



**REPORT
of the Expert Panel
on the
RE-ACCREDITATION OF
Dag Hammarskjöld University College of International Relations and
Diplomacy**

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INTRODUCTION

This report on the re-accreditation of the Dag Hammarskjöld University College of International Relations and Diplomacy was written by the Expert Panel appointed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education, on the basis of the self-evaluation of the institution and supporting documentation and a visit to the institution.

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

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

The report contains:

- A brief analysis of the institutional advantages and disadvantages,
- A list of good practices found at the institution,
- Recommendations for institutional improvement and measures to be implemented in the following period (and checked within a follow-up procedure), and
- Detailed analysis of compliance with the standards and criteria for re-accreditation.

The members of the expert panel were:

- Prof. Dibyesh Anand, University of Westminster, United Kingdom, panel chair,
- Prof. Ioan Horga, University Oradea, Romania,
- Dr. Đana Luša, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb, Croatia,
- Dr. Mladen Andrlić, Director of the Diplomatic Academy, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Croatia,
- Marko Dubroja, student, University of Applied Sciences VERN', Croatia.

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

- Ivana Borošić, coordinator, ASHE,
- Viktorija Juriša, support to the coordinator, ASHE,
- Goran Briški, interpreter at the site visit and report translator, ASHE.

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

- Management,
- Working Group that compiled the Self-Evaluation and representative of the Board of Quality Assurance,
- The student coordinators,
- Full-time employed teachers,
- Students,
- External stakeholders (teachers, associates, representatives of professional practice).

The Expert Panel also had a tour of the library, IT rooms, student register desk, and the classrooms, where they held brief Q&A sessions with students.

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

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

1. **Issue a confirmation on compliance** with the requirements for performing higher education activities or parts of activities (renew the licence),
2. **Deny the license** for performing higher education activities or parts of activities to the higher education institution, or
3. **Issue a letter of recommendation** for the period up to three (3) years in which period the higher education institution should make the necessary improvements. The letter of recommendation may include suspension of student enrolment for the defined period.

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

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED INSTITUTION

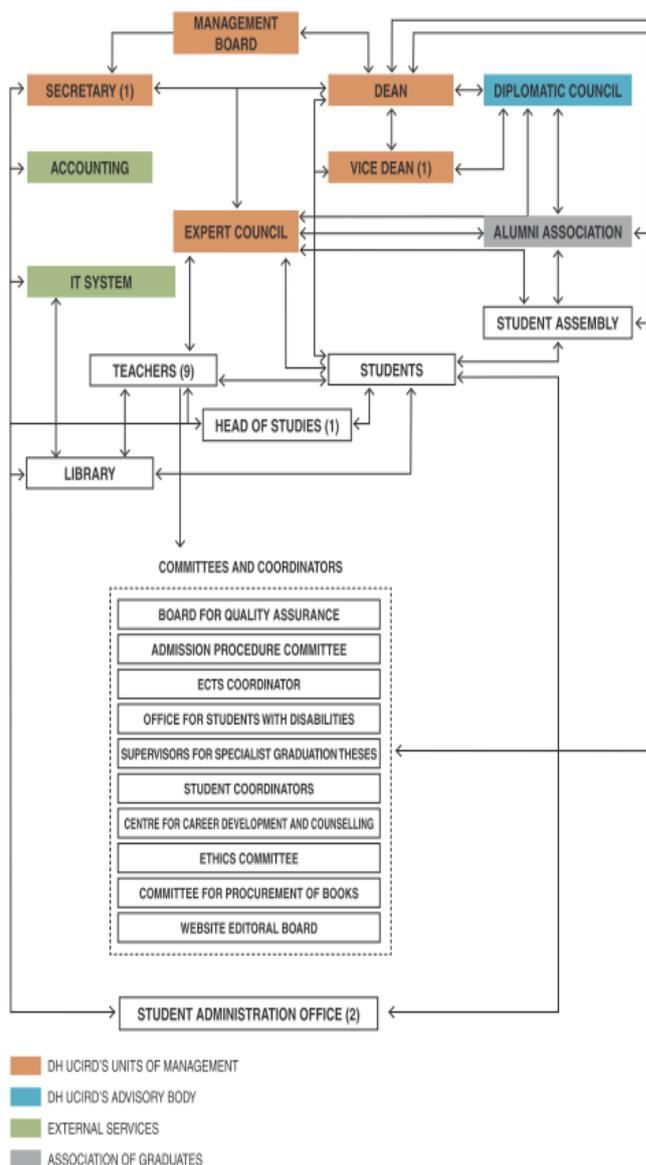
NAME OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: Dag Hammarskjöld University College of International Relations and Diplomacy

ADDRESS: Ilica 242, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia

DEAN: Academician Ivo Šlaus

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE: Self-evaluation (page 13)

Figure 1. The scheme of the organizational structure of DH UCIRD



STUDY PROGRAMMES:

- Undergraduate Professional Study Programme of International Relations and Diplomacy (three years),
- Specialist Graduate Professional Study Programme of International Relations and Diplomacy (two years).

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 216

NUMBER OF TEACHERS: 9

TOTAL BUDGET: 7,558,448.09

MSES FUNDS: 0

OWN FUNDS: 7,558,448.09

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: Self-Evaluation (page 12)

Dag Hammarskjöld University College of International Relations and Diplomacy (hereinafter referred to as: DH UCIRD) has been operating since 2009. Namely, this higher education institution was established pursuant to the accreditation awarded by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport on March 31, 2009, and it started its activity in the winter semester of the academic year 2009/10. Since February 22, 2012 the institution has borne the present name of Dag Hammarskjöld University College of International Relations and Diplomacy, thus paying homage to one of the leading figures of Swedish and world diplomacy, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations and Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

The university college in question is the only higher education institution in the Republic of Croatia that carries out undergraduate professional study programme and specialist graduate professional study programme of international relations and diplomacy. The undergraduate professional study programme lasts for three years. Upon its completion, students earn 180 points under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and are awarded the professional title of Professional Bachelor (baccalaureus/baccalaurea) of International Relations and Diplomacy. On the other hand, the specialist graduate professional study programme lasts two years. Upon graduation, students earn 120 points under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and are awarded the professional title of Specialist of International Relations and Diplomacy.

Having obtained the appropriate Certificate of incorporation on May 16, 2013, DH UCIRD expanded its activity into publishing. Three books have been published by DH UCIRD so far, while DH UCIRD's *Međunarodne studije* (International Studies), a journal in international relations, foreign policy and diplomacy, has been published regularly.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE EXPERT PANEL

ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. The strategic plan of the DH-UCIRD has the support of, and involves, various levels of staff (management, teachers, visiting lecturers), students as well as external stakeholders,
2. The DH-UCIRD as a higher education institution (HEI) has adopted the relevant quality-assured policies and procedures,
3. The DH-UCIRD has several highly productive teachers with good international and/or national visibility in the research activity in international political and economic relations, international finance and trade, security, conflict management, and European Union policies,
4. DH-UCIRD employs an effective mix of lecturers composed of junior and mid-career professors, as well as of senior experienced diplomats, which provides for a fine combination of theoretical and practical approaches and findings in the field of international relations and diplomacy,
5. The study programme at DH-UCIRD offers specialisation in analysing the Cold War, as well as the role of nonalignment. Given that times and priorities in international relations and diplomacy have changed, study programme needs to evolve. The HEI has the required processes, people and structures in place to allow for this flexibility and dynamism,
6. DH-UCIRD has a proactive and engaged student body,
7. DH-UCIRD makes an effective use of overseas study tours to enhance knowledge of the wider world.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. Unclear evidence of the mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the goals and operational objectives,
2. No clarity of involvement of the students and external stakeholders in the process of setting up the curriculum content,
3. Limited instilling of research skills in students,
4. The low contribution concerning the number of translations of collective publications into foreign languages (e.g. English),
5. They offer a systematic programme, but it still seems to be limited in terms of subject matter and academic discipline. The courses look rather traditional and conventional.
6. Library resources are limited,
7. Employability skills are insufficiently embedded in the curriculum.

FEATURES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. The concept of quality is internalised in the staff's thinking and behaviour,
2. The study programmes are in line with the mission of the DH-UCIRD and meet the standards for awarding the qualifications,
3. The good translation of the strategic plan of the research and scientific activity into goals and operational objectives,
4. The proactive support of the career development of young teachers,
5. A number of courses are designed with an introductory part composed of a theoretical background, facts and figures, which is followed by practitioners' views of experienced diplomats and other international experts. Such a good practice should be adopted by all courses that are part of the programmes offered by the DH-UCIRD,
6. Some students have been trained in multiple foreign languages intensively at the DH-UCIRD, namely Arabic, Chinese, German, Italian, Spanish, and Russian.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. Management of the Higher Education Institution and Quality Assurance

- To provide clear evidence of the mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the goals and operational objectives as set out in the Strategic Plan,
- To allow more financial resources to the library in the Strategic Plan and in the Management Activity,
- To pay attention in the Strategic Plan and in the Management Activity to the creation of a database concerning the collection of information after monitoring the management process and to use this information in the Management Activity,
- To involve more students and stakeholders from the private and public sectors in the quality assurance policies and procedures,
- To establish and implement formal feedback mechanisms for staff (such as annual appraisals with line managers) where specific objectives are set for the next period,
- To set research performance objectives for individuals at regular intervals.

2. Study Programmes

- To announce and discuss the future of the College and its (re)designed study programme with prospective interested stakeholders and the wider public,
- To show evidence of a more effective distribution of courses, with more general courses being taught in the initial years of study, and the specialized ones being taught in advanced years,
- To offer new courses in areas of sustainable development, energetic diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy, diplomacy of small states, Mediterranean and other regions,

- To introduce more lectures to be taught in English, which would enable more competitive study programmes for students from Croatia, but also expose the College more to international markets and competition influences,
- To improve adaptation of the College to (f)actual circumstances regarding demands of students and different stakeholders, as well as of the labour market,
- To introduce obligatory programmes to enable imparting of research skills as well as hands on practical skills and experience.

3. Students

- To re-evaluate admission criteria for each academic year based on the data of students' academic success,
- To offer students more opportunities to engage in public speaking and participate in the University debates (e.g. debates at the University of Zagreb, European University etc.),
- To improve the feedback professors give their students, outside the exams, in the form of presentations, essays etc.,
- To consider doing more public advertising on social networks to attract prospective students,
- To conduct a student survey about their programmes, not just for each course. By doing so, the students will be able to say what they did and did not like about the courses in the programme; the general survey results should be made public and the results should be more transparent.

4. Teachers

- To increase the proportion of full-time teachers with academic appointment into higher educational or scientific titles and to implement the measures and activities for increasing the scientific and research standards of the employees,
- To devote more attention to increasing teachers' mobility and to encourage them to become more engaged in the implementation of existing agreements on institutional cooperation,
- To explore why the participation in professional development programmes is limited to select teachers, to improve teachers' involvement and to strategically plan all activities pertaining to their professional development, which includes ensuring sufficient funds for training programmes and to have them become more actively involved in special professional development programmes for acquiring skills in writing project proposals and applying for international project funds, as well as in communicating research results to the private sector.

5. Research and Professional Activity

- To formalise the priorities in the agenda of professional and research activity,
- To develop clear key performance indicators to allow direct comparison of publication quality and quantity,

- To develop a standardized process for performance evaluation across the DH-UCIRD. This assessment should include summative and formative components that focus on the scientific and research output and student mentoring as appropriate for an individual's specific appointment,
- To foster a strong connection with the industry field by adjusting the curriculum to this demand,
- To involve junior scholars and teachers in research to ensure long-term career development for them and research led teaching for the institution.

6. International Cooperation and Mobility

- To organise an Annual Students Conference on a topical issue where the speakers include faculties as well as students. Open this to students from all over the country to participate. Such a conference would highlight the uniqueness of the HEI and showcase its strengths in dealing with vital topics of public and international affairs,
- To introduce substantive courses on disciplinary topics to be taught in English,
- To widen the pool of academics who are involved with internationalisation and mobility,
- To encourage foreign students and teachers to come for a substantive period of time.

7. Resources: Administration, Space, Equipment and Finances

- To make strategic investment in the library to expand it significantly,
- To provide to the students access to more electronic databases,
- To support all teaching staff to be research active.

A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE WITH THE STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR RE-ACCREDITATION

1. Management of the Higher Education Institution and Quality Assurance

1.1. The strategic plan of the DH-UCIRD has the support of all staff and students and the external stakeholders. Both the permanent and visiting faculty have strong inputs into the processes. The decision-making processes are clear. We have noticed a proactive participation of external stakeholders in the general activity of the DH-UCIRD including in existing teaching programme, but did not find much evidence of their involvement in the rethinking study programme to make it more responsive to the challenges and the demands of the labour market. We have noticed a good translation of the strategic plan into goals and operational objectives. Another lack that we have noticed concerned the clear evidence of the mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the goals and operational objectives.

The main strategic risks have been identified and thought has been put into contingency planning with regard to the continuing limitation of finances and lack of information after monitoring the management process. The management has demonstrated follow-up on weaknesses identified during the current management period, for example in terms of starting to develop the DH-UCIRD library, though a lot more needs to be done.

1.2. The structure of the DH-UCIRD is clearly formalised in the legal documents, with equal distribution of the tasks between the bodies and very open responsibilities for each actor. The management structure is adapted to the particularity of the DH-UCIRD. The processes are also linked with the mission of the institution. However, more attention should be paid to how the structure becomes responsive to contingencies including the need to revise enrolment quotas and deal with the dynamic job market for the students.

1.3. The DH-UCIRD offers 2 study programmes.

The *Undergraduate Professional Study Programme of International Relations and Diplomacy* awards the title of Professional Bachelor in *International Relations and Diplomacy*. During three years, the students acquire knowledge and skills in international relations, diplomacy, foreign policy, security, political sciences, economics and communication. Most of the undergraduate alumni continue to study in the DH-UCIRD in the *Specialist Graduate Professional Study Programme of International Relations and Diplomacy*, others continue to study at Master level in other universities in Croatia and at foreign partners of the DH-UCIRD, while others are employed in the public or private sector.

Specialist Graduate Professional Study Programme of International Relations and Diplomacy award the title of Professional Graduate in *International Relations and Diplomacy*. During two years, the students acquire knowledge and skills in international political and economic

relations, international finance and trade, security, conflict management, European Union policies, institutions and funds, international law. The alumni are often employed in government administration, international organisations and institutions, corporations, associations, NGOs, etc.

The study programmes are in line with the mission of the DH-UCIRD concerning the content, description and learning outcomes and meet in full the standards for awarding the qualifications. The indicators regarding enrolment in and duration of the studies, as well as regarding the employment are average in Croatian terms. Also the study programmes meet the standards and can be compared with study programmes at similar European institutions.

However, it is not clear how the programmes promote independent research. While the Mission highlights research capacity explicitly, research is not fully embedded in the study programme.

1.4. The DH-UCIRD as a higher education institution (HEI) has adopted the quality-assured policies and procedures. The concept of quality is internalised in the staff's thinking and behaviour. The documents concerning the QA system described are sufficient and comprehensive (templates, annual analysis). The annual action plans for improvement have some shortages regarding the distribution of responsibilities. The self-evaluation is unbalanced in terms of content. Some criteria are very detailed, while other responses are laconic (see Self-evaluation document of DH-UCIRD, p. 37, point c; p. 39, point g; p. 79, points j; k; m). Some gaps can be seen in the degree of involvement of the students and stakeholders from the private sector, particularly in the process of setting up the curriculum content.

1.5. The mechanisms for monitoring the teaching quality are mostly implemented (peer reviews of content and delivery, teacher training via workshops). Yet, the good feedback from students is currently not systematically rewarded. For instance, the students asked for a more dynamic method of teaching during the discussions. An annual review of curriculum could contribute to improving the contents and dynamics of the programmes of studies without involving any major review. Some gaps are also noticed concerning the implementation of the functional mechanism for monitoring and improvement of the research quality, particularly by involving all the teaching staff in this matter. No research performance objectives are set for individuals at regular intervals in formal settings.

1.7. The monitoring of potential unethical behaviour is achieved. There is a code of ethics available at DH-UCIRD level. However, there are no clear mechanisms in place for dealing with issues related to, for example, plagiarism in student work. Awareness and understanding of unethical behaviour appears to be limited.

2. Study Programmes

2.1. The DH-UCIRD has already introduced certain procedures for monitoring and improving the quality of study programmes. The indicators achieved regarding enrolment in and duration of the studies, as well as regarding the employment after graduating are average in Croatian terms.

Effective interviews and surveys with students, as well as with stakeholders from the public, private and NGO sectors, if evidence is collected, analysed and presented more systematically, could provide for much better outcomes, not only in a horizon of years, but even in a shorter period of time.

Introducing active English, so that it would become major 'lingua franca' of the key activities, particularly of lecturing, as well as of internal seminars and public conferences, should also impact directly the overall excellence of the College. This could additionally attract not only students from Croatia, but also from abroad. Such a distinguished institution and a study programme, with internationally competitive scholar fees, if and when delivered in English, would obviously attract more international public, namely students (and professors), as well as different stakeholders. Moreover, competence in English could become additional criteria for selecting both students and lecturers. However, there is still insufficient information regarding further (re)designing of the study programmes, which could bring some new courses which are not a part of the current curriculum, although certain EU brokered research studies are under way.

2.2. The enrolment quotas are justified and mostly in line with limited interests of potential students in the study programme of international relations and diplomacy. These have been affected by the economy of volume in a number of ways, mostly having in mind that Croatia is among relatively open but small EU markets. Signals from domestic labour markets regarding demand for employing new specialists in international relations and diplomacy in GO, NGO or business sectors seem to be weak and not so visible. A prolonged and structural economic crisis, with slowdowns of purchasing power, additionally burdens real and optional demand of potential students. However, there is still no evidence of how enrolment quotas are being defined, which should be bettered by more dynamic, permanent and updated market research. Improving the dialogue with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and other stakeholders could help, as well as more intensive work on the EU funded projects. Additional specialisation of study programmes at high graduate levels could also bring new benefits. The management has been working hard on further restructuring of the programmes, but it seems difficult to judge this more accurately in the current starting phase. It goes almost the same with a lack of contingency planning, either regarding the enrolment quotas or with teachers and other employers.

2.3. The enrolment quotas follow the institutional resources in general and particularly from the point of quality teaching and pass rate analysis, as evidenced by the Self-Evaluation of the College. While assessing possible improvements in this very niche, one should also take into account that the premises are rented and even partly shared with other training institutions. This poses its own risks. Further planning should perhaps become less ambitious and more realistic.

2.4. The learning outcomes clearly describe the knowledge and skills students obtain after completing a study programme. The curricula consist of a series of basic courses including diplomatic history and relations, introduction to international organisations, institutions and the

system, with specialisation and more choice subjects at higher levels during last two years of the studies. Practical workshops and simulations in different fields of diplomatic communication, from negotiations to protocol, have become a part of the core programme, being highly appreciated and assessed by both students and lecturers.

2.5. The student groups are relatively small, enabling their continuous interactive dialogue among themselves, as well as with professors, providing feedback and assessment throughout the studies, with a number of partial and full exam dates, and joint student preparation for exams. Regular lecturing has been accompanied with guest speakers, mostly diplomats and other dignitaries of the international arena. A number of ambassadors accredited in Zagreb have already contributed to the studies, among them most of the heads of the missions to the EU member states, the USA, Russia, Brazil, China, India, Iran and Turkey.

In this respect, it would be wise to expand further the range of assessment, possibly by organising more interactive workshops, and by learning about good practices from the others in real diplomatic and business circles. Making an annual review of the syllabi could also contribute to improving the contents and dynamics of the programme, and while being more up to date it would also become more attractive to the students, as well as to actual and future stakeholders.

2.6. Allocating of ECTS reflects the realistic estimate of student workload. Further (re)designing of the study programme, if and when initialled, should carefully follow the already achieved pattern of the ECTS distribution throughout the subjects of the programme.

2.7. The content and quality of the study programme conforms in general to internationally recognized standards. But, in terms of subject matter and disciplinarily, they are still limited, and there is room for more dynamic adaptation. The subjects look traditional and conventional, not fully up to date with some more recent strategic thinking and research findings. They still do lack their own core library with works published by their professors. The College publishes its own scientific journal in international relations quarterly, but just one of the issues is in English.

2.8. Teachers use teaching methods that are appropriate for the subject matter and different ways of learning, encouraging independent student learning. Seminars, workshops and small group teaching are used extensively, with E-learning also being introduced. There are also facilities for students needing special assistance, so they can also attend the studies smoothly.

2.9. The College has been in a starting phase in implementation regarding more appropriate supplemental resources, including electronic databases and other sources that aid in acquisition of knowledge, being made available for teachers. There is a lack of more clear evidence whether full access is available to international electronic journals and specialised databases.

2.10. Opportunities for students to reinforce and apply their learning outcomes seem to be wide and effective, from academic and business partnerships and internships, to different services and other arrangements. The College has brokered a number of cooperation agreements with partners from academic and business area at home and abroad, including certain international

organisations. There are opportunities for obtaining additional practical experience through placements in a range of institutions and organisations, as well as through volunteering at foreign embassies, international organisations and business institutions, mostly in Croatia. More specialisation in this field is to be expected with further (re)designing of the study programme. According to Self-evaluation, currently at the College there are not only students from Croatia, but also from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Kosovo, Lebanon, Macedonia, Serbia and the USA.

3. Students

3.1. Students, who enrol in the HEI and come from different kinds of high schools, undergo special classes to help them get a general prior knowledge for the future subjects in the undergraduate programme. Furthermore, the whole enrolment process is very well organized. The European studies yielded weak student pass results and that is something to be worked on, as it might be important for their future careers. There was no evidence suggesting that the admissions criteria are changing according to market needs, although the market is small, and based on the academic success of the students, the admissions criteria are not being re-evaluated. We are concerned about the number of students enrolled in the undergraduate professional study programme who lost their right to study during the academic years 2009/2010, 2010/2011 and 2011/2012, which should be taken into account when analysing and monitoring the admission criteria. This is especially related to assessing whether students' competencies meet the requirements of the study programmes.

3.2. The HEI provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities for their students. Those activities range from different kinds of workshops, internships, student excursions and volunteering. The student excursions are designed in a way that the students of the first year, once per semester, visit a foreign, neighbouring country, where they visit the embassy and get valuable insight into how their studies look like in reality. With every succeeding year, the students are able to visit more countries, both in Europe and outside of Europe. The students are very satisfied with the opportunities they have for their extra-curricular activities and they expressed the will to have more such opportunities, especially internships. The HEI could offer their students the ability to participate in student debates, both national and international.

3.3. The professors hold their appointed consultation hours on time, and the consultation hours are announced on time, i.e. at the start of the academic year. The students expressed their satisfaction with the reachability of the professors at any given time. Instead of going to consultation hours, the students can easily ask the professors at the hallway whatever they might need. The Career Centre is a body that helps the student direct their professional career, build confidence for public speaking and various other topics, which is an excellent tool to help students. In addition to that, potential students can come and visit the HEI at any working day. The Expert panel commends the DH UCIRD for employing an external professional for providing psychological support to students and their parents as well as for establishing the Office for Students with Disabilities whose tasks include: organizing and providing support for students

with disabilities, ensuring reciprocal communication between those students and teaching staff as well as adjusting of special conditions for the purpose of overcoming physical barriers for students with disabilities.

3.4. Students are provided with details of assessments methods and have the opportunity to appeal or re-take assessment as determined by the requirements of the programme. Senior student mentorship and creative ways to pass difficult subjects are examples of good practice this HEI is offering. However, professors should offer detailed feedback to students and their work (e.g. Essays and oral presentations), apart from feedback in the exams. The impression we got from our discussion with the students was that often the feedback was not detailed enough for students to benefit from it.

3.5. The Alumni club is very well organized and the HEI collects data of all their previous students and tracks their careers.

3.6. Study programmes, learning outcomes, qualifications and employment opportunities are visible online on the HEI website. The HEI also does a variety of public advertising activities, ranging from going to high schools, organizing open days and various other public events. One thing the HEI might improve is their advertising on social networks.

3.7. The students can express their opinions and provide feedback in the surveys that every course and professor has, once per semester. However, there is no general programme survey, for the whole undergraduate/graduate programme. Therefore, the HEI should implement a general, overall survey for both programmes.

3.8. The survey results are visible to the students, but need to be more transparent and more publicly announced (i.e. website and boards in the HEI). The students should also have a sense of how the survey results are taken into consideration.

4. Teachers

4.1. The number and qualifications of the scientific-teaching staff at the DH UCIRD adequately cover core disciplines and are in line with strategic goals of the Institution as well as with 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 24/2010)). The DH UCIRD carries out two study programmes: The Undergraduate Professional Study of International Relations and Diplomacy and Specialist Graduate Study of International Relations and Diplomacy by employing 9 full-time teachers and 24 external associates. The study programmes delivered by the DH UCIRD are comparable to the relevant study programmes at renowned European institutions regarding staff qualifications, their number in the basic discipline and the number of interdisciplinary teachers. The Expert panel would like to commend DH UCIRD for recognizing the need for internationally recognized

specialist qualifications in certain disciplines by employing external associates, mostly former high ranking state officials and experts with career in diplomacy, with the aim of enriching the educational process. Staff members are perceived to be highly motivated, engaged with the institution and proactive. However, taking into account the learning outcomes of the study programmes at the undergraduate and graduate levels, the management is to be encouraged to increase the proportion of full-time teachers with academic appointment into higher educational or scientific titles and to implement the measures and activities for increasing the scientific and research standard of the employees, ensuring national and international recognisability of more than two full-time teachers.

4.2. The DH UCIRD carries out the policy of growth and development of human resources, continuously seeking to employ the candidates from the field of diplomacy and international relations. In the academic years 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 seven new teachers were employed while 3 had their contracts expired. The full-time teacher with the highest scientific-educational title is 38 years old, while lecturers and senior lecturers are between 28 and 56 years old, which confirms taking into account the sustainability of the study programmes, as well as the tendency to employ relatively younger scientists, three of which are currently enrolled in doctoral studies. The Expert panel has slight concerns about the DH UCIRD's practice of rewarding research excellence (except from paid conference participation). There is room for improvement in the area of additional networking and connections on the international level, particularly the need to devote more attention to increasing mobility and encouraging teaching staff to become more actively engaged in the implementation of existing agreements on institutional cooperation. Having in mind the material constraints the DH UCIRD is facing, such as aggravated payment of tuition fees, the Expert panel has slight concerns about the opportunities to grow and develop human resources. One area of growth would be the international students but this requires the institution to invest in adopting more English language teaching.

4.3. The DH UCIRD takes into account the number of full-time teachers, maintaining an optimal ratio between students and full-time teachers, comparable to that of renowned European institutions. There is an evident decrease in the student-teacher ratio compared to the previous academic years, complying with the prescribed one, which amounts to 1:29,81.

4.4. The DH UCIRD has policies for scientific-teaching staff to provide them with the required professional development opportunities, as needed to advance institution's mission. The DH UCIRD uses surveys to evaluate the quality of teaching and performance of each teacher in the previous semester. The management of DH UCIRD and the teaching staff are acquainted with the results of the surveys with some corrective measures taking place, such as the termination of cooperation with two teachers. All external associates are remunerated for mentoring and supervising students on their final graduation theses. Full-time teachers are also provided with a complete technical and IT equipment. DH UCIRD supports professional training activities and continuous development of teachers' competences by covering the costs of formal education in whole or partially for some of them, co-financing all forms of non-formal education (workshops, training, professional conferences, conferences at home and abroad) as well as by organizing

scientific conferences and gatherings. However, only some staff members engage and avail of these opportunities. The Expert Panel therefore advises the DH UCIRD to explore why the use of these opportunities is limited and to improve staff involvement, to strategically plan all activities pertaining to professional development of staff, which includes ensuring sufficient funds for training programmes and to more actively involve them in special professional development programmes for acquiring skills in writing project proposals and applying for international project funds, as well as in communicating research results to private sector. These measures could result in the possibility for a higher external income, building the awareness of the importance of participation and visibility in the international scientific community, as well as with attracting students and teachers from abroad.

4.5. The DH UCIRD implements policies that distribute teachers' workload in an attempt to provide a fair and equitable distribution of effort. The teaching workload of full-time teachers and external associates is distributed in favour of permanently employed teachers and is perceived fair by staff members. In addition to lectures, teaching activities also include development of curriculum, preparation for lectures, and assesment of student work, consultation and mentoring. The Expert Panel advises the DH UCIRD to consider implying more extensive workload model in the future which would include more research work (by encouraging publishing and mobility).

4.6. Except from written and oral statement that each teacher must be granted consent of the Dean for external engagement, as well as that scientific, educational and professional activities of DH UCIRD's employees outside the Institution are monitored in accordance with the interests of DH UCIRD, there is no evidence that teachers' external obligations do not exceed 1/3 of prescribed teaching load. Furthermore, there is no data on specific external commitments of full time teachers. A better practice of monitoring this should be adopted.

5. Research and Professional Activity

5.1. The institution has implemented the guidelines concerning the existing and planned professional and research agenda. The strategic programme covers the period of the last 5 years. The strategic plan is connected with the mission of the institution. It shows to a great extent the analysis of research potential and the connections with the socioeconomic environment. It is a good reflection of objectives and expected results. As far as the organisational development plan and markers measuring the success of implementation within the DH-UCIRD are concerned, they have to better adjust to the research potential and the specific socioeconomic trend in international political and economic relations, international finance and trade, security, conflict management, and European Union policies. We have noticed weak monitoring and evaluation of the professional and research plan. The formalisation of the priorities in the agenda of professional and research activity is minimal. The integration between the elements of the strategic plan (student recruitment, research, resource allocation, etc.) is insufficiently clear.

5.2. The DH-UCIRD has in place mechanisms for ensuring the research and professional activity. The DH-UCIRD should monitor closely individual's research objectives and actual performance every year. We have observed little participation in the development of a policy concerning the implementation of the EU project. It was mostly during the site visit that the management body expressed their intention to do it in the future. The DH-UCIRD has several highly productive researchers with good international and national visibility.

5.3. The DH-UCIRD is connected with other professional organisations from Croatia and abroad, especially in the Diplomatic Practice area. There is a small gap concerning the connection with the industry field.

5.4. The DH-UCIRD has several highly productive teachers with good international and/or national visibility in the research activity, but other teachers have little activity. The DH-UCIRD must involve especially the junior researchers and ensure a long-term sustainability for them. Some researchers have made a great contribution to the development of the DH-UCIRD in specific international research, particularly through the number of citations in foreign articles and books, yet there is low contribution concerning the number of translations of collective publications. We can find the same situation regarding the indexing of works in specialised databases. For instance, the journal *International Studies* should only publish articles in foreign languages (particularly in English). The policy of the DH-UCIRD to support the career development of young teachers represents a proactive, creative approach, but it will need to improve the scientific output, especially concerning the publication in foreign languages.

6. International Cooperation and Mobility

The process of encouraging internal mobility is clear and transparent.

6.1. The HEI concerned (DH UCIRD) makes itself open to mobility of students from other HEIs in Croatia and its website welcomes students to transfer and enrol and puts no restrictions other than quotas and capacities. Since the HEI has not reached its quota, it has been completely open in allowing incoming mobility. The process is governed through the "Rule Book on Enrolment and Transfer" and governed by the "Admission Procedure Committee" abiding by the Bologna declaration.

Support is provided to incoming students to help them at par with the existing students. The students are required to pass a "differential exam so that they would have the same profile of expertise as the students who have been studying at DH UCIRD" (SE 86). The uniqueness of the professional studies is used as an attraction for bright and interested students to transfer. The "small" pool from which students can be picked up due to language specificities and the fee structure would understandably limit the number of students who transfer to the DH UCIRD. . However, more courses offered in English could easily be a greater source of attraction. The actual number of incoming students is low in practice. Use students as ambassadors to promote the HEI and attract other students.

6.2. Given the size and the recency of the HEI, it has been very good at providing opportunities to its students to complete a part of their programme abroad. Extensive range of bilateral agreements with foreign higher education institutions along with Erasmus + mobility helps students to explore this option. The HEI should continue to work on these partnerships and expand them to build on this strength.

6.3. The HEI does encourage mobility of its teaching staff but this is mostly concentrated amongst a few (to be precise, three) of them. It has to ensure that all staff members make use of the opportunities because internationalisation is not a luxury but a necessity in today's higher educational world. The specialist areas in which the HEI has participated in, and contributed to, international activities, such as Holocaust studies, is interesting and one of the avenues to be explored further. This would help research, networking as well as internationalisation. A very useful tool used by the HEI is study tours in various countries. These provide students with insights into policy processes in different countries. Given that the study tours are self-funded, there is a risk of having a two-tier student body in the HEI – one that can afford the fees and the tours and participate fully and one that can afford the fees but not the additional tours and thus miss out. HEI should explore options for external sponsorships and bursaries to support students who are deserving and meritorious, but cannot afford study tours. Which activities take place within the HEI to build upon the knowledge and experience gained from these tours? Rather than treat the tours as a one-off activity, knowledge/experience must be embedded within the curriculum.

6.4. The HEI has active collaboration and interaction with institutions in Europe and beyond. These cooperation include Europe-wide research projects (while the benefit to the staff involved is clear, it is not obvious how this benefits the students), Erasmus + mobility programme (this should be expanded by the HEI), bilateral agreements with foreign HEIs, international conferences (these are impressive) organised by DH UCIRD staff as well as attended by them, specialist activities such as Holocaust studies, study tours (this is extensive and impressive) and support for volunteering abroad and in international organisations. The HEI needs to consolidate and expand these activities and ensure that more than a couple of key staff members are involved in such activities. The HEI is member of international associations.

6.5. Given the size of Croatia and Croatian speaking diaspora, it is not surprising that a new HEI such as DH UCIRD does not attract significant number of students from abroad. However, size is not the only relevant factor here. There is little evidence of effort made by the HEI to attract foreign students. The Self-Evaluation Report pithily states "In an effort to encourage mobility, teachers of DH UCIRD are motivated to teach courses in English" (pg. 118) but how the motivation is incentivised or implemented is not clear. In fact, both the report and the site visit indicated insufficient efforts in the direction. The HEI must invest more time, energy and resources in making itself attractive to overseas students. When the Self-Evaluation Report itself says "DH UCIRD should further encourage the implementation of the Bologna process" (pg. 121), this has to be embedded within the planning process of the HEI.

6.6. This remains an area of weakness for reasons similar to 6.5. While the size of the pool is a factor, HEI has not yet shown evidence of proactive efforts to attract teachers from abroad. While one-off guest lectures are excellent ways to introduce students to speakers from outside, this is not sufficient. Erasmus scheme for staff mobility is a route that could be used better.

6.7. Though DH UCIRD is only a few years old, it has managed to have agreements and exchanges with several institutions in Europe and beyond. This confirms its outward-facing character and offers wonderful mobility opportunities to the students and the staff.

7. Resources: Administration, Space, Equipment and Finances

7.1. While the teaching and classroom space is adequate and well furnished, the library comes across as insufficiently resourced. During the site visit, the Expert team was left with the impression that the library did not have sufficient books (many books seemed to be recently bought and unused), there was no clear procedure on borrowing, and the students were not happy about resources. The Self Evaluation Report mentions the library working hours from 11-13 on weekdays (and additionally 17-18 on Tuesdays and Thursdays) which is limited.

7.2. Both the Self Evaluation Report and the site visit gave an assurance that the number of non-teaching staff is sufficient for the purpose of the HEI. The ratio of teaching and non-teaching staff is satisfactory. HEI needs to provide transparent and clear processes on temporary hiring of students to support work at the HEI.

7.3. The HEI is supportive of educational and professional development of its non-teaching staff. The extent to which this is successful is not clear as the four non-teaching staff members are full-time employees and yet into studies. How does this work? We did not get a clear answer during our site visit on this.

7.4. NA

7.5. Though research is included in the HEI's Mission, it remains mainly confined to a select few members of staff, some of them involved with external research grants and networks. Better access to electronic databases will help not only the researchers but also students who should be encouraged to carry out more independent research as part of their studies

7.6. As mentioned in 7.1, this is a matter of concern. The HEI's investment in the library is inadequate and the library is not fit for purpose for a higher education institution.

7.7. The HEI is almost completely dependent on students' fees for income. This makes it vulnerable to uncertainties of student recruitment. The HEI's planning process expects a much higher number of students than are currently enrolled. Additional income comes from research

grants but these are almost exclusively helping researchers. The HEI needs to have a more robust and clear plan to become financially secure and stable.

7.8. The HEI, with all its limits due to dependence on student fees, offers support to its staff to attend conferences, conduct research and enhance their scholarship. The process through which support is offered to staff should be made transparent to ensure equal opportunities for all.