



**REPORT
OF THE EXPERT PANEL
ON THE
RE-ACCREDITATION OF
ACADEMY FOR ARTS AND CULTURE
J. J. STROSSMAYER UNIVERSITY OF OSIJEK**

**Date of preliminary site visit:
5 and 6 November 2020
Date of on-line re-accreditation:
10 November -13 November 2020**

December 2020

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 3

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION 6

BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES 13

ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION 13

DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION 14

LIST OF INSTITUTIONAL GOOD PRACTICES 15

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE 15

ANALYSIS OF EACH ASSESSMENT AREA, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY GRADE FOR EACH ASSESSMENT AREA 16

I. Internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution 16

II. Study programmes 18

III. Teaching process and student support 21

IV. Teaching and institutional capacities 26

V. Scientific/artistic activity 29

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF EACH STANDARD, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY GRADE FOR EACH STANDARD 35

I. Internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution 35

II. Study programmes 43

III. Teaching process and student support 55

IV. Teaching and Institutional Capacities 69

V. Scientific/artistic activity 79

APPENDICES 90

EXPERT PANEL SUMMARY 99

INTRODUCTION

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

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

The Agency's Accreditation Council appointed an independent Expert Panel for the evaluation of Academy for Arts and Culture, J. J. Strossmayer University of Osijek.

Members of the Expert Panel:

- David Quin, Lecturer in Animation, Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dublin, Republic of Ireland, Panel chair,
- Linda Duškova, DAMU, Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, Czech Republic,
- Associate Professor Iva Rosanda Žigo, University North, Republic of Croatia,
- Associate Professor Sabina Vidulin, Academy of Music Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Republic of Croatia,
- Lucia Luque Akrap, student, Academy of Dramatic Arts University of Zagreb, Republic of Croatia, student.

During the site visit, the Expert Panel held meetings with the following stakeholders:

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

- Leaders of research projects and artistic projects,
- Representatives of the business sector, potential employers.

Croatian Expert Panel members went to the preliminary site-visit on 5 and 6 November 2020 during which they had a tour of the work facilities, library, IT classrooms, student administration office and classrooms, and attended sample lectures, where they held a brief Q&A session with students.

In accordance with the site visit protocol, the Expert Panel examined the available additional documents and study programme descriptions (learning outcomes).

The Expert Panel drafted this Report on the re-accreditation of Academy for Arts and Culture, J. J. Strossmayer University of Osijek on the basis of Academy for Arts and Culture, J. J. Strossmayer University of Osijek self-evaluation report, other relevant documents and site visit.

The Report contains the following elements:

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

In the analysis of the documentation, site visit to the Academy for Arts and Culture, J. J. Strossmayer University of Osijek and writing of the Report, the Expert Panel was supported by:

- Marina Grubišić, coordinator, ASHE,
- Davor Jurić, assistant coordinator, ASHE,
- Marko Horvat, interpreter at the site visit,
- Ivana Rončević, translator of the Report, ASHE.

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

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

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

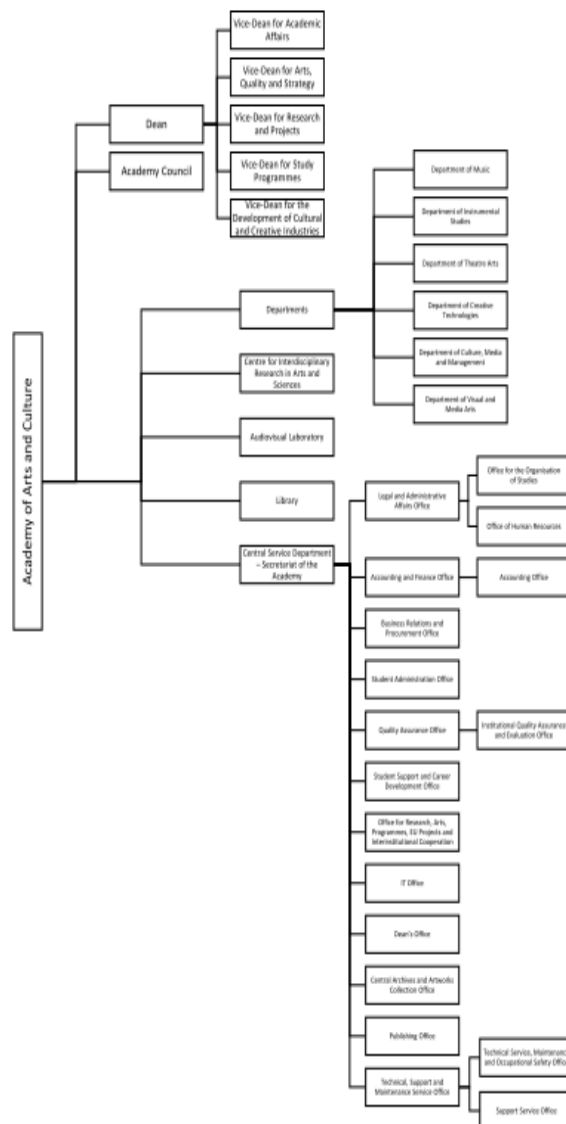
SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

NAME OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: Academy of Arts and Culture, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek

ADDRESS: Kralja Petra Svačića 1f, 31000 Osijek

DEAN: Dr. Helena Sablić Tomić, Full Professor,

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE:



STUDY PROGRAMMES:

- Acting and Puppetry undergraduate university study programme,
- Music Education undergraduate university study programme,
- Music Education graduate university study programme,
- Vocal Studies undergraduate university study programme,
- Vocal Studies; specialisation in: Solo graduate university study programme,
- Piano undergraduate university study programme,
- Piano; specialisation in: Solo graduate university study programme,
- Fine Arts , undergraduate university study programme,
- Fine Arts , graduate university study programme,
- Design for Stage and Screen undergraduate university study programme,
- Creative Therapies postgraduate specialist university study programme,
- Set Design for Stage, Screen and Multimedia (double major), graduate university study programme,
- Set Design for Stage, Screen and Multimedia (singlemajor), graduate university study programme,
- Costume Design for Stage, Screen and Multimedia (double major), graduate university study programme,
- Costume Design for Stage, Screen and Multimedia (singlemajor), graduate university study programme,
- Puppet for Stage, Screen and Multimedia (single major), graduate university study programme,
- Puppet for Stage, Screen and Multimedia (double major), graduate university study programme,
- Illustration, graduate university study programme,
- Stringed Instruments; specialisations in: Guitar and Tamboura, undergraduate university study programme,

- Composition and Music Theory; specialisations in: Composition, Music Theory, undergraduate university study programme,
- Art of Tamburitza, graduate university study programme,
- Non-verbal theatre (single major), graduate university study programme,
- Non-verbal theatre (double major), graduate university study programme,
- Acting (single major), graduate university study programme,
- Puppetry Directing (single major), graduate university study programme,
- Culture, Media and Management, undergraduate university study programme,
- Media and Public Relations (single major), graduate university study programme,
- Media and Public Relations (double major) ,graduate university study programme,
- Management in Culture and Creative Industries (double major) graduate university study programme,
- Acting (double major) graduate university study programme,
- Puppetry Directing (double major) graduate university study programme,
- Puppet Animation (double major) graduate university study programme,
- Puppet Animation (double major) graduate university study programme,
- Management in Culture and Creative Industries (single major), graduate university study programme.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS:

Study programme name	Full-time students	Part-time students
Acting and Puppetry (716), undergraduate university study programme, Osijek	25	0
Music Education (720), undergraduate university study programme, Osijek	43	7
Music Education (721), graduate university study programme, Osijek	13	8
Vocal Studies (722), undergraduate university study programme, Osijek	8	2
Vocal Studies; specialisation in: Solo (723), graduate university study programme, Osijek	1	2
Piano (724), undergraduate university study programme, Osijek	7	4
Piano; specialisation in: Solo (725), graduate university study programme, Osijek	1	2
Fine Arts (726), undergraduate university study programme, Osijek	53	1
Fine Arts (727), graduate university study programme, Osijek	28	10
Design for Stage and Screen (729), undergraduate university study programme, Osijek	16	2
Creative Therapies (730), postgraduate specialist university study programme, Osijek	0	26
Set Design for Stage, Screen and Multimedia (double major) (731), graduate university study programme, Osijek	0	0
Set Design for Stage, Screen and Multimedia (single major) (732), graduate university study programme, Osijek	3	0
Costume Design for Stage, Screen and Multimedia (double major) (733), graduate university study programme, Osijek	0	0
Costume Design for Stage, Screen and Multimedia (single major) (734), graduate university study programme, Osijek	4	1
Puppet for Stage, Screen and Multimedia (single major) (735), graduate university study programme, Osijek	0	1
Puppet for Stage, Screen and Multimedia (double major) (736), graduate university study programme, Osijek	0	0
Illustration (737), graduate university study programme, Osijek	13	1
Stringed Instruments; specialisations in: Guitar and Tamboura (738), undergraduate university study programme, Osijek	23	13
Composition and Music Theory; specialisations in: Composition, Music Theory (739), undergraduate university study programme, Osijek	13	8
Art of Tamburitza (740), graduate university study programme, Osijek	3	2
Non-verbal theatre (single major) (741), graduate university study programme, Osijek	2	6
Non-verbal theatre (double major) (742), graduate university study programme, Osijek	3	0
Acting (single major) (743), graduate university study programme, Osijek	16	0
Puppetry Directing (single major) (744), graduate university study programme, Osijek	1	3
Culture, Media and Management (745), undergraduate university study programme, Osijek	132	71

Media and Public Relations (single major) (746), graduate university study programme, Osijek	42	10
Media and Public Relations (double major) (747), graduate university study programme, Osijek	13	1
Management in Culture and Creative Industries (double major) (748), graduate university study programme, Osijek	13	1
Acting (double major) (749), graduate university study programme, Osijek	5	1
Puppetry Directing (double major) (750), graduate university study programme, Osijek	1	0
Puppet Animation (double major) (751), graduate university study programme, Osijek	1	1
Puppet Animation (double major) (752), graduate university study programme, Osijek	1	0
Management in Culture and Creative Industries (single major) (753), graduate university study programme, Osijek	45	14
Total*	529 (511)	198 (196)

NUMBER OF TEACHERS:

Table 4.1.a Staff Structure - FOR UNIVERSITIES in the evaluated academic year

Staff*	Full-time staff		Cumulative employment		External associates	
	Number	Average age	Number	Average age	Number	Average age
Full professors with tenure	5	61	-	-	-	-
Full professors	6	50,17	-	-	4	57
Associate professors	22	50,5	3	55	13	53,73
Assistant professors	36	44,72	3	46,67	17	45,53
Scientific advisor (permanent/with tenure)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Scientific advisor	-	-	-	-	-	-
Senior Research Associate	-	-	-	-	-	-
Research Associate	-	-	-	-	-	-
Teaching grades	23	46,39	1	52	19	40,81
Assistants	19	34,47	-	-	22	32,22
Postdoctoral researcher	4	41,5	-	-	-	-
Employees on projects	-	-	-	-	-	-
Expert assistants	1	59	-	-	1	0
Technical staff	8	44,75	-	-	-	-
Administrative staff	30	44,3	-	-	-	-
Support staff	10	47,3	-	-	-	-

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

The Academy of Arts and Culture in Osijek (AUKOS) is the only constituent of Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek (UNIOS) that is both an artistic-scientific and a scientific-teaching institution. The Academy received the License for Performing Higher Education Activity from the Ministry of Science and Education on 3 July 2018. The Academy was established by merging the Academy of Arts in Osijek and the Department of Cultural Studies, which was a constituent of Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, and the Academy is the legal successor to both institutions. The Academy of Arts and Culture in Osijek consists of six departments: Department of Music, Department of Instrumental Studies, Department of Theatre Arts, Department of Creative Technologies, Department of Culture, Media and Management, and Department of Visual and Media Arts.

The Academy of Arts and Culture in Osijek has adopted the best practice of both institutions in order to continue preparing students for their professional and life challenges in a highly competitive world of arts, culture, creative industries and intellectual property. Today, the Academy is a higher education institution (HEI) that creates and delivers university studies and does scientific and artistic work in several scientific, educational and artistic fields; it delivers undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate university studies of visual, musical, theatre and applied arts, media culture and cultural management, and creative therapies. The Academy is the only constituent of the University that is both an artistic-scientific and a scientific-teaching institution (and the only such institution in the Republic of Croatia) that offers state-of-the-art education by integrating artistic content and strong scientific underpinnings in social sciences and humanities. This could only be achieved by designing various study programmes that are constantly revised and improved and that incorporate the latest scientific findings. The Academy's long-term objective is to promote and present cultural, artistic and regional specificities against a wider European context, i.e. to establish criteria for the local development of all regional specificities. The Academy delivers university undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate artistic and scientific studies in the fields of arts, social sciences and humanities, and in interdisciplinary fields of arts and sciences, and does state-of-the-art artistic production and research, which makes it an institution of broad horizons, open to the most diverse profiles of students, who can recognize it as a place to acquire the artistic and scientific competencies necessary for life and work in the modern society. The Academy delivers study programmes in the fields of music education, voice, composition and music theory, instrumental studies, fine arts education, illustration, acting, puppet animation, design for stage and screen, costume design, set design, puppets for stage, screen and multimedia, puppetry directing, non-verbal theatre, and scientific studies in the fields of culture, media and management, media and public relations, and management in culture and creative industries. The Academy, in cooperation with the

Faculty of Medicine in Osijek, has launched the first Postgraduate University Specialist Study of Creative Therapies in the Republic of Croatia with specialisations in art (fine arts) therapy, dramatherapy, music therapy and dance movement therapy. As an important player in the development of Eastern Croatia, which has the population of about one million inhabitants, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University and the Academy of Arts and Culture in Osijek are extremely important for the further development, differentiation and professionalization of the artistic and cultural life of this part of Croatia for two extremely important reasons: primarily because there is a clear need for highly educated employees in specific areas of culture, media and creative industries, and also because the future of every society and nation rests on the education of as many socially responsible young people as possible, who are capable of critical thinking and action, broadly educated, and able to give answers to questions that have not even been asked yet. In addition to regular teaching activities, the Academy organizes conferences, festivals, seminars, book presentations, concerts, exhibitions, performances, film screenings, listening rooms and workshops such as: International Festival of Theatre Academies Dionysus, International Puppetry Revue Lutkokaz, International Festival of Vocal Music InterVox, International Student Wood Sculpture Workshop Jarčevac, International Workshop of Art Graphic, International Scientific and Artistic Symposium on Pedagogy in the Arts, International Singing Competition Lav Mirski, Days of Julije Knifer, SOS – Osijek Student Scene, Art and Woman Festival, Glazbos, International Student Biennial, International Scientific Conference European Realities, Final exhibition of the Department of Visual and Media Arts students, Annual exhibition of the Department of Creative Technologies students and more. We also invite lecturers from Croatia and abroad to give visiting talks, mostly as part of various thematic cycles coordinated by the AUKOS Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Arts and Sciences. The Academy of Arts and Culture in Osijek is the organizer of national and international projects involving music, fine and performing arts and science. As mentioned earlier, the Academy has the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Arts and Sciences (InterScArt), which provides infrastructural and methodological support for all artistic and research projects of the Academy. The function of the Centre is documentary, project-oriented and innovative, aimed at improving the scientific profile of the institution as a whole and supporting project activities of its students and teachers in both artistic and scientific-teaching academic ranks.

The aim of the Academy of Arts and Culture is to develop and foster excellence in the field of arts, science and cultural production in the broadest sense. The Academy will continue to deliver study programmes and implement projects which will promote and showcase the interdisciplinary, cultural, artistic and scientific specificities of its students and teachers, or the universality of their interests.

BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. Academy students were excited, enthusiastic and seemed very happy with their studies and with their educational and employability outcomes.
2. Academy staff do seem to be hugely engaged with their students and also with the organic development of the Academy and the strategic goals of the institution.
3. Academy seems very engaged with stakeholders, enterprises and with the cultural and creative enterprises in Osijek and the local region. This labour market engagement is to be hugely commended.
4. The Academy and its students are involved in a commendable number and variety of events, concerts, projects and exhibitions and this activity is to be encouraged.
5. The fact that Academy asks their staff for their ideas on future research, cultural and creative priorities is commendable, something to be encouraged and to be carefully and systematically managed for the future.
6. The Academy Dean and Vice Deans seem to be a strong and enthusiastic team, very supportive of each other and possessing a clear view and ownership of the Academy vision and strategy. The executive team seemed commendably 'competitive' for the Academy.
7. The collaboration between science and art is a commendable objective is to be encouraged and could provide great opportunities for Academy, for students and for graduates in the future.
8. The campus looks really attractive, has a good vibe, a peaceful aspect and good energy and could be extremely attractive to incoming students and staff in the future.
9. Academy staff are working very hard on Learning Outcomes. This work is to be supported, continued and encouraged in the future.
10. Students do have the possibility to earn ECTS credits for work on external projects, exhibitions and cultural and scientific events. The possible allocation of such credits is commendable, but must be governed by simple, clear, fair and transparent formal mechanisms.
11. The mentoring arrangements seemed commendable and students evidenced an excellent understanding of their rights in the mentoring relationships.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. The collaboration between science and art is a commendable objective, but the Expert panel did detect some very old approaches. The Expert panel suggests that Academy needs to benchmark with modern international higher education institutions, establishing strategic links and collaborations in order to modernise its approaches.
2. There already seem to be a lot (perhaps far too many) study programmes at Academy, and the Expert panel also recognises the urgent need for Academy to create new, more modern and more current study programmes in the near future. The Expert panel believes that Academy strongly needs to look at rationalising the number of study programmes, perhaps merging some study programmes together and reimagining some of the existing study programmes.
3. On the highly contested 'interdisciplinary' term, the Expert panel would suggest that Academy needs to clearly define short, agreed, consistent and easily understood definitions for interdisciplinarity (horizontal and vertical), transdisciplinarity, and multidisciplinary. This will enable and facilitate truly interdisciplinary collaboration for Academy students and staff.
4. On Learning Outcomes, the Expert panel appreciates the work already done, but from an international perspective some of the LOs we've seen remain quite cumbersome and old-fashioned. We'd encourage Academy to continue to offer all of their staff modern, systematic pedagogical training on the development of Learning Outcomes.
5. Academy needs to do some real work in terms of modernising its approach to research methodology.
6. The Academy seems to be engaged in very little experimental, risk-taking, new-mode and innovative artistic, scientific, research or pedagogical work. The Expert panel would encourage the development of a real Academy strategy in this area of 21st century innovation.
7. From an international perspective, Academy doesn't seem to have adequate ICT, technical, digital technology, audio-visual, or camera equipment, nor is there adequate capacity for Academy to loan or provide equipment to students from more challenged 'social-need' backgrounds. Academy (and senior Academy staff) need a radical transformation of attitude in relation to the power and potential of appropriate ICT and digital technologies.
8. The Academy can find a balance between older, valuable craft-based academic approaches and practices and new forms, experimental forms, new technology and the digital world. The Expert panel would encourage more risk-taking, experimental approaches, new modes of research, teaching and learning and a much stronger integration of digital technology and approaches in the Academy.

9. On ECTS, study programmes and courses, there still seem to be far too many small courses with small allocations of ECTS credits on some study programmes. We'd encourage Academy to strongly look at the amalgamation of many smaller, complementary and related courses into fewer, larger courses.
10. The Expert panel did notice some spatial problems on-campus. There could be better spatial management and some fairer allocation of space between different types of Academy study programmes.
11. Academy should urgently pursue membership of leading international associations and academic/professional bodies.

LIST OF INSTITUTIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. Academy students were excited, enthusiastic and seemed very happy with their studies and with their educational and employability outcomes.
2. Academy staff do seem to be hugely engaged with their students and also with the organic development of the Academy and the strategic goals of the institution.
3. Academy seems very engaged with stakeholders, enterprises and with the cultural and creative enterprises in Osijek and the local region. This labour market engagement is to be hugely commended.
4. The Academy and its students are involved in a commendable number and variety of events, concerts, projects and exhibitions and this activity is to be encouraged.
5. The fact that Academy asks their staff for their ideas on future research, cultural and creative priorities is commendable, something to be encouraged and to be carefully and systematically managed for the future.
6. The Academy Dean and Vice Deans seem to be a strong and enthusiastic team, very supportive of each other and possessing a clear view and ownership of the Academy vision and strategy. The executive team seemed commendably 'competitive' for the Academy.

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

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

Analysis

The higher education institution does have established and functional internal quality assurance systems and relies on the parent university for many 'umbrella' quality assurance mechanisms, policies and procedures. The university would obviously have more capacity and expertise to stay on top of all aspects of modern higher education quality assurance, but amongst Academy staff there did seem to be something of a 'detachment' from, or lack of ownership of many key QA processes and procedures, key policies and other ordinances and regulations. Academy does have a very well developed sense of its social role, especially its role in relation to the city and the local region.

Academy does implement recommendations for quality improvement from previous evaluations. Indeed the Academy merger was brought about as a result of the results of previous evaluations.

Academy does support academic integrity and freedom, and has done important work to prevent unethical behaviour, intolerance and discrimination. Text-matching software has been introduced, a Code of Ethics is in operation and an Ethics Committee and an Ethics Review Committee are in place.

The higher education institution needs to work harder on ensuring the availability of information on important aspects of its activities (teaching, scientific/artistic and social). Much of the Academy website can be improved. Key documents and basic information should be much easier to find and should be written in such a way to be much more easily understood, especially by students.

The Academy understands and encourages the development of its social role. The Academy has a very well-developed sense of its social role, its working relationships with the city of Osijek and with the region and its prominent role in the artistic life of the city and region. Academy programmes were confident that they were responding well to the needs and requirements of society, students and the labour market, especially the labour market in the local region.

Academy has a very preliminary understanding of Lifelong learning programmes and struggles to relate lifelong learning to Academy's strategic goals, to the mission of the

higher education institution, and to social needs. The Expert Panel completely understands that lifelong learning is not yet a developed area in the Croatian context. The SER states that 32 lifelong learning programmes have been designed. Academy staff referred to 'creative writing classes' and painting classes 'for retired people'. Over five years, 16 programmes were delivered, with very few participants per year. The SER referred to *'the state of the market and the poor purchasing power of potential participants'*.

Recommendations for improvement

The Academy staff and students did seem to view many university regulations, policies and procedures as pertaining to the university rather than to Academy. Academy staff especially should be much more familiar with (and involved with) key policies and procedures, especially those directly relating to learning, teaching, assessment and students. Though Academy has a strongly developed sense of its social role, it is especially focused on the city and the local area. Academy should have the ambition to expand its social role to have a national and international outlook.

Though Academy is responsive to the findings of previous evaluations, some findings from previous panels and reports were yet to be accomplished. Admittedly, Academy is only two years into its merger process, a lot of work has already been done and a lot of work still lies ahead. Academy staff must not 'wait and see' – they should continue to make improvements as they go.

Though Academy does support academic integrity and freedom, and has done important work to prevent unethical behaviour, intolerance and discrimination, more work remains to be done. Academy staff especially need greater awareness of, and training in modern ethical practice (especially in relation to research) plagiarism, copyright, fair usage and Intellectual Property ownership.

Much of the Academy website can be improved. Key Academy documents and basic information should be much easier to find and should be written in such a way to be much more easily understood, especially by students. Too often, students admitted that they often had to ask teachers to explain the most basic information to them.

The Academy should work hard to broaden its links with businesses and enterprises outside of the city and the local region. As previous evaluations have stated, the Academy needs to look *'beyond the very narrow labour market in the region.'*

Academy also needs a radical reimagining of its attitude to digital technologies if it's to maintain its position (and the position of its students and graduates) in a modern

(digitised) society. Influential and expert institutions like Academy must have social and leadership responsibilities in cyberspace too.

The Academy has a great opportunity to radically rethink this so-called 'lifelong learning' area. Modern European lifelong learning courses could present Academy with lucrative opportunities over the coming years.

Academy should attempt to establish Continuous Professional Development courses, short (often evening) courses, mid-career training, microcredentials and online short courses, with accurate ECTS allocations (often at Masters level) designed to offer upskilling and retraining to people who are currently employed. This would represent truly modern European-style lifelong learning.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

II. Study programmes

Analysis

The Academy of Arts and Culture currently delivers 34 study programmes of which nine undergraduate university studies, 24 graduate studies and one postgraduate specialist study in cooperation with the Faculty of Medicine in Osijek. Three study programmes are delivered only in senior years but do not enrol new students from the academic year 2019/2020, and are therefore not included in the total of 34 study programmes. The Academy delivers study programmes leading to regulated professions, such are undergraduate and graduate university studies of Fine Art Education, Music Education, Piano and Singing, which according to database of regulated professions, belong to the professions in the category of 'School Education', 'Secondary School Teacher' and 'Primary School Teacher'.

It seems that the Academy insists on the importance of the collaboration between study programmes in the arts and science. Still, the relationship between art and science lacks a scientific critical mass. The Academy also needs to establish clear and stable foundations in the reorganisation of its study programmes. There are currently too many study programmes and new, more modern and more current study programmes need to be devised.

From the document of Self-evaluations as well as from meetings that the Expert Panel had with faculty representatives and students, it is evident that the Academy does understand the importance of learning outcomes. For that reason, the Academy founded the Committee for learning outcomes which is composed of representatives of teachers

from all departments of the Academy. Equally, the Academy conducts annual surveys with graduates in which it tries to check the clarity of defined learning outcomes of courses. It seems that the average grade from this survey item is very good. However, the Expert Panel detected some difficulties related to a small number of ECTS credits at some study programmes; such is the Undergraduate study programme of Culture, Media and Management.

Further, the Academy doesn't own its Regulations on studying and/or student grading, relying instead on regulations from the parent university. Teachers did not understand the importance of this document. The Academy currently isn't included in any EU project for the purpose of alignment with the CroGF standards, and study programmes aren't listed in the Register of the Croatian Qualifications Framework.

The Self-evaluation documents mention that checking the learning outcomes at the level of courses is conducted through constructive alignment, meaning that learning outcomes are consistent with the content and activities during teaching and with what will be assessed and with assessment methods. Equally, from the document of Self-evaluation and meeting with teachers and students, it seems that at the beginning of each semester, teachers inform the students about how their course activities will be assessed, in accordance with the course description and syllabus.

During the visit of the Academy, members of Expert Panel reviewed project tasks and final theses. From an international academic perspective, the dissertations presented did seem to be of rather inconsistent quality, in terms of subject matter, research methodology, theoretical and academic approaches. Too often, the student work presented seemed to be descriptive, rather than analytical, critically-minded, academically probing or reflective.

It should be mentioned that the Academy should establish the procedures used to assess the alignment of actual student workload and defined ECTS credits. International experiences suggest that this will vary depending on discipline or type of study. The creation of adequate breathing space around students' intensive study loads will allow for reduced stress, sustainable work, increased professionalism and greater creativity.

Finally, from the link provided by the Self-evaluation as well as from conversation with teachers and students, it is evident that the Academy has established numerous forms of effective student practice. A diverse range of student practice is conducted, and it depends on the specificity of the study programme.

Recommendations for improvement

The number of study programmes is worryingly high, and all procedures, processes and documents related to launching new programmes should be revised. Reorganisation, strategic rationalisation and merging of existing study programmes are strongly recommended. Study programmes in arts might include two main undergraduate programmes which would then branch out in several graduate programmes (university and/or professional). From the *Strategic Research Agenda of the Academy of Arts and Culture 2020-2024*, it is quite clear that the most potent scientific field at the Academy is Humanities (subfield Science of art). Hence, the Academy should possibly consider a reorganisation of scientific study programmes in that direction.

From the present perspective, there is a lot of vagueness related to learning outcomes which correspond with a lack of a focused, meaningful and deeply thought-out Academy strategy for delivering new courses and programmes. Additionally, we suggest merging smaller complementary and related courses into larger courses with a higher number of ECTS credits. We strongly recommend that the Academy should implement an ongoing, sustained and systematic practice of rationalising, simplifying, modernising and refreshing learning outcomes on the level of each course and in each study programme.

The Academy must strengthen the scientific component of specific study programmes, establishing a more rigorous and consistent approach to precise methodological, theoretical and academic questions. Analysing the available documentation and basing their opinion on conversations with Academy staff and students, the Expert Panel conclude that Academy students can tend to be overloaded in their work.

Further, from the conversation with students, it seems that external work can be properly credited and this is to be welcomed. But the Academy lack simple, transparent and rigorous formal procedures to govern the negotiated allocation of such additional credit. Finally, the Academy should establish the procedures used to assess alignment of actual student workload and defined ECTS credits.

Participation in an international project is mentioned as a possibility of a realisation of student practice, but it seems that this element is poorly represented. Establishing stronger cooperation with international institutions would allow the Academy realisation of various scientific and artistic projects as well as ones in which students could be significantly involved.

Quality grade: Minimum level of quality

III. Teaching process and student support

Analysis

Admission criteria or criteria for the continuation of studies are in line with the requirements of the study programme, clearly defined, published and consistently applied. However, many Academy study programmes are enrolling tiny numbers of students, or student numbers which frequently fall far below enrolment targets or quotas. Some study programmes failed to enrol any students, sometimes for years on end.

Academy does gather information on student progress and uses it to ensure the continuity and completion of study. There did seem to be scepticism about the quality of the data emerging from the student surveys. *'The students are assessing teachers but they're not doing this in a very good way. Grads are less reluctant to criticise teachers...'*

The Academy is working hard to provide student-centred learning. The Academy does encourage varied modes of programme delivery, in accordance with the intended learning outcomes. Field work and out of classroom teaching are an integral part of most study programmes. However, there is a noticeable absence of the most modern and innovative pedagogical methods. The centrality of Academy teachers in the learning process does seem more than a little excessive. Even when discussing the most basic student information (which should be readily available to students and should be easily understood by all students) students replied *'we send an email to a teacher. Yes, we know where to find information. If I don't understand, teachers will explain. We can always ask our teachers, or the student office, they are always willing to help...'*

More independent, student-centred, self-directed components should be encouraged more across Academy. Students do seem to be engaged in a lot of basic project-based problem solving, but their creative and critical capacities are not being adequately challenged or empowered whilst working on quite everyday and ordinary projects for local cultural enterprises.

The Academy does provide adequate student supports, including guidance on studying and career opportunities. A Student Administration Office, A Careers Office an AUKOS Counselling Office, and a UNIOS Counselling Office are all available to students. AUKOS does have a functioning students union.

Academy has done some important work in supporting to students from vulnerable and under-represented groups. There is a UNIOS Office for Students with Disabilities. The Committee for Students with Disabilities is designated as *'the competent body to support*

students with disabilities.' The Committee regularly informs students about open competitions for scholarships for students with disabilities.

All Academy buildings allow access and movement for students in wheelchairs or students with reduced mobility. Two very visible elevators have been installed. Academy also organises an annual Day of Persons with Disabilities and, in 2019 held an International Conference on Persons with Disabilities in Arts, Science and Education and the conference was *'very well received.'*

Academy does allow students to gain international experience, although the majority of international 'mobilities' were short trips abroad for specific concerts, workshops, exhibitions etc. Some of the Academy procedures for *'making the final decision on the recognition of courses and ECTS credits and differential exams'* seemed extremely formal and potentially scary for students. Such procedures do seem to have the potential to jeopardise or threaten the progression of outgoing Erasmus students on their return to Academy.

Academy teachers still appear to have great difficulty in teaching anything through English. Academy does ensure adequate study conditions for foreign students once they've arrived, with buddy systems and basic information available through the UNIOS website. However, it's quite difficult for potentially incoming students to discover which specific Academy programmes are available through English. This information should be clear for incoming Erasmus students. If all tuition, some tuition or no tuition is available in English, this should be made clear.

Academy procedures do seem to ensure an objective and consistent evaluation and assessment of student achievements. Students receive all information about assessment and grading during an initial lecture at the start of each course. The students who met with the Expert panel seemed quite happy with this system. The evaluation criteria for each course are publicly available in study programmes published on the AUKOS website and in Curriculum Implementation Plans. The Academy does issue diplomas and Diploma Supplements in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Academy is hugely committed to the employability of graduates. Academy does respond readily to the needs of the labour market, especially to the needs of the local labour market. New programmes have been launched to meet the needs of the market, whilst some study programmes not recognised as attractive by the labour market have either been discontinued or modified to make them more attractive. The Academy does maintain strong and formalised links with a large number of institutions, companies, associations and organisations in arts, culture, media and education.

The Academy has a Student Support and Career Development Office, informing students about potential job opportunities. The Office also cooperates with the UNIOS QA Center on things like cv writing, time management, interviews etc... The Alumni Club also helps to organise the distribution of information on job opportunities.

Recommendations for improvement

Though Academy and UNIOS admission criteria and procedures seem clear, too many Academy study programmes are enrolling tiny numbers of students, or student numbers which frequently fall far below enrolment targets or quotas. Academy needs an urgent and strategic rationalisation of its study programmes, fewer study programmes, merged programmes and broader graduate outcomes for the new and revised Academy study programmes.

The gathering of student data at Academy needs refinement and reimagination – the suggestion would be to involve the Student Union in some of the information gathering processes, using alternative and nuanced methods such as student focus groups and discussion groups rather than endless surveys and questionnaires. Data gathered through surveys will frequently be steered or governed by the questions being asked, whereas real student discussion will frequently identify true student concerns.

In future, it would be helpful if both students and management placed far more emphasis on revisions, improvements and enhancements which resulted from listening to student voice.

The Academy does use a good range of teaching methods, but very few of their current pedagogical approaches could be called either innovative, or strongly student-centred.

There is still far too much student dependence on (extremely willing and enthusiastic) teaching staff. Students can call teachers ‘at any time’ and seem to rely in teachers for even the most basic student information. This is not a strongly student-centred approach. The danger with such a high-dependency approach is that many students develop little autonomy, very little capacity for independent decision making and very little real, questioning capacity for critical and creative thinking.

There should be a concerted attempt across Academy to try newer interactive teaching methods, free-briefs, unguided group working, experimentation, mistake-making and risk-taking learning modes. Digital technologies need to be incorporated much more into student centred learning at Academy and senior professors need to start growing

their own understanding of and expertise in state-of-the-art ICT and digital technologies.

Some commendable work has been done on raising awareness of people with disabilities, and work has been done on making the buildings more accessible. It would be good to see concerted, sustainable and strategic outcomes and policy initiatives emerging as 'action plans' from 'social-need' conferences and symposia. Academy needs to keep working on more structured and organised (policy based) modern approaches to diverse student populations.

Student support mechanisms are established, but too much of the functional support starts with, or is accessed through teachers and mentors. Information on student supports should be readily available, easily accessible and easily understood by all students. Important student supports should be completely independent of teaching staff.

In all documentation and in discussions with staff and students, the AUKOS student union was rarely referred to. The Student Union seems to be viewed mostly as a partner in Academy management and institutional decision-making. A more independent Student Union has a vital role to play in replacing ineffective student surveys and Academy-supports with far more effective, student-led focus groups, discussion fora and student-centred, even student-led supports and awareness initiatives. Independent student voice needs to be heard at Academy. Academy students need to be more empowered to act for themselves too, rather than to solely be in the service of improving Academy's management procedures and corporate ethos.

Academy is obviously doing quite a lot of work in order to provide supports and to raise awareness of disability. Academy support mechanisms need to become much less formal and 'administrative'. Such a change could make Academy a welcoming and attractive destination for students 'in social need'.

Annual Conferences are a welcome first start in raising awareness, but more modern, accessible supports and Academy access initiatives should now be a strategic priority. This should directly relate directly to the development of Academy's social role.

Academy is obviously doing a lot of work to facilitate short 'mobilities' but Erasmus numbers will remain small whilst outgoing students have to undergo a potentially nerve-wracking '*decision on the recognition of their foreign courses and ECTS credits and differential exams.*' European Higher Education Institutions must engage with Erasmus programmes flexibly and without penalising returning students using such apparently

arcane and possibly terrifying administrative mechanisms. Such highly-formal, administration-centred ECTS and course checking models should be changed to more student-centred, mobility-friendly procedures which do not potentially jeopardise or threaten the progression of Erasmus students on their return to Academy.

Every study programme at Academy should try to deliver at least one small course through an international language like English, if only to allow Academy students to learn a little of the vocabulary of their practice or discipline in an international language. This would also start preparing the ground for incoming Erasmus students.

The expert panel would suggest a radical overhaul (and simplification) of the Academy ECTS-validation and 'course comparison' systems, allowing for much more flexibility and clarity in relation to guest students from partner institutions.

Though many of the programme documents on the Academy website do claim to offer English as a language of instruction, this seems to be offered either 'on demand', as an option or governed through regulations on '*the minimum number of students needed to organise classes in English.*' This information should be clear for incoming Erasmus students. If all tuition, some tuition or no tuition is available in English, this should be made clear.

There does seem to be reluctance on the part of many Academy professors to engage with tuition through any language other than Croatian. Academy should do everything possible to improve this situation for the strategic benefit of the institution and especially of the Academy students.

The Academy should make a concerted effort to 'sell' its attractive campus, attractive study programmes, friendly and less formal administrative procedures and friendly study conditions (including some clear accommodation for tuition through English or German etc) to incoming Erasmus students. Academy should be a much more popular Erasmus destination.

The fact that '*there have been no objections to grades in the past two years*' is unusual – a sign of student contentment, or perhaps a sign that Academy grades are generous. Exams predominate in the documentation, though there is some provision for '*the assessment of classroom activities*'. There's little or no mention of innovative modes of assessment, cross-moderation of grades, self-assessment or group assessment.

Graduate employability is a commendable component of the Academy's activity. The Expert panel would strongly encourage Academy to broaden its links with employers and

enterprises outside of Osijek and the local region, especially with companies and enterprises involved in digital technology and culture-related ICT.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

IV. Teaching and institutional capacities

Analysis

Classes at the Academy are delivered by teachers appointed to artistic-teaching, scientific-teaching, teaching and associate academic ranks. Most of the doctoral professors come from the science research area Humanities. The courses are on great percentage delivered by teachers employed by the Academy. The ratio of students and full-time teachers ensures the high quality of study. Since the number of students is small, the teaching process can be done accurately, taking into consideration the students' individuality, disposition and competences. Teachers' workload is mostly in line with the relevant legislation and policies. In some occasions it is not possible to stay strictly in line with the regulations. Staff explained that in particular teaching areas it was more difficult to recruit appropriately qualified teaching staff, or teaching staff with the appropriate background or experience.

The Academy does take into consideration the legislation, regulations and procedures for assessing and rewarding teacher excellence. In addition to national regulations, the procedures for the selection of the best candidates for each post are also governed by two internal ordinances. It can be seen that the higher institution has adequate methods for the selection of the best candidates in addition to the prescribed national minimum conditions for each position ensuring the selection of excellent candidates. Even if the indicators of excellence which include scientific/artistic, teaching and professional work are taken into consideration, it is evident that not so many papers have been published in the last five years, and that the total number of teachers' citations as well as the number of published higher education textbooks are very small. When viewed as the number of projects per person the situation is a little better, but still insufficient. It can be seen that the same person works at different study programmes and this multiplies the total numbers.

The Academy does indeed provide opportunities for the improvement of teaching competencies through different forms of support. Furthermore, the Academy supports teachers and associates appointed as assistants in the field of arts, who do not need to obtain a PhD degree in science/arts, to attend postgraduate university studies (doctoral studies) or specialist studies. The Academy encourages the assessment and

improvement of teaching competencies based on the peer-review recommendations and results of student satisfaction surveys through various following procedures.

The Academy has 7 buildings. The Academy uses 6 teaching bases for the delivery of part of the university studies and post-graduate specialist studies. For the practical part (professional practice) Academy uses spaces in primary and secondary schools. The Academy invests and it included construction work, renovations. Some more are in progress, including the hugely significant and long-promised concert hall. Though some important work has been done it is still necessary to have more spaces and constantly improved hardware and software for better delivery of study programmes and for ensuring the achievement of intended learning outcomes. Careful infrastructural improvement will lead to improved implementation of scientific/artistic and professional activities.

Professional development is an integral part of the library business, so library staff regularly attend various professional courses, lectures, webinars, et cetera. Staff continuously keep track of professional literature in the field of library science and in the fields of music, fine art and theatre arts. Because of the functional integration of the University of Osijek it is also possible for students and staff to access scientific literature at other scientific and teaching constituents of the University of Osijek. The Library holdings seem to be adequate for the study needs and activities at the Academy. The library and library equipment partially meet the conditions for a high quality of study. Some teaching material should be up-to-date and subscriptions to appropriate bibliographic databases with full-text access in regards to the need of each department should be encouraged.

Financial sustainability is evident in the way that the Academy manages its finances from the state budget, local budgets, but also funds from its own activities or by special regulations (student tuition fees). The Academy also generates revenues on the basis of Programme Agreements, revenues for scientific activity and revenues for regular operating expenses, which are partly sufficient for teaching and regular operation. The Academy does generate revenues from artistic projects, which does create some additional revenue. The income is also by student tuition, as well as from postgraduate specialist studies. The Academy manages its financial resources transparently and appropriately.

Recommendations for improvement

The number and qualifications of teachers are satisfactory, but more teachers should be encouraged to pursue and complete doctoral studies, especially teachers who hold assistant professor positions. The recruitment of new employees (full-time or external ones) also needs to be considered, especially the recruitment of teaching staff with new

capabilities, more modern research approaches and highly developed skills in areas where Academy has very obvious deficiencies, such as ICT and digital technology. The improved distribution of teaching workloads is a management problem and should be solved by Academy management for the strategic benefit of the institution. Further, the merging of some study groups and the rationalization of study programmes at Academy should have hugely beneficial impacts on the reduction, redistribution and reallocation of teacher workload, as well as a strong potential for the creative reimagination of Academy teaching practice.

Teachers should strive to publish more in relevant publications and to adopt and develop the most modern and progressive research skills and methods, taking into consideration the most progressive contemporary research methodology in their study field, discipline or area. Once again, Academy management must strive to create the conditions, space and time for their teachers to pursue such lucrative opportunities in order to strategically enhance the quality of the institution.

Though the Academy encourages teachers to apply for competitive projects, such activity could be encouraged even more and should be supported to a much greater extent through the reimagination and reduction of teacher workloads and through some economies of scale which would derive from the strategic rationalization of Academy study programmes. Presentations should of course be done at every department to give more confidence to teachers in relation to the application process and to motivate and encourage staff who are not yet involved to take parts in different projects. At the same time, the Academy should find innovative ways to include more teachers in the international mobility programs. Student satisfaction is an important, though sometimes quite limited (or even misleading) measure of teaching excellence, especially where student satisfaction is being measured by imprecise university-wide survey instruments.

Different locations of the Academy seem to be problematic for students so it is necessary to reorganize in some other way the locations in which the Academy works and make it closer to students. More spaces should be found for some departments in regards to the actual space that they cover. Ongoing strategic ICT investment is required, and a radical modernisation in teaching staff attitude to digital technology and digital potentials is urgently needed at Academy.

From the perspective of continuous and progressive Academy development it falls to Academy teachers to rethink which kind of contemporary and relevant literature should be used in each subject, and the library should of course be provided with the necessary publications, music scores, and music on appropriate devices and technical platforms.

The Academy should deepen some of the existing possibilities, as how to income more funds from its own activities and projects. Greater cooperation with local industry and

local community is desirable, but is unlikely to yield particularly rich revenue streams. Applying to EU projects and funds may be an option in the future. Project collaborations with larger international businesses and business incubator projects may also present future opportunities. Across the world, attracting international students is always seen as an obvious revenue generator, but the Academy will need to do a lot of work to develop some courses or programmes in languages other than Croatian and in order to present highly-differentiated, attractive programme offerings to international students.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

V. Scientific/artistic activity

Analysis

Teachers and associates employed at the Academy are committed to the achievement of high quality and quantity of scientific research. Over the past five years (2014-2019) AUKOS teachers created, produced or participated in over 1900 exhibitions, concerts, theatre performances and other public performances. According to the conversation held with teachers and vice-deans, since the creation of CIRAS, artistic teachers tend to be more interested in scientific research compared to the previous re-accreditation period.

In the same five-year period, AUKOS teachers published 224 publications of the highest category according to the Ordinance on Appointment of Scientific Grades, but the publication ratio is quite low. The Academy does keep clear records of all relevant staff publications.

Besides the conferences that Academy organises in Osijek, teachers participate in national and international conferences. 28 of AUKOS teachers (in artistic field) have participated in 359 conferences and art festivals during the past five years.

Academy does provide evidence for the social relevance of its scientific / artistic / professional research and transfer of knowledge. The Academy does develop multiple collaborations with stakeholders in Osijek and is keenly aware of the labour market needs in the local area. The Academy seems to be very active within the local general public and has had a commendably positive impact on the cultural environment of Osijek and the local region, organising cycles of events on regular basis.

Teachers in artistic fields and scientific fields are members of many Croatian professional associations. Many of the AUKOS teachers have achieved university and national awards

for their works and the Academy does organise international conferences on site. The Academy has published two volumes (1-2019; 2-2020) of its new journal *Nove teorije*.

The scientific / artistic activity of Academy is both sustainable and developmental. The Scientific Strategy of the Academy mentions, that a connection between Humanities, Social Sciences and interdisciplinary field of sciences and artistic fields would be the most recognizable for the Academy. As an institution directed to the scientific and the artistic work at the same time, the Academy is rightly proud of its unique status in the Republic of Croatia.

The Academy adopted the Ordinance on rewarding teacher excellence in teaching, artistic and research work and artistic and research project implementation and the anticipated implementation of a fair, transparent and strategically minded rewards system for staff is to be welcomed. The Academy does co-finance the participation of teachers in seminars, conferences, festivals, etc.

In 2019, Academy created the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in the Arts and Sciences InterScART. The Centre organises scientific activities like workshops, lectures, conferences on methodology or text book publications.

From the Scientific Strategy is clear that after integration of two institutions (The Academy of Arts, Department of Culture), the Academy recognises the need to strengthen its scientific component. The aim should be to grow scientific fields to become equal in importance and in quality to the artistic components.

The scientific/artistic and professional activities and achievements of the higher education institution do improve the teaching process, but much work still needs to be done to relate project work to pedagogical improvement.

The Self evaluation document includes a list of 528 artistic projects in the past five year period that students took part in. Most of those projects were realized in Osijek or at other places in Croatia.

The self-evaluation document mentions that AUKOS teachers use innovative and creative teaching methods, as follows: conversation (95.7%); oral presentation (89.2%); explanation (82.8%); interpretation (73.1%); research (independent student research) (66.7%); demonstration (66.7%); practical work (61.3%); independent learning (independent research) (49.5%); However, too many of the more 'innovative' methods seem to be the least represented in this survey. Many modern and innovative teaching

and learning methods are not mentioned and are not evident in the Academy's programme documentation.

Recommendations for improvement

The Academy's artistic activities on a regional level seem to be one of the strong sides of the institution's teaching processes. However, the Expert panel would recommend that students of artistic field should be included much more in artistic research projects, which could lead to the discovery and creation of new pedagogical forms and experimentations.

The Expert panel encourages AUKOS teachers in the pursuit of risk taking, experimentation and in the active pursuit of new research and pedagogical forms and methods.

Concerning the scientific field activities, more opportunities for included students in research projects are recommended. The documentation mentions students only as co-authors or authors of articles in journals, but not as co-researchers in art/science projects.

The Expert panel found out the research and artistic activities of the Academy are often not consciously or directly related to the teaching and learning practices. Teachers should take more risk in evolving new teaching methods or in using more innovative and challenging pedagogical methods. The Academy needs to work much harder on the introduction of innovative and modern, student-centred teaching and learning methods.

The word "interdisciplinary" is very often used in Academy documents but the Expert panel is not convinced that all at the Academy clearly understand or explore the rich possibilities and challenges which this term presents in the year 2021. The Expert Panel recommends that the Academy should clearly define the terms '*interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinarity*' and should communicate those common and agreed definitions to the teachers, staff and students of the Academy. Sadly, many activities and work presented to the Expert panel at Academy as "interdisciplinary" were often basic (and quite honest, necessary and everyday) collaborations between different artistic fields. Interdisciplinary research should not be only two disciplines put together that need each other. For instance, a student in double major acting and management is not necessarily doing interdisciplinary work, studies or research. This would be rather a case of a multidisciplinary profile, a valuable person who is capable of simultaneously handling two different disciplines. Approaches that should be called interdisciplinary are those that potentially create new forms and content by experimenting with new methods across different fields, where two disciplines get together and create something

unexpected (for instance performance philosophy or cognition in theatre creation, or artists working with chemists, puppeteers working with medics on patient rehabilitation, or pharmacists working with designers on innovative data visualisation).

The Expert panel also detected a strong lack of ambition in art/science research risk taking, experimental methodology and innovative approaches (a single student project was presented as an example). We encourage the Academy to investigate not only art-based scientific research, but also innovative and modern research through art practice.

The Academy has some work done in that sense in the fields of Music and Pedagogy, but there are still huge opportunities to explore work in this field as well as to discover research opportunities in completely new fields. Concrete efforts should be done also in rethinking and reimagining music with other sciences as well as to make deeper the link between Music and Pedagogy.

The Academy is very well recognised in the regional area and actively contributes to the local artistic and cultural context. But the Expert panel found that the Academy academic work is not sufficiently published or recognised at a national level. The new journal may help but more publication in the highest quality national scientific journals is recommended.

As mentioned in section 5.1 teachers of artistic field seem to be more active in promoting the Academy in national and international context than the teachers of scientific fields. But even in the case of art, the Academy should have the ambition to participate in highlighted, highest-quality international events. The Academy seems to be very focused on its region and on the events organised on site, rather than taking inspiration from the most progressive and contemporary tendencies of similar types of international education.

The Expert panel believes that the Academy has a great opportunity to become a national hub for new interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches in merging arts and sciences. In order to achieve this effectively and efficiently, the Expert panel would strongly recommend that Academy should seek similar types of educational institutions abroad. The Academy should now aim to establish working links with the strongest and most progressive international institutions, especially with those institutions who are strongest in areas such as digital art practice, digital technologies and the contemporary cultural industries.

The Academy's Scientific Strategy should be completely revised in line with the most modern research tendencies, approaches and methodologies. Also, the new founded

journal *Nove teorije* should achieve high quality scientific articles by integrating contributions by researchers recognised at national and especially at the highest international levels.

The Academy transfers knowledge of art very actively in the local area, supports the awareness of art in the general public and initiates new collaborations with local stakeholders. AUKOS teachers take part in Croatian professional associations and are members of a few key international organisations. This is certainly an approach which should be maintained and developed. The Academy should maintain strong links with local enterprises, with the city, the region and with the local general public.

The Academy has great opportunities to improve and broaden its social relevance by involving the digital technology and ICT sector in the transfer of knowledge, in the development of new, more modern and contemporary study programmes and in the development of collaborative research and business projects. With the exception of two or three notable projects, the Academy has not adequately explored the potential of new digital technology collaborations in the labour market and in the development of its teaching process. Many Academy staff seem quite unaware of the true potentials for digital development in the 21st century cultural industry, in the development of progressive pedagogy and in the enhancement and reimagination of the institution's social relevance.

The Academy should also actively inform teachers about international organisations and initiatives in scientific and artistic fields and support them in memberships in those organisations.

The teachers and associates seem to be committed to conducting research and to the production of artworks, but raising the level of quality should now be the main ambition, along with broadening and deepening the research base. The Academy should encourage the teachers to produce more publications of the highest category quality according to the Ordinance on Appointment of Scientific Grades and should do everything possible to motivate teachers in achieving higher quality in their scientific research.

The implementation of a fair, transparent and clearly understood system of rewards for teachers will be an especially valuable incentive in Academy's ambitious pursuit of higher quality research and artistic creation. Though teachers are involved in publication, the publication rates across the Academy still appear to be low. Lighter teaching workloads for specific periods of time, at crucial points in research and

postgraduate projects would give some teachers a greater opportunity to be engaged in the highest quality intensive research and artistic production work.

At this crucial stage of the Academy's development, more Academy teachers should be encouraged to have a more strategic and ambitious international outlook. Once again, such internationalisation should feed strategically into the enhancement and development of Academy research and into the development of truly 21st century research, undergraduate and postgraduate offerings.

Quality grade: Minimum level of quality

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

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

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

Analysis

The Academy does have functional internal QA processes. As stated in the self evaluation documents, this system covers all Academy activities, including the teaching processes, student supports, spatial resources, planning, staff CPD, staff and student recruitment. The Academy QA Office operates in alignment with the Center for Quality Assurance in Higher Education at the university. The Academy has developed a Quality Manual and students receive a handbook when they arrive. The Expert Panel met with the members of the Academy's Quality Assurance Committee, who understood clearly that quality is a process, that all members of staff should be responsible for quality matters and that stakeholders and students should be involved in the enhancement of quality at the Academy. The Self Evaluation documents presented were good, although many of the documents referenced in the SER were only available in Croatian. The Academy website needs work, with a lot of information available only in Croatian. The website requires a lot of time to navigate and it's difficult to discover even basic information.

The Expert Panel feel there is a pressing need for the Academy to address the big issues surrounding the convergence of science and art. Staff at Academy expressed themselves rightly proud that their institution was the only one *'qualified in Croatia'* to pursue both science and art. However, it must be noted that Academy has a quite limited range of scientific disciplines – including management and media, economics and music pedagogy. The Academy's Scientific Strategy reads like a rambling discussion document, big on philosophical musings and worryingly old-fashioned references and very thin on progressive and exciting 21st century scientific action plans. In the report on the reaccreditation of the Department of Cultural Studies of the University of J. J. Strossmayer in Osijek it was stated that there was no *'clearly formulated overarching scientific agenda or profile or connections to other research institutions and activities'* whilst there was *'no apparent collaboration with other faculties and departments and thus seems isolated and disorganized, fails to exploit its potential and is unable to reach its objectives.'* In the absence of a progressive and modern Scientific Strategy, with clear and achievable action plans for collaboration with a broader range of scientific Faculties, institutions and departments – internationally, across Croatia and especially in their

own university, the dangers of isolation, disorganisation, failure to exploit potentials and inability to reach objectives remain very real. The absence of a clear and progressive vision for the integration of digital technologies in Academy project work, research and pedagogy is not helping to contribute towards a truly 21st century outlook.

Whilst staff claimed that the Academy and university were seamlessly integrated, they still referred to collaboration with their own university as *'inter-institutional collaboration'*. *'I co-operate with the Vice Dean of the university on cultural cooperation. The academy is the only artistic constituent component of the university.'*

Another sticking point centres around Interdisciplinarity. As with the convergence of science and art, Interdisciplinarity is an incredibly strong potential area for 21st century pedagogical and research development. However, it's clear that definitions of Interdisciplinarity in the Academy are quite vague. Much of the Interdisciplinarity described to the Expert Panel amounted to little more than basic, honest and everyday artistic collaboration. Set designers working with artists painting backdrops, costume makers, puppeteers, musicians and actors on productions such as Samson and Delilah is possibly not exploring or exploiting the full potentials of 21st century Interdisciplinary practice.

Some senior Deans expressed extremely fervent and academic understandings of Interdisciplinary concepts, whilst more junior academics, graduates and students often had the vaguest, most cursory or even random understanding of Interdisciplinarity. The solution is perhaps quite simple – the Academy might agree short, simple, clearly written and clearly understood definitions for Interdisciplinarity (horizontal and vertical) as well as related terms such as transdisciplinarity. Academy staff and students can then confidently move forward to work on truly challenging 21st century Interdisciplinary projects. The Academy could become a real Croatian leader in this field.

Recommendations for improvement

Though the Academy has worked hard on Learning Outcomes, this work needs to continue. More Academy teaching staff need modern training in this area. Learning Outcomes need to be fewer, clearer, more simply written if Academy is to operate according to progressive European standards.

Academy Strategies need to be more strategic, more simply written, more easily understood and more focused on the problems, opportunities and potentials of the 21st century.

The Academy Scientific Strategy needs urgent and drastic revision. This is potentially a crucial document for the institution. It could help to establish Academy's leadership in the Croatian Art and Science convergence space.

The Academy needs to pursue collaboration with even broader scientific areas – the university should be the start point for such collaboration. 21st century areas such as Design Thinking, User Experience Design and Data Visualisation could present potentially lucrative convergences between science and art.

The Academy needs to continue to invest in ICT, in terms of equipment, software and digital skills for teaching staff. Too many of the senior professors frequently demonstrated the most old-fashioned and retrograde comprehension of the potentials of digital media and digital technology.

Similarly, clear, elegant and agreed definitions of Interdisciplinarity could allow all staff and students to move into truly Interdisciplinary study, collaboration and research with the greatest confidence, allowing Academy to own that space at a national level. This would set Academy up for lucrative future collaborations with science, business and industry.

Quality: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

Many times in their meetings with the Expert Panel, Academy staff stressed the fact that their institution is only 2 years into the merger process which occurred in 2018, largely as a result of the 2014 and 2015 Expert Reviews of the previous institutions. *'We haven't yet had a full circle of progression,'* a member of the QA Committee admitted to the Expert Panel.

Many revisions have already been put in place, QA processes and procedures have been improved and there's a developing understanding of the role and importance of Learning Outcomes. The Academy has worked very hard to be responsive to the needs of the labour market in terms of study programme revision and development. The students who met with the Expert Panel expressed a high degree of confidence in their own student outcomes and employability on graduation from the Academy. Stakeholders seemed delighted that Academy graduates could quickly work to a very high level in local artistic enterprises. Academy students and staff are very involved in the artistic life of Osijek and the Academy has very strong links with local artistic and business enterprises.

According to the vice-Deans *'over 50 international agreements have been signed,'* and university finance for outgoing mobility seemed readily available. Even through the covid crisis, international VLs were still engaging (virtually) with Academy students.

Students expressed themselves happy with the mentoring systems at the Academy and seemed content with the selection and appointment of mentors. However, students seemed unclear about formal appeal and complaint procedures, claiming that problems between students and lecturers *'never ever arose at Academy'*. The students presented to the Expert Panel did seem confident that any such problems would be rectified within days, though none of them could explain whether professors, Heads of Department or vice Deans might be responsible for such quick fixes.

There has been a real attempt to invest in ICT and computers, though many staff admitted that *'finance was still a problem'*. It was difficult for the Expert Panel members to get a clear idea (in a locked-down Academy campus) about the use of space and provision of wifi for students et cetera. Staff claimed that the long-awaited Academy concert hall would soon be realised.

Academy has done some work to change its international perspective, but according to the self evaluation documents there's still only one 'Croatian Studies' course being delivered through English. Some short course descriptors on the website do allude to English as a possibility in terms of language of instruction (Croatian/English) or (English on Demand), but english instruction seems to be offered as something of an option.

The potentially exciting, long-proposed, still in development and prospectively lucrative art therapy programmes which were alluded to in previous evaluations will now apparently be delivered in Zagreb, *'because that is where the students are predominantly coming from'*.

Early relationships with international HEIs have rightly been based on personal relationships *'We're trying to contact the right people, the right professors... Not institutions, but mostly adequately skilled professors... This is how we choose our partners...'* In the next few years, this strategy will need to evolve to become truly institutional collaboration, truly strategic collaboration.

Recommendations for improvement

Though basic agreements are now being signed with a range of international partners, and though much of the early internationalisation has been (rightly) based on personal relationships with 'skilled professors' Academy now needs a clearer strategy for internationalisation. Academy especially needs to identify key international institutional partners, like-minded HEIs and institutions which have capabilities in areas like digital technology (where the Academy is struggling). Such new linkages can assist Academy in developing its own capacity building and modern programme development.

Outgoing student mobilities would benefit from a complete simplification of the potentially punitive submission of their foreign documentation to what looks like an extremely complicated procedure for *'making the final decision on the recognition of courses and ECTS credits and differential exams.'* This procedure needs to be simpler, clearer, fairer and more permissive, in the spirit of Erasmus. Threatening or jeopardising student progression should never be the penalty for students' international mobility.

Though the students presented to the Expert Panel expressed themselves happy with mentoring processes, grading and relationships with lecturers, there does need to be far more clarity and transparency around formal student appeals policies and procedures. Once again, such policies should be clearly and simply written, readily accessible and understood by all students and staff.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

The university does have a functioning Code of Ethics and the Quality Manual apparently guides on all matters of ethical behaviour. The Quality Policy of the Academy referred to in the SER turns out to be a one-page document, an overarching guidance rather than a functioning policy document in an international QA sense.

The Academy has appointed an Ethics Committee in order to determine violations of the Code of Ethics, though the SER states that *'no violations of the UNIOS Code of Ethics have been reported'*. An Ethics Review Committee reviews ethics in human research at the Academy. A student ombudsperson and deputy are elected by the students. The Academy has introduced the Turnitin text matching software and students and staff seem very content with its operation. PlagScan is also in operation. Page 18 of the SER claims *'in the past five years, there has been no need to implement procedures for detecting and sanctioning unethical behaviour.'* Viewed one way, this is hugely encouraging. From an international perspective, such a claim would be viewed as highly unusual.

Recommendations for improvement

Though the text-matching Turnitin and PlagScan have been introduced, a Code of Ethics is in operation and though an Ethics Committee and an Ethics Review Committee are in place, the absence of any cases (even minor) involving 'issues of academic integrity' over

a period of five years must be viewed as highly unusual, even questionable. The Expert panel would suggest a serious review of this area.

The awareness levels of Academy staff and students surrounding 21st century ethics, plagiarism, copyright, fair usage and Intellectual Property ownership should be improved. Once again, the Academy has a great opportunity to be a national leader in this important area.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

Much of the Academy website can be improved. There is a manual for students, (some staff referred to it as ‘an information pack’) though the Expert Panel didn’t have an opportunity to examine a copy of this. Such a manual should be easy to find, publicly available and written in easily understood language.

Neither were the Expert panel able to locate the Academy’s Quality Manual (a one-page Quality Policy (a quality statement) in Croatian was available). On the website, information is presented on study programmes et cetera, but it’s mostly or all in Croatian and information is all very difficult and time-consuming to locate.

If Academy is to attract Erasmus students and staff, simpler and more accessible information in languages such as English should be presented clearly on the website. Academy study programmes are not clearly or obviously flagged as ‘taught through English’ – even the cursory programme descriptor documents allude rather cryptically to ‘*Language of Instruction: Croatian (English on demand).*’ Academy should make it easy for people to find such basic information. Searches for Academy programmes taught through English language soon end up on the UNIOS website, with an extensive list of very basic English language courses offered (eg *telephone conversational skills in English*), wholly unrelated to the Academy.

Study programmes and everything else are very well explained on the website but mostly in Croatian. Many of the documents referenced in or linked from the SER were also available only in Croatian. The Expert Panel also observed that it took a lot of time to discover even the most basic information on the Academy website.

Much of the information about the Academy activities appears to be the most basic recording of concerts, exhibitions and performances (very important) but with little critical reflection, contextualisation, curatorial or research-based interpretation. Academy archives and art collections seemed focused on the challenges of basic artefact preservation, rather than on any forward-looking strategy to allow for research and academic contextualisation.

Students did seem happy with the programme information they had been provided with as applicants and the Academy's Open Days and 'Academy of Tour' information initiatives around Croatia were highly commended.

The SER makes clear that *'indicators such as student pass-rates, student employment, drop-out rates and outcomes of previous evaluations are available on request from the relevant services and the Management of the Academy.'* However, anonymised versions of such basic statistics should be very publicly available. An institution like the Academy should have nothing to hide here when progression rates and student employability are apparently so positive. Such information should surely become a rich selling-point for the institution.

Recommendations for improvement

Much of the Academy website must be improved. Documents such as the Quality Manual, the Manual For Students and detailed programme information should be readily available, easy to locate and simply presented (written in easily understood language) through the website.

Anonymised versions of such basic stats as progression rates, student employment pass rates et cetera should be very publicly available, presented as modern infographics rather than buried in administrative and statistical language. The Academy should have nothing to hide here when student progression rates and graduate employability are apparently so high. Such information should be a rich selling-point for the institution.

If Academy is to attract Erasmus students and staff, simpler and more accessible information in languages such as English should be presented clearly on the website.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

The Academy has a very well developed sense of its social role, its working relationships with the city of Osijek and with the region and its prominent role in the artistic life of the city and region. Academy programmes were confident that they were responding well to the needs and requirements of society, students and the labour market, especially the labour market in the local region. Local stakeholders (primary school teachers, theatre owners and arts entrepreneurs) expressed great satisfaction with the quality of their links with the institution and with students and graduates.

The Academy has worked intensively to sign agreements with international HEIs, cultural institutions and companies *'from the real sector'* as the SER points out. Keeping in mind that the Academy is only two years old and is still "a work in progress", the self-assessment and the meetings with staff remain full of rather vaguely formulated plans for the future. In terms of links with businesses and companies, the Academy remains incapable of (as one of the previous evaluations pointed out) *'looking beyond the very narrow labour market in the region'*.

Recommendations for improvement

The Academy should work hard to broaden its links with businesses and enterprises outside of the city and the local region. As previous evaluations have stated, the Academy needs to look *'beyond the very narrow labour market in the region.'*

Academy also needs a radical reimagining of its attitude to digital technologies if it's to maintain its position (and the position of its students and graduates) in a modern (digitised) society. Influential and expert institutions like Academy must have social and leadership responsibilities in cyberspace too.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

The Expert Panel completely understands that lifelong learning is not yet a developed area in the Croatian context. The SER alludes to *'promoting the European tradition of arts and humanities'* and states that 32 lifelong learning programmes have been designed. Academy staff referred to 'creative writing classes' and painting classes 'for retired people'. Over five years, 16 programmes were delivered, with 323 participants – an average of 64 participants per year. The SER referred to *'the state of the market and the poor purchasing power of potential participants'*.

The Academy needs a radical rethink of this so-called 'lifelong learning' area. In modern terms, the Academy's current lifelong learning offerings are more 'adult education' offerings – hobby courses and leisure-education. Lifelong learning courses in the Europe of 2021 tend to be more Continuous Professional Development courses, short (often evening) courses, with full ECTS allocations (often at Masters level) designed to offer upskilling and retraining to people who are currently employed. For Academy, such short courses are especially important in areas such as digital technology. Many Academy professors could greatly benefit from such structured and formal lifelong learning courses in digital technology and modern research methodology.

Recommendations for improvement

The Academy has a great opportunity to radically rethink this so-called 'lifelong learning' area. Modern European lifelong learning courses could present Academy with lucrative opportunities over the coming years.

Academy should attempt to establish Continuous Professional Development courses, short (often evening) courses, mid-career training, microcredentials and online short courses, with accurate ECTS allocations (often at Masters level) designed to offer upskilling and retraining to people who are currently employed. This would represent truly modern European-style lifelong learning.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

II. Study programmes

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

Analysis

The Academy of Arts and Culture currently delivers 34 study programmes of which nine undergraduate university studies, 24 graduate studies and one postgraduate specialist study in cooperation with the Faculty of Medicine in Osijek. Three study programmes are delivered only in senior years but do not enrol new students from the academic year 2019/2020, and are therefore not included in the total of 34 study programmes. The Self-evaluation document indicates that the strategic objectives of the Academy are related to study programmes. From this document, especially from the mentioned Chapter 2, Expert Panel noted that several procedures had been established, for example, the appointment of a vice-dean for study programmes, defining learning outcomes on the level of every

single study programme, promotion of study programmes. Equally, it seems that in the next two years Academy considers the possibility of launching more new study programmes, and new technologies and improvement of digital skills is also detected as a crucial segment for future education at the Academy.

The self-evaluation documents also point out that the justification for delivering all AUKOS study programmes directly relates to social and economic needs and includes an analysis of resources of the higher education institution required for providing study programmes (as an example the Expert Panel were given an insight into *Feasibility study performing the proposed study programme – Undergraduate university study: Culture, Media and Management*).

The Academy delivers study programmes leading to regulated professions, such are undergraduate and graduate university studies of Fine Art Education, Music Education, Piano and Singing, which according to database of regulated professions, belong to the professions in the category of 'School Education', 'Secondary School Teacher' and 'Primary School Teacher'.

Based on an analysis of available documents and the self-evaluation, as well as from meetings with management, teachers, stakeholders and students, the Expert Panel noticed several crucial points that should be improved in the next institutional and programmatic revision period. The main problem comes from the interpretation and views on the term interdisciplinarity and the whole context that this term implies.

This 'interdisciplinarity' term permeates all crucial documents (descriptions of study programmes, *Development Strategy of the Academy of Arts and Culture in Osijek 2018-2022*, *Strategic Research Agenda of the Academy of Arts and Culture 2020-2024*), but it seems that many teachers and students do not understand its essence. In most study programmes (especially in art) when teachers and students spoke of interdisciplinarity, they were actually referring to everyday, essential collaborations between different professions which are traditional, common and wholly to be expected across the broad field of arts practice. Equally, it seems that the policy of launching new programmes isn't fully systematised.

Further, it seems that the Academy insists on the importance of the collaboration between study programmes in the arts and science. But the Academy's relationship between art and science lacks a scientific critical mass. The Academy also needs to establish clear and stable foundations in the reorganisation of its study programmes – there are currently too many study programmes and new, more modern and more current study programmes need to be devised. The Academy certainly has good cooperation with stakeholders, who

proved themselves commendably engaged and enthusiastic in all meetings with the Expert Panel. Stakeholders expressed great satisfaction with the skills and competencies of graduate students from the Academy. However, all stakeholders seemed come from the local community, which opened questions of quality and a concern that the broader needs of the national and international scientific, cultural industry, business and labour market might not be sufficiently factored into the Academy's strategic thinking. Any such strategic short-sightedness might seriously impact on graduates' future employability potentials.

Recommendations for improvement

The number of study programmes is worryingly high, and all procedures, processes and documents related to launching new programmes should be revised. Reorganisation, strategic rationalisation and merging of existing study programmes are strongly recommended.

Some Academy study programmes in arts might include shared or common undergraduate programme offerings from which students could then choose to branch out in different graduate directions (university and/or professional).

From the *Strategic Research Agenda of the Academy of Arts and Culture 2020-2024*, it is quite clear that the most potent scientific field at the Academy is Humanities (subfield Science of art). Hence, the Academy should seriously consider a reorganisation of scientific study programmes in that direction.

It is necessary for the Academy to identify the very best corresponding international institutions which can serve the Academy as a benchmarking example to achieve unique and truly interdisciplinary pedagogical content, not only on the local level but on the national and international level.

Further, implementation of new technologies in a teaching process is strongly recommended.

The Academy needs strong and clear strategic guidelines with the aim of enacting and realising quality goals.

Quality grade - Minimum level of quality

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

Analysis

From the document of Self-evaluations as well as from meetings that the Expert Panel had with faculty representatives and students, it is evident that the Academy does understand the importance of learning outcomes. For that reason, the Academy founded the Committee for learning outcomes which is composed of representatives of teachers from all departments of the Academy. Equally, the Academy conducts annual surveys with graduates in which it tries to check the clarity of defined learning outcomes of courses. It seems that the average grade from this survey item is very good.

As is pointed out in the Self-evaluation, the Academy checks the learning outcomes of study programmes and competencies of students by assessing their readiness for the labour market. Further, the Quality Assurance Committee has established a protocol for harmonisation with the recommendations of the Croatian Employment Service for student admission policy. The Quality Assurance Office, based on the data provided by the Croatian Employment Service, makes an annual report on all AUKOS study programmes and submits it to the heads of departments, who then harmonise admission quotas with the real market needs.

From available documents and all meetings, it also could be pointed out that the Academy pays special attention to profession-specific and generic learning outcomes (instrumental, interpersonal and systematic competencies).

However, the Expert Panel detected some difficulties related to a small number of ECTS credits at the Undergraduate study programme of Culture, Media and Management, such as *Writing and critical reception* 2 ECTS; *Digital heritage and user communication* 3 ECTS, *Media literacy* 3 ECTS, *Documentary reportage* 3 ECTS, *Dramaturgy* 2 ECTS, *Legal foundations of public management* 2 ECTS, *Introduction to cultural studies* 2 ECTS, *Literature on television and film* 2 ECTS, etc. Equally, on the same study programme but at the level of the individual course, the Expert Panel detected imbalances between the number of ECTS credits, the expected learning outcomes and the number of titles of required literature. For example, a course *ICT in culture and creative industry* has 3 ECTS credits, 8 defined learning outcomes and 6 titles of required literature. Similarly, at the course *Literature on television and film* are restricted 6 learning outcomes for 2 ECTS credits; *Social media* has 3 ECTS credits, 7 learning outcomes and 7 titles of required literature, etc.

This remark isn't applicable for the Department of Music's undergraduate and graduate study programmes, since some subjects are divided in two semesters (example: Solfeggio I in the winter, and Solfeggio 2 in the summer semester), the number in total is 4 (2+2). Some subjects are lead for 4 years, so when the BA level is completed, there are,

in the case of the subject mentioned above, a total of 16 ECTS (4 per year x 4 years). Those subjects mostly have in total per year 4 or 6 ECTS credits. The main subject in the vocal and instrumental study programmes (Piano, Singing, etc.) has 10 ECTS credits per semester, 20 credits in total per year. There are some subjects with 1 ECTS credit per semester but in the minority and non-musical areas.

In relation to the imbalance between the number of ECTS credits, the number of learning outcomes and the number of titles of required literature on specific courses, the Expert Panel suggests that the number of ECTS credits at the level of each subject should inform the logical organisation of learning outcomes and an appropriate number of titles of required literature. Where a higher number of required literature texts is unavoidable, teachers should indicate relevant chapters or pages for each title. It is common international practice for course texts to be organised into 'need to know' (required reading) and 'nice to know' (or additional reading). All such required and additional texts should be available in or through the Academy library. These examples should be revised in the context of each study programme delivered by the Academy.

Further, the Academy doesn't own its Regulations on studying and/or student grading, relying instead on regulations from the parent university. Teachers did not understand the importance of this document.

The Academy currently isn't included in any EU project for the purpose of alignment with the CroGF standards, and study programmes aren't listed in the Register of the Croatian Qualifications Framework.

During the visit of the Academy, members of Expert Panel reviewed Diploma Supplement.

Recommendations for improvement

Most problems and ambiguities with learning outcomes are directly linked with difficulties mentioned at point 2.1 of this document. As part of the necessary changes in revising, merging, rationalising and reorganising study programmes, the Academy should consider making fewer, clearer and more easily understood learning outcomes, corresponding better with the level of each study programme as well as with the CROQF and EQF level descriptors.

From the present perspective, there is a lot of vagueness related to learning outcomes which correspond with a lack of a focused, meaningful and deeply thought-out Academy strategy for delivering new courses and programmes.

The question needs to be asked whether some Graduate study programmes (for example Non-verbal theatre and Puppet animation) truly belong to the university level of study. The current learning outcomes at the programme level suggest that these study programmes probably fit better with a professional study level.

Additionally, the Expert panel suggests merging smaller complementary and related courses into larger courses with a higher number of ECTS credits. These examples should be revised in the context of each study programme delivered by the Academy.

The Expert Panel also suggests that the number of ECTS credits at the level of each subject should inform the logical organisation of learning outcomes and an appropriate number of titles of required literature for each course. If possible, teachers should indicate relevant chapters or pages for each title. It is common international practice for course texts to be organised into 'need to know' (required reading) and 'nice to know' (or additional reading). All such required and additional texts should be available in or through the Academy library. These examples should be revised in the context of each study programme delivered by the Academy.

The Academy does receive positive feedback from students and their employers surrounding achieved learning outcomes and this is something that certainly should be an example of good practice. However, the Academy should do everything possible to find additional stakeholders who are oriented more to national or international levels and perspectives, in order to broaden and deepen the intended learning outcomes for the programmes and for Academy students.

Quality grade: Minimum level of quality

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

Analysis

The ways of demonstrating the achievement of the intended learning outcomes in the AUKOS study programmes are defined in the Ordinance on studies and studying at Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek and the AUKOS Ordinance on final and diploma exams.

The Self-evaluation documents mention that checking the learning outcomes at the level of courses is conducted through constructive alignment, meaning that learning outcomes are consistent with the content and activities during teaching and with what will be assessed and with assessment methods. Tables 1.8 and 1.9 of course descriptions

in all study programmes demonstrate all forms of constructive alignment. Further, from the document of Self-evaluation and meeting with teachers and students, it seems that at the beginning of each semester, teachers clearly inform the students about how their course activities will be assessed, in accordance with the course description and syllabus.

Feedback on the learning outcomes achieved is collected from students, graduates and external stakeholders. Feedback from current students is collected through the UNIOS Student Survey, in which the Academy is always ranked among the best institutions. Results of different surveys related to checking the learning outcomes, such as '*A unique university student survey for the academic year 2018, Evaluation of courses and teachers in the Study of Creative Therapies 2016/2017, The survey for graduate students, A questionnaire for stakeholders*', were available to Expert Panel via links integrated to the document of Self-evaluation.

During the visit of the Academy, members of Expert Panel reviewed project tasks and final theses. From an international academic perspective, the dissertations presented did seem to be of rather inconsistent quality, in terms of subject matter, research methodology, theoretical and academic approaches. Too often the student work presented seemed to be descriptive, rather than analytical, critically-minded, academically probing or reflective.

Recommendations for improvement

The majority of difficulties related to learning outcomes are described at point 2.2 of this document. We strongly recommend that the Academy should implement an ongoing, sustained and systematic practice of rationalising, simplifying, modernising and refreshing learning outcomes on the level of each course and in each study programme.

Further, from a number of the final theses presented, the Expert Panel noticed some serious theoretical and methodological deficiencies in defining and resolving research problems. Such deficiencies were especially evident in some final papers coming from scientific study programmes and Postgraduate specialist study programmes in Creative Therapies. The Academy must strengthen the scientific component of specific study programmes, establishing a more rigorous and consistent approach to precise methodological, theoretical and academic questions. Students (on the entire study vertical) should be encouraged towards the most modern and rigorous methodological (quantitative and qualitative), academic, critical and creative ways of thinking. Such a revised teaching and learning modernisation may require some profound teaching staff professional development.

Once again, it may be useful and necessary for the Academy to identify the very best corresponding international institutions which can serve the Academy as benchmarking examples to facilitate the revision, modernisation, and enhancement of Academy's pedagogical content, methodologies and approaches.

Quality grade - Minimum level of quality

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

Analysis

In the last five years, the Academy has launched as many as 24 new study programmes (1 postgraduate, 19 graduates and 4 undergraduates), and implemented 78 amendments up to 20% (2 in postgraduate specialist studies, 51 in graduate studies and 25 in undergraduate studies). Since the Academy is the only artistic-scientific teaching constituent of J. J. Strossmayer University, it seems that there is no overlap in terms of delivering the same or similar study programmes within the university.

The process of originating a new study programme is transparent, and it is in accordance with regulations at the Academy as well as with University policies.

Further, all programmes that have been delivered from one full cycle (undergraduate programmes for 3 years and graduate programmes for 2 years) have undergone revisions and amendments up to 20% based on feedback received from students and external stakeholders. All modifications to study programmes are recorded in detail by types of amendments (changes of the course title, content, a form of instruction, ECTS credits, course status, and the introduction of new and erasing outdated electives) and the percentage of changes made to a particular study programme since inception. Everything mentioned is accompanied with detailed tables which were included in the document of Self-evaluation.

From all presented documents and from the various meeting between the Expert Panel and the representatives of the Academy, it seems that the Institution does use feedback from students, employers, alumni and professional organisations in revising and approving new programmes. Further, from the document of previous re-accreditation it is evident that the Academy had improved study programmes based on the recommendations from those reports. Finally, the Academy published up-to-date versions of the study programmes and records changes within them.

Recommendations for improvement

As it is mentioned in 2.1, the sheer number of study programmes in Academy is worrying, and all procedures, processes and documents related to launching new programmes should be reviewed and revised. New study programmes certainly will need to be developed, but existing programmes should be merged, rationalised, revised and reimagined first.

Equally, in 2.2 it is mentioned that the Academy has very positive feedback from students and their employers. Whilst this is extremely encouraging, the relative quality of stakeholders remains open to question and Academy should try to develop working linkages with stakeholders who are oriented to more national or international levels.

On the Academy website, all information about study programmes is available and all information and notices are up-to-date, The Expert Panel did find it difficult to find important regulations, policies and documents. All such documentation should be easy to find, clearly written and readily understood by staff and by students.

Quality grade – Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

The Academy delivers three-year and four-year undergraduate study programmes. The total number of ECTS credits differs depending on the duration of each study programme. In undergraduate studies that last for 4 years, students collect a total of 240 ECTS credits (for example in Music Pedagogy, Piano, Voice). In contrast, at the rest of undergraduate studies that last 3 years, student collect 180 ECTS credits. Because of the large number of courses in particular study programmes, as mentioned in the Self-evaluation document, real student workload is constantly analysed.

The Self-evaluation document also states that all types of activities conducted by the student are analysed and evaluated in detail, including individual (standard literature review and writing of seminar papers, playing an instrument, singing, independent work in the art studio, such as painting, sculpting, independent work in applied arts such as costume design and production, set design, puppet design) and group activities (preparation for acting, animation and dance roles, directing projects and the like).

Analysing the available documentation and basing their opinion on conversations with Academy staff and students, the Expert Panel conclude that Academy students can tend to be overloaded in their work. Students presented to the Expert Panel stated 'we

wouldn't be here if it was too much for us. Every year students start, they try and they can't handle the schedule. Nothing is too much in my opinion. It is true that we have a lot of work but that doesn't mean that our workload is too heavy... Real projects actually ask for a lot more time... We should give 150% of our time.' With the greatest respect, 150% effort is not sustainable professional practice in the year 2020. Such enthusiastic but misguided work ethic will lead to poor work-life balance, professional burnout and unsustainable careers on graduation. Academy staff may need to revise, reconsider and modernise their own professional attitudes and the workload guidance they give to impressionable students.

The Expert panel did feel that particular Departments (eg Music) are doing a good job in this ECTS area, but there needs to be much more consistency across all Departments of the Academy.

From the conversation with students, it seems that external work can be properly credited and this is to be welcomed. But the Academy lack simple, transparent and rigorous formal procedures to govern the negotiated allocation of such additional credit. The formula (1 ECTS equals 13 contact hours and 12 hours of independent work) which the Academy uses in a situation when a student requests more possibilities for independent creative work, is a quite strange interpretation of ECTS. This formula is also quite arbitrary and doesn't seem to refer to the needs and requirements of students at different study levels? Neither does it seem to have the flexibility to adapt to different types of study, or the study of different disciplines. Again the Academy and the students would benefit from an agreed, simple, transparent and rigorous formal procedure (rather than any formula) to govern the negotiation of such independent student learning. The Academy should establish procedures which will clearly explain the manner, conditions and specific study programmes on which such a welcome and flexible understanding of ECTS credits could and should be used.

The Self-evaluation document also mentions that when students work independently, they have access to workshops, studios, dance and acting halls, classrooms with instruments, etc. At the suggestion of students, Academy introduced a course titled 'Independent Project' with 5 ECTS credits, in which students can choose the desired topic or area of artistic research and conduct it independently with the mentoring support of a selected teacher who has the expertise in the field.

Finally, the Self-evaluation document points out that the annual graduate survey conducted by the Academy has a targeted question relating to ECTS credits, which could be useful feedback for potential corrections in programmes or within courses. As already observed, the Academy does sometimes align ECTS credits with the actual

students' workload, which can be seen from the corrections through amendments up to 20%, for example, reduction of contact teaching hours in the graduate studies of the Department of Creative Technologies. Once again, more consistency across the Academy is required.

Recommendations for improvement

Academy students can tend to be overloaded in their work. 150% effort is not sustainable professional practice in the year 2020. Such enthusiastic but misguided work ethic will lead to poor work-life balance, professional burnout and unsustainable careers on graduation. Academy staff may need to revise, reconsider and modernise their own professional attitudes and the workload guidance they give to impressionable students.

Strong mentoring relationships and individual work is something that certainly should be nurtured in the future, but only balanced student workload can bring sustainable, fruitful and high-quality results.

The Expert panel did feel that particular Departments are doing a good job in this ECTS area, but there needs to be much more consistency across all Departments of the Academy.

The Expert Panel strongly recommend that the Academy should make precise changes in already pointed difficulties related to a number of courses with a small number of ECTS credits and imbalances between the number of ECTS credits and expected learning outcomes. These revisions should be made in each study programme delivered by the Academy (see 2.2 in this document).

From the conversation with students, it seems that external work can be properly credited and this is to be welcomed. The Academy and the students would benefit from an agreed, simple, transparent, flexible and rigorous formal procedure to govern the negotiation of such independent student learning. The Academy should establish procedures which will clearly explain the manner, conditions and specific study programmes on which such a welcome and flexible understanding of ECTS credits could and should be used.

Finally, the Academy should establish the procedures used to assess alignment of actual student workload and defined ECTS credits. International experience suggests that this will vary depending on discipline or type of study. The creation of fair breathing space around students' intensive study loads will allow for reduced stress, sustainable work, increased professionalism and greater creativity.

Quality grade – Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

From the link provided by the Self-evaluation as well as from conversation with teachers and students, it is evident that the Academy has established numerous forms of effective student practice. A diverse range of student practice is conducted, and it depends on the specificity of the study programme. It is also evident that students show a particular interest in all forms of student practice and often emphasise the importance of it. Report on the conducted satisfaction of students of the Academy of Arts and Culture in Osijek among the employers and supervisor within professional practice shows a high degree of satisfaction (4,54). Further, the Academy organises several forms of student practice: practice involving students in professional projects of the Academy and partner outside the Academy, practice in which students develop additional pedagogical, psychological, didactic and methodical competencies, practice aimed at the public presentation of works of art or independent student work, practice in which students indirectly participate in projects of cultural institution, which they analyse and assess in written reports and observation journals, etc.

The collaborating institutions providing student practice for AUKOS students are the Croatian National Theatre in Osijek, the Children's Theatre Branko Mihaljević in Osijek, the Theatres in Virovitica, Požega, Vinkovci, Varaždin and elsewhere, the Mediterranean Dance Centre in Svetvinčenat, the Kam Hram Association from Split, etc. Pedagogical Practice (School Practice, Teaching Practice) is attended by all students who will work in education after graduation (programmes in Music Education, Fine Arts Education, Voice, Piano, and Tambura Artistry).

Students acquire pedagogical knowledge through practical work in primary and secondary general education and/or music schools by taking part in the following activities: classroom observation, teaching of individual classes under the guidance of a mentor/subject teacher, teaching of public classes attended by peers, mentors and teachers, designing lesson plans and classroom observation reports. At the Department of Culture, Media and Management, students participate in Mandatory Traineeship or can take the elective course Research Methodology in Culture, Media and Creative Industries, in which they attend various cultural events in Osijek and the Republic of Croatia and write reports on what they have seen and experienced.

Based on information obtained from the conversation with students, it is evident that students are delighted with their practice and all possibilities which are, in that context, ensured by the Academy.

From the document Organisation of student practice at the Academy of Arts and Culture Osijek and from study programme published on an official webpage, it is evident that student practice is an integral part of each study programme at the Academy. Methods of obtaining ECTS credits are generally well explained, and the possibility to get ECTS credit without grading can be viewed as an interesting example of innovative practice.

Recommendations for improvement

Participation in international projects is mentioned as a possibility of a realisation of student practice, but it seems that this element is poorly represented. Establishing stronger cooperations with international institutions would allow the Academy to realise more innovative scientific and artistic projects as well as ones in which students could be significantly involved.

Equally, space conceived for the realisation of student practice in each programme could be used for implementing and improving students' digital skills and competencies.

The Academy and its students would benefit greatly from the broadening of external partners and stakeholders. A priority should be to establish working links with partners with broader national and international perspectives, as well as with partners who possess up-to-date capacity in areas such as digital technology.

Quality grade: High level of quality

III. Teaching process and student support

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

Analysis

The Academy publishes multiple admission criteria, taking (according to p.38 of the self-evaluation document) *'particular care of the transparency of the admission process while taking into account the specific needs for the assessment of applicants' knowledge, skills abilities and talents...*' Admission procedures are governed by multiple ordinances and regulations, including the Ordinance on studies and studying at Josip Juraj Strossmayer

University of Osijek, AUKOS Ordinance on criteria for admission to undergraduate studies and public competitions for admission. Competition details and specifications are published in official publications and on the university website, containing admission criteria, admission quotas, terms for admission tests, aptitude tests and enrolment, lists of documents to be submitted, tuition fees and more.

Students expressed themselves very pleased with the information which had been made available to them as applicants, praising especially the Academy's Open Door Days and national outreach initiatives such as Academy on Tour.

There is transparent differentiation between admission procedures for arts studies and for scientific studies, as well as specific admission procedures for different study programmes. Applicants for undergraduate study in Culture, Media and Management are enrolled on the basis of a completed four-year secondary education and the results of the State Matura Exam. For admission to graduate studies, the Academy independently makes a ranking list of candidates based on submitted documents on previous education and the results of the admission test.

Postgraduate programmes also consider applicants with experience in related disciplines and specialisations, conduct specific admission tests and conduct motivational interviews.

Transfers from other Faculties and other HEIs are also possible, with the Academy cooperating closely with the UNIOS Office for Academic Recognition. The self-evaluation document points to high student satisfaction with such transfer processes in internal surveys, claiming that students were especially happy with the recognition of prior learning and the speed and efficiency of Academy transfer procedures.

However, data presented in the Analytic supplement and SER clearly show that many study programmes are enrolling tiny numbers of students, or student numbers which frequently fall far below enrolment targets or quotas. Some study programmes failed to enrol any students, sometimes for years on end. This is a serious problem, which can only be addressed through an urgent and strategic rationalisation of Academy study programmes. Indeed, the Academy should seriously ask itself the question 'what constitutes a study programme?' At the moment, too many Academy 'study programmes' seem to be highly specialised niche study components, rather than what would be viewed as rounded European undergraduate educational study programmes.

Recommendations for improvement

Though Academy and UNIOS admission criteria and procedures seem clear, too many Academy study programmes are enrolling tiny numbers of students, or student numbers which frequently fall far below enrolment targets or quotas. Some study programmes fail to enrol any students, sometimes for years on end. Academy needs an urgent and strategic rationalisation of its study programmes, fewer study programmes, merged programmes and broader graduate outcomes for the new and revised Academy study programmes.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

The SER makes clear that *'indicators such as student pass-rates, student employment, drop-out rates and outcomes of previous evaluations are available on request from the relevant services and the Management of the Academy.'* However, anonymised versions of such basic statistics should be very publicly available. Such positive information should surely become a rich selling-point for the institution.

According to the self-evaluation documents, management of the Academy continuously monitors and analyses the results of the work of students and teachers. Student pass rates are clearly analysed (Table 3.4 from the MOZVAG database), with as many as 81.27% of students managing to progress through to the next year of their studies. Of the 4.77% of students who dropped out after the first year of studies, most discontinued their studies due to 'objective reasons' such as resettlement, health issues or a decision to enrol in a different study programme.

The self-evaluation claims that student satisfaction with studies and studying is regularly checked through the UNIOS Student Survey, which is mandatory for all students, though in their meetings with the Expert Panel, staff did express some reservations about the quality of responses from Academy students, questioning whether accurate data was in fact being gathered by the surveys. In the QA Committee meeting with the Expert panel, a staff member very honestly admitted *'The students are assessing teachers but they're not doing this in a very good way. Grads are less reluctant to criticise teachers...'* It is always difficult to gather reliable and accurate student data in an Academy setting, where class sizes are small, where students have very close working relationships with teaching staff and when anonymisation of gathered data can prove a very real challenge.

The self-evaluation document asserts that the UNIOS survey has been regularly updated and has become *'a trustworthy indicator of the quality of the institution.'* However, it must be pointed out that pan-university surveys are rarely nuanced enough to gather much accurate or useful data in Academy settings, where class sizes can frequently be tiny and the anonymisation of student data can prove problematic or impossible.

Page 43 of the self-evaluation does identify a web-form Predlozi (Make a Suggestion) through which students can make a request, a complaint or give praise to Academy management. It's claimed that *'students use all these forms of communication'*, though no evidence was provided of any improvements being made based on student inputs.

The positive student satisfaction comparisons between the Academy and the broader university are to be expected, with Academy students enjoying smaller class groups, individual tuition, individual mentorship, external project work, strong relationships with external enterprises and stakeholders and great employability on graduation.

The Academy has developed mechanisms for monitoring and rewarding student excellence in academic, artistic, scientific, professional and extracurricular activities *'with the aim of encouraging progress in their studies'*. The rewards process is detailed in the Ordinance on Student Rewards.

In future, it would be helpful if both students and management placed far more emphasis on revisions, improvements and enhancements which resulted from listening to student voice. Such *'success story'* information is now frequently provided in simple tables in contemporary self-evaluation documents. AUKOS Management may well pride itself on the fact that Academy study programmes are chosen, *'as a rule, by motivated students who actively participate in the creation of the teaching processes, initiate changes and show interest and involvement in almost all areas of the institution's activities.'* However, AUKOS management should also respect less-motivated students, possibly from diverse and more challenged socio-economic backgrounds, neuro-diverse students, students who need to learn how to become actively involved in their learning and students who still need to develop the confidence to express genuinely felt concerns around their studentship in the Academy.

Recommendations for improvement

Anonymised versions of such basic (and apparently positive) student statistics as progression rates, student employment, pass rates et cetera should be very publicly available, presented as modern infographics rather than buried in administrative and statistical language or *'available on request from the relevant services and the Management of the Academy'*. The Academy should have nothing to hide here when

student progression rates and graduate employability are apparently so high. Such information should be a rich selling-point for the institution.

The gathering of student data at Academy needs refinement and reimagination – the suggestion would be to involve the Student Union in the information gathering process, using alternative and nuanced methods such as student focus groups and discussion groups rather than endless surveys and questionnaires. Data gathered through surveys will frequently be steered or governed by the questions being asked, whereas real student discussion will frequently identify true student concerns.

Academy students and management should place far more emphasis on revisions, improvements and enhancements which result from listening to student voice. Such ‘success story’ information is now frequently provided in simple tables in contemporary institutional self-evaluation documents.

AUKOS management should also work harder to respect and engage with less-motivated students, students from diverse and more challenged socio-economic backgrounds, neuro-diverse students, students who need to learn how to become actively involved in their learning and students who still need to develop the confidence to express genuinely felt concerns around their studentship in the Academy.

In future, it would be helpful if both students and management placed far more emphasis on revisions, improvements and enhancements which resulted from listening to student voice.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

The Academy does encourage varied modes of programme delivery, in accordance with the intended learning outcomes. Field work and out of classroom teaching are an integral part of most study programmes. However, there is a noticeable absence of the most modern and innovative pedagogical methods. An AUKOS survey on the use of teaching methods (quoted on p45 of the self evaluation document) cited ‘*conversation (95.7%), oral presentation 89.2%) explanation (82.8) and interpretation (73.1%)* as the most prominent ‘innovative and creative’ teaching methods? ‘*Project teaching (31.2%); drawing (22.6%); problem based learning (22.6%)*’ are tellingly rated at the bottom of the AUKOS survey. ‘*Student class activity*’ is highlighted as the most frequent way of

monitoring students' work and progress, with '97.8% of teachers monitoring the work of students in this way.'

'Research (*independent student research*) comes in at 66.7% on the survey, but the centrality of Academy teachers in the learning process does seem more than a little excessive. Students told the Expert panel that teachers '*support and help us in their free time. We can contact teachers whenever we can, which seems crazy...*' Even when discussing the most basic student information (which should be readily available to students and should be easily understood by all students) students replied '*we send an email to a teacher. Yes, we know where to find information. If I don't understand, teachers will explain. We can always ask our teachers, or the student office, they are always willing to help...*' The Academy has held multiple symposia on 'Innovative Teaching Methods in the Arts' but teaching innovations at Academy still seem rather rare.

The Self-evaluation document does mention that when students work independently, they have access to workshops, studios, dance and acting halls, classrooms with instruments, etc. At the suggestion of students, Academy introduced a course titled 'Independent Project' with 5 ECTS credits, in which students can choose the desired topic or area of artistic research and conduct it independently with the mentoring support of a selected teacher who has the expertise in the field. Such independent, student-centred, self-directed components should be encouraged more across Academy.

The mentoring system seemed highly developed and students expressed themselves very happy with the mentoring support. Students did feel empowered to suggest mentors and to change mentors if necessary. Rather worryingly, students couldn't clearly explain the processes and procedures in place to resolve problems with teachers or professors claiming rather dismissively that '*this never happens at Academy*'.

In general, there seems to be too little emphasis on interactive and research-based learning at Academy. Students do seem to be engaged in a lot of basic project-based problem solving, but their creative and critical capacities are not being adequately challenged or empowered whilst working on quite everyday and ordinary projects for local cultural enterprises. There seems to be a distinct absence of interactive methods, free-briefs, unguided group working, experimentation, mistake-making and risk-taking. Digital technologies are barely mentioned in relation to student centred learning at Academy and senior professors claimed very little understanding of or expertise in state-of-the-art ICT or digital technologies.

In discussions with teachers, a few commendable examples were proudly provided where Academy teaching methods were adapted to students from a more diverse

background. The self evaluation document points out that *'only two students with disabilities currently study at AUKOS.'* Perhaps a deliberate outreach initiative, creating the conditions to attract more students from challenged and disabled backgrounds would greatly assist the raising of awareness and the enhancement of all aspects of access at Academy.

The Academy has held a *'Conference on Persons with Disabilities in Arts, Science and Education which aimed to sensitize the teachers of the Academy, the university and beyond to develop teaching methods and specific forms of instruction for persons with different disabilities.'* Though a commendable initiative, no clear outcomes, impacts, sustained Academy initiatives or 'action plans' seem to have emerged from this conference.

From the evidence in the documentation and in discussions with Academy students, there seems to be a very strong (and very proud) focus on the *'motivated students who actively participate in the creation of the teaching processes, initiate changes and show interest and involvement in almost all areas of the institution's activities.'* This focus on the strongest can be really demotivating and problematic for students from a variety of more challenged backgrounds. Academy certainly needs more work in strategically developing its institutional sensitivity.

Academy students obviously had very strong and valuable relationships with the enthusiastic teaching staff. However, student autonomy and self-direction needs to be more encouraged and developed.

Recommendations for improvement

The Academy does use a good range of teaching methods, but very few of their current pedagogical approaches could be called either innovative, or strongly student-centred.

There is still far too much student dependence on (extremely willing and enthusiastic) teaching staff. Students can call teachers 'at any time' and seem to rely in teachers for even the most basic student information, as well as for the simplest permissions around their project work. This is not a strongly student-centred approach. The danger with such a high-dependency approach is that many students develop little autonomy, very little capacity for independent decision making and very little real, questioning capacity for critical and creative thinking.

There should be a concerted attempt across Academy to try newer interactive teaching methods, free-briefs, unguided group working, experimentation, mistake-making and risk-taking learning modes. Digital technologies need to be incorporated much more into student centred learning at Academy and senior professors need to start growing

their own understanding of and expertise in state-of-the-art ICT or digital technologies. At the moment, senior professors seem quite happy to pass such digital teaching and learning responsibilities over to their more junior teaching colleagues.

Some work has been done on raising awareness of people with disabilities, and work has been done on making the buildings more accessible. It would be good to see concerted, sustainable and strategic outcomes and policy initiatives emerging from such work. Academy needs to keep working on more structured and organised (policy based) modern approaches to diverse student populations.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

3.4. The higher education institution ensures adequate student support.

Analysis

The Academy does provide adequate student supports, including guidance on studying and career opportunities. A Student Administration Office, A Careers Office, an AUKOS Counselling Office and a UNIOS Counselling Office are all available to students. AUKOS does have a functioning students union.

Though the self evaluation document claims that *'all teachers regularly have office hours for students'*, the document does admit that *'office hours are held more frequently than the prescribed minimum'*. Students claimed that teachers *'support and help us in their free time. We can contact teachers whenever we can, which seems crazy'*. The self evaluation document also frequently places teachers at the front of the provision of the most basic student-support mechanisms. *'During the study, various forms of support are available to AUKOS students, which come from teachers, administrative and support services and senior fellow students.'* Students seemed quite unclear about basic support information, admitting that they frequently asked their teachers if anything was unclear.

One student related how some exam-stress in her class was defused by a teacher who happened to be a psychologist. Some students claimed that psychological supports at Academy were very good, others claimed that psychological supports were strong in some programmes only. The self evaluation document asserts that the UNIOS Counselling Office *'is run according to the highest psychological standards of discretion and immediacy.'* Students were quite proud of the Academy covid-response initiative to publish student artworks on the website during the first lockdown, but there was no mention of any clear covid-related additional supports for students. A covid survey was conducted – the findings mainly seemed to centre around the obvious inadequacies in the online teaching and learning experience.

In all documentation and in discussions with staff and students, the AUKOS student union was rarely referred to. According to the self evaluation document, the AUKOS Students Union '*protects the interests of the students by participating in decision-making in the Academy Council and various other decision making bodies (committees and boards).*' The AUKOS Students Union '*also cooperates with the UNIOS Student Union in relation to finance and implementation of student activities and projects.*' Representing students is not really mentioned in the self evaluation documents. Rather, the SU is viewed as a student partner in management and institutional decision-making. AUKOS students who met with the Expert panel seemed to be exclusively selected by Heads of Department, rather than proposed or elected by other students. The selected students represented very cohesive and homogenous views and opinions, with no dissenting voices, no articulation of any student difficulties beyond '*a broken coffee machine, which was fixed.*' In a more modern model, the AUKOS Student Union would actively represent students, would gather genuine information on student concerns and would be a central and independent provider of information on AUKOS student supports. The student union has a vital role to play in replacing ineffective student surveys with far more effective, student-led focus groups and discussion fora. Student voice needs to be heard at Academy.

Recommendations for improvement

Student support mechanisms are established, but much of the functional student support starts with, or is accessed through teachers and mentors. This might tend to favour students who have strong relationships with their teachers, whilst mitigating against students who need independent supports, not more teacher-led guidance. Information on student supports should be readily available, easily accessible and easily understood by all students. Crucial student supports should be completely independent of the teaching staff.

In all documentation and in discussions with staff and students, the AUKOS student union was rarely referred to. The Student Union seems to be viewed mostly as a partner in Academy management and institutional decision-making. A more independent Student Union has a vital role to play in replacing ineffective student surveys and Academy-supports with far more effective, student-led focus groups, discussion fora and student-centred, even student-led supports and peer to peer initiatives. Independent student voice needs to be heard at Academy.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

The self evaluation document clearly states (p51) *'there are no restrictions on the admission of students with disabilities to study programmes of the Academy'*. The document asserts that *'The Academy takes special care of and ensures support to students from vulnerable and under-represented groups'*. There is a UNIOS Office for Students with Disabilities. The Committee for Students with Disabilities is designated as *'the competent body to support students with disabilities.'* The Committee regularly informs students about open competitions for scholarships for students with disabilities. *'After students with disabilities are admitted to the Academy, an individualized approach to study is agreed upon.'* There are annual university scholarships available for students with disabilities. Scholarships are also provided *'to other vulnerable and under-represented groups in accordance with the Ordinance on conditions and manner of exercising rights for awarding student scholarships and grants at Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek.'* Students in social need are divided into three subcategories, students with lower economic needs, students with disabilities and students belonging to potentially vulnerable groups.

All Academy buildings allow access and movement for students in wheelchairs or students with reduced mobility. Two very visible elevators have been installed. Academy also organises an annual Day of Persons With Disabilities and, in 2019 held an International Conference on Persons with Disabilities in Arts, Science and Education.

Recommendations for improvement

Academy is obviously doing quite a lot of work in order to provide supports and to raise awareness of disability. Academy support mechanisms now need to become much less formal and 'administrative'. Such a change could make Academy a welcoming and attractive destination for students 'in social need.'

Annual Conferences are a welcome first start in raising awareness, but more modern, accessible supports and Academy access initiatives should now be a strategic priority. This should directly relate directly to the development of Academy's social role.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

The self evaluation document states that students are informed regularly about the opportunities for completing part of their study abroad. The university runs the Erasmus student mobility programme. All information can be found on the UNIOS website. The AUKOS website also has a separate Erasmus page. AUKOS has an Erasmus Committee and Erasmus Counselling Office. Erasmus Mobility Info Days are regularly held. An Erasmus Student Network ESN is organised at university level. The self evaluation document (p54) speaks about the *'transparent recognition of ECTS credits earned at a foreign HEI,'* stating that *'the student needs to check the compatibility of the two study programmes before going abroad.'* On their return from an Erasmus placement, students submit their documentation from their host HEI into what looks like an extremely complicated procedure for *'making the final decision on the recognition of courses and ECTS credits and differential exams.'*

Only small numbers of AUKOS students are brave enough to go on Erasmus mobilities. There are many opportunities to engage with *'other types of international mobility'* (projects, festivals, visits, international competitions and eworkshops etc). Such mobility opportunities are important, but are not as valuable for students as the opportunity to study abroad through Erasmus.

Academy teachers still appear to have great difficulty in teaching anything through English. Some teachers have excellent working English, and the reasons why they're finding it impossible or undesirable to teach anything through English were never really explained. Some procedures and regulations surrounding tuition in English were vaguely alluded to in the self-evaluation documentation. Only one AUKOS course 'Croatian Studies' is taught through English, though courses on the website rather cryptically claimed that English could be a language of tuition 'on demand'.

Recommendations for improvement

Academy is obviously doing a lot of work to facilitate short 'mobilities' but Erasmus numbers will remain small whilst outgoing students have to undergo a potentially nerve-wracking *'decision on the recognition of their foreign courses and ECTS credits and differential exams.'* European Higher Education Institutions must engage with Erasmus programmes flexibly and without penalising returning students using such apparently arcane and terrifying administrative mechanisms. Such highly-formal, administration-centred ECTS and course checking models should be changed to more student-centred,

mobility-friendly procedures which do not potentially jeopardise or threaten the progression of Erasmus students on their return to Academy.

Every study programme at Academy should try to deliver at least one small course through an international language such as English, if only to allow Academy students to learn a little of the vocabulary of their practice or discipline in an international language. This would also start preparing the ground for incoming Erasmus students.

The expert panel would suggest a radical overhaul (and simplification) of the Academy ECTS-validation and 'course comparison' systems, allowing for much more flexibility and clarity in relation to guest students from partner institutions.

Quality grade: Minimum level of quality

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

Analysis

According to the self evaluation document, the AUKOS website links to the UNIOS website to provide 'basic information' to incoming Erasmus students. It's difficult to navigate this section of the website and it's practically impossible to find information on courses which are clearly taught through English language. Though many of the programme documents on the Academy website do claim to offer English as a language of instruction, this seems to be offered either 'on demand', as an option or governed through regulations on '*the minimum number of students needed to organise classes in English.*'

UNIOS does offer a range of short (3 ECTS to 5 ECTS) management and business-related courses in English (the link is provided on p56 of the self evaluation document) including '*conversational telephone skills in English*' '*cv preparation,*' *et cetera.*

The self evaluation document mentions that '*course descriptions also contain the information on the minimum number of students needed to organise classes in English.*' Two Erasmus coordinators provide information and '*individual teachers can organise classes as individual consultations, adapted to the needs and abilities of the foreign students.*'

The university encourages all foreign students to learn Croatian. In 2018/2019 there were 3 incoming students whilst in 2019/2020 the number increased to 16.

Recommendations for improvement

Though many of the programme documents on the Academy website do claim to offer English as a language of instruction, this seems to be offered either 'on demand', as an option or governed through regulations on '*the minimum number of students needed to organise classes in English.*' This information should be clear for incoming Erasmus students. If all tuition, some tuition or no tuition is available in English, this should be made clear.

There does seem to be reluctance on the part of many Academy professors to engage with tuition through any language other than Croatian. Academy should do everything possible to improve this situation for the strategic benefit of the institution and especially of the Academy students.

The Academy should make a concerted effort to 'sell' its attractive campus, attractive study programmes, friendly and less formal administrative procedures and friendly study conditions (including some clear accommodation for tuition through English or German etc) to incoming Erasmus students. Academy should be a much more popular Erasmus destination.

Quality grade: Minimum level of quality

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

Analysis

Students receive all information about assessment and grading during an initial lecture at the start of each course. The students who met with the Expert panel seemed quite happy with this system. The evaluation criteria for each course are publicly available in study programmes published on the AUKOS website and in Curriculum Implementation Plans. Final grades can be determined on the basis of class activities and/or the exam, in accordance with the Curriculum Implementation Plan. The self evaluation document asserts that '*there have been no objections to grades in the past two years.*' This is an unusual situation in any institute of higher education and could point to a certain tendency towards 'grade inflation' or 'overly generous grading'. An appeals procedure is clearly described in the self evaluation document and examinations take place before a panel of examiners, in order to ensure objectivity and reliability of grading. Reasonable accommodations and exam modifications are made for the two students with disabilities and teachers are advised and assisted in this process by the Committee for Students with Disabilities.

Recommendations for improvement

The fact that *'there have been no objections to grades in the past two years'* is unusual – a sign of student contentment, or perhaps a sign that Academy grades are generous. Exams predominate in the documentation, though there is some provision for *'the assessment of classroom activities.'* There's little or no mention of innovative modes of assessment, cross-moderation of grades, self-assessment or group assessment.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

The Academy issues diplomas and Diploma Supplements in accordance with the relevant regulations (outlined on p58 of the self evaluation document). Members of the Expert panel did examine a number of Diploma Supplements during their site visit to Academy.

Recommendations for improvement

No recommendations

Quality grade: High level of quality

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

Analysis

The Academy places a strong emphasis on the employability of their graduates and responds readily to the needs of the labour market, especially to the needs of the local labour market. New programmes have been launched to meet the needs of the market (p59), whilst some study programmes not recognised as attractive by the labour market have either been discontinued or modified to make them more attractive.

The Academy does maintain strong and formalised links with a large number of institutions, companies, associations and organisations in arts, culture, media and education.

The Academy has a Student Support and Career Development Office, informing students about potential job opportunities. The Office also cooperates with the UNIOS QA Center on things like cv writing, time management, interviews etc... The Alumni Club also helps to organise the distribution of information on job opportunities.

Recommendations for improvement

Graduate employability is a commendable component of the Academy's activity. The Expert panel would strongly encourage Academy to broaden its links with employers and enterprises outside of Osijek and the local region, especially with companies and enterprises involved in digital technology and culture-related ICT.

Quality grade: High level of quality

IV. Teaching and Institutional Capacities

4.1. The higher education institution ensures adequate teaching capacities.

Analysis

Classes at the Academy are delivered by teachers appointed to artistic-teaching, scientific-teaching, teaching and associate academic ranks. The Staff Structure (Table 2 and Table 4.1.) shows that the Academy employs 5 full professors with tenure, 6 full professors, 25 associate professors, 39 assistant professors. 23 of them are in teaching grades, 18 are assistants, 4 postdoctoral researchers, 7 senior lecturers, 8 lecturers, 2 artistic counsellors, 1 senior associate for Arts and 5 associates for Arts.

In 2017 the Academy employed 22 new teachers. 5 teachers were newly employed in 2018 and 4 teachers were newly appointed in the year 2019. Over the five-year period the Academy also newly employed 20 associate teachers, whilst 5 contracts expired. 47 employees have the academic degree of doctor of science or art, namely 39 with doctorate in science. 8 employees have a doctorate in arts, though this is not a requirement in Croatian education.

74 employees do not possess a doctoral qualification, including 5 full professors, 10 associate professors, 19 assistant professors, 5 senior lecturers, 8 lecturers. No advisor for arts or associate for arts possesses a doctoral qualification.

Most of the doctoral professors come from the science research area Humanities (18), most especially Philology, Art sciences, Interdisciplinary Humanities, History of Art. 13 doctoral professors work in Art disciplines – mostly Theatre arts, Musical arts, Applied arts and Visual arts. 7 of those professors hold art doctorates and 6 hold doctorates in science.

10 Doctorates are held in Social sciences in the field Information and Communication Sciences, Economics, Psychology. 4 professors hold doctorates in what could be

described as more Interdisciplinary areas, especially Educational Sciences, Interdisciplinary.

The courses are on great percentage delivered by teachers employed by the Academy. In general, Academy teachers seem clearly qualified for the courses they're currently expected to deliver.

The ratio of students and full-time teachers ensures the high quality of study. Since the number of students is small, the teaching process can be done accurately, taking into consideration the students' individuality, disposition and competences.

Teachers' workload is mostly in line with the relevant legislation and policies. In some occasions it is not possible to stay strictly in line with the regulations. This is especially true of more junior teachers' workload (plus or minus 20 %). Also, staff explained that in particular teaching areas it was more difficult to recruit appropriately qualified teaching staff, or teaching staff with the appropriate background or experience. Such situations can detrimentally affect teachers' workload and can have adverse impacts on the appropriate distribution of teaching, scientific/artistic activities, professional and personal development and administrative duties. In their meeting with the Expert panel, teachers explained: *'Workload is not equal amongst all the teachers. We started with Masters degree and teacher workload was a little bit high. We have a lot of assistants. I don't see a problem with the workload. Puppetry and animation are not so developed. Teachers have less scope for hiring assistants, so the workload is higher.'* However, though teachers agreed that workload could sometimes be unevenly distributed, none expressed any deep, persistent or systemic dissatisfaction surrounding teacher workloads at the Academy.

Recommendations for improvement

The number and qualifications of teachers are satisfactory, but more teachers should be encouraged to pursue and complete doctoral studies, especially teachers who hold assistant professor positions. Though management of the Academy stated that teachers happily take on more obligations which affect their teaching workload, the recruitment of new employees (full-time or external ones) also needs to be considered, especially the recruitment of teaching staff with new capabilities, more modern research approaches and highly developed skills in areas where Academy has very obvious deficiencies, such as ICT and digital technology. The improved distribution of teaching workloads is a management problem and should be solved by Academy management for the strategic benefit of the institution. Though Academy staff are currently patiently and pragmatically coping with higher teaching demands, Academy management should do more to ensure that every teacher has more time and space to pursue their scientific/artistic activities and research as well as for professional and personal development and academic

publishing. Further, the merging of some study groups and the rationalization of study programmes at Academy should have hugely beneficial impacts on the reduction, redistribution and reallocation of teacher workload, as well as a strong potential for the creative reimagination of Academy teaching practice.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

The Academy does take into consideration the legislation, regulations and procedures for assessing and rewarding teacher excellence. This recruitment procedure arises from the development goals of the higher education institution. The basic procedure that regulates the recruitment of teachers and associates is the UNIOS Human Resources Management Plan, which is adopted by the UNIOS Senate, and which is aligned with the needs of the Academy for new recruitment in the current year. This Plan also covers the promotions of teachers and associates in a given year. In addition to national regulations, the procedures for the selection of the best candidates for each post are also governed by two internal Ordinances of Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek – Ordinance on election/re-election to titles and corresponding employment positions, and Ordinance on announcing and conducting public competitions at Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, and Statutes of the University and the Academy.

The promotion of teachers to higher scientific ranks is based on the evaluation and rewarding of excellence and takes into account significant achievements (such as international contribution to the scientific discipline, high-impact publications, significant scientific discoveries, mentorship, supervision of final and graduation theses, course materials, textbooks etc.). The following criteria for the evaluation of teaching, scientific and professional activities are considered: Criterion of teaching contribution; Criterion of scientific-professional contribution; Criterion of institutional contribution.

The requirements for appointment to artistic-teaching ranks of full professor, associate professor and assistant professor, are based on the artistic activity: a) which has been presented to the public; b) which has not been presented to the public, but can be evaluated; c) artistic teaching and artistic teaching production in which one invests their artistic being and which results in artistic creation.

It can be seen that the higher institution has adequate methods for the selection of the best candidates in addition to the prescribed national minimum conditions for each position ensuring the selection of excellent candidates.

The promotion of Academy teachers does take into account their important achievements.

Even the indicators of excellence which include scientific/artistic, teaching and professional work are taken into consideration. Table 4.4 clearly shows that not so many papers have been published in the last five years, that the total number of teachers' citations are very small, as well as the number of published higher education textbooks. Some example: Acting and Puppetry: just 4 teachers have something of the above-mentioned; Music Education: 11 persons; Vocal studies (10); Piano (8); Fine Arts (5); Design for Stage and Screen (4); Stringed Instruments (6); Composition and Music Theory (6); Culture, Media and Management (21).

When viewed as the number of projects per person the situation is a little better, but still insufficient. It can be seen that the same person works at different study programmes and this multiplies the total numbers.

Recommendations for improvement

Once again, it must be observed that high and unevenly distributed teaching loads at Academy will not allow teaching staff adequate space and time to pursue staff training and development, research and artistic activity and increased levels of high-quality academic publishing.

Of course teachers should strive to publish more in relevant publications and to adopt and develop the most modern and progressive research skills and methods, taking into consideration the most progressive contemporary research methodology in their study field, discipline or area. At the same time, teacher with less writing capability or experience could easily be monitored or guided in their writing and researching process by more experienced Academy colleagues or through collaboration with leading, high-grade professionals from their field. Once again, Academy management must strive to create the conditions, space and time for their teachers to pursue such lucrative opportunities in order to strategically enhance the quality of the institution.

Quality grade: satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

The Academy does indeed provide opportunities for the improvement of teaching competencies through the following forms of support: enabling the participation in the

pedagogical-psychological and didactic-methodological training programmes; funding of doctoral and specialist studies; the covering of registration fees to enable staff to participate in conferences; granting sabbaticals; granting paid leave for the production of doctoral dissertations; issuing approvals to teachers and associates for work outside the home institution for the purpose of their professional development; organising workshops, seminars, conferences, festivals, book presentations, concerts, exhibitions, performances, film projections, as well as visits by lecturers from Croatia and abroad; organising international conferences and symposiums; supporting artistic-research and scientific-research; supporting the application and implementation of projects; organising Erasmus+ Exchange Programme presentations.

Furthermore, the Academy supports teachers and associates appointed as assistants in the field of arts, who do not need to obtain a PhD degree in science/arts, to attend postgraduate university studies (doctoral studies) or specialist studies. Teachers appointed to artistic-teaching ranks have the opportunity to obtain a doctorate in arts on the basis of appointment to artistic-teaching ranks.

The Academy encourages the assessment and improvement of teaching competencies based on the peer-review recommendations and results of student satisfaction surveys through the following evaluation procedures: University Student Survey assessing the work of teachers and associates; evaluation of the work of assistants, postdoctoral fellows and mentors. There may be something of a danger of complacency in placing too much emphasis on the results of imprecise survey methods. In their meeting with the Expert panel, the vice deans for academic affairs and study programmes explained *'we analyse the surveys... we have too many professors with too many grades... in general we're above the university, we have pretty high grades for the teachers. It's not that we just get good grades...'*

A Dean's Award for exceptional work in teaching and projects also exists and peer-reviews of teachers and associates occur, as well as regular reviews of university textbooks, scientific and artistic monographs and teaching materials.

Some teachers and non-teaching staff did participate in international mobility programmes and projects and Academy deans made it clear to the Expert panel that there is no shortage of university funds to support and to subsidise such staff mobilities. Table 4.5 on the mobility of teachers and associates in the last five academic years clearly presents four main type of mobility, mostly up to three months: for research (61), professional (56), in arts (51) and teaching (51). There were also 43 professional visits of non-teaching staff up to 3 months.

The Academy should find innovative ways to include more teachers in the international mobility programs. Unusually, finance at Academy does not seem to be the problem (with more than adequate funding available at university level). If the foreign language is part of the problem, extra lectures should be conducted in order to improve language ability. So-called 'internationalisation at home' might also be hugely valuable in increasing teacher awareness of and involvement in international mobility. If more students and staff were coming into Academy and if some courses started to be delivered through foreign languages, the international perspectives of Academy students and staff could be greatly improved. Despite all efforts, the Academy still provides only one course (in Croatian studies) through English.

It's clear that many lecturing staff urgently need serious help in their skill levels and understanding of modern ICT and digital technology.

More attention should be paid to each and every teacher, to her/his competences, in order try to identify strengths and excellence and in order to assist or support when something should be improved. The Academy should find the opportunities to work on this and help teachers to improve themselves on individual basis.

Student survey grades across the university are really high and Academy management are (obviously) happy with the grades being achieved. However, in the early meeting with the Dean and Academy Quality Assurance Office, staff did honestly point out *'the students are assessing teachers but they're not doing this in a very good way. Graduates are less reluctant to criticise teachers...'*

Student satisfaction is an important, though sometimes quite limited (or even misleading) measure of teaching excellence, especially where student satisfaction is being measured by imprecise university-wide survey instruments. Anonymised, Academy-centred, student-led focus groups and discussion groups might provide more accurate, valuable, detailed and trustworthy data on teaching excellence. Benchmarking Academy teaching performance against teaching excellence in the best comparable international HEIs might also be a useful and progressive mode of teaching enhancement.

Recommendations for improvement

Though the Academy encourages teachers to apply for competitive projects, such activity could be encouraged even more and should be supported to a much greater extent through the reimagination and reduction of teacher workloads and through some economies of scale which would derive from the strategic rationalization of Academy study programmes.

Presentations should of course be done at every department to give more confidence to teachers in relation to the application process and to motivate and encourage staff who are not yet involved to take parts in different projects.

The Academy should find innovative ways to include more teachers in the international mobility programs.

It's clear that many lecturing staff urgently need serious help in their skill levels and understanding of modern ICT and digital technology.

More attention should be paid to each and every teacher, to her/his competences, in order try to identify strengths and excellence and in order to assist or support when something should be improved. The Academy should find the opportunities to work on this and help teachers to improve themselves on individual basis.

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Benchmarking Academy teaching performance against teaching excellence in the best comparable international HEIs might also be a useful and progressive mode of teaching enhancement.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

The Academy has 7 buildings accommodating the Dean's office, Department of Theatre Arts and Department of Music; Department of Visual and Media Arts – sculpting; Department of Visual and Media Arts; Department of Creative Technologies; Collection of Artworks – Costumes; Department of Culture, media and Management and Department of Instrumental Studies. In total 7,726,66 m². In addition, the Academy uses 6 teaching bases for the delivery of part of the university studies and post-graduate

specialist studies. For the practical part (professional practice) Academy uses spaces in primary and secondary schools. The Academy invests and it included construction work, renovations. Some more are in progress, including the hugely significant and long-promised concert hall.

Table 4.8 clearly shows that the Academy is equipped with classrooms with 16/1 computers, teaching laboratories/practicums 51/1 computers, computer classrooms 2/32 computers, scientific laboratories 1/1 computers, rooms for student activities 1/0 computers, teaching offices 34/51 computers, in total 105 rooms with 97 computers. This is welcome, but ongoing ICT investment, and a radical modernisation in teaching staff attitude to digital technology and digital potentials at Academy is urgently needed.

In their meeting with the Expert panel, study programme heads and heads of departments rather reluctantly admitted *'yes, we need a bit more of IT equipment.'* Teachers explained *'We have a laboratory. We can fix things in post production. Better cameras green screens. Of course we could improve. A VR camera? Coolex in Osijek has such a camera...'* Worryingly, when discussing graphics tablets with Academy students, the students dismissed the need for such technology *'you can also use a computer for that.'*

Though the funding situation in Croatia remains a serious challenge, the Academy does plan forward and continues to carefully and incrementally improve its infrastructural development. Though some important work has been done it is still necessary to have more spaces and constantly improved hardware and software for better delivery of study programmes and for ensuring the achievement of intended learning outcomes. Careful infrastructural improvement will lead to improved implementation of scientific/artistic and professional activities.

Recommendations for improvement

Different locations of the Academy seem to be problematic for students so it is necessary to reorganize in some other way the locations in which the Academy works and make it closer to students. There seemed to be difficulties with the uneven allocation of available spaces. At the same time, more spaces should be found for some departments in regards to the actual space that they cover.

The newest forms of ICT should be available to students as a strategic priority. Ongoing strategic ICT investment is required, and a radical modernisation in teaching staff attitude to digital technology and digital potentials is urgently needed at Academy.

Quality grade: Minimum level of quality

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

Analysis

Three professional library staff are employed at Academy. Professional development is an integral part of the library business, so library staff regularly attend various professional courses, lectures, webinars, et cetera. Staff continuously keep track of professional literature in the field of library science and in the fields of music, fine art and theatre arts. The total number of book volumes is 11,929. There are 843 compulsory titles, and 1,756 volumes of compulsory literature textbooks then 1,053 music scores, 791 CDs, 194 DVDs, 35 CD-ROMs, 46 videocassettes and 22 audio cassettes. The library fundus consists in 28 printed foreign journals and 31 printed national journals. 15,920 electronic journals are available with full texts provided by the institution. 25 bibliographic databases provided and financed by the institution. There are 43 seats in the library, 15 of which are equipped with computers.

Because of the functional integration of the University of Osijek it is also possible for students and staff to access scientific literature at other scientific and teaching constituents of the University of Osijek. Access to scientific databases is made possible through the *Portal of Electronic Sources for the Croatian Academic and Scientific Community*, which provides access to databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, Academic Search Complete (EBSCO), Cambridge Journals and many others using a national license funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) through the project *Increasing access to electronic sources of scientific and professional information – e-Sources*.

The Library holdings seem to be adequate for the study needs and activities at the Academy. The library contains books and non-literary material in the fields of music, fine and theatre arts and all relevant artistic fields, but also in management, media, art therapy, pedagogy, psychology, language, and literature.

The library also has collections of fine print, posters, serial publications, course materials, students' final and diploma papers, recordings of student exams, graphic maps and 290 copies of unpublished drama features. The reference material is also divided by the fields of arts, as well as the related fields, necessary for quality artistic and scientific work at the institution. The audio-visual material on the mentioned media contains works of film, theatre arts and music. All materials are regularly listed, classified, technically processed, and entered into a central library computer program.

The library and library equipment partially meet the conditions for a high quality of study. Some teaching material should be up-to-date and subscriptions to appropriate bibliographic databases with full-text access in regards to the need of each department should be encouraged. More library computers would be welcome.

Recommendations for improvement

From the perspective of continuous and progressive Academy development it falls to Academy teachers to rethink which kind of contemporary and relevant literature should be used in each subject, and the library should of course be provided with the necessary publications, music scores, and music on appropriate devices and technical platforms. For example, videocassettes and audio cassettes urgently need to be updated or replaced and the material from them should be 'forward migrated' onto the most up to date digital or cloud platforms in order to maintain access. Accessing information is very important and continuous and ever increasing access to crucial texts, scientific and professional information, electronic sources, e-Sources and digital materials for all study programmes should be encouraged and strategically supported and resourced.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

Financial sustainability is evident in the way that the Academy manages its finances from the state budget, local budgets, but also funds from its own activities or by special regulations (student tuition fees). The Academy also generates revenues on the basis of Programme Agreements, revenues for scientific activity and revenues for regular operating expenses, which are partly sufficient for teaching and regular operation. The Academy does generate revenues from artistic projects, which does create some additional revenue, although the Academy's current focus is on such additional revenues defraying the costs of the artistic activities and projects. The income is also by student tuition, as well as from postgraduate specialist studies.

The Academy manages its financial resources transparently and appropriately.

The Academy has not developed any great strategy to generate additional funds from its own activities and projects. Great problems, such as space limits and ICT, digital capacities and technical equipment, need great solutions and great funds, so new possibilities for additional funding should strategically be sought out. Greater cooperation with local industry and local community is desirable, but is unlikely to yield particularly rich revenue streams. Applying to EU projects and funds may be an option in the future. Project collaborations with larger international businesses and business incubator

projects (especially in collaboration with the university) may also present future opportunities.

Across the world, attracting international students is always seen as an obvious revenue generator, but the Academy will need to do a lot of work to develop some courses or programmes in languages other than Croatian and in order to present highly-differentiated, attractive programme offerings to international students.

In addition, as the Academy self evaluation documents frequently state *'it is necessary to develop new programmes that will have market orientation, which will have a positive impact on revenues.'* Both Academy documentation and discussions with staff yielded very little detailed information on proposed 'market-oriented' new programmes and business models for any such programmes were never (even vaguely) unpacked or explained.

Recommendations for improvement

The Academy should generate a strategic plan to generate more funds from its own activities and projects. Great problems, such as space limits and ICT, digital capacities and technical equipment, need great solutions and great funds, so new possibilities for funding should strategically be sought out.

The Academy will need to do a lot of work to develop some courses or programmes in languages other than Croatian and in order to present highly-differentiated, attractive programme offerings to international students (not just Erasmus students) as a revenue generator.

The Academy self evaluation documents frequently discuss *'new programmes that will have market orientation, which will have a positive impact on revenues.'* The Academy needs to develop clear business plans, with KPIs and achievable targets for such revenue generating programmes.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

V. Scientific/artistic activity

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

Analysis

Based on the Analytic supplement, Table 5.2, over the past five years (2014-2019) AUKOS teachers created, produced or participated in over 1900 exhibitions, concerts, theatre performances and other public performances. The number of complex artworks defined as extraordinary achievements with international merit is 175, with national merit 170. Teachers of art have authored 9 books published abroad and 224 published in Croatia. 9 of the teachers in artistic field have obtained doctoral degrees. Teachers in artistic fields seem to be more active in promoting achievements at national and international events, than teachers in scientific fields. According to the conversation held with teachers and vice-deans, since the creation of CIRAS, artistic teachers tend to be more interested in scientific research compared to the previous re-accreditation period.

Based on Table 5.1 of the Analytic supplement, in the five-year period (2014-2019) AUKOS teachers published 224 publications of the highest category according to the Ordinance on Appointment of Scientific Grades. The publication ratio is quite low, running at 0.48 publications per teacher per 5 years. Other publications according to the Ordinance on Appointment of Scientific Grades: 136, and ratio is 0.29 per teacher per 5 years. The Academy teachers have published 227 peer-reviewed publications, the ratio is quite low here as well: 0.48 per teacher in 5 years. The Academy has published 39 monographs and text-books in Croatia, 2 books written by AUKOS teachers were published abroad. The Academy does keep clear records of all relevant staff publications.

The Expert panel appreciates and welcomes the fact that the Academy pays the often considerable publishing fees for teachers who are publishing in high-quality international scientific reviews. The Academy also pays the tuition fees for teachers of the artistic fields who enrol on doctoral study programmes. However, the Expert Panel would recommend a careful reconsideration of the workload and time management of teachers who are expected to contribute to scientific research. The Academy is in the process of creation a new reward policy for excellence in artistic and research work, as mentioned as well in previous section 4.2. A fair and transparent staff reward system would be most welcome. A fair, transparent and strategic reduction in teaching load for particular staff members at specific points in time could be a key part of any such rewards system.

In the past five years, 8 AUKOS teachers were directors of 15 PhD theses in total. This number is low, probably due to the fact that Academy does not yet have its own doctoral programme and its students and teachers integrate into the doctoral studies of Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek. In the future, the Academy should initiate the creation of its own PhD programme. With the exception of the long-awaited Art Therapy programmes, it is difficult to discover or understand the Academy's strategic thinking in relation to the development of postgraduate study programme strands. According to the

documents available to the Expert Panel, no definite programme threads and research strands are being clearly proposed and no innovative new research-centred postgraduate study programme offerings seem to be in development.

Besides the conferences that Academy organises in Osijek, teachers participate in national and international conferences. 28 of AUKOS teachers (in artistic field) have participated in 359 conferences and art festivals during the past five years. That is 2.47 national and international events per teacher per year.

Recommendations for improvement

The teachers and associate seem to be committed to conducting research and to the production of artworks, but raising the level of quality should now be the main ambition, along with broadening and deepening the research base. The Academy should encourage the teachers to produce more publications of the highest category quality according to the Ordinance on Appointment of Scientific Grades and should do everything possible to motivate teachers in achieving higher quality in their scientific research. The implementation of a fair, transparent and clearly understood system of rewards for teachers will be an especially valuable incentive in Academy's ambitious pursuit of higher quality research and artistic creation. Though teachers are involved in publication, the publication rates across the Academy still appear to be low. All Academy teachers seem to be very occupied with mentoring students and with everyday teaching. Lighter teaching workloads for specific periods of time, at crucial points in research and postgraduate projects would give some teachers a greater opportunity to be engaged in the highest quality intensive research and artistic production work. At this crucial stage of the Academy's development, more Academy teachers should be encouraged to have a more strategic and ambitious international outlook. Once again, such internationalisation should feed strategically into the enhancement and development of Academy research and into the development of truly 21st century research and postgraduate offerings.

Quality grade: Minimum level of quality

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

Analysis

The Academy does develop multiple collaborations with stakeholders in Osijek and is keenly aware of the labour market needs in the local area. According to the meeting with alumni, students and teachers seem to be in a regular contact with most of the biggest potential job providers in Osijek (National Theatre in Osijek, Children's Theater in Osijek,

local schools, etc.). Too few of the regional collaborations are with the ICT or the digital technology sector (Software City, Business Incubator Bios), and in this field the Expert panel would suggest there are great opportunities for mutual improvement and development.

According to the additional documentation of the Self evaluation document, in the past five years, AUKOS teachers and students have given 422 lectures, workshop, concerts, performances in public spaces in order to participate in the popularization of arts intended for the general public. The Academy seem to be very active within the local general public and have had a considerable positive impact on the cultural environment of Osijek and the local region, organising cycles of events on regular basis: for instance, The Osijek Summer of Culture, The Advent of Creativity, Osijek Music Wednesday. The teachers also react to the actual world situation: the international student project *How I see the future*, started in 2020 is a commendable activity with great development potential. The Academy is also to be commended for actively participating in drafting the Cultural Development Strategy of the City in Osijek.

Teachers in artistic fields and scientific fields are members of many Croatian professional associations including the Association for Visual Culture, Matrix Croatica, Croatian Culture Parliament, Croatian Pedagogical Society, Academy of Educational Sciences of Croatia, Croatian Society of Fine Artists, Croatian Association of Artists of the Applied Arts, Croatian Designers Association, Filmmakers Association of Croatia, Croatian Cinematographers Society. Some Academy teachers are members of international organisations - International Association of Theatre Critics AICT, International Council of Vocal Teachers ICVT and International Society of Music Education ISME.

Recommendations for improvement

The Academy transfers knowledge of art very actively in the local area, supports the awareness of art in the general public and initiates new collaborations with local stakeholders. AUKOS teachers take part in Croatian professional associations and are members of a few key international organisations. This is certainly an approach that should be maintained and developed and the Academy should maintain strong links with local enterprises, with the city, the region and with the local general public.

The Academy has great opportunities to improve and broaden its social relevance by involving the digital technology and ICT sector in the transfer of knowledge, in the development of new, more modern and contemporary study programmes and in the development of collaborative research and business projects. With the exception of two or three notable projects, the Academy has not adequately explored the potential of new digital technology collaborations in the labour market and in the development of its

teaching process. Many Academy staff seem quite unaware of the true potentials for digital development in the 21st century cultural industry, in the development of progressive pedagogy and in the enhancement and reimagination of the institution's social relevance.

The Academy should also actively inform teachers about the international organisations and initiatives in scientific and artistic fields and support them in memberships in those organisations.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

Many of the AUKOS teachers have achieved university and national awards for their works. The Self-evaluation document mentions for instance among the most important awards for achievements in science the Vladimir Nazor Award for the book *Gospodar priče. Poetika Ive Andrića* by Krešimir Nemeč (2017), Josip and Ivan Kozarac Award, the Stipan Bilić-Prčić Literary Award of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts for the research monograph of the year *U osječkom Nutarnjem gradu* by Helena Sablić Tomić (2017), the Andrija Buvina Award for the outstanding contribution to Christian culture awarded to Sanja Nikčević (2018), the Coat of Arms of the City of Osijek for the special contribution to music and art of the city of Osijek awarded to Antoaneta Radočaj-Jerković (2016). Based on the teachers CV's which are published on the website of the Academy and are available in the Self-evaluation documents, a few teachers of artistic fields have achieved diverse international awards including the Gold Plaque Australian International Music Festival in 2017 and Third Prize of the Florilège Vocal de Tours in 2019).

The Academy organises several international conferences on site (the International Conference European Realities, International Artistic and Scientific Conference Persons with Disabilities in Arts, Science and Education and the International Scientific Conference on Pedagogy in the Arts), as well as other international events (for instance The International Lav Mirski Singing Competition). Two teachers of scientific field participated in the project Economic Foundations of Croatian Literature funded by the Croatian Science Foundation (2016-2019), and one teacher was a collaborator on the EACA – Creative Europe project, funded by the European Commission (2017). In 2018, the Dean Helena Sablić Tomić was appointed the first ambassador of The Creative Europe Desk in Croatia.

The Academy has published two volumes (1-2019; 2-2020) of its new journal *Nove teorije*. The journal editorial board is composed of Academy professors, postdoctoral fellows and assistants. The Expert panel appreciates this brave initiative and encourages the ambition and ongoing development of such a potentially innovative journal at the national and international level. Academy teachers work on committees and expert panels of art conferences and festivals, including the International Puppet Theatre Festival PIF, Conference of Puppeteers and the Puppet Theatres of Croatia SLUK.

Recommendations for improvement

The Academy is very well recognised in the regional area and actively contributes to the local artistic and cultural context. But based on the discussions with teachers and vice-deans as well as on the Self-evaluation document and the additional documentations, the expert panel found that the Academy academic work is not sufficiently published or recognised at a national level. The new journal may help but more publication in the highest quality national scientific journals is recommended.

As mentioned in section 5.1 teachers of artistic field seem to be more active in promoting the Academy in national and international context than the teachers of scientific fields. But even in the case of art, the Academy should have the ambition to participate in highlighted, highest-quality international events such as Biennale de Venise, Berlinale or Avignon's Theater festival. The Academy seems to be very focused on its region and on the events organised on site, rather than taking inspiration from the most progressive and contemporary tendencies of similar types of international education.

The expert panel believes that the Academy has a great opportunity to become a national hub for new interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches in merging arts and sciences. In order to achieve this effectively and efficiently, the Expert panel would strongly recommend that Academy should seek similar types of educational institutions abroad. The Academy should now aim to establish working links with the strongest and most progressive international institutions, especially with those institutions who are strongest in areas such as digital art practice and contemporary cultural industry.

The Academy's Scientific Strategy should be developed in line with the most modern research tendencies and methodology. Also, the new founded journal *Nove teorije* should achieve high quality scientific articles by integrating contributions by researchers recognised at national and international level.

Quality grade: Minimum level of quality

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

Analysis

The Scientific Strategy of the Academy mentions, that a connection between Humanities, Social Sciences and interdisciplinary field of sciences and artistic fields would be the most recognizable for the Academy. As an institution directed to the scientific and the artistic work at the same time, the Academy is rightly proud of its unique status in the Republic of Croatia.

Out of 161 employees at the Academy of Arts and Culture, 33 have the PhD degree: 28 employees in the scientific/teaching grade, 4 postdoctoral researchers and 2 employees in the teaching grade with the scientific PhD degree. Another 2 employees have the scientific PhD degree but are appointed into the artistic area. Employees with scientific titles make up 40% of the total numbers of employees. The most represented are employees in Humanities (17), then in Interdisciplinary fields of science (6) and in Social Sciences (6). The scientific disciplines that are developed at the Academy are the fields of art science, management in culture and music pedagogy.

Within Humanities, the most represented are employees in Science of art (dramatology, theatre studies, film studies, music studies, theory of fine arts, etc.). Such fields should form one strong base for the further development and enhancement of the scientific component at the Academy. Such scientific fields deal with different scientific areas but also in various artistic disciplines such as visual art, theatre, film and music art. In only one Department (Department of culture, media and management) are employees with scientific-teaching titles in the majority. They primarily belong in Economy, Information and Communication Sciences, Philology, and Science of Art.

Science of Art, Economy and Information and Communication Sciences are the second major grouping of scientific fields at the Academy. A central scientific field is Philology because teachers elected in this field have highest scientific-teaching titles at the Academy.

The Academy adopted the Ordinance on rewarding teacher excellence in teaching, artistic and research work and artistic and research project implementation and the anticipated implementation of a fair, transparent and strategically minded rewards system for staff is to be welcomed. As mentioned before, the Academy co-finances the participation of teachers in seminars, conferences, festivals, etc.

In 2019, Academy created the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in the Arts and Sciences InterScART. The Centre organises scientific activities like workshops, lectures, conferences on methodology or text book publications.

The Strategy of Scientific Work established by the Academy for the years 2020-2024 is structured into 6 main projects: *Image Science – problems, methods, goals, Community Practice in Transition – art, institutions and public sphere, Basic Definitions of the Notion of Puppet – synchronic, diachronic and poetic characteristics, Culture, Media and Management in Creative Industries – scientific, management and media aspects, Vocal Art and Music Education – interdisciplinary scientific and artistic topics, Theoretical and Poetical Aspects of Performance – relationship between costume and stage design.*

From the Scientific Strategy is clear that after integration of two institutions (The Academy of Arts, Department of Culture), the Academy recognises the need to strengthen its scientific component. The aim should be to grow scientific fields to become equal in importance and in quality to the artistic components. Up to now, there has been a strong imbalance in the Academy, with artistic aspects operating at higher qualitative levels to the scientific side. The most represented teachers are elected in the scientific field – Science of Art. Equally, this field is the most represented and in 6 main research projects. Strangely enough, the Academy hasn't proposed, evolved or developed any study programmes in this field. The only scientific study programmes are ones delivered by the Department of Culture, Media and Management. These programmes are situated in Humanities and Social Sciences (Philology, Economy, Information and Communication Sciences). From the provided documentation, it is quite clear that the significant scientific field for the institution is Science of Art, however this is not in accordance with the central organisational concept or the strategic ambition of the Academy.

Page 4 of the Scientific Strategy states *'finally, our students who will learn from the start what is the nature and purpose of scientific work in (mostly) the humanities and the social sciences as well as their importance in a world that prefers technical and natural sciences'*. The question must be asked whether the scientific disciplines currently represented within the Academy (Philology, Economy, Information and Communication Sciences, Science of Art) are broad enough to generate truly interdisciplinary opportunities for Art-Science learning, research, the creation of novel Intellectual Property and new knowledge as the century progresses. The Academy must ask itself whether it can generate a truly interesting Art-Science critical mass with such a limited group of scientific disciplines? The supposedly strategic statement above seems to philosophically turn its back on *'a world that prefers technical and natural sciences'*. Perhaps a more lucrative strategy would be to recognise the potentials for collaboration with more natural sciences and especially with the *'technical sciences'*. Collaborating with dissimilar scientific fields (the parent

university will have all the technical and natural science opportunities) will be hugely challenging but will lead to the creation of new knowledge, novel research strands and hugely innovative study pathways.

Recommendations for improvement

The word “interdisciplinary” is very often used in all provided documentation, however the Expert panel is not convinced that the Academy clearly understands or explores the rich possibilities and challenges which this term presents in the year 2021. The Expert Panel recommends that the Academy should clearly define the terms of interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinarity and should communicate those common and agreed definitions to the teachers, staff and students of the Academy. Sadly, many activities and work presented to the Expert panel at Academy as “interdisciplinary” were often basic (and quite honest and necessary, everyday) collaborations between different artistic fields. Interdisciplinary research should not be only two disciplines put together that need each other. For instance, a student in double major acting and management is not necessarily doing interdisciplinary work, studies or research. This would be rather a case of a multidisciplinary profile, a valuable person who is capable of simultaneously handling two different disciplines. However, the approaches that should be called interdisciplinary are those that create new forms and content by experimenting new methods across the fields, where two disciplines get together and create something unexpected (for instance performance philosophy or cognition in theatre creation, or artists working with chemists, puppeteers working with medics on patient rehabilitation, or pharmacists working with designers on data visualisation).

The Expert panel also detected a strong lack of ambition in art/science research risk taking, experimental methodology and innovative approaches (a single student project was presented as an example). We encourage the Academy to investigate not only art-based scientific research, but also innovative and modern research through art practice.

The Academy has some work done in that sense in the fields of the Music and Pedagogy, but there are still huge opportunities to explore work in this field as well as to discover research opportunities in completely new fields. Concrete efforts should be done also in (re)thinking and reimagining music with other sciences as well as to make deeper the link between Music and Pedagogy.

Quality grade: Minimum level of quality

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

Analysis

The Self evaluation document includes a list of 528 artistic projects in the past five-year period involving Academy students. Most of those projects were realized in Osijek or at other places in Croatia, few of them were international (for instance Hungary, Germany, Poland). According to the table 5.2 approximately 300 art works were realized in direct collaboration with students. Students were also co-authors of projects in Osijek and in other parts of Croatia, but only a few projects had any international component or aspect (for instance projects realized in Poland, Hungary). That is around 60 co-authored artworks per year, counted for around 700 students (currently 529 full-time students and 198 part-time students).

The Self evaluation document also mentions 12 final and diploma papers of AUKOS students that have resulted from national and international projects collaborations. However, in the documentation presented to the Expert panel members as part of the site visit, the final and diploma papers based on art work are largely student commentary and reflexions on the work done than what could be considered as high quality and contemporary artistic research. Neither the Self evaluation document nor any other documentation provided to the Expert panel clearly details student involvement in artistic research projects.

According to the documentation, scientific field students have been co-authors in the past in these journals and events: Scientific Conference Global and Local Perspectives of Pedagogy (2016), The Journal of Music Education (2018), Journal of Education and Training Studies (2017), The Osijek Literary Review (2018 and 2019), the proceedings of international symposiums on culture, media and management European Realities organised the Academy (2015, 2017, 2019), the proceedings of the conference Sociocultural Heritage and Economic Development – Globalization and Regional Identity (2016), the proceedings of the International Conference Development of Public Administration organized by the Lavoslav Ružička Polytechnic in Vukovar (2019 and 2017), the proceedings of the 23rd Scientific Conference, Germans and Austrians in the Croatian Cultural Circle, Yearbook of the German Community DG Jahrbuch (2016), the Hvar City Theatre Days The Folk and the Popular (2018), the journal of textile technology and fashion design TEDI (2017), Art Magazine Kontura (2016).

The Academy provides to the teachers and students the possibility of full immersion work within the Academy's teaching base in the Istrian town of Bale.

The self-evaluation document mentions that AUKOS teachers use innovative and creative teaching methods, as follows: conversation (95.7%); oral presentation (89.2%); explanation (82.8%); interpretation (73.1%); research (independent student research) (66.7%); demonstration (66.7%); practical work (61.3%); independent learning (independent research) (49.5%); evaluation (assessment of works) (49.5%); creative method (48.4%); text work (44.1%); storytelling (39%); debate (32.3%); writing (31.2%); reading (31.2%); project teaching (31.2%); drawing (22.6%); problem based learning (PBL) (22.6%); ERR framework methods (brainstorming, Venn diagram, reciprocal teaching, semantic traits analysis, collaborative discussion, etc.) (21.5%); creative writing (16.1%). However, too many of the more 'innovative' methods seem to be the least represented in this survey. Many modern and innovative teaching and learning methods are not mentioned.

Recommendations for improvement

The Academy's artistic activities on a regional level seem to be one of the strong sides of the institution's teaching processes. However, the documentation mentions mostly artwork collaborations in professional institutions. We would recommend that students of artistic field should be included much more in artistic research projects, which could lead to the discovery and creation of new pedagogical forms and experimentations. The possibility of intensive work outside of Osijek in the teaching base in Bale probably presents a good opportunity for implementing art-science research sessions and modern transdisciplinary experimentation. The Expert panel encourages AUKOS teachers in the pursuit of risk taking, experimentation and in the active pursuit of new research and pedagogical forms and methods.

Concerning the scientific field activities, more opportunities for included students in research projects are recommended. The documentation mentions students only as co-authors or authors of articles in journals, but not as co-researchers in art/science projects.

The Expert panel found out the research and artistic activities of the Academy are often not consciously directly related to the teaching. The teacher should take more risk while inventing new teaching methods or using more innovative and challenging ways to work.

The Academy needs to work much harder on the introduction of innovative and modern, student-centred teaching and learning methods.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

APPENDICES

1. Quality assessment summary - tables

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

Quality grade by standard

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

Quality grade by standard

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

Quality grade by standard

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

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

Quality grade by standard

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

1. Site visit protocol

Edukacija članova stručnog povjerenstva u virtualnom okruženju / Education of panel members in virtual form

	Srijeda, 28. listopada 2020.	Wednesday, 28 th October 2020
9:50 -10:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spajanje na poveznicu (link) ZOOM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joining the ZOOM meeting via the link
10:00 -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predstavljanje AZVO-a Predstavljanje sustava visokog obrazovanja u RH Postupak reakreditacije Standardi za vrednovanje kvalitete Kako napisati Završno izvješće 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of ASHE Overview of the higher education system in Croatia Re-accreditation procedure Standards for the evaluation of quality How to write the Final report

Preliminarni posjet Stručnog povjerenstva visokom učilištu / Preliminary site-visit of Expert Panel members to the HEI

	Četvrtak, 5. studenoga 2020.	Thursday, 5 th November 2020
14:00- 14:15	Spajanje dijela članova Povjerenstva na poveznicu (link) ZOOM	Joining the part of the Expert Panel members to the ZOOM meeting via link
14:15 - 15:15	Sastanak s dekanom i prodekanima	Meeting with the Dean and Vice-Deans
15:15 - 16:30	Sastanak s Povjerenstvom za osiguravanje i unapređivanje kvalitete	Meeting with the Quality Assurance Committee
16:30 - 18:30	Analiza dokumenata	<i>Document analysis</i>

	Petak, 6. studenog 2020.	Friday, November 6 th 2020
9:00 - 12:00	Obilazak fakulteta (predavaonice, informatičke učionice, knjižnica, studentske službe) i prisustvovanje nastavi	Tour of the Faculty (classrooms, computer classrooms, library, student services) and participation in teaching classes

Virtualni sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstva, diskusija o zapažanjima i impresijama s preliminarnog posjeta/Virtual meeting of Expert Panel members, discussion on observations and impressions from the preliminary site-visit

	Ponedjeljak, 9. studenog 2020.	Monday, November 9 th 2020
11:00 -	Interni sastanak Stručnog povjerenstva	Internal meeting of the Expert panel

Prvi dan reakreditacije u virtualnom okruženju / First day of re-accreditation in virtual form

	Utorak, 10. studenog 2020.	Tuesday, November 10th 2020
9:15 – 9:30	Spajanje na poveznicu (link) ZOOM	Joining ZOOM meeting via the link
9:30 – 10:45	Sastanak s prodekanom za nastavu i studente i prodekanom za studijske programme	Meeting with vice dean for academic affairs and vice dean for study programmes
10:45 – 11:00	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
11:00 – 12:15	Sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstva s voditeljima studijskih programa i/ili voditeljima odsjeka	Meeting with study programme coordinators / heads of departments
12:15 – 12:30	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
12:30 – 13:30	Sastanak sa studentima	Meeting with students
13:30 – 14:30	Sastanak s nastavnicima (u stalnom radnom odnosu, osim onih na rukovodećim mjestima)	Meeting with full-time employed teachers, except those in managerial positions
14:30 – 14:45	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
14:45 – 15:30	Organizacija dodatnog sastanka o otvorenim pitanjima – prema potrebi	Organisation of an additional meeting on open questions, if needed
15:30 –	Interni sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstva –	Internal meeting of the Expert Panel members

Drugi dan reakreditacije u virtualnom okruženju / Second day of re-accreditation in virtual form

	Srijeda, 11. studenog 2020.	Wednesday, November 11 2020
9:15 – 9:30	Spajanje na poveznicu (link) ZOOM i	Joining ZOOM meeting via the link and
9:30 – 10:45	Sastanak s prodekanom za znanost i projekte i prodekanom za umjetnost, kulturu i strategiju	Meeting with vice dean for research and projects and vice-dean for arts, quality and strategy
10:45 – 11:00	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>

11:00 – 12:00	Sastanak s asistentima i poslijedoktorandima	Meeting with teaching assistants and postdoctoral researchers
12:00 – 12:10	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
12:10 – 13:30	Sastanak s voditeljima znanstvenih i umjetničkih projekata	Meeting with the heads of research and arts projects
13:30 – 14:30	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
14:30 – 15:15	Sastanak s alumnijima i vanjskim dionicima	Meeting with Alumni (former students who are not employed by the HEI) and External Stakeholders
15:15 –	Interni sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstva –	Internal meeting of the Expert Panel members –

Treći dan reakreditacije u virtualnom okruženju / Third day of re-accreditation in virtual form

	Četvrtak, 12. studenog 2020.	Thursday, November 12th 2020
9:50 – 10:00	Spajanje na poveznicu (link) ZOOM i	Joining ZOOM meeting via the link
10:00 – 10:50	Sastanak s prodekanom za razvoj kulturne i kreativne industrije	Meeting with the Vice-Dean for the development of cultural and creative Industries
10:50 – 11:00	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
11:00 – 11:50	Sastanak sa službama: - Ured za računovodstveno-financijske poslove - Ured za potporu studentima i razvoj karijera - Ured za centralnu arhivu i fundus umjetnina - Ured za izdavačku djelatnost	Meeting with the: - Accounting and finance office - Student support and career development office - Central archives and artworks collection office - Publishing office
11:50 – 12:00	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
12:00 – 12:30	Organizacija dodatnog sastanka o otvorenim pitanjima – prema potrebi	Organisation of an additional meeting on open questions, if needed
12:30 – 13:30	Interni sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstva	Internal meeting of the Expert Panel members
13:30 – 13:45	Završni sastanak s dekanom i prodekanima	Exit meeting with the Dean and Vice-Deans
13:45 –	Sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstva – ocjenjivanje prema standardima kvalitete	Internal meeting of the Expert Panel members – assessment according to quality standards

	Petak, 13. studenog 2020.	Friday, November 13th 2020
10:00 –	Interni sastanak Stručnog povjerenstva	Internal meeting of the Expert panel

EXPERT PANEL SUMMARY

The Academy has successfully completed its merger and is to be commended for taking the opportunities presented by this institutional review to complete an effective self-evaluation. The Academy has worked hard on responding to the needs of the labour market. Academy students are very happy with the skills and work-ethic they develop and with their employment prospects on graduation. Academy has strong and well-organised relationships with local enterprises and employers and is confident of its leading role in the cultural and creative life of the city and the local region.

Academy is proud of its unique position in Croatian higher education as the only institution 'qualified' to work in both science and art. Academy staff are also commendably determined to place interdisciplinarity at the centre of all Academy study programmes.

However, much work remains to be done and there are enormous opportunities for Academy development over the next five years. Academy currently has far too many study programmes, many with consistently very small numbers of students. Academy should take a deep look at all its study programme offerings and should merge related programmes. In revising and reimagining its study programmes, Academy should take the opportunity to merge related study programme courses together, to create smaller numbers of courses, with greater numbers of ECTS credits per course. Only when such a process of study programme revision, rationalisation and reimagination has occurred, should Academy consider the development of the required new study programmes.

Academy needs to work much harder on the relationship between science and art and on the science-art collaborative work it is engaged in. The Expert panel doubts whether the sciences represented at Academy will ever generate sufficient 'critical mass' to result in convincing, state-of-the-art art-science collaboration. At the moment, science seems very much less important than art at Academy. The Scientific Strategy needs a radical reimagination, and a dramatic modernisation of its philosophy, thinking and approaches.

Whilst interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity are undoubtedly exciting and rewarding 21st century areas for research and pedagogy, Academy urgently needs to agree clear and simple definitions of such terms. Too many staff described very honest and everyday artistic collaboration as 'interdisciplinary', totally missing the true possibilities and potentials to engage with truly interdisciplinary practice. Academy also needs a radical overhaul and modernisation of its research methodology and its approach to student-centred critical thinking. Academy can be a Croatian leader in all of these exciting fields.

Academy has done a lot of work on Learning Outcomes and on student centred learning. This work must continue as a priority. Many Academy learning outcomes are overly complicated, cumbersome and old-fashioned. Many learning approaches in Academy are still too teacher-centric and Academy administration often seems to be careful, risk-averse, excessively formal and not strongly student-centred.

Finally, Academy needs a radical modernisation of its attitude to ICT and to digital technologies. Too many senior Academy staff evidenced very poor awareness of digital technologies. In order to fund investments in spatial development and in modern equipment and software, Academy will need to attract funding from external projects and from collaborations with external enterprises. Fundamentally, Academy needs working linkages with businesses, enterprises, higher education institutions and cultural industries beyond the city and the local region, across Croatia and across Europe. A revised strategy for internationalisation could be a key part of such an Academy initiative.

Academy's merger process is working. Academy's programme offerings are distinctive and its staff team is strong, enthusiastic and well-motivated. Academy students are already achieving strong outcomes for themselves and are rightly proud of their alma mater. Academy has enormous opportunities to rationalise, strengthen and develop to become a leading higher education institution in Croatia over the next few years.