



**REPORT
OF THE EXPERT PANEL
ON THE REACCREDITATION
OF THE UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE (DOCTORAL)
PROGRAMME
EUROPEAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY JOSIP JURAJ STROSSMAYER IN OSIJEK**

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INTRODUCTION

The Expert Panel appointed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) created this Report on the Re-accreditation of the University Postgraduate (Doctoral) Study Programme *European Studies* on the basis of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) of the Programme, other documentation submitted and a visit to the University Josp Juraj Strossmayer in Osijek.

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

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

The Report contains the following elements:

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

Members of the Expert Panel:

Professor Dibyesh Anand, University of Westminster - chair

Dr Igor Štiks, University in Edinburgh and Faculty for Media and Communication

Professor Ciarán Burke, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena

Dr Daniela Angelina Jelinčić, Institute for Development and International Relations

Dr Peter W. Zuidhof, University of Amsterdam

Dr. Teresa Murjas, School Director of Academic Tutoring for Theatre & Television and the School of Arts & Communication Design, Reading University, UK

Marko Radenović, Princeton University and McKinsey & Company,

Katja Simončič, Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana

Matteo Tracchi, Human Rights Centre of the University of Padova, Italy

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

- Dr Peter W. Zuidhof, University of Amsterdam - moderator
- Professor Dibyesh Anand,
- Matteo Tracchi
- Dr Igor Štiks
- Dr Daniela Angelina Jelinčić
- Dr. Teresa Murjas
- Katja Simončič
- Marko Radenović.

Members of the Panel that primarily participated in the report writing:

- Assoc. professor Peter W. Zuidhof, University of Amsterdam - moderator
- Professor Dibyesh Anand,
- Matteo Tracchi
- Marko Radenović

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

- Marina Matešić, coordinator, 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.

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

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme contained in the licence: Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Doctoral (PhD) Study Programme in European Studies

Institution delivering the programme: University Josip Juraj Strossmayer in Osijek

Institution providing the programme: University Josip Juraj Strossmayer in Osijek

Place of delivery: Osijek

Scientific area and field: Social Sciences (Law, Political Sciences, Interdisciplinary Soc. Sc, Information and Communication Sc.)

Number of doctoral candidates: 47

Number of funded doctoral candidates: 1

Number of self-funded doctoral candidates and those funded by employer: 46

Number of inactive doctoral candidates: 23

Number of doctoral candidates whose supervisor has been appointed officially (on University Senate): 19

Number of teachers: 29

Number of supervisors: 15 officially appointed to 19 doctoral candidates; and 9 are appointed as advisors.

Learning outcomes of the study programme:

LO 1: Identify, analyse and thoroughly reflect on research ethics in projects and research areas included by the doctoral study programme.

LO 2: Carry out research and disseminate research results with academic integrity and in accordance with the values, principles and standards promoted by the academic community.

LO 3: Identify and define independently research problems and do research independently in the field of European Studies.

LO 4: Address critically opposing attitudes in the fields of one's research, as well as in relation to research of other stakeholders.

LO 5: Manage and participate in complex interdisciplinary tasks and research in the field of European Studies.

LO 6: Evaluate existing and encourage the application of new research methodologies in the field of European Studies.

LO 7: Participate in national and international scientific debates in the field of one's research.

Structure of programme (3 years/6 semesters/180 ECTS):

Taught/research ratio: 90-110 : 70-90.

Annually (p. 8-9):

1-2 year: (1-3rd. semester) combining compulsory and elective courses in Semesters 1, 2 and 3. (30 ECTS each) In Semester 4, there are two research seminars (20) and submission and defence of the proposal/topic (10 ECTS) or 2 papers can be written instead (each 10 ECTS). In total: 90-110 ECTS in coursework and 10-30 in research. Third year: 60 in research and defence.

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

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

3. issue a letter of recommendation for the period up to 1 (3 max.) years in which period the higher education institution should make the necessary improvements.

If after 1 year not sufficient progress has been made on the recommendations; it is followed by:
3.a) the letter of recommendation includes suspension of student enrolment

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. quality of thesis has to improve,
2. time spent on research has to increase,
3. coursework is a burden to students' independent research,
4. published papers of students need to improve in quality,
5. qualifications and opportunities that mentors offer need to improve,
6. institutional support, international exposure of all involved and scrutiny of the research community, ethical issues, research reputation of the institution etc. are all major issues that the institution needs to improve immediately.

ADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. A PhD.-programme in European studies is highly relevant given the current national context of Croatia as a recently acceded Member State of the European Union and considering Osijek's regional position. In this context it is highly important to further develop research capacity in this area.
2. The interdisciplinary nature of the programme: The impact of transnational European developments on its Member States and regions, has many different aspects, ranging from law, economics, politics, to history and culture, which require an interdisciplinary approach. The programme is covering a number of the relevant disciplines and stimulating interdisciplinary research.
3. The programme is geographically uniquely positioned to study the impact of transnational European developments from a regional perspective.
4. The programme can count on a large body of interested and enthusiastic students, which is a sign that the programme satisfies a need in society.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. The programme has a strong orientation towards (European) law and (business) economics. While especially the first is important for European studies, there is relatively little attention for the study of EU politics and also history and culture.
2. The research orientation of the programme should be strengthened. The programme clearly satisfies a practical need for students to engage in research, but should be stronger aligned with international standards on PhD. research.
3. Despite its unique regional position, students and lecturers hardly engage in international research and lack the possibilities to gain an international experience.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. The programme has strong connections with its environment through its lectures and students. This allows it to engage in research that has practical relevance for students and may contribute to the development in the region.

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

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| Minimal legal conditions: | |
| 1. Higher education institution (HEI) is listed in the Register of Scientific Organisations in the scientific area of the programme, and has a positive reaccreditation decision on performing higher education activities and scientific activity. | NO |
| Neither University nor the Doctoral School are listed in the Register of Scientific Organisations (only its constituents and autonomous departments). | |
| 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 (all 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). | NO and NO |
| Doctoral School does not have any undergraduate or master programmes and the constituents taking part in delivering the programme are not officially registered as delivering the programme, and do not cover all the (major/essential) fields (European studies, Political sc.). Programme and the University do not employ teachers, constituents do. There is no academic staff working at the doctoral school. | |
| 3. HEI employs a sufficient number of researchers, as defined by Article 7 of the Ordinance on Conditions for Issuing Licence for Scientific Activity, Conditions for Re-Accreditation of Scientific Organisations and Content of Licence (OG 83/2010). | NO, same as the above. |
| 4. At least 50% of teaching as expressed in norm-hours is delivered by teachers employed at the HEI (full-time, elected into scientific-teaching titles). | NO, same as the above. |
| 5. Student: teacher ratio at the HEI is below 30:1. | NO, same as the above |
| 6. HEI ensures that doctoral theses are public. | NO (no access), and no summaries in English |
| 7. HEI launches the procedure of revoking the academic title if it is determined that it has been attained contrary to the conditions stipulated for its attainment, by severe violation of the studying rules or based on a doctoral thesis (dissertation) that has proved to be a plagiarism or a forgery according to provisions of the statute or other enactments. | YES |
| Additional/ recommended conditions for passing a positive opinion | |
| 1. HEI has at least five teachers appointed to scientific-teaching titles in the field, or fields relevant for the programme involved in its delivery. | NO, same as the above |
| 2. In the most recent reaccreditation, HEI had the standard Scientific and | * |

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| Professional Activity marked as at least "partly implemented" (3). | |
| *There was no accreditation of the University. If we look at the constituents such as the Law or Economics also NO. | |
| 3. The doctoral programme is aligned with the HEI's research strategy. | NO. There is no research strategy for university or doctoral school, only individual ones for constituents. |
| 4. The candidate : supervisor ratio at the HEI is not above 3:1. | YES |
| 5. All supervisors meet the following conditions: a) PhD, elected into a scientific title, holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position and/or has at least two years of postdoctoral research experience; b) active researcher in the scientific area of the programme, as evidenced by publications, participation in scientific conferences and/or projects in the past five years (table 2, Supervisors and candidates); c) confirms feasibility of the draft research plan upon admission of the candidate (or submission of the proposal); d) ensures the conditions (and funding) necessary to implement the candidate's research (in line with the draft research plan) as a research project leader, co-leader, participant, collaborator or in other ways; e) trained for the role before assuming it (through workshops, co-supervisions); f) received a positive opinion of the HEI on previous supervisory work. | NO* |
| * a) YES b) NO, some supervisors have no papers recently or project activity in last 5 year, H-index for some is low or there is no data; c) NO, not upon enrolment; d) NO, many supervisors (7) have no project exposure in past 5 years; e) YES f) YES. | |
| 6. All teachers meet the following conditions: a) holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position; b) active researcher, recognized in the field relevant for the course. | partly* |
| * 12 teachers (out of 29) are employed somewhere else, outside the University and Osijek and 2 have been retired. According to the table in SER, all the teachers have publications. However, for the majority of teachers there is no data on H index, and for others it is generally low (1-2). Also a small number of teachers teach above the norm. | |
| 7. The supervisor normally does not participate in the assessment committees. | NO (is a |

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| | member of assessment committee). |
| 8. The programme ensures that all candidates spend at least three years doing independent research (while studying, individually, within or outside courses), which includes writing the thesis, publishing, participating in international conferences, field work, attending courses relevant for research etc. | NO. |
| <p>Comments:</p> <p>Taught/research ratio: 90-110 : 70-90.</p> <p>The PhD programme is envisaged as a three-year programme, but teaching carries on for at least 2 years and takes around 100 ECTS (depending on what research seminars are counted into or whether they are replaced by papers, but over half of the programme at best). Thesis proposal is due at the end of 2 year, or before third year. That leaves third year for research. No doctoral student published a paper (although published paper seems obligatory and brings ECTS necessary for completion).</p> | |

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

| | Quality assessment (“high level of quality” or “improvements are necessary”) and the explanation of the Expert Panel |
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| 1. RESOURCES: TEACHERS, SUPERVISORS, RESEARCH CAPACITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE | |
| <p>1.1. HEI is distinguished by its scientific/ artistic achievements in the discipline in which the doctoral study programme is delivered.</p> | <p>Improvements are Necessary</p> <p>The programme has a respectable research staff of 29 of whom 9 are external associates. The staff employed in the program has a strong interdisciplinary background. The majority of the faculty has a background in social sciences, with the majority a background in either law or economics and the remaining members ranging from communication to humanities and political science. The research staff supervising theses have primarily have a background in economics and law. As such the research staff is aligned with international standards for comparable programmes in European Studies of which some have a similar strong focus on Law and/or economics. The programme compares less well to programs elsewhere that have a strong emphasis in either political science or culture and history. The majority of the PhD. projects supervised have a recognizable European dimension.</p> <p>The majority of lecturers and supervisors is research active (over past 5 years) but mostly publish in local or national outlets with international output being less prominent. Impact of publications, especially internationally, measured in terms of citation scores, is generally low.</p> <p>A small group of (often external) staff members have a good track record of being involved in (international) research projects and/or – which is important for a European Studies programme – are or have been engaged in Jean Monnet initiatives and other European initiatives, but many of these projects are no longer ongoing. It must be noted that some of lecturers and supervisors with the strongest research output are not employed by the institution but are external members.</p> <p>It is recommended in order to better align the standing of</p> |

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| | <p>the program both nationally and internationally that research output of lecturers and supervisors is improved both in quantitative and qualitative terms. It is strongly encouraged to increase output of internationally peer-reviewed output and participation in (international) research projects.</p> |
| <p>1.2. The number and workload of teachers involved in the study programme ensure quality doctoral education.</p> | <p>High Level of Quality</p> <p>The number and overall workload of teachers is within the limits of Collective Agreements and satisfies legal requirements. A number of the more high-profile lecturers/supervisors are external teachers. Also, a limited number of external lecturers and/or supervisors is working outside academic institutions.</p> |
| <p>1.3. The teachers are highly qualified researchers who actively engage with the topics they teach, providing a quality doctoral programme.</p> | <p>Improvements are Necessary</p> <p>The majority of lecturers and supervisors are research active and their research engages with topics that are relevant for the doctoral programme. As indicated supra 1.1. the quantity and especially quality of (international) research output should be improved in order to provide for a high quality programme.</p> |
| <p>1.4. The number of supervisors and their qualifications provide for quality in producing the doctoral thesis.</p> | <p>Improvements are Necessary</p> <p>The number of 15 officially appointed supervisors is sufficient to supervise the current number of 19 doctoral candidates. The supervisors have an identifiable research expertise within the field of European studies and are qualified to supervise doctoral theses. As indicated supra 1.1. the research activities and output of supervisors could be improved in order to secure high quality supervision.</p> |
| <p>1.5. The HEI has developed methods of assessing the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors.</p> | <p>Improvements are Necessary</p> <p>A number of procedures are in place to assess the quality and competences of lecturers and supervisors. The Doctoral Committee for instance monitors whether supervisors have sufficient research competences in the area of supervision. In 2018, there has been a training for</p> |

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| | <p>supervisors and surveys are conducted among alumni. It could not be established whether and how these have been followed up.</p> <p>In order to maintain quality of supervision and to make sure that all supervisors are highly research active and have an international profile, the panel recommends that the criteria for appointing supervisors is made more explicit and that quality criteria are tightened.</p> |
| <p>1.6. The HEI has access to high-quality resources for research, as required by the programme discipline.</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The HEI offers a minimum amount of resources for research, such as access to a library and scientific literature and databases.</p> <p>The program however offers little to no substantial financial resources for students for conducting their research. Also it provides little to no financial support for students to attend conferences or do research abroad.</p> <p>There is no dedicated university library or a section of the library devoted for the needs of the programme or Doctoral school.</p> |
| <p>2. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE PROGRAMME</p> | |
| <p>2.1. The HEI has established and accepted effective procedures for proposing, approving and delivering doctoral education. The procedures include identification of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social and economic needs.</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The programme was created according to the established rules of the HEI (University of Osijek), and pursuing the decision by the HEI's Senate, upon review of the overall Doctoral School Establishment Study. The Establishment Study highlighted the need for European Studies, given the process of Croatia's EU accession (now membership), regional needs with the EU development framework, as well as opportunity to enrol students from the neighbouring countries (also in the process of EU-integrations).</p> <p>There appears to be no clear and documented strategy for further development of the Doctoral School or the European Studies programme itself (only for the University of Osijek as a whole). There are also no procedures for a regular (e.g. every 3-5 years) assessment by the programme leadership of potential changes in the scientific/ artistic, cultural, social and economic needs on Croatian/regional level that would be reflected in the programme. Consequently, there is no developed</p> |

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| | <p>programme strategy for determining which courses to offer, which profile of students to accept, what profile of faculty to retain or recruitment etc.</p> <p>Recommendation: - Prepare a mid-term (3-5 year) strategy plan defining research priorities, setting clear targets (comparable to external benchmarks) in key KPIs and creating an incentive system, identifying research/teaching/student profiles for recruitment, laying out financial plan, and . Refresh every year and review every five years.</p> |
| <p>2.2. The programme is aligned with the HEI research mission and vision, i.e. research strategy.</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>As mentioned above, there is no clear and documented strategy for further development of the Doctoral School or the European Studies programme itself (only for the University of Osijek as a whole; note that the panel has also received from HEI the research strategies for HEI's Economics and Law departments, but those do not contain any reference to the European Studies programme). Consequently, the courses offered, and research strategy seem to be primarily driven by the existing expertise and research interests of current faculty members involved in the programme. Some of the electives offered (e.g. Architecture of Cultural Org, HR Management) have only a distant connection to the field of European Studies themselves.</p> <p>Furthermore, to truly align with HEI's mission and vision to "[prepare] students for professional work based on scientific knowledge and methods" and "to involve students in scientific research activities", will require a much stronger curricular emphasis on research methods, more frequent involvement of doctoral students in the research projects carried out by the faculty, and financial support for students to cover the costs of conducting own research or attending international conferences.</p> <p>Recommendation: - Prepare strategy plan (supra at 2.1.), and implement other changes highlighted elsewhere in this review.</p> |
| <p>2.3. The HEI systematically monitors the success of the programmes through periodic reviews, and implements improvements.</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>Despite what was stated in the programme's self-assessment form, it seems that in practice there is no annual review of the programme. Business Activities Report of the Doctoral School, seems to be produced every 4 years (as all its section cover each year separately), and</p> |

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| | <p>focuses on the decisions made by the Doctoral School Council and other bodies (including thesis defense committees), along with the overview of financial performance of each doctoral programme.</p> <p>While the programme tracks some data on “inactive” students, the dataset they shared contained no info on the actual (e.g. job/career change, becoming a parent, losing interest in obtaining an academic degree, financial challenges, dissatisfaction with the programme itself etc.) rather than formal (e.g. failure to enrol in the next semester, failure to submit the work needed for successful completion of a course or a research seminar etc.) reasons for “inactivity”. This makes it harder for the Programme to act and try to mitigate some of the underlying causes of attrition. (Note that the attrition rate is already around 50% of all students enrolled since the start of the programme, not including any further attrition among currently active students).</p> <p>The programme also monitors publication activity by former and current students, but it is unclear if there are standardized processes by which these publications are acknowledged/rewarded by the Programme, or that promote publication in more highly-regarded journals. Currently, the list of publications by former students was rather short, with 7 students and just 12 publications, but more importantly, with very limited academic impact – most publications were either in conference proceedings, HEI’s own journals, or even non-scientific journals.)</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collect more data on causes of delay and attrition of students. - Emphasize the importance of publishing your work, especially internationally, and support the students by paying for English language proof-reading of papers ready to be submitted to international scientific journals. - Ensure that the research methods used by students are meeting international standards and recent methodological developments – currently, both main textbooks used in methods course are still from the 20th century, |
| <p>2.4. HEI continuously monitors supervisors' performance and has mechanisms for evaluating supervisors, and, if necessary,</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>We found only limited monitoring of faculty’s performance in supervisor roles. There is a survey sheet which provides</p> |

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| <p>changing them and mediating between the supervisors and the candidates.</p> | <p>a high-level breakdown of hours spent during an academic year on supervisor activities - it is filled out by the supervisor, but it does need to be co-signed by the student. The panel was also informed that the programme was regularly collecting student evaluations of their supervisors, but that all the documentation was lost in the recent move of programme offices to a new location (raising concerns about the record-keeping practices of the programme).</p> <p>Article 32 (5) of Regulations on Postgraduate Study Programmes states that: “Postgraduate student has the right to once change the mentor or the doctoral thesis subject with a written request to the Council/Commission for postgraduate studies and with a written statement of the previous mentor.”</p> <p>Otherwise, the Programme seems not to be involved in the supervisor-student interactions, with the exception of its Director who typically mediates between the supervisors and the candidates, if necessary.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey sheet for mentors should require more details about the type of support provided to the student. - Programme must keep backups of data safely stored, not just for proper record-keeping, but also for |
| <p>2.5. HEI assures academic integrity and freedom.</p> | <p>High level of quality</p> <p>Overall, the panel is satisfied with the HEI’s efforts at assuring academic integrity and freedom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The HEI has its Ethics Code regulating among others, “ethical principles in science and higher education” (Section 4.), including integrity, freedom, data collection and representation, academic authorship, plagiarism, counterfeiting, collegial and teacher-student relations; - The programme’s mandatory methodology course provided in the first semester has emphasis on the academic ethics; - The programme uses anti-plagiarism software Turnitin, which was also made available to students themselves; - As part of their thesis submission, the students are obliged to sign a Statement on academic integrity, non-plagiarism, and approval for publishing the |

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| | <p>doctoral dissertation in institutional repositories. The panel would recommend that a similar statement is also included in the thesis proposal submission;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The panel has received no complaints from students or alumni regarding the limiting of their academic freedoms. - As mentioned earlier, students also have a right to change their supervisor once. |
| <p>2.6. The process of developing and defending the thesis proposal is transparent and objective, and includes a public presentation.</p> | <p>High level of quality</p> <p>The of developing and defending the thesis proposal is transparent and objective, and it includes a public presentation.</p> <p>The programme should consider moving the timing of thesis proposal (currently at the end of IV semester) to an earlier stage.</p> |
| <p>2.7. Thesis assessment results from a scientifically sound assessment of an independent committee.</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>As per the Guidelines, “Mentor (co-mentor) of the doctoral dissertation cannot be a member of the Commission for the assessment and defence of doctoral dissertation topic” and “at least one” member of the committee must be “an external member or a person who is not a teacher at the postgraduate university study.”</p> <p>However, the theses mostly not exposed to scientific scrutiny internationally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - even external committee members are typically from other HEIs in Croatia or the immediate neighbourhood (former-Yugoslav countries, without considerable language barriers); - the theses are not made publicly available online; - the theses are not written in English; - some of the defended theses did not even include an English summary (despite that being one of the stipulated requirements); |
| <p>2.8. The HEI publishes all necessary information on the study programme, admissions, delivery and conditions for progression and completion, in accessible outlets and media.</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The HEI publishes most of the necessary information on its website (as well as in mass media), although some of it is not regularly updated (e.g. course schedule listed in Feb 2019 was for Spring 2018). The programme does not offer</p> |

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| | <p>students an overview of the research interests of faculty members, which is key to attracting prospective students and achieving best-fit between with research interests of students, faculty, and overall programme.</p> <p>The situation is worse for international students, as aside from information already missing in the Croatian version, the English-language version of the webpage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - only has a list of courses and teachers, but no course overviews or reading lists; - does not have key application forms in English; <p>Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make the missing information (both in Croatian and English) available on the website. - Consider adding short bio pages (both in Croatian and English) for all faculty members, listing their research interests, publications, and courses, at the programme website - Consider advertising/publishing information about the programme in international media. |
| <p>2.9. Funds collected for the needs of doctoral education are distributed transparently and in a way that ensures sustainability and further development of doctoral education (ensures that candidates' research is carried out and supported, so that doctoral education can be completed successfully).</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The panel found very limited institutional support for candidates' field research or participation in academic conferences (unless specifically organized by the HEI or the Programme). This is despite financial reports showing that the programme revenues are regularly and considerably outpacing the costs (in 2015, revenues collected were ~50% higher than costs; in 2016, ~150% (!) higher, and in 2017 ~65% higher) which suggests that there should be available funds for investment in supporting the students and their research, or that tuition fees could be decreased.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invest more in the students (stipends, conference funds, research funds) or reduce tuition fees |
| <p>2.10. Tuition fees are determined on the basis of transparent criteria (and real costs of studying).</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>Given financial reports we have received (<i>supra</i> at 2.9.), which consistently show the programme revenues to be higher than the costs, the panel cannot agree that the fees are determined based on the real cost of studying.</p> <p>Additionally, based on the estimate of the breakdown of costs provided to the panel, it seems that criteria are not always transparent:</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The programme’s self-assessment report, referenced the one-time lump sum of EUR 400 / HRK 3000 gross (roughly 5% of total cost of study) paid to thesis supervisors, but this is not mentioned in the breakdown the panel received - It is unclear what the subset of costs related to “Conferences – the doctoral candidate scientific productivity costs “ refers to, as the students have told us that the Programme does not cover the costs of students’ participation of in academic conferences, unless they are organized directly by the programme itself or in cooperation with another HEI. <p>Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make sure criteria for determining fees are completely transparent, non-overlapping and non-conflicting. - First assess costs, aligned with implementation of the mid-term strategy plan, and then assess tuition fees as just one of the (and not the only) source of financing. |
| <p>3. SUPPORT TO DOCTORAL CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROGRESSION</p> | |
| <p>3.1. The HEI establishes admission quotas with respect to its teaching and supervision capacities.</p> | <p>High level of quality</p> <p>Due to low number of student enrolment (only one in the year 2017/2018), the HEI is able to manage admission quotas efficiently. The teaching workload of supervisors does not seem to exceed the existing legal thresholds. The expert panel recommends, however, the establishment, follow up and monitor of more detailed guidelines for supervision in order to ensure the scientific quality of candidates’ work.</p> |
| <p>3.2. The HEI establishes admission quotas on the basis of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social, economic and other needs.</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The expert panel has not been presented with explanation as to whether admission quotas are based on scientific/artistic, cultural, social, economic and other needs. There is no procedure in place to assess all these needs and therefore the expert panel recommends to establish this assessment on a yearly basis in order to capture a relevant picture of a fast-changing world.</p> |
| <p>3.3. The HEI establishes the admission quotas taking into account the funding</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> |

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| <p>available to the candidates, that is, on the basis of the absorption potentials of research projects or other sources of funding.</p> | <p>Out of 47 doctoral candidates, only 1 is funded. This impacts the capacity to attract talented and motivated candidates, also from abroad. There appears to be no link between admission quotas and research projects or other sources of funding. While it is commendable that the self-evaluation report states that “It is <i>pro futuro</i> evaluated as necessary that the Regulations on scholarships and grants of the University of Osijek provide for the category of scholarships for the most successful and most motivated doctoral candidates”, the expert panels aims to see the HEI taking concrete steps in this direction. The expert panel also regrets that current doctoral candidates do not seem to be involved in research projects and therefore recommends supervisors to proactively look for research projects in order to include their candidates and have the opportunity to grow academically together.</p> |
| <p>3.4. The HEI should pay attention to the number of candidates admitted as to provide each with an advisor (a potential supervisor). From the point of admission to the end of doctoral education, efforts are invested so that each candidate has a sustainable research plan and is able to complete doctoral research successfully.</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The high number of inactive students (23) is raises concerns regarding the sustainability of doctoral research and the ability to complete it successfully. It appears that candidates have little opportunity to work on their research for the first two years of the doctoral programme, therefore the expert panel highly recommends that, not only an advisor, but also a supervisor, is appointed to each student since the very beginning of the PhD so as to help the student start framing their research topic.</p> <p>The HEI could also consider requiring future applicants to submit their research proposal as part of admission process, at least in a draft form, and is encouraged to provide students with more detailed guidelines on how to write a research proposal.</p> <p>While students expressed positive feedback on the flexibility and the frequency of communication with their supervisor, the expert panel recommends that, in order to achieve higher scientific production, clear guidelines on how to set up a sustainable research plan is officially established and follow.</p> |
| <p>3.5. The HEI ensures that interested, talented and highly motivated candidates are recruited</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>As stated in point 2.8. above, the website does not provide</p> |

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| <p>internationally.</p> | <p>all the necessary information and some of them are only in Croatian (e.g. no syllabi in English). The expert panel has not been provided with the Study Guide mentioned in the self-evaluation report. Therefore, since wider international recruitment does not seem to be performed, we recommend the HEI to take concrete steps to ensure that interested, talented and highly motivated candidates are recruited internationally. This will require the programme to have the ability to provide coursework in English in all mandatory courses and most elective ones. The programme should also advertise in appropriate international fora, starting with the international HEIs with which it already has set-up various forms of collaboration.</p> |
| <p>3.6. The selection process is public and based on choosing the best applicants.</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The selection process is public and based on a detailed interview to assess student motivation and research topic. However, the expert panel encourages the HEI to establish more elaborated criteria in order to choose the best applicants, e.g. applicants' project proposals and individual work plans for three years, past performance, recommendations, publications, etc.</p> |
| <p>3.7. The HEI ensures that the selection procedure is transparent and in line with published criteria, and that there is a transparent complaints procedure.</p> | <p>High level of quality</p> <p>The HEI ensures that the selection is clear and in line with published criteria. There is also a transparent complaints procedure. According to the self-evaluation report, "Rejected candidates have the right to inspect documents referring to the selection procedure. There have been no objections in the selection procedures so far. In addition, during an interview, applicants can get any clarification regarding the selection procedure or potential disadvantages of their applications that might affect scores. If there were a formal objection or a complaint concerning the results of the call, it would be decided by the Doctoral School Council."</p> |
| <p>3.8. There is a possibility to recognize applicants' and candidates' prior learning.</p> | <p>High Level of Quality</p> <p>The programme has the possibility to recognize applicant's and candidates' prior learning. Students can petition to have their prior learning recognized and they may be exempted from courses and other requirements. These requests are</p> |

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| | assessed by the Doctoral School. |
| 3.9. Candidates' rights and obligations are defined in relevant HEI regulations and a contract on studying that provides for a high level of supervisory and institutional support to the candidates. | <p>Improvements are Necessary</p> <p>Doctoral candidates' rights and obligations are defined by the Study programme (Statute of the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek). There exists a procedure to change supervisor. All students and alumni members stated that they were satisfied with the program.</p> <p>The panel noted that there is no formal agreement between the student and the University (for instance in the form of a contract) that specifies what can be expected from the supervisory process. The panel recommends that such a contract should be introduced.</p> |
| 3.10. There are institutional support mechanisms for candidates' successful progression. | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The institutional support mechanisms for candidates' successful progression are weak. While student-supervisor relationship seems generally very positive, this is more on an informal level rather than on an institutional one. The expert panel encourages the HEI to invest more resources to better understand why so many students are inactive and provide them with the support they need to further progress in their PhD research. Regarding active students, resources should be invested to strengthen and improve current mentoring and monitoring, as well as to provide students with funds to present at international conferences abroad and publish in international academic renown journals. We believe that this might help the doctoral programme to reach international PhD quality standards.</p> |
| 4. PROGRAMME AND OUTCOMES | |
| 4.1. The content and quality of the doctoral programme are aligned with internationally recognized standards. | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The programme in European studies has a distinct interdisciplinary profile that is aligned with international standards. It is very important that a PhD. program is offered in European studies given the context of Croatia and especially considering Osijek's regional role. It seems very relevant that the programme focuses on studying the regional impact of the European integration process, using an interdisciplinary approach.</p> <p>Recognizing the national and regional relevance of the programme it is nonetheless important to better align the programme with internationally recognized standards.</p> |

Especially the following aspects need improving:

1. The content of the program is not fully aligned with internationally recognised standards for a PhD in European Studies. The program has a strong focus on law, international business, and international economics. In doing so it covers a limited subset of the areas of European studies theory and methods. There is relatively little attention for European politics, EU policy analysis, and International Relations and related methods. As a corollary the number of lecturers and supervisors with a background in political science seems to be low, while the relative emphasis on business or business communication seem less aligned with international standards.
2. The level of the courses and research seminars does not sufficiently prepare students for conducting innovative research in international relations (see 4.2 to 4.5 below for further substantiation). The programme is not adequately stimulating students to conduct research that is at the frontiers of the field of European studies, both in terms of relating to existing literature and research methods and design.
3. While only a limited number of dissertations has been defended to date, the dissertations that have been reviewed do not meet international standards of quality, in terms of their relation to the existing literature in the field of European studies, theoretical breadth and depth, but especially research design, research methods and the scope and depth of the empirical research conducted (see also 4.4 below). This is supported by the observation that, according to the documents provided by the HEI (annex Tablica 2. Mentori i doktorandi), students do not publish their research nationally or internationally.
4. In general, the programme appears not to impose a sufficiently rigorous research orientation on its students, to match international standards for PhD. research in the field of European studies. This way the programme is more aligned with that of specialist or professional graduate degree, and not a research degree on the PhD. level.

The panel recommends that:

- a. the content of the programme is improved to better align with international standards;
but most importantly:
- b. the research orientation and capabilities of students are improved and better aligned with international standards in terms of both theoretical orientation and most notably research methods and the execution of research.

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| <p>4.2. Programme learning outcomes, as well as the learning outcomes of modules and subject units, are aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF. They clearly describe the competencies the candidates will develop during the doctoral programme, including the ethical requirements of doing research.</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The learning outcomes defined by the programme are only partially aligned with level 8.2 of the CroQF. The majority of learning outcomes are formulated on level 7 of CroQF. Especially learning outcomes LO 1-5 listed in the self evaluation report largely fall within level 7 of CroQF as they are primarily concerned with the critical evaluation and application of existing knowledge and methods to complex problems in European studies, and communicating these in complex social contexts (see also CroQF criteria on knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility). Only learning outcomes LO 6 and 7 seek to go beyond level 7, reaching for CroQF level 8.2 which requires developing new knowledge (facts and knowledge) using new methods, and new forms of communication with a high level of autonomy and responsibility. It is also noted that the Learning Outcomes as they are currently formulated in very general terms and provide little to no direction for the program in terms of what a student in European studies would specifically learn in the programme.</p> <p>The stated learning outcomes suggest that the programme is not sufficiently aiming to train students to become independent researchers that contribute to the field of European studies by extending the frontiers of knowledge, developing new insights, knowledge, methods, or new applications of that knowledge in society. The programme should focus stronger on training PhD. students to not merely synthesize and replicate existing research in the field, but that extend the frontiers of the field especially in terms of research questions, research methods, research design, research ethics, and (international) communication of research become a much more central feature in the programme.</p> |
| <p>4.3. Programme learning outcomes are logically and clearly connected with teaching contents, as well as the contents included in supervision and research.</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The programme has a logical and clear structure that students could successfully complete within 3 years and would enable them to realize the stated learning outcomes. It should, however, be noted that higher PhD.-level learning outcomes are not sufficiently realized or only in the later part of the programme. It is necessary that the research orientation should be made much more central from the outset of the programme. Overall, as stated under 4.2, the research focus both in terms of theoretical breadth and</p> |

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| | <p>depth, and research methods and research design, should be strengthened.</p> <p>While a number of students find the courses very useful, those who have a clearer idea on their research topic would rather prefer to start working earlier on that. For this second group, it would be good to reduce the number of courses as long as they can have a say in deciding which ones to remove. As recommended above (3.4.), the HEI could consider to anticipate the stage of the research proposal, even before enrolling at least in a draft form, and is encouraged to provide students with more detailed guidelines on how to write a research proposal. It is advisable that at the end of year one, all students declare a topic and are assigned a supervisor, so they can begin working earlier on developing their own research questions, methods and research design.</p> <p>It must be noted that practically all students take much longer to complete the programme, which may be taken as a sign that the programme structure poses a problem to students.</p> |
| <p>4.4. The doctoral programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes and competencies aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF.</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>It was found that the achievements of learning outcomes were not sufficiently aligned with level 8.2 of the CroQF. While the programme has resulted in a limited small sample of doctoral theses (under 10), it was noted that these generally fell short of the requirements of research resulting in new knowledge, methods and solutions on level 8.2 of CroQF. The theses reviewed were especially weak in terms of both theoretical breadth and research methodology. The theses were found wanting in their review of and relation with the existing international field of research. Especially the discussion of methodology (justification of research question and empirical research methods) was in most cases too limited. In some theses even the scope and extent of the empirical research was too limited.</p> <p>A review of proposal defence forms also suggested that no sufficient attention and stress is put on important elements such as international literature review and a discussion of research methods in the proposal stage.</p> <p>It is necessary that attention for relation with international research literature, research methods, research design and</p> |

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| | <p>research execution are improved and better aligned with level 8.2 of CroQF.</p> |
| <p>4.5. Teaching methods (and ECTS, if applicable) are appropriate for level 8.2 of the CroQF and assure achievement of clearly defined learning outcomes.</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The programme and teaching methods are in principle appropriate for level 8.2 of the CroQF. A review of the courses, course contents and teaching methods (based on the syllabi that were provided by the HEI) in the first year, however, indicates that these courses do not sufficiently prepare students for PhD research that is aligned with current international standards. Especially research methods and research design are not sufficiently covered in the courses and only feature in the course devoted to methodology. It was also noted that the literature covered was slightly dated and does not provide students with the most up to date introduction to current debates, topics and methods in the field. Teaching methods are mostly class/lecture based and assessment in the form of oral or written exams, which is hardly appropriate for PhD level of training.</p> |
| <p>4.6. The programme enables acquisition of general (transferable) skills.</p> | <p>High level of quality</p> <p>The programme sufficiently secures the acquisition of transferable skills such as academic writing, presentation skills, project management, and especially cooperation with actors in the field.</p> <p>In order to match better with the international field for publication and research dissemination, it would be recommended to provide more teaching in English or English language training to students.</p> |
| <p>4.7. Teaching content is adapted to the needs of current and future research and candidates' training (individual course plans, generic skills etc.).</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>Teaching content is sufficiently adapted to the needs and candidate's training. Teaching content, its topics, and interdisciplinary nature is generally much appreciated by the students.</p> <p>It was found, however, that the teaching programme does not sufficiently prepare students for current and future PhD research (see 4.1 to 4.5 above). It is necessary that more attention is paid to research methods and research design. An additional difficulty is posed by the diverse disciplinary background and relevant prior education of the student population for adapting the teaching content to their needs and those of the field: students have a diverse</p> |

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| | <p>prior education, none of which is in European Studies (because of the absence of this degree on primary and secondary cycle) and some students have a relatively weak academic standing in prior education (see also 3.6).</p> |
| <p>4.8. The programme ensures quality through international connections and teacher and candidate mobility.</p> | <p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The programme has too little international connections that could help ensure its quality and alignment with international standards. With the exception of one, there are no international lecturers or supervisors in the programme. Lecturers and supervisors publish little in English and internationally peer-reviewed journals or books (less than ten in past five years). Thesis defence committees have no international members. According to the information provided by the HEI, a limited number of supervisors participate or have participated in (international) research projects (of the list of supervisors provided 4 out of 8 participated in research project, of whom 2 were external members, not employed by the institution).</p> <p>None of the courses is taught in English and only very few students write their course work or dissertations in English. Students are hardly stimulated by the programme to conduct their research abroad or attend international conferences. As a consequence, international mobility of the students is low.</p> <p>It is strongly recommended that international connections are initiated and strengthened, to ensure that the work of both lectures/supervisors and students can become better aligned internationally.</p> |

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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