Overview

• The context of Higher Education & Science in Croatia
• ASHE – organisational structure
• Activities
• Challenges
The main stakeholders:

- MSES - Ministry of Science, Education and Sports
- NCHE - National Council for Higher Education
- NCS - National Council for Science
- 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 (90 public / 29 private)
  - 10 universities (7 public / 3 private)
  - 15 universities of applied sciences / 27 university colleges of applied sciences

• Number of students: cca 170 000

• Number of scientific organizations: 102
  (25 public scientific institutes / 77 others)
Croatian Universities

New:
2007 – 0
2008 – 2
2009 – 1

Total: 10 (7 pub, 3 prv)
Croatian Universities of Applied Sciences

New:
2007 – 1
2008 – 1
2009 - 0

Total: 15 (13 pub, 2 priv)
Croatian University Colleges of Applied Sciences

New:
2007 – 7
2008 – 5
2009 – 0

Total: 27 (3 pub, 24 prv)
Type of study programmes

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<td>university study programmes</td>
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Professional study programmes

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University study programmes

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The beginnings – 1990s

- HE system inherited from Yugoslavia
- First legislative changes in 1993 – establishment of private HEIs enabled
- National Councils (Science and HE) set up – strategic and external QA role
Introduction of Bologna system in Croatia

• 2001 Croatia signed the Bologna Declaration
• Impetus - wish to improve the education structure of the population, reform the system, and join the EU
• Mayor changes: binary system, three cycle system, ECTS
• National Councils tasked with external QA
• 2005 – first Bologna generation of students enrolled
European cooperation in quality assurance

Cooperation of QA agencies and HE institutions

Primary responsibility of HE institutions for quality

European Standards and Guidelines

European Register EQAR

Evaluation of EQAR

1999 Bologna
1998 Reco. 98-561-CE

2001 Prague

2003 Berlin

2005 Bergen

2007 London

2009 Leuven Louvain-la-Neuve

2006 Reco. 2006-143-CE

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

2009 – redefinition of its role (Quality Assurance Act) and strengthening of its independence

Is a legal entity that autonomously and independently performs activities defined by Scientific Activity and Higher Education Act, Act on Recognition of Foreign Educational Qualifications and Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education

Unifies various activities related to the science and higher education system
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
- Fulfilment 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

- 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
Re-accreditation - Expert Panel

- ASHE coordinator + ASHE translator
- Student
- International Expert
- National Expert

Agency for science and higher education Croatia
Re-accreditation - Scope

- Scope of reaccreditation
- Minimum criteria
- Quality grade
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

All HEIs by 2015/2016

- 2010/2011 re-accreditation of 20 HEIs in the field of economics and business
- 2011/2012 re-accreditation of 32 HEIs in the technical sciences
- 2012/2013 re-accreditation of 9 HEIs in the biotechnical sciences + 14 private HEIs
Re-accreditation of HEIs

Outcomes

49 accreditation recommendations

- accreditation granted to 30 HEIs
- letter of expectation issued to 15 HEIs
- accreditation denied to 4 HEIs and 11 dislocated study programs
Audit

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

**Outcome** → final report with recommendations for improvement and a certificate issued by ASHE
Audit

- CARDS 2003 project “Furtherance of the Agency for Science and Higher Education in its Quality Assurance Role and Development of a Supporting Information System“ in 2006/08
- ASHE developed an audit model
- Seminars for HEIs
- In house seminars for ASHE staff
- Develop & promote a quality culture
- An audit manual
- Pilot project
- Audit’s base
Audit / 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
- Enhancement of quality culture
ACT
How do you change to improve?

PLAN
What are you trying to do?

CHECK
How do you know it works?

DO
How are you trying to do it?
Audit - Expert Panel

ASHE coordinator + ASHE translator

Student

International Expert

National Expert

ASHE Auditor

Expert from Economy Sector
Audit

- Standards: ESG 1.1.-1.7.
- Criteria: 1 - Absent  
  2 - Emerging  
  3 - Developing  
  4 – Advanced
ASHE Accreditation Council:

- Issues certificate to HEI’s QA System
- Reaudit
- Reaccreditation

(certificates for 8 HEIs issued)
Thematic evaluation

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

- **Outcome** → report with assessment
2011/2012 → thematic evaluation of 25 public research institutes

2012/2013 → thematic evaluation of all postgraduate doctoral studies

→ thematic evaluation of studies in biomedical field (compliance with EU Directive)
Role of Students in QA system

• Internal QA system at HEIs:
  – Part of governance body at HEI (Senat, Faculty bord, SU, …)
  – Part of advisory body (QA Council, Board, Center)
  – Participate in evaluation of QA system/procedures at
    • Institutional level
    • Program level
Role of Students in QA system

• External QA system
  – Part of reaccreditation panel
  – Part of audit team
ASHE QA System

• Integrated QA system ESG + ISO 9001

• Quality management system ISO 9001 (2006)
  – Internal audit (each year)
  – External audit (each year, recertification in 3 years cycle)

• Quality assurance system in line with ESG
  – Quality management system + Strategy +Annual report
  – Cyclical external review of the Agency
Accountability procedures

- An internal feedback mechanism
- An internal reflection mechanism
- An external feedback mechanism
- An external reflection mechanism
- Cyclical external review of the Agency
ASHE membership in international networks

- Full member of INQAAHE (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education) since 2006
- Full member of ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) since 2011
- Full member of CEEN (The Central and Easter European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education) since 2008
- Member of OECD IMHE Forum (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development Forum on Institutional Management in Higher Education) since 2008
Strengths

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

• 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

• Public forum – ASHE website

• ASHE documents public (standards, criteria & procedures)

• The Ministry clearly committed to independence of the national agency
Strengths

- Surveys

- Confidentiality Statement – ASHE staff

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

- Accreditation Council Ethical Code

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

- ASHE annual report is public
Challenges and Future

• Further development of external QA procedures in line with the implementation of National Qualification Framework

• Shift from „inputs” to „outputs” /more focus on learning outcomes and employment of graduates

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

• Support to evidence-based policy making: focus on data collection
Challenges and Future

• Help our HEIs to enhance their position in EHEA and worldwide (mobility, cooperation with business)

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

• Strengthen regional and international cooperation
Thank you
Thank you for your attention!

https://www.azvo.hr/index.php/en