ASHE AND QA SYSTEM IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

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Overview

• The context of Higher Education & Science in Croatia
• ASHE
• ASHE activities
• Challenges
The main stakeholders:

- MSES - Ministry of Science, Education and Sports
- NCSHET - National Council for Science, Higher Education and Technology
- ASHE - Agency for Science and Higher Education
- SU - Students’ Union
- Rectors’ Conference
- The Croatian Council of Universities and University Colleges of Applied Sciences
- HEIs
- Scientific organizations
The Context of Higher Education & Science

- Number of HEIs:
  - 119 (88 public / 31 private)
  - 10 universities (7 public / 3 private)
  - 15 polytechnics / 27 colleges

- Number of students: approx. 180 000

- Number of scientific organizations: 168
  (25 public scientific institutes)
Polytechnics - 15

Existing higher education institutions network

- Public
- Private
- Towns

Map showing locations of polytechnics.
Colleges - 25

Existing higher education institutions network

- Public
- Private
- Towns
Scheme of study programmes in Croatia

Undergraduate (univ. bacc.), 3-4 years
180-240 ECTS

Graduate (mag. struke/Master), 1-2 years
60-120 ECTS

Postgraduate professional (uni. spec.), 1-2 years

Postgraduate university (dr.sc., dr.art/PhD), 3 years
ECTS number regulated by university

Specialist graduate professional (professional spec.), 1-2 years
60-120 ECTS

Undergraduate professional (professional baccalareus/baccalaurea)
3-4 years
180-240 ECTS
<3 god.
<180 ECTS

PROFESSIONAL STUDY PROG.

YEAR

INSTITUTION

POLYTECHNICS & COLLEGES

UNIVERSITY STUDY PROG.

MIN. 300 ECTS

UNIVERSITIES
Type of study programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of study programmes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional study programmes</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University study programmes</td>
<td>1122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Professional study programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional study programmes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist graduate professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>
University study programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University study programmes</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate university study</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated undergraduate and graduate university study</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate university study</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate specialist study</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate university (doctoral) study</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Croatian Qualification Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Types of programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Postgraduate university study – PhD</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Former Master’s Degree – 2 years</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Postgraduate professional study</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Graduate university study</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Graduate professional study</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Undergraduate university study</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Undergraduate professional study</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 5      | **Professional study – less than 3 years**
|        | **Training programs – training and additional education** |
| 4      | **Secondary education – 4 years + State Matura** |
|        | **Secondary education – 3 years + final exam** |
| 3      | **Secondary vocational education – 1-2 years** |
| 2      | **Vocational training** |
| 1      | **Primary school (8 years)** |
Introduction of Bologna system in Croatia

• 2001 Croatia signed the Bologna Declaration

• Impetus - wish to improve the education structure of the population, reform HE system, improve the quality and join the EU

• Mayor changes: three cycle system, ECTS

• 2005 – first Bologna generation of students enrolled
European cooperation in quality assurance

Primary responsibility of HE institutions for quality

Cooperation of QA agencies and HE institutions

European Standards and Guidelines

Evaluation of EQAR

1999 Bologna
2001 Prague
2003 Berlin
2005 Bergen
2007 London
2009 Leuven Louvain-la-Neuve

1998 Reco. 98-561-CE

2006 Reco. 2006-143-CE

Source: Colin Tück, E4, B. Curvale
• Established in 2005

• Development of QA model in line with *European standards and Guidelines for QA in HE* (ESG) and best international practices began in 2005

• 2009 – redefinition of its role (Act on QA in Science and Higher Education) and strengthening of its independence

• 2011 – ENQA/EQAR membership / full compliance with ESGs
Legal framework


Activities

1. Quality Assurance Role
2. Collecting and analysing data on the systems of science and higher education
3. National ENIC/NARIC office
4. Central Applications Office
5. Support to work of various bodies
6. International cooperation
QA role

- Initial accreditation
- Re-accreditation
- Thematic evaluation
- Audit
Initial accreditation

- New HEIs and/or new study programs
- New scientific organizations established and/or financed by state
- Fulfillment of minimum criteria is checked
Re-accreditation

- 5 – year cycles
- All public and private HEIs by 2015/2016
- All scientific organizations established and/or financed by the state by 2015/2016
Re-accreditation procedure

1. Self-assessment
2. Site visit
3. Writing report
4. Follow-up
Re-accreditation - Scope

- Scope of reaccreditation
- Minimum criteria
- Quality grade
Quality grade criteria

Standards and criteria of quality defined by the Accreditation Council of the Agency

1. INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE
2. STUDY PROGRAMMES
3. STUDENTS
4. TEACHERS
5. SCIENTIFIC AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY / RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY
6. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND MOBILITY
7. RESOURCES: ADMINISTRATION, SPACE, EQUIPMENT AND FINANCES
ASHE makes recommendation to the minister of science, education and sports to:

- Issue accreditation (for institutions and/or programmes)
- Issue a letter of expectation up to 3 years (can result in prohibition of student enrolment)
- Deny accreditation (for institutions and/or programmes)

After expiry:
- Issuance of licence
- Denial of licence
Re-accreditation of HEIs

2010-2012 - Outcomes

50 accreditation recommendations

- accreditation granted to 30 HEIs
- letter of expectation issued to 20 HEIs
- accreditation denied to 20 dislocated study programs
COMMON PRACTICE – USA & CROATIA

✓ Periodic external review
✓ Standards and criteria (key areas)
✓ Accreditation Commissions/Councils
✓ Self-review
✓ Trainings
✓ Peer-reviews
✓ Site-visit
✓ Report
✓ Follow-up
✓ Accreditation decision
✓ Outcome of accreditation
| DIFFERENCES ( IN GENERAL ) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>USA</strong></th>
<th><strong>CROATIA</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long tradition</td>
<td>At the beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many types of accrediting organizations</td>
<td>1 accrediting organization (ASHE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private (nongovernmental)</td>
<td>Established by the government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary based accreditation</td>
<td>Mandatory accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US peer reviews</td>
<td>International peer-reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students not included</td>
<td>Students in peer-reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accreditation decision and report</td>
<td>Public disclosure (accreditation decision &amp; report)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public, private non-profit &amp; private for-profit</td>
<td>Public and private institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Education not included</td>
<td>Ministry issues licences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Audit

▪ Scope → degree of development and efficiency of the internal QA system of HEIs

▪ Outcome → report with recommendations for improvement and a certificate issued by ASHE
HEIs QA system

- 150 QA units are established at HEIs
- 126 QA Ordinances
- 57 QA Manuals
- 108 students members of QA Units
- 35 representatives from business sector are members of QA Units
Role of Students in QA system

- Internal QA system at HEIs:
  - Part of governance body at HEI (Senate, Faculty board, SU, …)
  - Part of advisory body (QA Council, Board, Centre)
  - Participate in evaluation of QA system/procedures at
    - Institutional level (internal audits)
    - Program level
Role of Students in QA system

• External QA system
  – Part of ASHE Accreditation Council
  – Part of experts panel (re-accreditation panel, audit panel)
ACT
How do you change to improve?

CHECK
How do you know it works?

PLAN
What are you trying to do?

DO
How are you trying to do it?
Thematic evaluation

- **Scope** → a segment of activities of HEIs or scientific organizations or equivalent evaluation subjects

- **Outcome** → report with assessment
Thematic evaluation

- **2011/2012**: thematic evaluation of 25 public research institutes

- **2012/2013**: thematic evaluation of all postgraduate doctoral studies (125) → thematic evaluation of studies in biomedical field (compliance with EU Directive)

- **2013/2014**: thematic evaluation of publically funded research vessels and maritime equipment → evaluation of applications for Centres of Excellence in Science
Strenghts

- ASHE is a member of ENQA & EQAR
- External quality assurance procedures are in line with the ESG, as well as best European and international practices
- Public call for experts (peer reviews)
- Foreign reviewers in the panels
- Business representatives and students are included in the Management Board, Accreditation Council and review panels
- NGO representative is also a member of the Accreditation Council
Strenghts

• Fair and equitable treatment of all stakeholders (public, private, new or traditional HEIs)

• Involvement of all stakeholders in implementing changes and carrying out activities

• Public discussions with all stakeholders

• Reports and decisions are public

• System-wide analysis are public

• Public forum – ASHE website

• ASHE documents are public (standards, criteria & procedures)

• ASHE annual report is public
Strenghts

• Surveys

• Confidentiality Statement – ASHE staff

• Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Statement (everybody participating in external QA procedures)

• Accreditation Council Code of Ethics

• No gifts, no paid lunches or dinners from HEIs (for members of peer-reviews or ASHE staff) – written procedure

• Ministry clearly committed to independence of the national agency
Challenges and Future

- Successful completion of the first re-accreditation cycle (by 2015)
- Reconsidering the model of re-accreditation for the second cycle (starting from 2016)
- New Strategy for Science & HE
- Further development of external QA procedures towards the implementation of National Qualification Framework
- Shift from inputs to outputs / more focus on learning and research outcomes and employment of graduates
- QA of transnational education, joint studies, e-learning ...
Challenges and Future

• Thematic reviews of ‘burning issues’ in Croatian HE: doctoral education, learning outcomes …

• Further support to development of quality culture: workshops, reports …

• Help our HEIs to enhance their position in EHEA and world-wide (mobility, cooperation with industry)

• Support to evidence-based policy making: focus on data collection
Thank you for your attention!