REPORT
OF THE EXPERT PANEL
ON THE REACCREDITATION
OF THE POSTGRADUATE UNIVERSITY STUDY PROGRAMME
ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE EASTERN ADRIATIC
UNIVERSITY OF ZADAR
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

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INTRODUCTION

The Expert Panel appointed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) created this Report on the Re-accreditation of the postgraduate university study programme Archaeology of the Eastern Adriatic on the basis of the Self-Evaluation Report of the Programme, other documentation submitted and a visit to the University of Zadar.

The Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE), a public body listed in EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education) and a full member of ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), re-accredits higher education institutions (hereinafter: HEIs) and their study programmes in line with the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (Official Gazette 45/09) and the Ordinance on the Content of a Licence and Conditions for Issuing a Licence for Performing Higher Education Activity, Carrying out a Study Programme and Re-Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions (OG 24/10). In this procedure parts of activities of higher education institutions and university postgraduate study programmes are re-accredited.
Expert Panel is appointed by the Agency's Accreditation Council, an independent expert body, to carry out independent evaluation of post-graduate university study programmes.
The Report contains the following elements:

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

Members of the Expert Panel:

- Dr. Igor Štiks, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom,
- Dr. Ljiljana Reinkowski, Universität Basel, Switzerland,
- Prof. Dr. Rozita Dimova, Ghent University, Belgium,
- Dr. Vladimir Unkovski-Korica, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom,
- Dr. H. J. M. J. (Harm) Goris, Tilburg University, Netherlands,
- Prof. David Maxwell, Emmanuel College Cambridge, United Kingdom,
- Prof. Elzbieta Osewska, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland,
- Prof. Mikhail Dmitriev, Central European University, Hungary,
- Prof. Andrej Blatnik, Univerza v Ljubljani, Slovenia,
- Prof. Ljiljana Šarić, University of Oslo, Norway,
- Prof. dr. Katrin Boeckh, Ludwig-Maximilian-Universität in Munich, Germany,
- Prof. Vincent Gaffney, University of Bradford, United Kingdom,
- Prof. Mika Vahakangas, Lund University, Sweden,
- Dr. sc. Nicole Butterfiled, Marie Curie Fellow, Seged University, Hungary,
- Anna Meens, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands,

- Kevin Kenjar, University of California, Berkeley, United States of America,
- Dr. Elżbieta Gajek, University of Warsaw, Poland,
- Dr. Kyle Jerro, University of Essex, United Kingdom,
- Dr Nadia Mifka-Profozic, University of York, United Kingdom,
- Dr. Moreno Mitrović, University of Cyprus, Cyprus,
- Dr. Catherine MacRobert, Oxford University, United Kingdom,
- Prof. Emeritus Svein Mønnesland, University of Oslo, Norway,
- Dajana Vasiljevicová, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic,
- Prof. dr. Christian Neuhäuser, Universitaet Dortmund, Germany,
- Dr. Dries Bosschaert, KU Leuven, Belgium,
- Dr. Oliver George Downing, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom,
- Prof. Hanoch Ben-Yami, Central European University, Hungary,
- Sonja Kačar, University Toulouse II – Jean Jaurès, France,
- Garrett R. Mindt, Central European University, Hungary,
- Prof. Vieri Samek Lodovici, University College London, United Kingdom,
- Mišo Petrović, Central European University, Hungary.

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

- Prof. Vincent Gaffney, University of Bradford, United Kingdom,
- Anna Meens, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands,
- Sonja Kačar, University Toulouse II – Jean Jaurès, France.

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

- Alma Agović, coordinator, ASHE,
- Ivana Šimić, assistant coordinator, ASHE,
- Irena Škarica, interpreter at the site visit,
- Ivana Rončević, translator of the Report, ASHE.

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

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

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme contained in the licence: Postgraduate university study programme in Archaeology of the Eastern Adriatic
Institution delivering the programme: Department of Archaeology, University of Zadar
Institution providing the programme: University of Zadar
Place of delivery: Zadar
Scientific area and field: Humanities, Archaeology
Number of doctoral candidates: 40
Number of HEI funded doctoral candidates: 4
Number of self-funded doctoral candidates and employer-funded doctoral candidates: 31 (self-funded), 5 (funded by employer)
Number of inactive doctoral candidates: 7
Number of teachers: 17
Number of supervisors: 16
Number of doctoral candidates to whom a supervisor was officially appointed: 34

Learning outcomes of the study programme:
Postgraduate study programme does not have strictly defined learning outcomes as in the period of the study programme organization there was no demand for their specific definition.
However objectives and structure of the study programme indicate that it leads to learning outcomes defined as the level 8.2 of the CroQF. On the basis of the defined objectives of specific courses, one can conclude that the doctoral candidates will be able to:

LO1: use methodology of scientific research independently
LO2: understand and interpret theoretical concepts in the field of archaeology with emphasis on areas of individual specializations
LO3: use acquired knowledge and specific generic competences in order to reach relevant conclusions independently
LO4: formulate and interpret problems within scientific subject-matter of the field they specialize in
LO5: interpret different technological, cultural, social, spiritual and landscape-related processes affecting development of communities in specific prehistoric and historic periods
LO6: respect ethical standards in writing of scientific paper
LO7: develop ability of adjustment to novelties in work and environment

Taught / research ratio: 32 credits attained through classes / 148 credits attained through research activities

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

to issue a letter of expectation for a period up to two (2) years during which the higher education institution should make the necessary improvements.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. Reconsideration of the variable fee structure to prevent cross-subsidies and in the light of what appears to be an inequitable impact on self-funded students and fee-paying students more generally.
2. Provision of a comprehensive research strategy outlining research themes, methodologies, funding strategies and (inter)national partnerships.
3. Improvements in the available library resources for archaeology. Prominent journals are missing within the catalogue.
4. A re-assessment of available computing resources to support modern research.
5. To formalise and build on the strength of the stakeholder community to provide greater opportunity to international, professional networks.
6. To consider the impact of heavy workloads on supervisors.
7. To change the HEI regulations to ensure that the postgraduate supervisor is not part of the thesis committee.
8. An increased emphasis on internationalisation both within the courses and academic activity including publication and participation within international meetings.
9. A travel budget to which all candidates could apply is desirable.

ADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. The quality of student supervision and its supportive character.
2. The quality of published student work at the national and international level.
3. The willingness of the programme staff to adapt to changing circumstances.
4. Potential of supportive stakeholders, particularly within the area of maritime research, to support and expand the doctoral programme.
5. The significant opportunities provided by the programme to acquire transferable skills.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. The variable fee structure for students, implemented as an institutional strategy, appears to create first and second-class student experience. It results in restricted opportunities for students not associated with research projects from the department or other institutions, or employed by the department itself.
2. The lack of a strategic plan for the development of the discipline at Zadar.
3. Lack of research resources for students (particularly with respect to library and software resources).
4. Lack of a strategy for internationalisation, and formalisation of relationships with other institutions to provide opportunities for exchange for the students as well as funding opportunities.
5. Lack of effective assessment/evaluation/feedback mechanisms.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. The possibilities for acquiring transferable skills.
2. The willingness to engage with community and professional stakeholders.
3. The systematic use of anti-plagiarism software.
4. The encouragement of students to publish research in professional journals.

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

Minimal legal conditions:	**YES/NO** **notes**
1. Higher education institution (HEI) is listed in the Register of Scientific Organisations in the scientific area of the programme, and has a positive reaccreditation decision on performing higher education activities and scientific activity.	**YES**
2. HEI delivers programmes in the two cycles leading to the doctoral programme, i.e., first two cycles in the same area and field/fields (for interdisciplinary programmes), and employs a sufficient number of teachers as defined by Article 6 of the Ordinance on the Content of a Licence and Conditions for Issuing a Licence for Performing Higher Education Activity, Carrying out a Study Programme and Re-Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions (OG 24/10).	**YES**
HEI employs a sufficient number of researchers, as defined by Article 7 of the the Ordinance on Conditions for Issuing Licence for Scientific Activity, Conditions for Re-Accreditation of Scientific Organisations and Content of Licence (OG 83/2010).	**YES**
3. At least 50% of teaching as expressed in norm-hours is delivered by teachers employed at the HEI (full-time, elected into scientific-teaching titles).	**YES**
4. Student: teacher ratio at the HEI is below 30:1.	**YES**
5. HEI ensures that doctoral theses are public.	**YES**
6. HEI launches the procedure of revoking the academic title if it is determined that it has been attained contrary to the conditions stipulated for its attainment, by severe violation of the studying rules or based on a doctoral thesis (dissertation) that has proved to be a plagiarism or a forgery according to provisions of the statute or other enactments.	**YES**
Additional/ recommended conditions of the ASHE Accreditation Council for passing a positive opinion	
1. HEI (or HEIs in joint programmes) has at least five teachers appointed to scientific-teaching titles in the field, or fields relevant for the programme involved in its delivery.	**YES**
2. In the most recent reaccreditation, HEI had the standard Scientific and Professional Activity marked as at least "partly implemented" (3).	**YES**
3. The doctoral programme is aligned with the HEI's research strategy.	**NO** **There is no direct link to the published university research strategy. The**

	provision of nested strategy documents is strongly recommended. These documents should not be limited to research themes but should be underwritten by strong method and impact statements.
4. The candidate : supervisor ratio at the HEI is not above 3:1.	**YES**
5. All supervisors meet the following conditions: a) PhD, elected into a scientific title, holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position and/or has at least two years of postdoctoral research experience; b) active researcher in the scientific area of the programme, as evidenced by publications, participation in scientific conferences and/or projects in the past five years (table 2, Supervisors and candidates); c) confirms feasibility of the draft research plan upon admission of the candidate (or submission of the proposal);	**a) YES** **Some supervisors are retired but still act as supervisors.** **b) YES** **The tabular data provided for the SER was not complete. There were numerous errors including data not supplied for individuals, dead links and a lack of clarity regarding how assessed articles were chosen. The consequence of this is that a full quantitative assessment was not possible. However, full-time staff appear to be research active within the last five years.** **c) YES** **The draft research plan is not required upon admission. The supervisor confirms feasibility of the research plan upon submission of the dissertation proposal, which happens at the beginning of the second year.**

d) ensures the conditions (and funding) necessary to implement the candidate's research (in line with the draft research plan) as a research project leader, co-leader, participant, collaborator or in other ways; e) trained for the role before assuming it (through workshops, co-supervisions etc.); f) received a positive opinion of the HEI on previous supervisory work.	**d) NO** **It is clear that individual students that are not associated with existing research projects, or without institutional sponsorship, may not have full access to resources or opportunities required to fully achieve their chosen research goals.** **e) NO** **Although training provision is asserted within the SER, this was not elaborated upon during the site visit.** **f) NO** **Data from students is homogenised and a detailed commentary cannot be extracted from this data.**
6. All teachers meet the following conditions: a) holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position; b) active researcher, recognized in the field relevant for the course (table 1, Teachers).	**a) YES** **b) YES – although one active participant appears to be a retired member of staff.**
7. The supervisor normally does not participate in the assessment committees.	**NO** **The supervisors are part of the assessment committee and conform to HEI regulations. We would recommend the HEI to change this regulation.**
8. The programme ensures that all candidates spend at least three years doing independent research (while studying, individually, within or outside courses), which includes writing the thesis, publishing, participating in international conferences, field work, attending courses relevant for	**YES** **Students undertake independent research throughout the programme, alongside**

research etc.	**required taught programmes. In practice, they continue to work on their dissertation for several years after the three-year programme has finished.**
9. For joint programmes and doctoral schools (at the university level): cooperation between HEIs is based on adequate contracts; joint programmes are delivered in cooperation with accredited HEIs; the HEI delivers the programme within a doctoral school in line with the regulations and ensures good coordination aimed at supporting the candidates; at least 80% of courses are delivered by teachers employed at HEIs within the consortium.	**N/A**

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

1. RESOURCES: TEACHERS, SUPERVISORS, RESEARCH CAPACITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE	
1.1. HEI is distinguished by its scientific/ artistic achievements in the discipline in which the doctoral study programme is delivered.	**Improvements are necessary.** The tabular data provided for the SER was not complete. There were numerous errors including data not supplied for individuals, dead links and a lack of clarity regarding how assessed articles were chosen. The consequence of this is that a full quantitative assessment was not possible. Almost all supervisors were research active within the last five years. Due to the numerous errors in the staff submission any attempt to produce a full numeric assessment of the data was unlikely to be successful. As far as could be ascertained individual impact scores are c. 5-6. Most publications are within local or regional journals. The programme provides a good international, research environment and includes the organization of national and international research meetings.
1.2. The number and workload of teachers involved in the study programme ensure quality doctoral education.	**Improvements are necessary.** The majority of teachers have excessive workloads but teaching, overall, is provided from within the Faculty and on the criteria provided here. Serious consideration should be given to workloads and the impact on both staff and students.
1.3. The teachers are highly qualified researchers who actively engage with the topics they teach, providing a quality doctoral programme.	**Improvements are necessary.** Almost all teachers have been research active within their area within the previous five years. With average impact scores of 5-6 it is clear that most publications have only local impact.

1.4. The number of supervisors and their qualifications provide for quality in producing the doctoral thesis.	**Improvements are necessary.** The numbers of supervisors with appropriate qualifications is sufficient. However, the distribution of students to an appropriate supervisor according to their chosen subject is not necessarily adequate. Cases were recorded during the site visit where assigned supervisors were not experts in the field chosen by the student.
1.5. The HEI has developed methods of assessing the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors.	**Improvements are necessary.** The institution has a system for student assessment but data is homogenised and therefore of relatively low value in assessing performance. This appears to be a university-level issue and programme staff were clearly enthusiastic to change this to a more responsive and self-critical system.
1.6. The HEI has access to high-quality resources for research, as required by the programme discipline.	**Improvements are necessary.** It was apparent during the site visit that there are major deficiencies in the library provision for archaeology in comparison with humanities (for which students are not required to pay fees). Fee paying archaeology students did not have adequate access to recent journals or contemporary literature. Students voiced concerns regarding the lack of computer facilities for research, including GIS laboratories. It was not possible to visit facilities given the time available and the IT staff were not available to respond to questions put to research and library staff.
2. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE PROGRAMME	
2.1. The HEI has established and accepted effective procedures for proposing, approving and delivering doctoral education. The procedures include identification of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social and economic needs.	**Improvements are necessary.** The doctoral programme was launched, and approved, in line with the existing regulations and clearly contributes to the scientific/artistic, cultural, social and economic needs of the community. The programme delivers motivated, skilled and professional archaeologists that are a valuable asset to the community.

	The assessment team were very impressed with the range of stakeholders willing to support the programme during the visit. It is also true that the provision of transferable skill courses as part of the programme will provide students with the capacity to contribute more broadly to society. In support of this position, the team would specifically note the willingness of stakeholders to act more broadly in support of programme development. In particular, the available maritime associations could provide access to international connections (e.g. UNITWIN) and the potential to utilise the opportunities provided by the marine resource to expand and internationalise the programme significantly.
2.2. The programme is aligned with the HEI research mission and vision, i.e. research strategy.	**Improvements are necessary.** The University has a general development strategy dated July 2017. Whilst this document provides a good description of general benchmarks at an institutional level, there are no nested documents providing evidence for a strategy to enhance the programme in terms of academic standing, internationalisation or research or teaching methodologies.
2.3. The HEI systematically monitors the success of the programmes through periodic reviews, and implements improvements.	**Improvements are necessary.** The HEI has a system of periodic review at a variety of levels (e.g. programme, course), but a significant drawback is that results are merged. By doing so the feedback loop is broken, making it difficult to propose practical changes that could improve the programme based on this rather generalised feedback.
2.4. HEI continuously monitors supervisors' performance and has mechanisms for evaluating supervisors, and, if necessary, changing them and mediating between the supervisors and the candidates.	**Improvements are necessary.** The quality of supervision is not monitored systematically. There seems to be access to external supervisors, and these are involved and enthusiastic, but this opportunity is currently not optimally used. A maximum of three PhD candidates can be assigned to one supervisor and this seems to be adhered to.

2.5. HEI assures academic integrity and freedom.	**Improvements are necessary.** A positive aspect is the systematic use of plagiarism software. The theses are not all available online, so this is not transparent. The thesis defence committee is not entirely independent, because (in line with HEI regulations) the supervisor is member of the committee. **Implementation of plagiarism software is to be commended.**
2.6. The process of developing and defending the thesis proposal is transparent and objective, and includes a public presentation.	**High level of quality** Yes, the development of the thesis proposal is clearly outlined in the programme and a proposed defence protocol (as well as a template) is in place. This procedure includes a public defence of the thesis topic (synopsis). The process might be improved through provision of a more detailed research outline at the onset of the degree.
2.7. Thesis assessment results from a scientifically sound assessment of an independent committee.	**Improvements are necessary.** Thesis assessment is sound, but the thesis defence committee is not entirely independent, because (in line with HEI regulations) the supervisor is member of the committee. This should be changed urgently. Candidates are obliged to publish at least one article in a scientific journal of standing prior to the thesis defence. In reality, students are publishing many more articles, many of which may be of a high quality and in internationally journals. The frequency of publication by students provides an opportunity for the institution to consider the option of doctoral submission by publication.
2.8. The HEI publishes all necessary information on the study programme, admissions, delivery and conditions for progression and completion, in accessible outlets and media.	**Improvements are necessary.** Yes, but mostly in Croatian. If the HEI has the ambition to enrol more foreign students in their programme, which is asserted within the University Development Plan (written in Croatian), then the use of English is recommended.

2.9. Funds collected for the needs of doctoral education are distributed transparently and in a way that ensures sustainability and further development of doctoral education (ensures that candidates' research is carried out and supported, so that doctoral education can be completed successfully).	**Improvements are necessary.** There are insufficient funds available for supporting all PhD candidates in their research. This seems to result in an uneven balance between the funded candidates (employed at the HEI or within a supervisor's project) and unfunded students. The latter are possibly in a detrimental position and have fewer opportunities to gain ECTS to go to conferences or to travel for research purposes. With regard to travel, a travel budget to which all candidates could apply might be a solution. Generally, the HEI should improve the library research facilities available to doctoral candidates, especially access to modern archaeological literature (specifically international journals), whilst the availability of software for archaeological research (e.g. GIS) could be improved.
2.10. Tuition fees are determined on the basis of transparent criteria (and real costs of studying).	**Improvements are necessary.** The criteria for determining the tuition fees are not transparent, neither are the ways in which these fees are spent. The fee might be too low to cover the real costs of research. However, this should be seen in contrast to other PhD programmes on offer at the HEI, some of which are exempt from tuition fees. This variable fee structure is of great concern. Overall, it is good practice that no tuition fees are asked after the third year, when candidates are primarily undertaking independent research, although independent research should start much sooner.
3. SUPPORT TO DOCTORAL CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROGRESSION	
3.1. The HEI establishes admission quotas with respect to its teaching and supervision capacities.	**Improvements are necessary.** Although it was not clear that any specific quota is rigorously applied, the candidate : supervisor ratio is adhered to. Student interviews suggest that it is not always possible to provide a supervisor with direct, specialist knowledge within their chosen area of research.

3.2. The HEI establishes admission quotas on the basis of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social, economic and other needs.	**High level of quality** Although it was not clear that any specific quota was applied, the fact that many alumni of the programme seem to be employed within archaeology suggests the programme is of value to the discipline, and in line with its needs. Additionally, interviews suggest that the doctoral programme is interacting beneficially with stakeholders, and therefore engaging with direct cultural, social and economic needs. Stakeholders suggested these relationships could be expanded strategically and with a positive impact on research funding and also the development of an enhanced internationalisation agenda.
3.3. The HEI establishes the admission quotas taking into account the funding available to the candidates, that is, on the basis of the absorption potentials of research projects or other sources of funding.	**Improvements are necessary.** It was not apparent that any quota system was applied with reference to funding availability. Consequently, there is an inequitable relationship between funded and unfunded students, including unequal access to travel budget, opportunities to gain ECTS or to participate in fieldwork. This puts the unfunded students in a disadvantageous position. Additionally, it should be noted that there is a variable fee structure for doctoral studies across the university and this may be considered to result in an unfair, cross-subsidy system, which impacts negatively on a certain group of students.
3.4. The HEI should pay attention to the number of candidates admitted as to provide each with an advisor (a potential supervisor). From the point of admission to the end of doctoral education, efforts are invested so that each candidate has a sustainable research plan and is able to complete doctoral research successfully.	**Improvements are necessary.** Candidates are not required to have developed a sustainable research plan upon admission to the programme. Specific research topics are established only in the third semester. Supervisors seem to be supportive to candidates and the development of research plans. All students seem to have an advisor (and later on – a supervisor), but because one supervisor may only have a maximum of three students, this may not always be the most appropriate supervisor for any specific research topic.

3.5. The HEI ensures that interested, talented and highly motivated candidates are recruited internationally.	**Improvements are necessary.** The published university strategy suggests that there is a desire to compete internationally. Courses are advertised in English on the web site and some courses may be available in English. There is also an option to write the dissertation in English (although the students seemed to be unaware of this). The calls for application (recruitment), however, seem to be published in Croatian and mostly in Croatian media. If the HEI has the ambition to enrol more foreign students in their programme, then the use of English and dissemination within the international media is recommended.
3.6. The selection process is public and based on choosing the best applicants.	**Improvements are necessary.** Whilst admission procedures exist for assessing student quality, and may include an interview, the lack of a detailed research proposal at the onset of doctoral studies is a weakness in the selection process. A draft research proposal should be submitted during the admission process.
3.7. The HEI ensures that the selection procedure is transparent and in line with published criteria, and that there is a transparent complaints procedure.	**High level of quality** Selection/admission procedure is transparent and a complaints procedure is in place (but for recommendation see 3.6).
3.8. There is a possibility to recognize applicants' and candidates' prior learning.	**High level of quality** Yes, the department is open to alternative academic pathways and appreciative of the opportunities for interdisciplinary research. There is also opportunity to enrol at a later stage within the programme if applicants have demonstrated achievement in a relevant area of study.
3.9. Candidates' rights and obligations are defined in relevant HEI regulations and a contract on studying that provides for a high level of supervisory and institutional support to the candidates.	**Improvements are necessary.** The formal rights and obligations between supervisor/candidate are stated in regulations and a contract exists that the candidate has to sign. However, the visiting team were unsure whether the same opportunities

	and obligations enjoyed by students with project support or sponsorship were, in fact, extended to students who were self-funded. Students were not aware what action to take and who to approach in case of a complaint or suggestion for improvement of the programme.
3.10. There are institutional support mechanisms for candidates' successful progression.	**Improvements are necessary.** Programme supervisors seem to be very supportive and helpful. However, broader, institutional support for doctoral research appears to be variable and not comprehensive in respect of the entire student body. In particular, students employed within the University may receive preferential treatment in respect of ECTS acquisition. The University must ensure equality of opportunity to all of its doctoral students. Such a policy should include reconsideration of fee waivers as these seem to be arbitrarily supporting specific disciplines. The doctoral programme provides a series of courses in transferable skills, e.g. project management or financial training, which will be invaluable in future career development.
4. PROGRAMME AND OUTCOMES	
4.1. The content and quality of the doctoral programme are aligned with internationally recognized standards.	**Improvements are necessary.** In comparison with other degrees, the taught element of the doctoral programme is significantly high in terms of the use of supervisor time. Student statements suggest that care is required to ensure that courses are directed at specific research needs and at an appropriate level of knowledge. Although support for student publishing is highly commendable, there is a need to consider the impact, and cost in research time, on the student. It is also clear that there is a need for clarification regarding published research if there is no guidance on incorporation of published work within theses, or provision of a route towards the award of a degree through publication.

4.2. Programme learning outcomes, as well as the learning outcomes of modules and subject units, are aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF. They clearly describe the competencies the candidates will develop during the doctoral programme, including the ethical requirements of doing research.	**Improvements are necessary.** The site visit and the self-evaluation report suggest that the department follows the criteria outlined in CroQF. It should be noted that student interviews suggest that courses do not always demonstrate the progression required for postgraduate research.
4.3. Programme learning outcomes are logically and clearly connected with teaching contents, as well as the contents included in supervision and research.	**Improvements are necessary.** The SER states that programme learning outcomes are in preparation. If so, the evaluation team anticipate that appropriate course progression will be demonstrated within such a document and the role of publication will be clarified at the same time.
4.4. The doctoral programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes and competencies aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF.	**Improvements are necessary.** Yes. However, the comments made within section 4.3 are applicable here and these issues should be clarified through the formalisation of learning outcomes for all aspects of the programme.
4.5. Teaching methods (and ECTS, if applicable) are appropriate for level 8.2 of the CroQF and assure achievement of clearly defined learning outcomes.	**Improvements are necessary.** Yes. The comments made within section 4.3 are also applicable here. The formalisation of learning outcomes for all aspects of the programme should ensure the applicability of teaching methods. It should be noted that there was clear dissatisfaction regarding the availability of, or access to, teaching related to specialist skill sets including GIS.
4.6. The programme enables acquisition of general (transferable) skills.	**High level of quality** The programme provides clear evidence of a considered approach to the teaching of transferable skills. This might be enhanced through the addition of other skill sets including general academic writing/presentation skills.
4.7. Teaching content is adapted to the needs of current and future research and candidates' training (individual course plans, generic skills etc.).	**Improvements are necessary.** The courses demonstrate the capacity for flexibility including the possibilities for acquiring ECTS via 'extracurricular activities'. The programme is 'hands on'

	and allows the students to engage with their own research topic as well as practical aspects of archaeological research within the wider research community. The downside of such a situation is that unfunded students cannot make full use of the opportunities for "extracurricular activities". Given that a "self-funded" student may arrive with significant contacts or professional networks, the regulation that such activities can be used to gain ECTS when a (Zadar) professor is involved may be regarded as disadvantageous. "Ex cathedra" courses, in contrast, are less flexible and do not always contribute to the candidate's research.
4.8. The programme ensures quality through international connections and teacher and candidate mobility.	**Improvements are necessary.** The department/programme has good connections to other institutions, and stakeholder organisations at a national level. Discussion with stakeholders suggests that the department could benefit further, in terms of funding and international linkage, by enhancing and deepening these relations. The students benefit from the provision of an international office to provide information on international opportunities. The students clearly have an international outlook: they are publishing in international journals and demonstrate the wish to attend conferences abroad. However, the opportunities to achieve this are unequal with often funded students having privileged access to travel funds. A travel budget to which all candidates could apply is desirable.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The 'high quality label' cannot be proposed or awarded to a programme or a higher education institution that does not comply with the requirements laid down by the laws and bylaws mentioned in this document, and any additional requirements recommended by the Accreditation Council. Moreover, the quality assessment awarded to a study programme should reflect a high level of quality inasmuch that at least half of the sub-criteria in each of the quality assessment criteria are assessed as being of high quality. The Accreditation Council of the Agency issues a final opinion on the label awarded. The content and form of the quality labels shall be prescribed by the Agency in a relevant general act.

The Accreditation Council of the Agency discusses the final report with all recommendations and suggestions, and issues their opinion on the report. Based on a prior opinion of the Accreditation

Council, the Agency issues an Accreditation Recommendation to the minister responsible for science and higher education, and upon receipt of the minister's final decision on the outcome of the procedure, awards the 'high quality label" to a higher education institution.