ASHE as evaluation body – in a nutshell

- National accreditation body in HE - 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
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
Legislative framework

• 2003 – Act on the Scientific Activity and Higher Education

• 2006 – ESG adopted in Croatia

• 2009 – Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science
HE and science in Croatia – numbers

No of HEIs: 116 (151)

No of students: approx. 170 000

No of scientific organisations: 102
• (25 public research institutes / 77 other)
HE and science in Croatia – numbers

Universities (10)

- 3 private
- 7 public:
  - 45 university departments
  - 67 faculties/academies
Universities - 10
(7 public, 3 private)
Polytechnics - 14

(11 public, 3 private)
Colleges - 25
(3 public, 22 private)
SCHEME OF STUDIES

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

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

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

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

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

Min. 300 ECTS

UNIVERSITY STUDY PROG.
YEAR
PROFESSIONAL STUDY PROG.

UNIVERSITIES
INSTITUTION
POLYTECHNICS & COLLEGES
Type of study programmes

<table>
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<th>TYPE OF STUDY PROGRAMMES</th>
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<tr>
<td>university study programmes</td>
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Professional study programmes

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<tr>
<td>professional</td>
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<tr>
<td>specialist graduate professional</td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>212</td>
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University study programmes

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>undergraduate university study</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated undergraduate and graduate university</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>graduate university study</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>postgraduate specialist study</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>postgraduate university (doctoral) study</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>1014</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2005 – ASHE established

2009 – Act on QA in Science and Higher Education: redefinition of ASHE role; strengthening of its independence

2011 – ENQA/EQAR membership
- compliance with *European Standards and Guidelines for QA in HE*
ASHE Organizational structure

- Management Board
  - Director's Office
    - Deputy director
    - Assistants
    - Internal QA Advisor
  - Director
  - Accreditation Council
- Direcctorate for Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education
- Central Applications Office – procedure for application to study programmes at HEI
- International Cooperation
- General Administration
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
QUALITY ASSURANCE ROLE

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

- New HEIs and/or new study programmes
- New scientific organisations established and/or financed by state
- Fulfilment of **minimum criteria** is checked
- From 07/2012 – 20 procedures completed, 4 pending
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

→ thematic evaluation of studies in biomedical field (compliance with EU Directive)

→ thematic evaluation of compliance with minimum criteria in the procedures of approving new study programmes of public universities

2013/2014 → thematic evaluation of research facilities in Marine research
Re-accreditation

- 5-year cycles (2010 – 2015 first cycle)

- Compulsory for:
  - all public and private HEIs (by 2015/2016)
  - all scientific organisations established and/or financed by the state (by 2015/2016)
RE-ACCREDITATION OF HEI - by numbers

• 2010/2011 re-accreditation of 28 HEIs in the field of economics and business
• 2011/2012 re-accreditation of 32 HEIs in the field of technical sciences
• 2012/2013 re-accreditation of 9 HEIs in the field of biotechnical sciences and 14 private HEIs
• 2013/2014 re-accreditation of 27 HEIs in the field of social sciences and humanities

• 2014/2015 re-accreditation of 41 HEIs in the field of natural sciences, arts, biomedicine and health etc.
Re-accreditation procedure

- Self-evaluation
- Site visit
- Report
- Follow-up
Re-accreditation - Expert Panel

Expert panel

- Student
- National Expert
- International Expert
- International Expert

- ASHE coordinator
- + ASHE translator
RE-ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

- **Scope of re-accreditation**
  - Minimum criteria
  - Quality grade criteria
  - Denial of accreditation, student enrolment
  - Influence on public financing
Minimum criteria

For all HEIs:

- **teacher/student ratio**: 1:30

- **space**: 1 student per 1,25 square meters

- 33 % of study programs conducted by teachers employed at the institution (polytechnics and colleges)

- 50 % of study programs conducted by teachers employed at the institution (universities and faculties)
Minimum criteria

For HEIs listed in the Register of Scientific Organisations:

• 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
MINIMUM CRITERIA

agencija za znanost i visoko obrazovanje

ANALYSIS OF CONDITIONS FOR PERFORMING THE STUDY PROGRAM

Core higher education institution: [Redacted]
Higher education institution: [Redacted]
Code: 58
Location: Zagreb
Report finished on: 15.04.2013

Number of students and employed teachers

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of full-time teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of associates</td>
<td>76.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of full-time students</td>
<td>934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- in university study programs</td>
<td>934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- in professional study programs</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of part-time students</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- in university study programs</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- in professional study programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher-student ratio*</td>
<td>9.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher-student ratio**</td>
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Facility capacity

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size of usable space in m²</td>
<td>8,455</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facility capacity per individual student</td>
<td>8,114</td>
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Availability of titles from compulsory reading lists

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<tr>
<td>Number of copies of titles from compulsory reading lists</td>
<td>500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of titles on compulsory reading lists</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of copies per title</td>
<td>10</td>
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</table>
QUALITY GRADE CRITERIA

1. INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE
2. STUDY PROGRAMMES
3. STUDENTS
4. TEACHERS
5. RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY
6. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND MOBILITY
7. RESOURCES: ADMINISTRATION, SPACE, EQUIPMENT AND FINANCES
Re-accreditation report

Accreditation Council: ASHE Recommendation

A. Report on meeting minimum quantitative criteria (MOZVAG)
B. Report with quality grade by the expert panel
C. HEI feedback on final report
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
Recap - Standards/criteria in 1st cycle

- Minimum criteria (mostly quantitative)

- Quality criteria (mostly qualitative)
  - HEI management and internal QA
  - Study programmes
  - Students
  - Teachers
  - Research/professional activities
  - Mobility and international cooperation
  - Resources
Goals for the 2nd cycle

Moving the focus from *input* to *output* parameters

Stronger emphasis on *learning outcomes* and *research outcomes*
Changes in the near future

• **Legislative changes in 2015:**
  - Act on QA in HE
  - Ordinance on minimum requirements for re-accreditation
  - Strategy of education, science and technology
  - Revised ESG

• **Croatian Qualification Framework**
  - Implementation of CQF Register – use in development of new programmes and ASHE evaluations
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
HEIs QA systems (September 2014)

- 155 QA units are established at HEIs
- 143 QA Ordinances/Regulations
- 116 QA Manuals
- 91 internal audits
QA Audit model in Croatia

- 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 - *pilot project (3 HEIs)*

- Seminars for HEIs
- Develop & promote quality culture
- In-house seminars for ASHE staff
Audit criteria

• Standards: ESG 1.1-1.7

• Phases of development:
  1. Preliminary (absent)
  2. Initial (emerging)
  3. Developed
  4. Advanced
Audit Procedure

**Annual plan of audits**

**Planning of audit (with HEI)**
- 4 months

**HEIs’ Internal Audit**
- 2 months

**Site visit**
- Day 0

**Report**
- +2 months

**Follow-up**
- +8 months

**Final report**
ASHE Accreditation Council:

- Issues certificate to HEI’s QA system
- Re-audit
- Re-accreditation

(11 certificates issued so far)
Audits 2010-2015

2010 – 3 audits completed
2011 – 9 audits completed
2012 – 8 audits completed
2013 – 3 audits completed
...(4 pending, 1 discontinued)
2014 – 6 ongoing procedures

2015 – 6 planned procedures
Published audit reports

External audits in 2012
- Summary of Final Audit Report of the University of Zadar
- Summary of Final Audit Report of the University of Rijeka
- Summary of Final Audit Report of the University of Pula
- Summary of Final Audit Report of the Polytechnic of Rijeka
- Summary of Final Audit Report of the University of Zagreb
- Summary of Final Audit Report of the Polytechnic of Požega
- Summary of Final Audit Report of the Polytechnic Velika Gorica
## Audit results – public universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEI</th>
<th>ESG 1.1.</th>
<th>ESG 1.2.1.</th>
<th>ESG 1.2.2.</th>
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</table>
Experiences: 2010-2014

Strengths:

• Pilot tested procedure (no significant revisions)
• Full ASHE procedure - certificate „quality label”
• New type of ext. evaluation – different perception of QA
• Follow-up
• Uniform structure of reports (ASHE panel member – „anchor”)
• Continuous training of audit experts (annual workshops)
• Annual QA questionnaires
• Positive impact on HEIs
Experiences: 2010-2014

Impact on HEIs:

- Establishment of QA units – QA documentation
- Self-evaluation/internal audits - Quality Culture
- Strategic development
- Positioning at national and international levels
- Awareness of differences between ISO and ESG
- Students and ext. stakeholders in the QAS
- Monitoring of study programmes improved
- Stimulating mobility of teaching staff and students
- Transparency
Areas for improvement:

- Length of procedure
- Evaluation questionnaires at the end of procedure - relevancy
- Annual planning – (lack of resources - max. 9 institutions)

... at HEIs

- Insufficient training of QA officers at HEIs
- Functionality of established QA systems
Experiences: 2010-2014

- Inertia (resistance to changes)
- Lack of administrative support (and financing)
- QA documentation and procedures (esp. follow-up)
- QAS are mostly input-oriented
- Insufficient dissemination of good practice at national level

Need for national QA network?
IDEAS FOR THE NEXT AUDIT CYCLE

QA network

agency for science and higher education croatia
IDEAS FOR THE NEXT CYCLE

(streamlined training of auditors)

(more procedures require)

A) Preliminary online
B) Selection (and training) of panel chairs
C) In-depth preparation at panel meeting
IDEAS FOR THE NEXT AUDIT CYCLE

FOLLOW-UP

1st CYCLE

1. 6 months follow up
2. Final (2nd) audit report

2nd CYCLE

1. 4 months follow up
2. Meeting with HEI
3. HEI presents results at CroQAnet workshop (after 2 years)
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 (125 programmes), learning outcomes…

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

• Help HEIs 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
Challenges and Future

Rethinking the position of ASHE:

Evaluation/accreditation

National/international context
Thank you for your attention!

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