Overview

• The context of Higher Education & Science in Croatia
• ASHE
• Re-accreditation
• Challenges
The Context of Higher Education & Science

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 (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)
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
- **Undergraduate** (univ. bacc.), 3-4 years 180-240 ECTS
- **Postgraduate university** (dr.sc., dr.art/PhD), 3 years 
  ECTS number regulated by university
- **Postgraduate professional** (uni. spec.), 1-2 years
- **Graduate** (mag. struke/Master), 1-2 years 60-120 ECTS
- **Undergraduate** (univ. bacc.), 3-4 years 180-240 ECTS
- **Specialist graduate professional** (professional spec.), 1-2 years 60-120 ECTS
- **Undergraduate professional** (professional baccalareus/baccalaurea)
  3-4 years 180-240 ECTS bodova
  (pristupnik/associate degree)
  <3 god.
  <180 ECTS

- **University study prog.**
- **Year**
- **Professional study prog.**
- **Universities**
- **Institution**
- **Polytechnics & Colleges**

Min. 300 ECTS
## Croatian Qualification Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Types of programs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Postgraduate university study – PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Former Master’s Degree – 2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Postgraduate professional study</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate university study</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate professional study</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Undergraduate university study</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate professional study</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Professional study – less than 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training programs – training and additional education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Secondary education – 4 years + State Matura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary education – 3 years + final exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Secondary vocational education – 1-2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vocational training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Primary school (8 years)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Polytechnics - 15

- Existing higher education institutions network
- Public
- Private
- Towns

Agency for Science and Higher Education Croatia
### Type of study programmes

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional study programmes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist graduate professional</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>215</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Pie chart showing professional and specialist graduate professional study programmes](chart.png)
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
Agency for Science and Higher Education - ASHE

- 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
Organizational structure
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
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
PROCEDURE

Self-assessment ➔ Site visit ➔ Writing report ➔ Follow-up
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

International Expert

National Expert
Re-accreditation - Scope

Scope of reaccreditation

- Minimum criteria
- Quality grade
MINIMUM CRITERIA

- Prescribed by Ordinance of Accreditation of HE
  - teacher/student ratio 1:30
  - space criteria 1 student per 1.25 m²
  - 50/33 percent of study programmes conducted by teachers employed at the institution/own teachers
For HE institutions registered in the Register of Scientific Organizations

- Adopted long-term **strategic programme of research** in the area in which the teaching activity is performed
- Adequate **number and qualifications of employed researchers** (appointed into scientific position or with an adequate number of scientific papers published)
- Proof of adequate **facilities and equipment** for proposed research
- Proof of necessary **funds** secured for proposed research
## QUALITY GRADE

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

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>STUDY PROGRAMMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>STUDENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>TEACHERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND MOBILITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>RESOURCES: ADMINISTRATION, SPEACE, EQUIPMENT AND FINANCES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
QUALITY GRADE

• Each standard consists of various criteria
• Fulfilment of each criterium must be described with following levels of implementation:
  - Not implemented
  - Starting phase of implementation
  - Partly implemented
  - Mostly implemented
  - Fully implemented
Meetings are organized with:

1. Management
2. Meeting with the working group that compiled the Self-Evaluation
3. Meeting with representatives of the QA Unit
4. Teachers
5. Students
6. Non-teaching staff – tour of the facilities, etc.
Focus markers:

- Mission
- Vision
- Systematic strategic planning
- Organizational structure
- Quality policy and procedures for quality assurance
- Mechanisms for monitoring and improving teaching and research quality
- Ethical behaviour

Questions addressed to: management, QA department etc.
1.5. The institution has a quality policy and connected procedures for quality assurance and enhancement of all its activities.

• Quality assurance unit – is it only formal?
Internal Audit

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

- ESG standards part I
- Integrated QA system (ISO+ESG)
HEIs QA systems

- 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?
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
    • Programme level
Role of Students in QA system

• External QA system
  – Part of ASHE Accreditation Council
  – Part of experts panel (re-accreditation panel, audit panel)
2. Study programmes

Focus markers:

- Enrolment quotas – pass rate
- Learning outcomes and assessment
- Allocation of ECTS credits
- Proposing new study programmes and revision of the existing study programmes
- Teaching methods
- Internship

Questions addressed to: management, heads of departments, teachers, QA department, working group that compiled the self-evaluation etc.
3. Students

Focus markers:

- Admission criteria
- Mentorship
- Assessment
- Alumni – track of the employability
- Informing the public
- Participation in decision-making processes and feedback about the measures implemented on the basis of their suggestions

Questions addressed to: students, teachers, management etc.
4. Teachers

Focus markers:

- Number and qualifications of teachers
- Encouraging development of teachers
- Teaching workload

- Questions addressed to: teachers, management etc.
5. Professional and Research Activity

Focus markers:

• Priorities and procedures for expert and research activities
• Cooperation with industry, businesses, S&ME
• Advisory and professional activities

Questions addressed to: teachers-researchers, assistants, management etc.
Focus markers:

- Mobility of students
- Mobility of teachers/researchers
- International networks, projects and cooperation

- Questions addressed to: management, students, teachers/researchers, representatives of international cooperation office, etc.
Focus markers:

- Resources: equipment, classrooms, laboratories etc.
- Development of non-teaching staff
- Equipment - in accordance with recognized international standards
- Library, e-resources
- Financial stability and transparency

- Questions addressed to: management, non-teaching staff, etc.
- Tour of facilities
REPORTS

Report on meeting minimum quantitative criteria (MOZVAG)

Report with quality grade by the expert panel

Accreditation Council
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 denial of enrolment)
- Revoke the licence (for institutions and/or programmes)

After expiry:
- Issuing the licence
- Revoking the licence
2010/2012 - Outcomes

- Accreditation granted to **30** HEIs
- Letter of expectation issued to **16** HEIs and **5** study programmes
- Accreditation recommendation to revoke the licence for **4** HEIs/ appeal procedure underway
- Revoke licence to **11** dislocated study programmes
Strengths

- ASHE is a member of ENQA and 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 are 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