

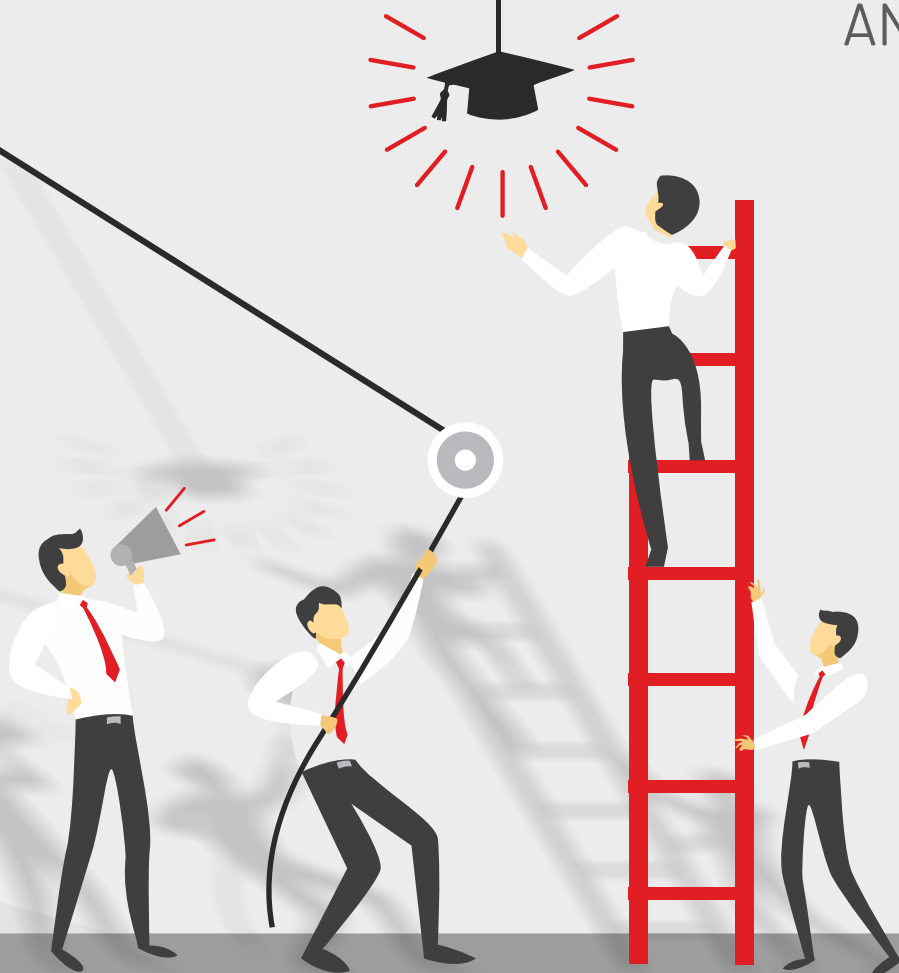


agency for science and higher education

2017

ANNUAL REPORT

ACTIVITY PLAN 2018





AGENCY FOR SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION
2017 ANNUAL REPORT
AND
2018 ACTIVITY PLAN



Zagreb, February 2018

Publisher:

Agency for Science and Higher Education
Donje Svetice 38
10 000 Zagreb,
Croatia

For the publisher:

Jasmina Havranek, PhD, Director

www.azvo.hr

We urge the users of this publication to provide the source to the Agency for Science and Higher Education when using the data.

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION | 8 |
| 1. QUALITY ASSURANCE IN SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION | 13 |
| RE-ACCREDITATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS | 13 |
| RE-ACCREDITATION OF POSTGRADUATE UNIVERSITY (DOCTORAL) STUDY PROGRAMMES | 21 |
| INITIAL ACCREDITATION | 30 |
| JUSTIFIABILITY OF PUBLIC FUNDING OF NEW STUDY PROGRAMMES | 31 |
| EVALUATION OF ONLINE STUDY PROGRAMMES | 32 |
| DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW CYCLE OF EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AUDIT OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS | 32 |
| CONSULTING AND SUPPORT TO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS | |
| 2. ASHE'S SUPPORT TO STRATEGIC AND EXPERT BODIES IN THE SYSTEM OF SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION | 36 |
| THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION | 36 |
| SCIENTIFIC AREA COUNCILS AND COUNCIL FOR ARTS | 36 |
| SCIENTIFIC FIELD COMMITTEES | 37 |
| THE COUNCIL OF POLYTECHNICS AND COLLEGES | 42 |
| FIELD COMMITTEES | 42 |
| THE COMMITTEE FOR ETHICS IN SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION | 45 |
| 3. APPLICATIONS TO STUDY PROGRAMMES IN CROATIA | 47 |
| APPLICATIONS TO UNDERGRADUATE AND INTEGRATED STUDY PROGRAMMES | 47 |
| APPLICATIONS TO GRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES | 49 |
| SUPPORT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS | 49 |
| CANDIDATE APPLICATIONS OUTSIDE THE REGULAR EDUCATION SYSTEM OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA FOR ENROLMENT IN THE FIRST GRADE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL | 50 |
| MONITORING GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY AND RESEARCHING STUDENT EXPERIENCE | 50 |
| 4. RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS | 53 |
| NATIONAL ENIC/NARIC OFFICE | 53 |
| RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS | 54 |
| IMPROVING THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR THE RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS | 59 |
| RECOGNITION OF CROATIAN EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS ABROAD | 60 |
| EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE RECOGNITION OF CROATIAN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS ABROAD | 60 |
| ASSISTANCE CENTRE FOR PROVIDING INFORMATION ON THE RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS | 63 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 5. ASHE INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES | 65 |
| INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS | 68 |
| COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS FROM THE AREA OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENCE AND PRESENTATION OF ASHE'S WORK ABROAD | 76 |
| PRESENTATIONS AND PARTICIPATIONS AT PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES AND PUBLICATIONS IN RECENT INTERNATIONAL JOURNALS AND NEWSLETTERS | 77 |
| PRESENTATIONS | 78 |
| 6. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE | 91 |
| 7. PUBLIC RELATIONS | 93 |
| 8. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY | 95 |
| 9. FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2017 | 98 |
| 10. ACTIVITY PLAN FOR 2018 | 102 |
| Glossary | 104 |
| Abbreviations and acronyms | 107 |



DIRECTOR'S
INTRODUCTION

Let us always meet each other with smile, for the smile is the beginning of love.

Mother Teresa

Dear readers,

While thinking about how to start this introduction, I decided that I will start off the way I usually finish, with a thank you. Firstly, I would like to thank all the employees of the Agency for Science and Higher Education, for their hard work and commitment—they play an essential role in the success of the organization through their ideas and enthusiasm, and that is evident through the many activities that we have coordinated throughout the last year, which we will present to you in this year's Annual report¹.

I would like to thank our Agency's Management Board, Accreditation Council, and National Council for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development, the Council of Polytechnics and Colleges, scientific field committees, scientific area councils and field committees on their cooperation and contribution in the past year. I would also like to thank the expert panels that participated in evaluation procedures, all the students who participated in the work of the Agency, through panels or other activities, and all other colleagues and partners. Let us now reflect on the year behind us.

In June 2017, The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) renewed the Agency's membership. It was preceded by renewed membership in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). This is a confirmation of the Agency's responsibility for external quality assurance procedures at both a national level and the level of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), in line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The first cycle of re-accreditation was concluded with a publication through which we gathered a large amount of data about Croatian higher education institutions and their activities. Analysis of the five year cycle of re-accreditation (2010-2015) includes all the proposals resulting from conducted evaluations that are useful to the higher education institutions and are also beneficial to policymakers in the field of higher education.

Towards the end of last year we began with implementation of the pilot re-accreditation according to the improved model and criteria. A lot of effort was put into the development of a new model and improved documents, which the ASHE employees were responsible for, in cooperation with the Committee of the Accreditation Council and the academic community. The first evaluations based on the new criteria have begun and we are awaiting to receive the results and feedback thereof. The new cycle is directed towards encouraging improvements based on the proposals and results from the first cycle of re-accreditation. We are going to continue to maintain our partnership with higher education institutions and encourage cooperation, however both sides are aware that the higher education institutions are primarily responsible for the quality of their activities.

Throughout the last year we continued with the re-accreditation of doctoral study programmes. Evaluation of that level of education showed that there is room for improvement, but also identified programmes of high levels of quality. Last year seven study programmes received the high quality label, for which I would like to congratulate them and wish them success in their further improvement of quality of doctoral education.

We always emphasize the international components of our work and the exchange of experiences with colleagues from other agencies. In October 2017 we hosted a European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA) seminar about institutional accreditation, which was held in Dubrovnik. We gathered our colleagues from Canada, Germany, Estonia, Czech Republic, Netherlands, Spain, Poland, Slovenia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Cyprus, with the aim of exchanging practical information and experiences of evaluation in various countries.

¹ ASHE Management Board adopted the 2017 Annual report and Plan of activities on its 50th session held on 26th February 2018.



I was pleased to participate in the World Education Day conference in China, an event that gathers researchers, teachers, policymakers and all interested in the field of education, where I held a lecture about leadership of higher education institutions in our country, based on the experiences of conducted external evaluations.

The Agency, as in previous years, participated in a number of projects as a partner and as a host. To mention just a few: SKAZVO (Improvement of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Systems in Higher Education), which is being conducted with the aim of developing a new model of external quality assurance system in Croatia, and HRMinHEI (Human resources modernization in higher education institutions), which has the goal of strengthening the function of human resource management at higher education institutions. Furthermore, we are a partner in a project called Database of External Quality Assurance Reports (DEQAR), coordinated by the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). Projects are indeed an essential part of our activities, both in terms of the scope of activities, and opportunities gained – from the use of European funds to international cooperation with colleagues from European countries.



Employees of the Agency for Science and Higher Education

Bearing in mind the importance of the productive cooperation of higher education institutions and business sector representatives, we organized seminars for career counsellors at higher education institutions throughout the last year. Career centres represent the link between the higher education institutions and the labour market, and that is why we emphasized good examples of this at our higher education institutions, with the aim of encouraging others to do the same. There is a demand for the services that career centres provide, and we hope that their number will increase. The Agency is continuing to plan new activities directed towards career counsellors and all those interested.

The end of 2017 was significant as the Agency was awarded the advanced MAMFORCE standard for implementing family responsibility and gender equality policies. After receiving the MAMFORCE standard the year before, we have been diligent in the realization of an action plan, and it evaluates was recognized and awarded by the advanced MAMFORCE standard. I am particularly proud as this recognition is the result of teamwork – it evaluates the organization as a community whose aim is to not only have employees satisfied at their place of work but also outside of it – working conditions and other related elements significantly contribute to this effect. Furthermore, we are the first public sector organization to receive the MAMFORCE standard, and we want to open further discussions about human resource management in the public sector.

I will conclude this introduction with one worthy recognition. For the second year in a row the Agency was awarded the Charter for Quality by the Croatian Society for Quality for special contribution to education and promotion of quality. We are delighted that our work is recognized, especially because we are in the field of education and science where quality requires a standard and promotion of quality must be a necessity and an obligation.

In light of all this, we are moving into the new year and we look forward to the challenges that await us!

Professor Jasmina Havranek, PhD

Director of the Agency for Science and Higher Education



2017 IN REVIEW

- The Agency was re-admitted into ENQA and EQAR.
- ASHE was awarded the advanced MAMFORCE standard for implementing family responsibility and gender equality policies.
- ASHE was awarded the Charter for Special Contribution in Education and Promotion of Quality by the Croatian Society for Quality.
- The Agency produced the Analysis of the five-year cycle of re-accreditation of higher education institutions (2010 – 2015).
- The new re-accreditation model was adopted.
- The pilot re-accreditation process started according to the improved model and criteria.
- According to the Postgraduate university study programmes re-accreditation plan for 2017, the Agency carried out the re-accreditation of 40 postgraduate university study programmes.
- The Agency organised workshops for coordinators of doctoral study programmes and management representatives of higher education institutions for 26 programmes at six universities.
- Clusters comprising 78 members of expert panels participated in the procedure of re-accreditation of doctoral study programmes.
- ASHE organized 8 workshops for members of expert panels in the re-accreditation of doctoral studies.
- A brochure "Quality assurance of doctoral study programmes in Croatia - recommendations and good practice" was drafted and published.
- The document "Position of the Agency for Science and Higher Education on the basis of the results of external evaluation of doctoral study programmes carried out in 2016 and 2017" was drafted and published.
- ASHE awarded seven high quality labels to postgraduate university (doctoral) study programmes.
- Three initial accreditation procedures for carrying out scientific activity have been initiated.
- Based on the conducted initial accreditation procedures, 18 study programmes received a recommendation to issue a licence, while two programmes received a negative recommendation from the Accreditation Council.
- Forty-three positive opinions were passed on compliance of the study programmes with the Network of higher education institutions and study programmes in the Republic of Croatia and 19 positive opinions were passed on the justifiability of public funding.
- ASHE received five requests for the evaluation of online study programmes in 2017.
- The proposal of a new model of external audit of higher education institutions was made.
- Scientific field committees held 96 sessions and passed 1482 decisions on appointment to scientific grades and artistic-teaching grades.
- Field committees held a total of 25 sessions; a total of 290 positive opinions were made on meeting criteria in the procedures of appointment to teaching grades.
- The National Council for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development held 8 sessions.
- The Council of Polytechnics and Colleges held 6 sessions.
- The Committee for Ethics in Science and Higher Education held 10 sessions.
- In the summer enrolment period; 38,299 slots were available at all Croatian higher education institutions, and out of 37,982 candidates that have applied, 29,626 candidates (or 78%) secured their right of enrolment.
- In 2017, ASHE continued monitoring graduate employability.
- The survey Understanding student's university choices was conducted in cooperation with Princeton University.
- Croatian ENIC/NARIC Office recognized 1747 foreign higher education qualifications for the purpose of employment.
- ASHE organised two meetings of the National network of quality assurance units at higher education institutions (CroQAnet).



- ASHE organized the General Assembly of the Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA).
- A seminar of the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) on institutional accreditation was organized.
- Two seminars on career guidance at higher education institutions were organized.
- A seminar on the implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) at Croatian higher education institutions was organized.
- ASHE hosted the regional meeting of ENIC and NARIC centres.
- ASHE and the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HEA) signed an agreement on the cooperation in the area of quality assurance in higher education and an exchange of experts in external evaluation procedures.
- ASHE signed a cooperation agreement with the Russian Register.
- Cooperation agreement was signed with Canadian Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB).
- ASHE took part in 12 international projects as coordinator or partner.
- The proposal of ASHE performance management system was made.
- External audit was carried out in line with ISO 9001, and the transition to the new standard ISO 9001: 2015 was assessed as successful, and ASHE received a certificate from the external certification body Det Norske Veritas GL (DNV).

Continued membership in ENQA is an acknowledgement of the work carried out by ASHE and their partners, and it is a proof that the quality of higher education in Croatia matches the quality in Europe.

Dr. sc. Lukša Lulić

Dean of Business School Zagreb





QUALITY ASSURANCE
IN SCIENCE AND
HIGHER EDUCATION

RE-ACCREDITATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The re-accreditation cycle of higher education institutions

The first five-year re-accreditation cycle ended with the evaluation of PAR Business School. Following the institution's request for postponement, the expert panel visited PAR Business School in January 2017.

Likewise, based on the request of the Ministry of Science and Education, ASHE initiated accreditation of part of activities of the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (University of Zagreb) and Polytechnic of Međimurje in Čakovec. Both procedures are in progress.

Publication of the analysis of the first re-accreditation cycle

The Agency for Science and Higher Education published and presented the Analysis of five-year cycle of re-accreditation of higher education institutions (2010-2015)² in July 2017. The publication contains comprehensive information about higher education institutions in Croatia, and it was prepared based on the results of the first comprehensive evaluation of all public and private higher education institutions (universities and university constituents – faculties and academies, polytechnics and colleges) in Croatia, which started in 2010. The analysis involved 132 higher education institutions and more than 600 Croatian and foreign reviewers took part in the procedures, while many of them teach at renowned international universities such as the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, Berkeley, Max Planck Institute, etc. Re-accreditation was carried out using a single methodology and criteria in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and examples of good international practice.

The analysis of the first re-accreditation cycle also includes the impact analysis and the fitness-for-purpose of the procedure. The goal of this approach was to gain a broad insight into needs and changes in the system of higher education that resulted from the re-accreditation procedure. The analysis confirmed the fitness-for-purpose of this procedure and identified advantages and disadvantages, i.e. elements which should be included in the next cycle of re-accreditation to make it more functional.

It is mostly based on the information contained in self-evaluation reports of higher education institutions, reports of expert panels and decisions adopted by the Accreditation Council, and comprises three groups of information – information on constituents and departments of public universities, information on public and private polytechnics and colleges, and information on private universities.



Public presentation of the Analysis of the five-year cycle of re-accreditation of higher education institutions

Some of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Analysis:

- Almost half of all the students at public universities in the Republic of Croatia study social sciences.

² https://www.azvo.hr/images/stories/publikacije/Analiza_petogodišnjeg_ciklusa_reakreditacije_2010-2015.pdf

- Undergraduate professional study programmes delivered in the area of biomedical science (70% – study programmes in Nursing) and the postgraduate university study programmes (77% – study programmes in Medicine) have the highest number of part-time students at public universities.
- The biggest scientific production per scientist was recorded in the area of biomedicine and health.
- The share of state funding of public higher education institutions within public universities in each scientific area is higher than 75%. The exceptions are higher education institutions in the field of Economics, where the share of funding from the state budget account for 55%.
- Higher education institutions in the area of biomedicine and health need additional funds for expansion and furnishing of clinics to develop clinical teaching.
- Determining disciplinary action for cheating on the exams, allowing anonymity in the publication of examination results and the establishment of more effective appeals procedure by ensuring an independent person i.e. a committee outside the higher education institution.
- It is important to allow students to do internships and to enable them to do volunteer work in the community.
- It is important for higher education institutions to independently collect information about the graduate employment, which would enable analysis of society's needs for the study programmes offered by higher education institutions, which would serve as a basis for an informed decision making regarding enrolment quotas for each study programme.
- It is necessary to develop a formal policy of professional development of teachers.
- Higher education institutions are recommended to develop and expand contacts with the industry in Croatia and abroad.
- Reconciling the contents and quality of study programmes in arts with the contents and quality of study programmes at foreign higher education institutions.

Re-accreditation of University of Mostar

The Agency for Science and Higher Education carried out the procedure of re-accreditation of the University of Mostar and all constituents of the University of Mostar in May 2017: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Natural Science and Education, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Computing, Faculty of Civil Engineering, School of Medicine, Faculty of Pharmacy, Faculty of Health Studies, Faculty of Agriculture and Food Technology and Academy of Fine Arts.

This was the first external evaluation procedure carried out by ASHE in Bosnia and Herzegovina which contributed to the strengthening of the Agency's role.

It was carried out upon request of the University of Mostar and the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia. As the University of Mostar is partly financed from the state budget of the Republic of Croatia, the procedure was carried out in accordance with laws and bylaws regulating higher education in Croatia and the Procedure of Re-accreditation of Higher Education Institutions of December 16th 2015. The Criteria for the Assessment of Quality of Higher Education Institutions within Universities on September 13th 2013 were applied in the external evaluation of the University of Mostar.

As part of the preparatory activities, ASHE employees organized a workshop on drafting a self-evaluation report in March 2016 for representatives of the University of Mostar, and another workshop was organized for members of the expert panel before the site visit to the University of Mostar in May 2017.

The expert panel visited the University of Mostar and its constituents on May 15th–19th 2017. It comprised 18 experts from seven countries: United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland, Slovenia and Croatia. Constituents were visited by seven expert panels, each comprising of two to four members. Each expert panel was supported by an ASHE coordinator and interpreter.



Members of expert panels in the re-accreditation of the University of Mostar constituents

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

1. Prof. Robert Logie, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom (president of the Expert Panel);
2. Prof. Matej Klemenčič, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia;
3. Prof. Ljiljana Reinkowski, Universität Basel, Switzerland.

Faculty of Natural Science and Education

1. Prof. Reinhold Stipsits, Institut für Bildungswissenschaft Universität Wien, Austria,
2. Prof. Luka Grubišić, Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb, Croatia,
3. Prof. Branko Matulić, University of Split, Croatia.

Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Law

1. Prof. Janez Kranjc, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia;
2. Prof. Bruno Grbac, Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka, Croatia.

Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Computing, Faculty of Civil Engineering

1. Prof. Peter Bak Frigaard, Aalborg Department of Civil Engineering University, Denmark;
2. Prof. Bojan Jerbić, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, University of Zagreb, Croatia.

School of Medicine, Faculty of Pharmacy, Faculty of Health Studies

1. Prof. Iztok Takač, Faculty of Health Studies, University of Maribor, Slovenia;
2. Prof. Marina Letica Crepulja, Faculty of Medicine, University of Rijeka, Croatia;
3. Prof. Vesna Gabelica Marković, associate at the Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb, and at the Faculty of Pharmacy and Biochemistry, University of Zagreb, Croatia.

Faculty of Agriculture and Food Technology

1. Prof. Bogdan Perko, Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia;
2. Prof. Ivica Kisić, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Zagreb, Croatia.

Academy of Fine Arts

1. Prof. David Quin, Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Ireland;
2. Prof. Branko Matulić, University of Split, Croatia.

Students:

Faculty of Agriculture and Food Technology

Nives Kalit, student, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Zagreb, Croatia.

School of Medicine, Faculty of Pharmacy, Faculty of Health Studies

Adam Vrbanić, student representative, Faculty of Medicine, University of Zagreb, Croatia.



After the site visit and based on the self-evaluation of the University and the self-evaluation report of each constituent of the University, underlying documentation and the site visit to the higher education institution, the expert panel drafted the Report on the re-accreditation of the University of Mostar and a separate report for each constituent unit of the University of Mostar, to which the University of Mostar and each constituent submitted their official comments. ASHE Accreditation Council adopted all final reports and recommendations contained in the final report issued by the expert panel for each constituent unit.

In September 2017, ASHE submitted the final reports containing the quality grades to the Croatian Ministry of Science and Education for the purpose of evaluation of financing of the University of Mostar (as it is partly funded by the state budget of the Republic of Croatia).

Comments of the participants:

The re-accreditation council was well-organized and conducted. I believe all participants gained new knowledge and experience.

I commend ASHE's professionalism, expertise and enthusiasm.

I would like to commend good cooperation with all ASHE employees in the procedure of re-accreditation of the University of Mostar, as the procedure requested a specific approach and it was very extensive.

Implementation of the new re-accreditation cycle in accordance with the new model

ASHE started the new re-accreditation cycle in 2017 (pilot re-accreditation of seven higher education institutions) as part of the SKAZVO project (Improvement of quality assurance and enhancement systems in higher education). The goal of the new re-accreditation cycle was to encourage improvements in accordance with the recommendations for quality improvement resulting from the first cycle of re-accreditation of higher education institutions. In this context, a higher education institution is viewed as a whole, and the quality of an institution includes the assessment all of its activities.

The new cycle is based on the improved documents which were mostly produced in 2016 and for which a public debate was held from 30th January to 28th February 2017. Members of the academic community and all interested stakeholders submitted their proposals and comments to ASHE, and the final versions of the following documents were drafted based on the received comments:

- The Procedure for the re-accreditation of higher education institutions;
- The system of the assessment and evaluation of quality of higher education institutions in the procedure of higher education institutions re-accreditation;
- Tables in the self-evaluation report obtained from the MOZVAG database.

Based on the public call published on the ASHE website in April 2017, 13 higher education institutions applied for the pilot re-accreditation. Taking into account regional representation, type of higher education institution, the method of financing and size, the Accreditation Council selected seven higher education institutions which will participate in the pilot re-accreditation and adopted the Plan of pilot re-accreditation of higher education institutions:

1. Faculty of Agriculture, University of Zagreb,
2. Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka,
3. Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, University of Split,
4. Faculty of Civil Engineering, Architecture and Geodesy, University of Split,



5. Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, University of Zagreb,
6. Nikola Šubić Zrinski University College of Economics, Entrepreneurship and Management,
7. College of Agriculture in Križevci.

In November 2017 the Accreditation Council appointed a panel of experts for the pilot re-accreditation of Nikola Šubić Zrinski University College of Economics, Entrepreneurship and Management. The procedure is in progress, while other procedures will be carried out in 2018.

Likewise, the Accreditation Council of the Agency for Science and Higher Education adopted the Higher Education Institutions Re-accreditation Plan for 2018 (for the new re-accreditation cycle) in June 2017:

1. Faculty of Architecture, University of Zagreb,
2. Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing, University of Zagreb,
3. Faculty of Geodesy, University of Zagreb,
4. Faculty of Transport and Traffic Sciences, University of Zagreb,
5. Faculty of Civil Engineering, University of Zagreb,
6. Faculty of Graphic Arts, University of Zagreb,
7. Faculty of Mining, Geology and Petroleum Engineering, University of Zagreb,
8. Geotechnical Faculty, University of Zagreb,
9. Faculty of Maritime Studies, University of Split,
10. Faculty of Mechanical Engineering in Slavonski Brod, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek,
11. Faculty of Metallurgy, University of Zagreb,
12. Faculty of Engineering, University of Rijeka,
13. Faculty of Civil Engineering, University of Rijeka,
14. Faculty of Maritime Studies, University of Rijeka,
15. Faculty of Civil Engineering, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek,
16. Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Computing and Information Technology, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek,
17. Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb,
18. Faculty of Economics, University of Split,
19. Faculty of Economics, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek,
20. Faculty of Organization and Informatics, University of Zagreb,
21. Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management Opatija, University of Rijeka.

Educational activities for higher education institutions

For the purpose of quality preparation for the pilot reaccreditation and the new re-accreditation cycle, the Agency carried out many training activities, including workshops and seminars for representatives of higher education institutions in 2017, which were financed by the European Union funded SKAZVO project.

Implementation of Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) at Croatian higher education institutions

ASHE organized a seminar on the implementation of Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) at Croatian higher education institutions, which took part on 20th February 2017 in Zagreb.



The European Standards and Guidelines have an important role in the development of the quality assurance systems of states and higher education institutions across the European Higher Education Area, as well as in cross-border cooperation. For this reason, and in view of the new cycle of re-accreditation of Croatian higher education institutions, the aim of the seminar was to answer the questions such as the importance of the ESG for higher education institutions, how to implement required changes and how to increase the quality of study with the application of the European Standards.

Almost 150 participants – representatives of Croatian universities, polytechnics and colleges as well as student councils – were familiarized with the updated and revised version of the ESG.

The seminar speakers were: Colin Tück, Director of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), Elizabeth Noonan, Head of Quality Assurance Office, University College Cork, Prof. Damir Boras, PhD, Rector of the University of Zagreb, dr. sc. Mislav Balković, Dean of the Algebra University College and Agency representatives dr. sc. Vesna Dodiković Jurković, mr. sc. Sandra Bezjak and Ivana Borošić.

Comments of the participants:

I found the concrete examples of implementation of the new ESG and the information on the changes in the new cycle of re-accreditation of higher education institutions the most useful.

I found the exchange of experience and good practice with colleagues from other institutions very useful.

Workshop on learning outcomes for lecturers at higher education institutions

The workshops on learning outcomes for lecturers at higher education institutions were held on the May 5th and 25th May 2017 at the University of Split and the University of Zagreb. Workshops were organized mostly for teachers and study programme coordinators. They gained more information on learning outcomes by working in small groups, which included writing and evaluation, while emphasis was placed on evaluation (assessment), adjusting contents and teaching methods.

The third workshop on learning outcomes was held on September 20th 2017 in Zagreb. Among the topics discussed were competencies and learning outcomes, constructive alignment, teaching methods and techniques, evaluation and assessment, ECTS credits and evaluation.

Comments of the participants:

Lecturers did an amazing job, the organization was excellent!

Great organization and interesting lectures.

Workshop on writing self-evaluation report for representatives of higher education institutions participating in pilot re-accreditation of higher education institutions

On 5th July 2017 the Agency for Science and Higher Education held a workshop in Zagreb on preparing the self-evaluation report for representatives of higher education institutions involved in the pilot re-accreditation of higher education institutions. Seven institutions participating in the pilot re-accreditation are: The Faculty of Agronomy, University of Zagreb; the Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka; The Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, University of Split; the Faculty of Civil Engineering, Architecture and Geodesy, University of Split; The Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, University of Zagreb; Križevci College of Agriculture and Nikola Šubić Zrinski University College of Economics, Entrepreneurship and Management. The Agency presented the new re-accreditation procedure, the standards for the assessment of quality and the new version of MOZVAG information system.

Meeting with representatives of higher education institutions participating in pilot re-accreditation

A meeting with the representatives of higher education institutions participating in the pilot re-accreditation was held at the Agency for Science and Higher Education in October 11th 2017. The discussion concerned various issues connected to the drafting of the self-evaluation, site visit of the expert panel, etc.

Comments of the participants:

A very positive atmosphere and working toward a common goal.

Workshop on writing self-evaluation report for higher education institutions participating in re-accreditation in 2018

The workshop for drafting the self-evaluation reports was held on the 24th October 2017 and gathered the representatives of higher education institutions in the procedure of re-accreditation, heads of internal quality assurance system, i.e. persons who will be actively involved in drafting self-evaluation.



Meeting with representatives of higher education institutions participating in pilot re-accreditation

Workshop on learning outcomes held in Osijek

The workshop on learning outcomes aimed at representatives of higher education institutions, titled „Workshop for HEI lecturers with a competence approach to planning study programmes“, was held on the campus of J. J. Strossmayer University in Osijek. The workshop was attended by representatives of HEIs, vice deans for teaching affairs, heads of offices for quality and teachers who, by engaging in practical activities, had the opportunity to engage in the topic of learning outcomes – writing, evaluation etc. with emphasis on the evaluation (assessment) and the adjustment of contents and teaching methods.

Workshop for potential members of expert panels in the re-accreditation of higher education institutions

On November 16th-17th 2017, employees of the Agency for Science and Higher Education and representatives of higher education institutions held workshops for potential expert panel members in the re-accreditation of higher education institutions in 2018 in the technical and social sciences (the fields of economics and information and communication sciences).

The workshop was held on the 16th November 2017 and it was designed for full-time students of the technical area and the social sciences area, the fields of economics and information and communication sciences. The workshop was organized on the 17th November 2017 for experts, members of academic and scientific community, and the representatives of the business sector.

Upgrade of the information system supporting re-accreditation of higher education institutions

All higher education institutions in Croatia undergoing re-accreditation are required to enter information on their study programmes, courses, teaching staff, projects, scientific productivity and other information required for the re-accreditation procedure, in the information system for the support to the re-accreditation of higher education institutions (MOZVAG) which is jointly maintained by ASHE and Srce (University Computing Centre).

Upgrading of the existing information system has started for the purposes of the new evaluation cycle, and it will contain updated information and data necessary for the implementation of the re-accreditation procedure. Reconstruction of the existing system contains several levels that are necessary for a successful implementation of the re-accreditation procedure, which will increasingly rely on the data and information obtained from the system.

The first phase concerned the upgrade of the technical component of the system. In the second phase, after adopting documents governing external evaluation procedures, a new version was installed for the support to the implementation of re-accreditation procedures, ensuring entry of all the data necessary in the procedure. It is especially important to stress that all quantitative data in the new re-accreditation procedure are obtained through the MOZVAG database.

Since the scope of information entered in the system is higher than before, ASHE financed linking of ISVU and the MOZVAG databases through SKAZVO project, in order to facilitate the taking over of data from ISVU system that can be used in the evaluation procedures carried out by ASHE.

ASHE established cooperation with the team maintaining the Croatian Scientific Bibliography (CROSBI). The data on scientific publications and projects maintained in CROSBI are used in the re-accreditation procedure carried out by ASHE. The reports and delivery of information from CROSBI have been adjusted to tables in the MOZVAG database.

The system will be tested during the pilot re-accreditation at seven higher education institutions.

Workshops on the work in upgraded MOZVAG and CROSBI databases

For HEIs participating in pilot re-accreditation and the HEIs scheduled to undergo re-accreditation in accordance with 2018 Re-accreditation Plan, ASHE organized workshops on operating the new system. Also, in cooperation with Ruđer Bošković Institute, ASHE organizes additional workshops for the administrators of the Croatian Scientific Bibliography (CROSBI) and administrators of the database of project activities in Croatian science and higher education.

Three workshops were held on the work in the upgraded MOZVAG and CROSBI databases at the premises of SRCE, at which upgrades of the new system were presented and work in the new modules of the system which were constructed in accordance with the needs of the new re-accreditation cycle was explained.

For the higher education institutions participating in the pilot re-accreditation one more workshop was held – Workshop for the administrators of the Croatian Scientific Bibliography (CROSBI) and the administrators of the database of project activities in Croatian science and higher education at Ruđer Bošković Institute, which administers the mentioned databases. Employees at higher education institutions in charge of that explained the entry, modification and administration of databases in more detail.

Directory of study programmes

Based on the data contained in MOZVAG, the Directory of Study Programmes is maintained and updated on the Agency website in Croatian and English. The directory enables examination of the basic information on the accredited programmes in Croatian HEIs to potential students, foreign ENIC and NARIC offices, etc. The directory contains information on higher education institutions delivering the study programme, issuing institution, level and type of programme, scientific area and field in which the programme is delivered, number of ECTS credits, duration of study, place of delivery and also includes a link to the HEI website or programme. The information in the directory can be searched by study programme parameters as well as the HEI parameters (category, type, location, issuing institution, field and area of study).

RE-ACCREDITATION OF POSTGRADUATE UNIVERSITY (DOCTORAL) STUDY PROGRAMMES

The need for re-accreditation of doctoral study programmes³ arose based on the findings obtained in previous evaluation procedures conducted by the Agency for Science and Higher Education, including the thematic evaluation procedures conducted in 2013 and 2014. The primary goal of the re-accreditation of doctoral study programmes was to ensure that the higher education qualifications that award the academic title "doctor of science" reflect study programmes of high quality, which are internationally comparable. The re-accreditation will make sure that all the doctoral study programmes in Croatia meet the minimal legal requirements, and that the academic titles "doctor of science" and "doctor of arts" reflect the degree of knowledge and skills equivalent to the highest level of higher education. ASHE continued with the re-accreditation of postgraduate (doctoral) study programmes in accordance with the Plan of re-accreditation for 2017 adopted by ASHE's Accreditation Council.

The mentioned Plan involved the re-accreditation of 40 doctoral study programmes delivered at 23 HEIs, and 78 expert panel members (mostly from foreign institutions) took part in the procedures.

Likewise, in the past year, the Accreditation Council of the Agency issued 49 accreditation recommendations for doctoral studies, thereof 31 for the procedures carried out in 2016 and 18 for the procedures carried out in 2017. All evaluation procedures of doctoral studies started in 2016 were completed after the Ministry of Science and Education issued the decisions based on accreditation recommendations. Based on the carried out re-accreditation procedures for 26 study programmes, issuing of a licence on compliance with conditions for carrying out part of activities was recommended, while the letter of expectation was recommended for 23 study programmes, with the deadline for removing deficiencies. All final reports of expert panels and accreditation recommendations were published on the ASHE website.

Counselling and support to higher education institutions and other stakeholders

In 2017 ASHE organized 26 workshops for doctoral study programme coordinators and management representatives of higher education institutions for 47 programmes at six universities, i.e. the constituent units delivering the programmes included in the 2017 Plan. Along with the workshops, ASHE organized lectures delivered by experts in quality assurance of doctoral education and doctoral schools.

In order to provide higher education institutions with a series of Croatian and international examples of improving the quality of doctoral study programmes, ASHE produced a brochure containing examples of good practice from the procedures carried out in 2016 titled Quality assurance of doctoral study programmes in Croatia - recommendations and good practices.

The document was produced in cooperation with representatives of higher education institutions, doctoral candidates and young scientists and provides experience and recommendations from previous evaluation procedures carried out in Croatia and abroad. It contains differences and similarities among different states in the delivery of



Brochure Quality Assurance of Doctoral Study Programmes in Croatia

³ In accordance with the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education (OG 123/03, 198/03, 105/04, 174/04, 02/07, 46/07, 45/09, 63/11, 94/13, 139/13, 101/14, 60/15) postgraduate university study (hereinafter: doctoral study programme) may be enrolled upon the completion of graduate university study and it lasts at least three years. Upon fulfilment of prescribed conditions and a public defense of the doctoral dissertation in scientific areas the academic degree of Doctor of Science (Dr. Sc.) is awarded, while upon the fulfilment of all the conditions stipulated in the arts the academic degree of Doctor of Arts (Dr. Art.) is awarded.



Doctoral study programme
in the Republic of Croatia: ASHE's standpoint

doctoral education, quality criteria and outcomes of re-accreditation of doctoral studies and recommendations made by expert panels for improving the national framework. The purpose of the document is to provide guidelines to higher education institutions undergoing re-accreditation of doctoral studies and encourage self-assessment in HEIs, i.e. raising awareness of advantages and deficiencies with the aim of continuous improvement of quality of doctoral education in Croatia.

In order to provide the stakeholders with insight in the improvement of quality of the third cycle of higher education, the Agency for Science and Higher Education produced and published the document Doctoral study programmes in the Republic of Croatia: Position of the Agency for Science and Higher Education on the basis of the results of external evaluation of doctoral study programmes carried out in 2016 and 2017.

The document contains information on the state of affairs of doctoral study programmes in the Republic of Croatia, as well as their specific characteristics, problems involved and quality of doctoral studies. The information is particularly useful for the Ministry of Science and Education, the Rectors' Conference, the National Council for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development of the Republic of Croatia and other stakeholders in the development of public policies in the area of improvement of the quality of doctoral study programmes in Croatia.

Evaluation of postgraduate university study programmes carried out in 2017

According to the Postgraduate university study programmes re-accreditation plan for 2017, the Agency carried out the re-accreditation of 40 postgraduate university study programmes. Mostly foreign members of expert panels participated in the evaluation procedures.

Table 1: Postgraduate university study programmes evaluated in 2017

| No. | Study programme name | Institution providing the programme | Institution delivering the programme | Number of Reviewers |
|--|---|--|--|------------------------|
| Information and Communication Sciences Cluster | | | | |
| 1. | Information and Communication Sciences | University of Zagreb | Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences | 8 |
| 2. | Information Sciences | University of Zagreb | University of Zagreb Faculty of Organization and Informatics in Varaždin | |
| 3. | Informatics | University of Rijeka | Department of Informatics, University of Rijeka | |
| 4. | Knowledge Society and Information Transfer | University of Zadar | University of Zadar | |
| Legal and Political Sciences Cluster | | | | |
| 5. | Legal Sciences | University of Zagreb | Faculty of Law | 9 |

| No. | Study programme name | Institution providing the programme | Institution delivering the programme | Number of Reviewers |
|---|---|--|--|---------------------|
| 6. | Social Work | University of Zagreb | Faculty of Law | 9 |
| 7. | Political Science | University of Zagreb | Faculty of Political Sciences | |
| 8. | Comparative Politics | University of Zagreb | Faculty of Political Sciences | |
| 9. | Law | University of Rijeka | Faculty of Law | |
| Economics and Interdisciplinary Studies Cluster | | | | |
| 10. | Business Economics and Economics | University of Zagreb | Faculty of Economics and Business | 13 |
| 11. | Business Economics in Tourism and Hospitality | University of Rijeka | Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management Opatija | |
| 12. | Management of Sustainable Development | University of Rijeka | Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management Opatija | |
| 13. | New Economics | Juraj Dobrila University of Pula | Dr. Mijo Mirković Department of Economics and Tourism | |
| 14. | Business Economics and Economics | University of Split | Faculty of Economics | |
| 15. | Business Economics and Economics | University of Rijeka | Faculty of Economics | |
| 16. | Management | Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek | Faculty of Economics | |
| 17. | Entrepreneurship and Innovativeness | Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek | Faculty of Economics | |
| Kinesiology Cluster | | | | |
| 18. | Kinesiology | University of Zagreb | Faculty of Kinesiology | 4 |
| 19. | Kinesiology | University of Split | Faculty of Kinesiology | |

| No. | Study programme name | Institution providing the programme | Institution delivering the programme | Number of Reviewers |
|---|--|--|---|---------------------|
| Humanities and Interdisciplinary Sciences Cluster | | | | |
| 20. | Humanities | University of Split | Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences | 31 |
| 21. | Christianity and Modern Culture | University of Split | Catholic Faculty of Theology | |
| 22. | History of Theology and Christian Institutions | University of Split | Catholic Faculty of Theology | |
| 23. | Croatian culture | University of Zagreb | Faculty of Hum. and Soc. Sci. | |
| 24. | Philosophy | University of Zagreb | Faculty of Hum. and Soc. Sci. | |
| 25. | Archaeology | University of Zagreb | Faculty of Hum. and Soc. Sci. | |
| 26. | Linguistics | University of Zagreb | Faculty of Hum. and Soc. Sci. | |
| 27. | Glottodidactics | University of Zagreb | Faculty of Hum. and Soc. Sci. | |
| 28. | Humanities | University of Zadar | University of Zadar | |
| 29. | Archaeology of the Eastern Adriatic | University of Zadar | University of Zadar | |
| 30. | History | University of Zagreb | Croatian Studies | |
| 31. | Croatology | University of Zagreb | Croatian Studies | |
| 32. | Linguistics | Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek | Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences | |
| 33. | Literature and Cultural Identity | Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek | Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences | |
| 34. | Philosophy and Contemporaneity | University of Rijeka | Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences | |
| 35. | Croatian Language History and Dialectology | University of Rijeka | Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences | |
| Social and Educational Sciences Cluster | | | | |
| 36. | Psychology | University of Zagreb | Faculty of Hum. and Soc. Sci. | 13 |
| 37. | Prevention Science and Disability Studies | University of Zagreb | Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation | |
| 38. | Pedagogy and Contemporary School Culture | Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek | Faculty of Hum. and Soc. Sci. | |
| 39. | Pedagogy | University of Rijeka | Faculty of Hum. and Soc. Sci. | |
| 40. | Psychology | University of Rijeka | Faculty of Hum. and Soc. Sci. | |
| Total number of reviewers | | | | 78 |

List of expert panel members in the re-accreditation of post-graduate university study programmes in 2017

Information and Communication Sciences Cluster:

1. Prof. Andrew McGettrick, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom (president),
2. Prof. Bjørn Erik Munkvold, Universitetet i Agder, Norway,
3. Prof. Henrique Madeira, Universidade de Coimbra, Portugal,
4. Prof. Sofia Gaio, Fernando Pessoa University, Portugal,
5. Prof. Theo Thomassen, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands,
6. Prof. Tanja Oblak Črnič, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia,
7. Akram El-Korashy, doctoral candidate, Max Planck Institute for Software Systems, Germany,
8. Abhishek Tiwari, doctoral candidate, Potsdam University, Germany.

Legal and Political Sciences Cluster:

1. Prof. Tamás Hoffmann, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Hungary (president);
2. dr. Gerhard van der Schyff, Tilburg Law School, Department for Public Law, Jurisprudence and Legal History, Tilburg University, Netherlands,
3. dr. Dagmar Simon, The WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Germany,
4. Prof. Dibyesh Anand, University of Westminster, United Kingdom,
5. dr. Igor Štiks, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom,
6. Prof. Mare Leino, Tallinn University, Estonia,
7. Max Lügert, doctoral candidate, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, Germany,
8. Marko Radenović, doctoral candidate, Princeton University/McKinsey & Company, Croatia,
9. Katja Simončič, doctoral candidate, Inštitut za kriminologijo pri Pravni fakulteti v Ljubljani, Slovenia.

Economics and Interdisciplinary Studies Cluster:

1. Prof. Peter Mason, London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom (president),
2. Prof. Aleksandra Mrčela Kanjuo, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia,
3. Prof. Rainer Niemann, Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, Austria,
4. Prof. Anand Murugesan, Central European University, Hungary,
5. Prof. Peter-Wim Zuidhof, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands,
6. Prof. Wendy Sigle, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom,
7. Doc. dr. Maja Turnšek-Hančič, University of Maribor, Slovenia,
8. Prof. Julius Horvath, Central European University Business School, Hungary
9. Prof. Adele Ladkin, Bournemouth University, United Kingdom,
10. Ieva Krumina, doctoral candidate, Latvian University of Agriculture, Latvia,
11. Hrvoje Stojić, doctoral candidate, University Pompeu Fabra, Spain,
12. Jeremiás Máté Balogh, doctoral candidate, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary,
13. Kanad Bagchi, doctoral candidate, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Germany.

Kinesiology Cluster:

1. Prof. Mojca Doupona Topič, Faculty of Sport, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia (president);
2. Dr. Joanne Hudson, Swansea University, United Kingdom,



3. Dr. Joanna Bowtell, University of Exeter, United Kingdom,
4. Mikko Huhtiniemi, doctoral candidate, M. Sc., Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences, University of Jyväskylä, Finland.

Humanities and Interdisciplinary Sciences Cluster:

1. Dr. Igor Štiks, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom (president),
2. Dr. Ljiljana Reinkowski, Universität Basel, Switzerland,
3. Prof. dr. sc. Rozita Dimova, Ghent University, Belgium,
4. Dr. Vladimir Unkovski-Korica, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom,
5. Dr. H. J. M. J. (Harm) Goris, Tilburg University, Netherlands,
6. Prof. David Maxwell, Emmanuel College Cambridge, United Kingdom,
7. Prof. Elzbieta Osewska, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland,
8. Prof. Mikhail Dmitriev, Central European University, Hungary,
9. Prof. Andrej Blatnik, Univerza v Ljubljani, Slovenia,
10. Prof. Ljiljana Šarić, University of Oslo, Norway,
11. Prof. dr. Katrin Boeckh, Ludwig-Maximilian-Universität in Munich, Germany,
12. Prof. Vincent Gaffney, University of Bradford, United Kingdom,
13. Prof. Mika Vahakangas, Lund University, Sweden,
14. Dr. sc. Nicole Butterfield, Marie Curie Fellow, Segeud University, Hungary,
15. Anna Meens, doctoral candidate, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands,
16. Kevin Kenjar, doctoral candidate, University of California, Berkeley, United States of America,
17. Dr. Elżbieta Gajek, University of Warsaw, Poland,
18. Dr. Kyle Jerro, University of Essex, United Kingdom,
19. Dr. Nadia Mifka-Profozic, University of York, United Kingdom,
20. Dr. Moreno Mitrović, University of Cyprus, Cyprus,
21. Dr. Catherine MacRobert, Oxford University, United Kingdom,
22. Prof. Emeritus Svein Mønnesland, University of Oslo, Norway,
23. Dajana, Charles University, Prag, Czech Republic,
24. Prof. dr. Christian Neuhäuser, Universität Dortmund, Germany,
25. Dr. Dries Bosschaert, KU Leuven, Belgium,
26. Oliver George Downing, doctoral candidate, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom,
27. Prof. Hanoch Ben-Yami, Central European University, Hungary,
28. Sonja Kačar, doctoral candidate, University Toulouse II – Jean Jaurès, France,
29. Garrett R. Mindt, doctoral candidate, Central European University, Hungary,
30. Prof. Vieri Samek Lodovici, University College London, United Kingdom,
31. Mišo Petrović, doctoral candidate, Central European University, Hungary.

Social Sciences Cluster:

1. Prof. Nihad Bunar, Stockholm University, Sweden (President),
2. Dr. Rachel Shanks, University of Aberdeen, United Kingdom,
3. Prof. Juana M. Sancho Gil, University of Barcelona, Spain,
4. Prof. Rachel Msetfi, University of Limerick, Ireland,
5. Dr. Matthew Schuelka, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom,



6. Prof. Bosse Bergstedt, Lund University, Sweden,
7. Justīne Viķe, doctoral candidate, Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia,
8. Ieva Bloma, doctoral candidate, European University Institute, Italy,
9. Prof. Annekathrin Schacht, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Germany,
10. Prof. Cathy Craig, Queen's University Belfast, United Kingdom,
11. Dr. Michel Denis, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France,
12. Prof. Thomas Morton, University of Exeter, United Kingdom,
13. Dr. Hrvoje Stojić, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom.

High quality labels awarded to postgraduate university(doctoral) study programmes

With the evaluation of doctoral study programmes, ASHE joined the European trend of external evaluations of that specific level of education, which is extremely important in encouraging innovative and highly specialised industrial and social development.

The aim of the evaluation is to make sure that only study programmes which meet the quality criteria (regarding qualified scientists, adequate equipment, space and support to doctoral candidates) are granted the licence. It is very important for ASHE's accreditation to guarantee that the qualifications gained by completing a study programme are recognized and comparable with the international standards of doctoral education. Furthermore, by carrying out the evaluations which gathered renowned academics from all over Europe, the Agency recognized excellent programmes of high quality and awarded the high quality labels to them.

- Doctoral study programme in Mechanical Engineering at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, University of Split,
- Doctoral study programme in Electrical Engineering and Information Technology at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, University of Split,
- Doctoral study programme in Civil Engineering at the Faculty of Civil Engineering, Architecture and Geodesy, University of Split,
- Doctoral study programme in Translation Research in Biomedicine – TRIBE at the School of Medicine, University of Split,
- Doctoral study programme in Electrical Engineering and Computing at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing, University of Zagreb,
- Doctoral study programme in Pharmacy and Biochemistry at the Faculty of Pharmacy and Biochemistry, University of Zagreb,
- Doctoral study programme in Veterinary Sciences at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zagreb.



Ordinance on the Quality Assurance System at the University of Zagreb

Based on the confirmation of compliance with conditions of the Ministry of Science and Education, the high quality label is awarded to doctoral study programmes of high quality for academic and promotional purposes.

Postgraduate university study programmes re-accreditation plan for 2018

In 2018 ASHE is planning to carry out the evaluation of the remaining 25 doctoral study programmes. Upon requests of the universities and constituents during the past two years the site visits to these HEIs were postponed for spring (for the natural and technical sciences, biomedical sciences and biosciences, and for autumn (for the areas of religious and social sciences). ASHE will start to evaluate the postponed study programmes at the end of 2018. A detailed 2018 Plan, with the deadlines for the submission of self-evaluation reports and clusters has been published on ASHE's website and sent to the institutions delivering and providing the study programmes.

Table 2: Postgraduate university study programmes re-accreditation plan for 2018

| No. | Study programme name | Institution delivering and providing the study programme |
|---|--|--|
| Natural and Technical Sciences Cluster | | |
| 1. | Applied Geoscience, Mining and Petroleum Engineering | University of Zagreb, Faculty of Mining, Geology and Petroleum |
| 2. | Geology | University of Zagreb, Faculty of Science |
| 3. | Chemistry | University of Zagreb, Faculty of Science |
| 4. | Biology | University of Zagreb, Faculty of Science |
| 5. | Oceanology | University of Zagreb, Faculty of Science |
| 6. | Chemical Engineering and Applied Chemistry | University of Zagreb, Faculty of Chemical Engineering and Technology |
| 7. | Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection | Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek |
| 8. | Molecular Biosciences | Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek |
| 9. | Applied Marine Sciences | University of Split/University of Split and University of Dubrovnik |
| 10. | Chemical Engineering in Materials and Environmental Protection | University of Split, Faculty of Chemical Engineering and Technology |
| 11. | Chemistry of Mediterranean Environment | University of Split, Faculty of Chemical Engineering and Technology |
| 12. | Adriatic - a link among the continents | University of Zadar |
| 13. | Mathematics | University of Zagreb, Osijek, Rijeka, Split City: Zagreb |
| Biomedical Sciences Cluster | | |
| 14. | Biomedicine and health | Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Medicine |
| 15. | Biophysics | University of Split, Faculty of Science |
| 16. | Medical Chemistry | University of Rijeka Department of Biotechnology |

| No. | Study programme name | Institution delivering and providing the study programme |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Religious Sciences II Cluster | | |
| 17. | Postgraduate Studies Licentiate and Doctoral Programme | University of Zagreb, Catholic Faculty of Theology |
| 18. | Religious Sciences | University of Zagreb, Faculty of Philosophy of the Society of Jesus |
| 19. | Philosophy | University of Zagreb, Faculty of Philosophy of the Society of Jesus |
| Social Sciences II Cluster | | |
| 20. | Culture Studies | Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek |
| 21. | Communication Studies | Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek |
| 22. | European Studies | Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek |
| 23. | Education Research in Natural and Technical Sciences | University of Split, Faculty of Science |
| 24. | Law | Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Law |
| 25. | International Relations | University of Zadar, Libertas International University |

INITIAL ACCREDITATION

Initial accreditation of study programmes

The Agency for Science and Higher Education conducted procedures of initial accreditation of study programmes in 2017, in accordance with the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education and 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.

The procedure includes checking compliance of study programmes with the strategic document “The Network of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes”, the examination of received documents, visits of expert panels to higher education institutions, administrative and professional support provided by ASHE during site visits, drafting the final report and making the accreditation recommendation.

In the past year ASHE received 22 requests for initiating the procedure of initial accreditation of new study programmes from polytechnics, colleges and private universities.

Based on the carried out procedures the minister of science and education received a recommendation to issue licences for 18 study programmes:

- Six professional undergraduate study programmes;
- Seven specialist professional graduate study programmes;
- Two undergraduate university study programmes;
- One graduate university study programme;
- Two postgraduate university (doctoral) study programmes.

Two requests for new study programmes received a negative recommendation of the Accreditation Council, while the procedure was interrupted for two requests.

Almost all recommendations refer to the study programmes delivered in the area of social sciences and only several study programmes are delivered in technical sciences and biomedicine and health.

Initial accreditation for performing higher education activities

In 2017, ASHE received three requests for performing initial accreditation for carrying out higher education activities. For all three requests recommendations were issued to the Minister of science and education for granting approval for establishing a higher education institution.

Initial accreditation for carrying out scientific activity

ASHE carries out the procedure of initial accreditation for carrying out scientific activity, that is, establishing a scientific organisation or entering an existing scientific organisation in the Register of Scientific Organisations in a new scientific area.

Initial accreditation for carrying out scientific activity includes the following stages: examining the submitted documentation, a site visit of the expert panel to a scientific organisation, writing the final report and issuing the accreditation recommendation.

In 2017, ASHE received three requests for performing initial accreditation for carrying scientific activity, which is under way.



JUSTIFIABILITY OF PUBLIC FUNDING OF NEW STUDY PROGRAMMES

ASHE passes opinion on establishing new study programmes at public universities, set up by their senates, on the basis of their alignment with the strategic document Network of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes in the Republic of Croatia. Based on the received requests, ASHE issued 62 positive opinions in 2017 (43 on the alignment with the Network and 19 on the justifiability of public funding).

Most new university study programmes are delivered in the area of biomedicine and health, followed by the arts and humanities, and technical sciences.

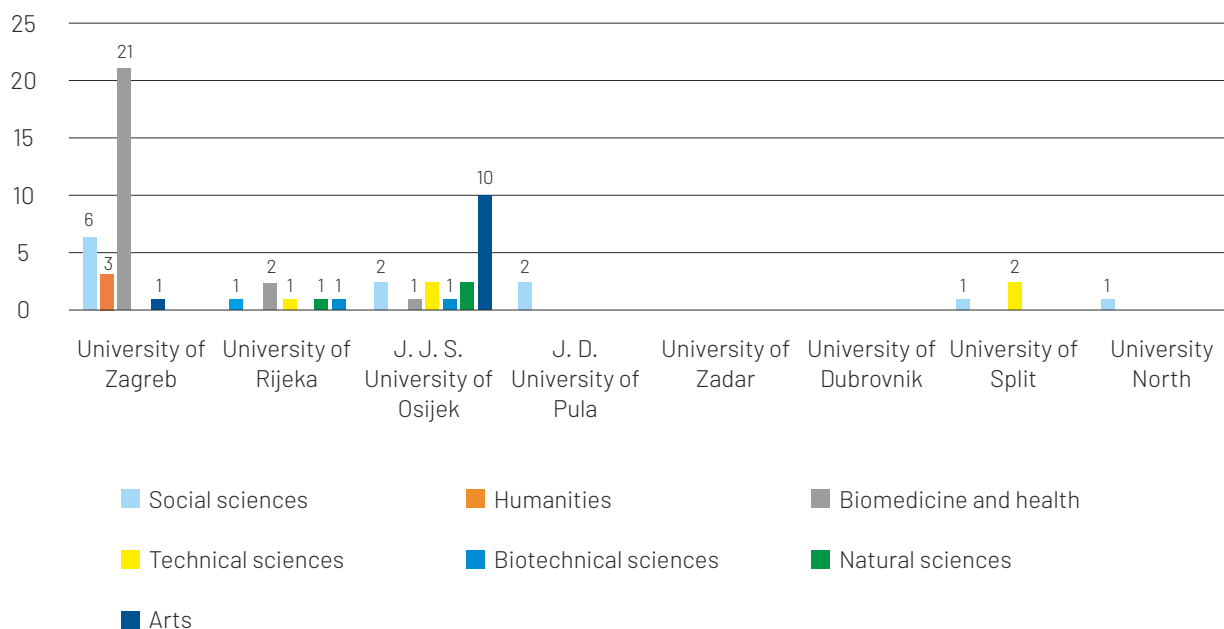


Chart 1: Positive opinions on establishing new study programmes by area

EVALUATION OF ONLINE STUDY PROGRAMMES

In accordance with Article 79 Paragraph 4 of the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education, a study programme can be organized via distance learning system (online study programme), which is approved by the National Council for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development. ASHE received five requests for the evaluation of online study programmes in 2017. One HEI dropped their request, while one procedure has not started because the higher education institution is currently undergoing the re-accreditation procedure, while ASHE carried out the evaluation for three study programmes and sent the reports on evaluation to the National council for approval of online study programmes.

I would like to thank ASHE for all the positive things they do for Croatian higher education.

Doc. dr. Niko Bilić, Faculty of Philosophy of the Society of Jesus

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW CYCLE OF EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AUDIT OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education regulates external and internal quality assurance in the system of science and higher education in the Republic of Croatia, in line with the principles of Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

In the 2010-2016 period, the Agency for Science and Higher Education conducted the first cycle of external quality assurance audit of higher education institutions, evaluating the efficiency and degree of development of HEIs' internal quality assurance systems, and their contribution to the continuous improvement of quality and overall institutional development.

During the first cycle, the procedure was carried out at the level of universities and polytechnics, as well as some university constituents and colleges that had the preconditions necessary for its implementation. A total of 40 audit procedures have been carried out; 39 in the Republic of Croatia and one abroad.

ASHE also analysed the fitness-for-purpose and influence audit procedure had on the development of quality culture and strengthening of internal quality assurance systems at HEIs. In developing the new model of audit, ASHE used the results of these analyses and analysed recent audit models in other countries, while taking into account the national context and changes introduced by the revised ESG (2015).

The new audit model was developed in 2017 by a specially appointed sub-committee of the Accreditation Council, in cooperation with ASHE's Audit Department. ASHE audit procedure remains an institutional evaluation.

Drafts of the following documents were made:

- Ordinance on External Quality Assurance Audit of Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Croatia
- Criteria for Audit.

The documents were submitted for a public review in April-May of 2017, feedback was collected from the academic community and general



public, and their suggestions used for finalising the documents. Public review reports for both documents are available on ASHE website. At its 86th session held on the 20th June 2017, ASHE's Accreditation Council adopted the final version of the Ordinance on external quality assurance audit of higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia and Criteria for audit. The documents are available on ASHE website.

In the new cycle, audit procedure will stimulate fitness-for-purpose, functionality, coherence and further development of internal quality assurance systems at higher education institutions.

Building upon the ESG (2015), new audit criteria aim at evaluating the functionality of a quality assurance system, in terms of day-to-day support and contribution to the implementation of HEI's mission through the adopted policies, which are reflected in processes of planning and management, monitoring and evaluation, and development and innovation.

At its 89th session held on the 24th October 2017, ASHE's Accreditation Council adopted the plan for pilot audit of 3 institutions who expressed interest for participation: Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Food Technology and Biotechnology, University of Zagreb, and University College Algebra.

A workshop for the audited institutions was organised on the 7th November 2017. A draft of the new Audit Manual was also developed at that time. Site visits to the appointed institutions have been arranged for March and April of 2018.

CONSULTING AND SUPPORT TO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

During the first audit cycle, ASHE provided continuous support to the establishment and work of internal quality assurance systems at higher education institutions. Taking into account the lack of study programmes from the field of quality assurance in higher education in Croatia, this segment of ASHE's operation had a great significance.

In December 2016, ASHE organised a kick-off meeting of the national network of quality assurance units at higher education institutions (CroQAnet), envisaged as a national platform for the exchange of knowledge and good practices in the area of higher education quality assurance, which could also provide opportunities for training and competence building of all QA staff directly involved in quality improvement and development of quality culture at Croatian HEIs, as well as various forms of support and opportunities for professional development and networking. CroQAnet contributes to the synergy of internal and external quality assurance, and their impact on the development of higher education at both institutional and national level.

The second CroQAnet meeting was held on the 5th June 2017 in Zagreb, with the main theme of student-centred learning.



Meeting of CroQAnet network

Through presentations and practical examples, the participants were informed of the basic principles of student-centred learning, its application, and benefits for both students and teachers. The meeting was attended by more than 70 representatives of Croatian universities, polytechnics and colleges, as well as student unions.

The third CroQAnet meeting was held on 11 December 2017 in Zagreb, and was attended by 70 representatives of higher education institutions. After the presentation of the internal quality assurance system of the Zagreb School of Economics and Management, and review of featured posters on good QA practices of Croatian universities, the participants engaged in group discussions on topics such as ECTS revisions, suggested amendments to the Quality Assurance Act, institutional support to the development of teaching competences and human resource management at higher education institutions.

As part of the preparations for the new cycle of external evaluations, ASHE held a number of seminars and workshops at universities: University of Mostar and University of Split in January, University of Osijek in March, and University of Dubrovnik in April. This was also an opportunity to present the outcomes of the first cycle of external evaluations at the level of universities and university constituents, as well as the implementation of action plans based on recommendations from evaluation reports. The issue of adapting to the new ESG and its full application at the national level was discussed as well.

Your efforts are effective, as is your focus on improving the quality of science and higher education in our country.

Prof. dr. sc. Tomislav Rukavina, dr. med.

Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Rijeka





ASHE'S SUPPORT
TO STRATEGIC AND EXPERT
BODIES IN THE SYSTEM OF SCIENCE
AND HIGHER EDUCATION

One of ASHE's tasks is to provide administrative and expert support to the National Council for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development, the Council of Polytechnics and Colleges, scientific field committees and the Committee for Ethics in Science and Higher Education. All this represents an added value as it enables collecting and linking information and data related to the improvement of the quality of higher education and science in Croatia.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION

In 2017, the Agency continued to ensure the successful work of the National Council for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development (NCSHETDC), the most prominent professional body concerned with the development and quality of scientific activity and the system of science, higher education and technological development in the Republic of Croatia.

ASHE provided administrative and professional support to the work of the Council by preparing the necessary materials and data for Council sessions, as well as drafting minutes, proposals, comments, decisions and conclusions with regard to the: the draft of proposals for amendments to the Act on Croatian Qualifications Framework, Ordinance on Criteria for Appointment to Scientific Positions, Ordinance on the Constitution and Activities of Scientific Area Councils and Scientific Field Committees, NCSHETD's Rules of Procedure, appointing the president, vice-president, and members of Scientific Area Councils, art councils and scientific field committees, initiative of the European Centre for Research project on the fusion of DOMES/IFMIF at the Ruder Boskovic Institute, Croatian panels for following Bologna processes and Croatian strategy forum on research infrastructure, assessment of annual professional and financial reports of the centres of research excellence in 2016. NCHSETD's conclusions on the strategy for development of Croatian research infrastructures, criteria's and procedures for obtaining and using the title of research and technology park, giving recommendations about fulfilling criteria for continued excellence of employment contracts for employees (65+), issuing consent for the implementation of the part of the procedure of appointment to scientific grades, particularly artistic-teaching grades, necessary conditions for assessment of teaching and scientific-professional activity in the procedures of appointment to scientific teaching grades, drafting proposals for the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education and issuing consent for the delivery of the professional study programmes at universities.

From January to December 2017, the National Council for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development held eight sessions.

SCIENTIFIC AREA COUNCILS AND COUNCIL FOR ARTS

Scientific area councils are responsible for the matters within the competence of the National Council for Science, Higher Education, and Technological Development in relation to scientific and artistic areas.

Of the seven sessions held in 2017, one session was held by the Scientific Area Council for Biotechnical Sciences, two sessions were held by the Scientific Area Council for Biomedicine and Health, and four sessions were held by The Scientific Area Council for the Humanities.



SCIENTIFIC FIELD COMMITTEES

During 2017, the Scientific Field Committees continued supporting the 22 scientific field committees that participate in the procedure of appointment to scientific grades as well as the support of the Scientific Field Committees for Arts in the implementation of appointment to artistic-teaching grades.

In 2016, the scientific field committees that appointed NCSHETD (2013-2017 mandate), continued to carry out the procedure of appointment to scientific and artistic teaching grades (Scientific Field Committee for Arts) as well as the procedure of determining criteria for scientific/artistic excellence in the selection procedure for the conclusion of employment contracts for employees over the age of 65.

On April 26, 2017, NCHSETD appointed new members of the scientific field committees (2017-2021 mandate) including, the amendment of Ordinance on the Quality Assurance System of the Scientific Area Councils and Scientific Field Committees (OG 47/18), along with the president and appointed members as well as three vice-presidents (for science, higher education and technological development), for better coordination, efficient work and efficiency and networking with NCSHETD.

During 2017, a total of 96 sessions were held, with 1482 decisions passed, of which 1429 (96.42%) were positive decisions (123 decisions are based on the appointment to scientific grades or artistic-teaching grades) and 53 negative decisions (8 negative decisions based on the appointment to scientific grades or artistic-teaching grades) (a total of 3.58% negative decisions).

The largest number of decisions on appointment to scientific grades was passed by the Scientific Field Committee for Biomedicine and Health-fields of Fundamental Medical Sciences, Clinical Medical Sciences, Public Health and Health Protection, Dentistry and Pharmacy (17.48% of the total number of procedures), followed by the Scientific Field Committee for Arts-fields of Dramatic Arts (theatre and media), Film Arts (film, electronic and media art of motion pictures), Music Art, Visual Art, Applied Arts, Dance Art and Art of Movement (8.84% of the total number of procedures), in addition the Scientific Field Committee for the Humanities-fields of History, Art History, Archaeology, Ethnology and Anthropology (7.49% of the total number of procedures).

The number of appointments to scientific grades upon individual request or request of a scientific institution in 2017 was 990 (66.85%), while those implemented on the basis of a public call amounted to 492 in the proposed scientific grades (33.15%).

According to the data on all the procedures and for all scientific field committees in 2017, there was 618 appointments of scientific associates, 410 senior scientific associates, 225 scientific advisors and 53 scientific advisors with tenure.

The Scientific Field Committee for Arts-fields of Dramatic Arts (theatre and media), Film Arts (film, electronic and media art of motion pictures), Music Art, Visual Art, Applied Arts, Dance Art and Art of Movement-confirmed appointment to scientific and artistic-teaching grades for 50 assistant professors, 32 associate professors, 27 full professors and 14 full professors with tenure.

Within the procedures of determining criteria for scientific/artistic excellence in the framework procedures for the conclusion of employment contracts for employees over the age of 65, scientific field committees have in 2017 issued 16 positive decisions (of which 5 are in the field of arts) and one negative decision on meeting the criteria for scientific excellence. In line with the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education (OG 123/03, 198/03, 105/04 174/04, 02/07, 46/07, 45/09, 63/11, 94/13, 139/13, 101/14 and 60/15) a total of 36 procedures of appointment to scientific grades were conducted, resulting in 4 negative decisions.

Data shows equal representation of genders in the conducted procedures for all scientific committees, however with a slightly higher ratio of female applicants (57 positive decisions).



Table 3: Procedures held and results in the scientific field committees in 2017

| Scientific field committee | No. of sess. held | Excellence criteria | Positive | | | | Negative | | | | Total positive | Total negative | Total |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------|
| | | | Research associate | Senior research associate | Research advisor | Research advisor with tenure | Research associate | Senior research associate | Research advisor | Research advisor with tenure | | | |
| SFC Biology | 3 | | 16 | 8 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 1 | 31 |
| SFC Physics | 4 | 1 | 26 | 11 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 41 | 1 | 42 |
| SFC Geology | 2 | | 5 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 11 |
| SFC Chemistry | 5 | | 23 | 14 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 42 | 0 | 42 |
| SFC Mathematics | 5 | | 13 | 8 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 31 | 0 | 31 |
| SFC Architecture, Urbanism, Geodesy and Civil Engineering | 3 | | 20 | 8 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 35 | 4 | 39 |
| SFC Electrical Engineering and Computing | 3 | | 26 | 21 | 14 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 64 | 0 | 64 |
| SFC Chemical Engineering, Mining, Geology and Petroleum Engineering, Metallurgy, Textile Tech., Graphic Technology | 3 | | 9 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 26 | 3 | 29 |
| SFC Mechanical Engineering, Shipbuilding, Traffic and Transport Technology, Aviation, Rocket and Space Technology | 3 | 1 | 33 | 9 | 10 | 12 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 64 | 5 | 69 |
| SFC Fundamental Medical Sciences, Clinical Medical Sciences, Public Health and Health Protection, Dentistry and Pharmacy | 6 | 1 | 131 | 66 | 53 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 252 | 7 | 259 |
| SFC Veterinary Medicine | 3 | | 3 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 15 |

| Scientific field committee | No. of sess. held | Excellence criteria | Positive | | | | Negative | | | | Total positive | Total negative | Total |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------|
| | | | Research associate | Senior research associate | Research advisor | Research advisor with tenure | Research associate | Senior research associate | Research advisor | Research advisor with tenure | | | |
| SFC Agricultural Sciences, Forestry, Wood Technology, Biotechnology, Food Technology and Nutrition | 4 | | 43 | 22 | 12 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 102 | 0 | 102 |
| SFC Economics | 5 | 1 | 32 | 48 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 95 | 0 | 95 |
| SFC Information and Communication Sciences | 5 | | 22 | 14 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 46 | 2 | 48 |
| SFC Pedagogy, Educational and Rehabilitation Sciences, Logopedics and Kinesiology | 6 | 1 | 33 | 29 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 71 | 2 | 73 |
| SFC Political Science, Sociology, Demography, Social Work and Security and Defence | 4 | | 17 | 16 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 41 | 1 | 42 |
| SFC Law | 4 | 1 neg | 9 | 16 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 33 | 2 | 35 |
| SFC Psychology | 3 | | 6 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 2 | 17 |
| SFC Philosophy and Theology | 7 | 3 | 29 | 18 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 58 | 4 | 62 |
| SFC Philology | 5 | 1 | 38 | 30 | 15 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 83 | 2 | 85 |
| SFT History, Art History, Art Science, Archaeology, Ethnology and Anthropology | 5 | 1 | 51 | 40 | 12 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 106 | 1 | 111 |
| SFC Interdisciplinary Field | 4 | 1 | 33 | 9 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 45 | 4 | 49 |
| TOTAL | 92 | 11+1 | 618 | 410 | 225 | 53 | 21 | 11 | 13 | 0 | 1306 | 45 | 1351 |

Table 4: Number of conducted procedures and decisions adopted by scientific field committees in 2017 artistic teaching grades

| Total | Positive decisions | | | | | | Negative decisions | | | | Total | | |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------|
| Name of department | No. of sessions | Excellence criteria | Assistant professor | Associate professor | Full professor | Full professor with tenure | Assistant professor | Associate professor | Full professor | Full professor with tenure | Total positive | Total negative | Total |
| SFC Arts: Dramatic Arts, film arts, music art, visual art, applied arts, dance art, movement art | 4 | 5 | 50 | 32 | 27 | 14 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 123 | 8 | 131 |

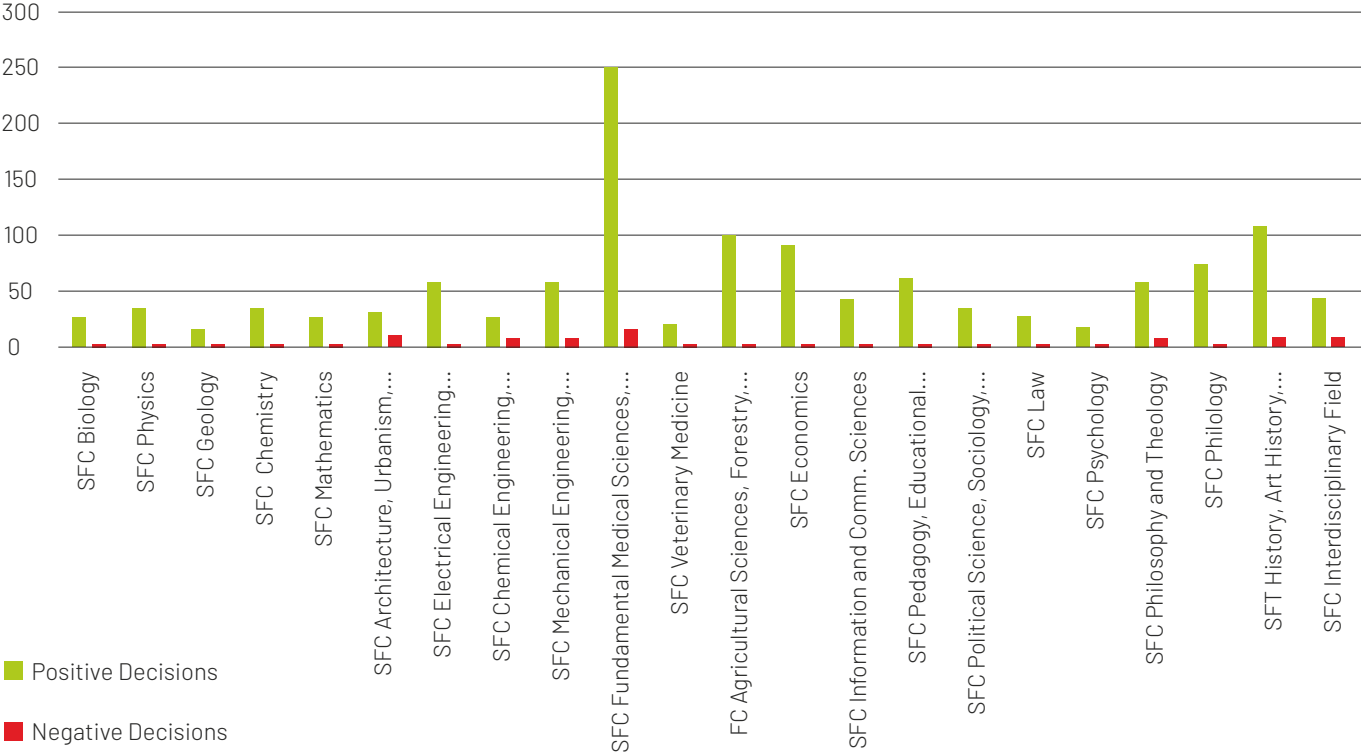


Chart 2: Total number of decisions made by the scientific field committees in the appointment to scientific grades in 2017



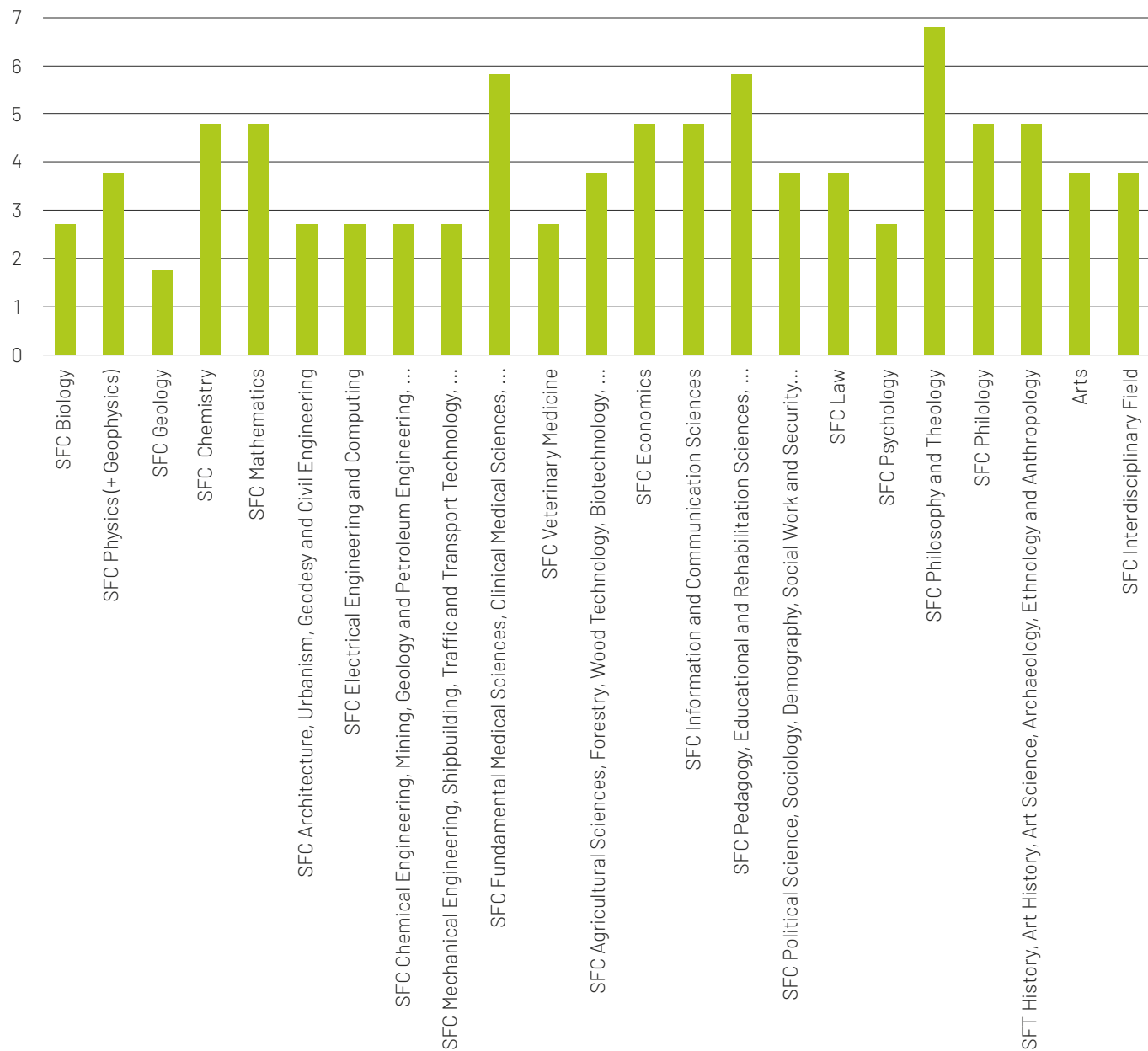


Chart 3: Number of sessions held in 2017

THE COUNCIL OF POLYTECHNICS AND COLLEGES

The Council of Polytechnics and Colleges is a body in charge of decision-making on the issues of common interest for the activities and development of polytechnics and colleges. Its members are deans of all polytechnics and colleges in Croatia. A representative of the Rectors' Conference participates in the work of the Council without voting rights, along with a representative of the Council of students of polytechnics and colleges. The Council of Polytechnics and Colleges currently comprises 39 members, of which 16 are polytechnics and 23 colleges. From the total number of members, 14 institutions are public and 25 are private.

ASHE organised six sessions of the Council of Polytechnics and Colleges in 2016.

In terms of international cooperation, the Council of Polytechnics and Colleges, being a member of the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), is partner in two Erasmus+ projects: Building Professional Higher Education Capacity (BuildPHE) and Strengthening Professional Higher Education and vocational education and training in Central and South-Eastern Europe (PROCSEE), initiated at the end of 2015, aimed at development and strengthening of professional higher education in the European Higher Education Area.

In December, after the end of the BuildPHE project, the Council of Polytechnics and Colleges organized a final conference in Zagreb, at which the results of the project were presented as well as 13 workshops for participants.

The Council of Polytechnics and Colleges has established the The Committee for Communications and Public Relations whose main activity is the promotion of all the members and professional study programmes. In 2017, the Committee coordinated a media campaign to promote professional studies through TV commercials that were broadcasted on several national television stations and online promotion on web portals. The Committee also made a proposal for a new website, visual identity and Council logo. Representatives of the Council actively participate in the work of a number of committees and working groups established for the purpose of drafting regulations and working on the overall development of higher education system.

FIELD COMMITTEES

Field committees of the Council of Polytechnics and Colleges have in the 2017 held 25 sessions, passing a total of 290 positive decisions on the fulfilment of criteria for appointment to teaching grades.

In that period, the Field Committee for Humanities passed the highest number of positive opinions (118), followed by the Field Committee for Technical Sciences with 59 positive opinions as well as the Field Committee for Biomedicine and Health with 50 positive opinions.

The highest number of positive opinions in the procedures of appointment to teaching grades was passed in the field of Economics with 65 positive opinions followed by the field of Clinical Medicine Science with 43 positive opinions as well as the field of Information and Communication Science with 22 positive opinions.

The teaching grade that resulted in the highest number of positive opinions in all scientific fields is the teaching grade for lecturers, which in 2017 resulted in 157 positive opinions, and the lowest number of positive opinions was for the teaching grade for tenured college professors – 21 positive opinions.

During 2017, the Field Committees Coordination Board held 3 sessions, and along with the interpretation of the appointment to teaching grades of the members of the Council of Polytechnics and Colleges, a positive opinion was made in the procedures of appointment in interdisciplinary fields of science.

The data does not include the number of amendments and negative opinions passed at the sessions.

Table 5: Number of positive opinions in the procedures of appointment to teaching grades for field committees.

| Field Committee | Social Sciences | Technical Sciences | Humanities | Natural Sciences | Biotechnical Sciences | Biomedicine And Health | Arts | Total |
|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------|-------|
| Number of Sessions | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 25 |
| Number of Opinions | 118 | 59 | 23 | 8 | 27 | 50 | 5 | 290 |
| Tenured College Professor | 7 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 0 | 21 |
| College Professor | 12 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 28 |
| Senior Lecturer | 45 | 18 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 12 | 0 | 84 |
| Lecturer | 54 | 35 | 18 | 6 | 14 | 25 | 5 | 157 |

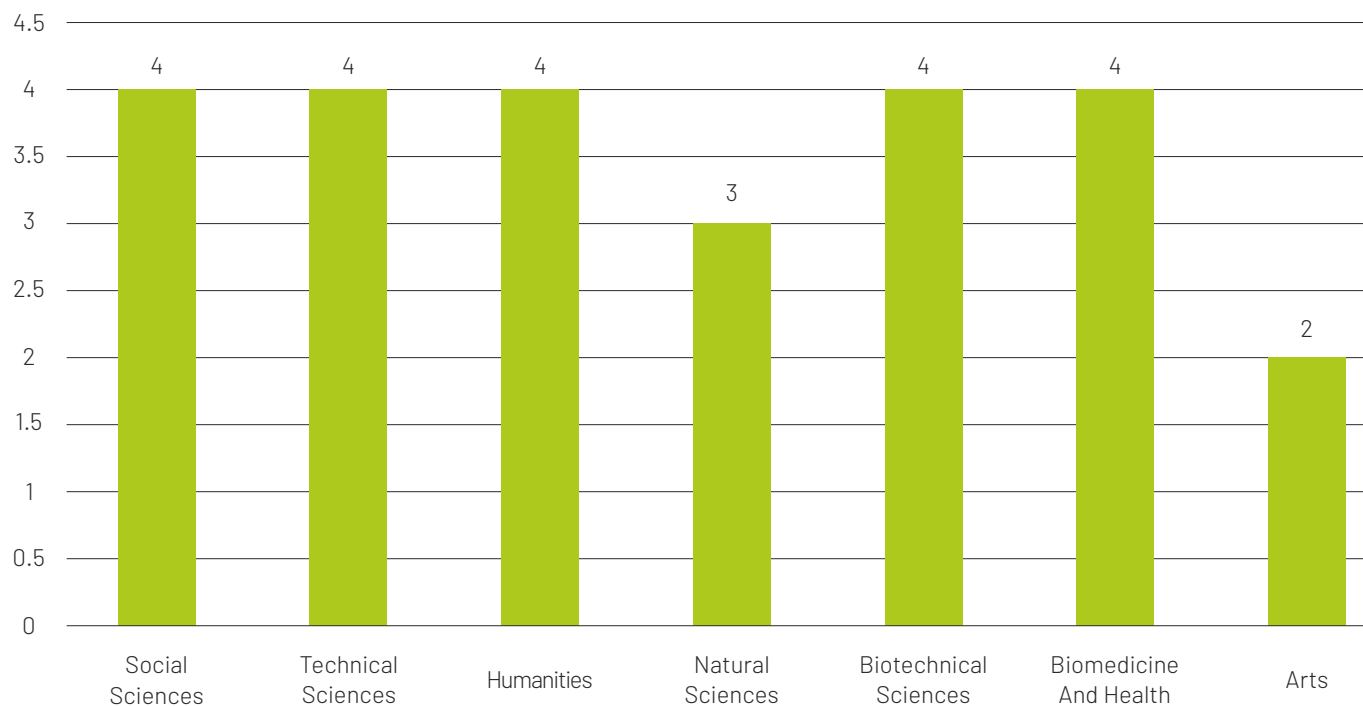


Chart 4: Number of sessions held in 2017

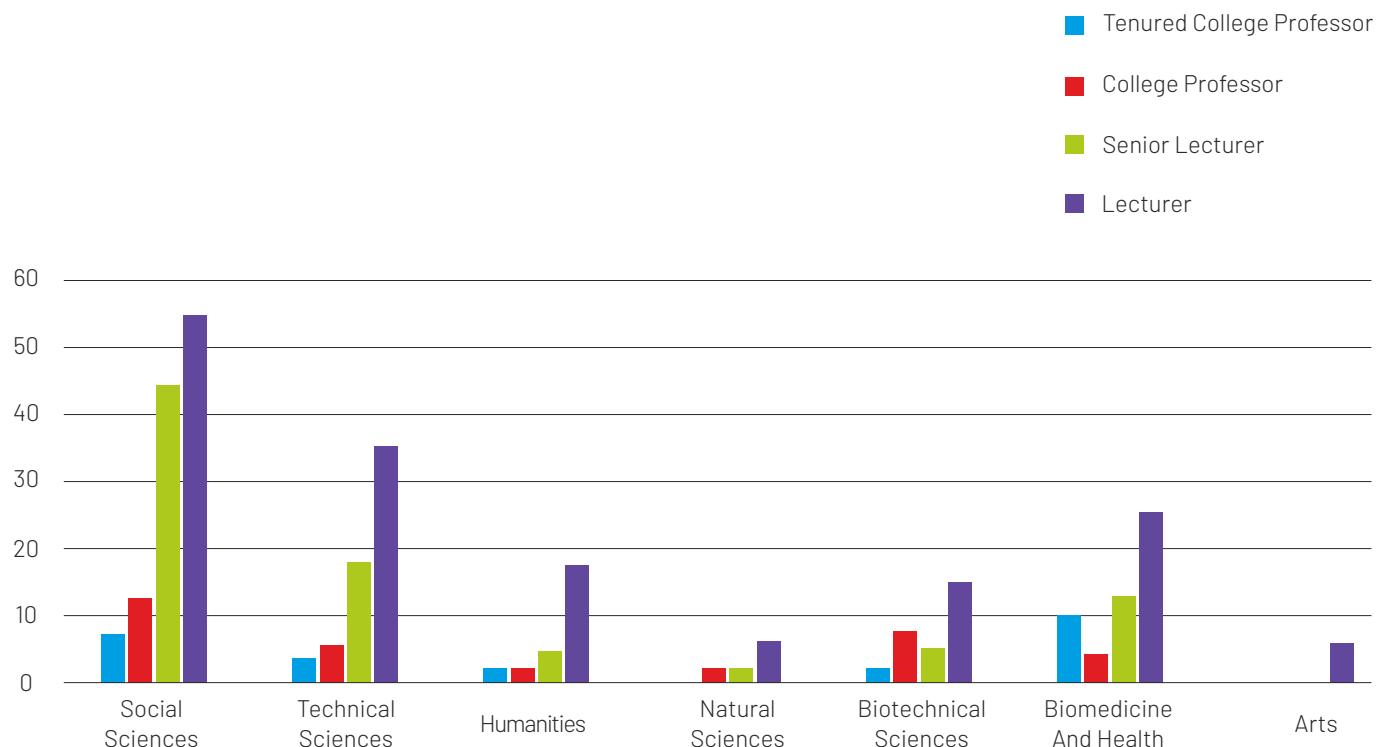


Chart 5: Positive opinions of field committees in 2017

THE COMMITTEE FOR ETHICS IN SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION

The Committee for Ethics in Science and Higher Education is the most prominent advisory and professional body for the promotion of ethical principles and values in science and higher education, business, public relations, application of modern technology, and environmental protection.

The Committee for Ethics in Science and Higher Education held 10 sessions in 2017. The Committee discussed and passed opinions on individual cases of suspected violation of ethical principles by previously requesting comments from the ethics committees of higher education institutions in which suspected cases of violation occurred.

The report on the annual work of The Committee for Ethics, in alignment with the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education, is referred to the Croatian Parliament



APPLICATIONS TO
STUDY PROGRAMMES
IN CROATIA

APPLICATIONS TO UNDERGRADUATE AND INTEGRATED STUDY PROGRAMMES

Applications to undergraduate and integrated study programmes in the summer enrolment period began on the January 9th 2017 and lasted until July 17th 2017, when the final ranking lists for enrolment into study programmes were announced. A total of 37 982 candidates had made an application to study programmes at the moment when ranking lists for the summer enrolment period were made public.

Central Applications Office (CAO) received and processed documents from 556 candidates, of whom 135 completed their secondary education outside of Croatia. Processing those applications included filing documents, making sure that the documentation is valid and complete, thoroughly checking and verifying of candidates' personal data and grades entered into the system.

In the autumn application period, which lasted from July 24th until September 19th 2017, 6975 candidates applied for admission to higher education at the time of the publication of the ranking. CAO received and processed 182 candidates documents, of whom 32 finished their secondary education outside of Croatia.

Chart 6:
Number of applicants
in the summer enrolment period

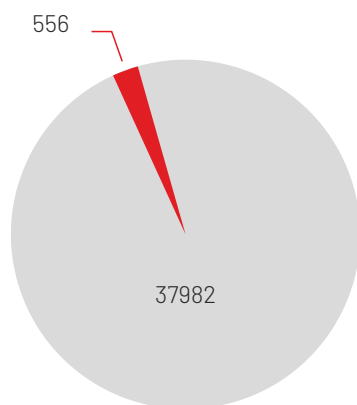


Chart 7:
Number of applicants
in the autumn enrolment period

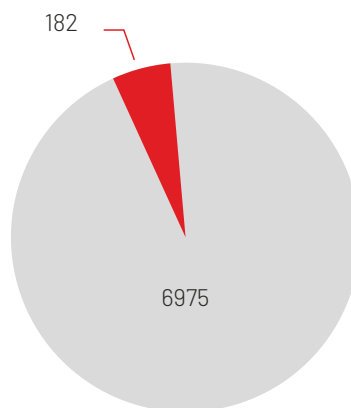
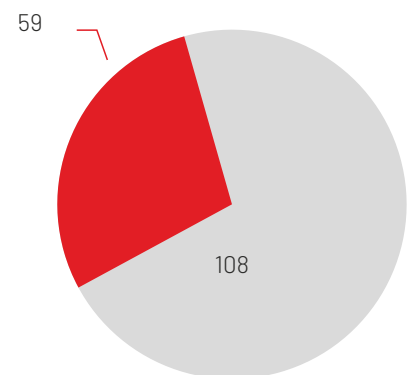


Chart 8:
Number of candidates completing
high school education, based on
countries of completion



■ number of candidates that do not require verification

■ number of candidates processed by CAO

■ number of candidates from EU member countries (aside from Croatia)

■ number of candidates from other countries worldwide



CAO also received 135 substantiated requests for advanced enrolment, and entered the 110 valid ones into the system.

In the summer enrolment period, there were 38 299 slots available at Croatian higher education institutions. Out of the total of 37 982 candidates, 29 626 candidates or 78% secured their right to enrol in a study programme. CAO recorded 184 094 applications to study programmes or 4.8 applications per candidate. In the autumn enrolment period, there were 10 941 slots left at higher education institutions. Out of the 6975 candidates who competed for enrolment, 3786 or 54% secured their right to enrol. CAO recorded 24 913 applications to study programmes or 3.6 applications per candidate.

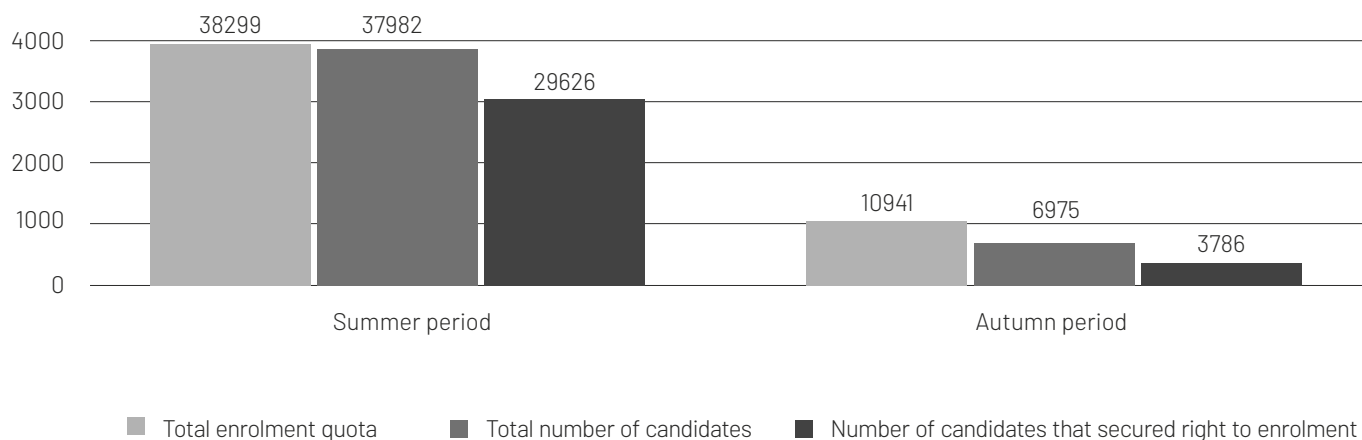


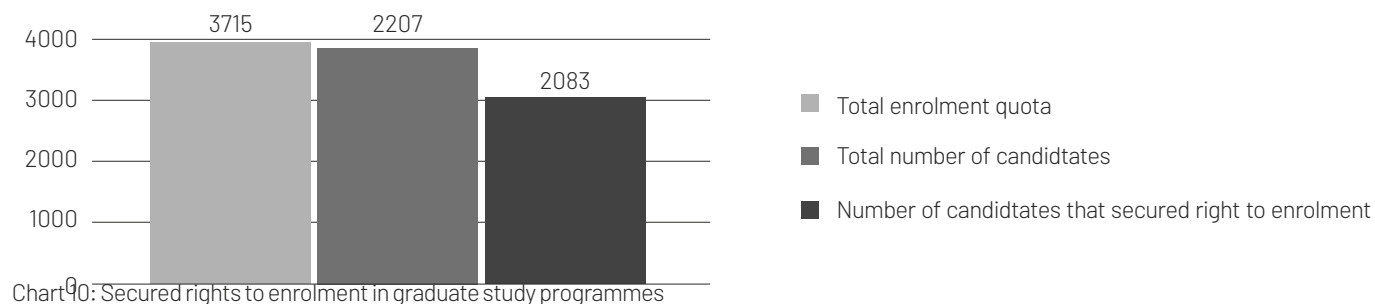
Chart 9: Number of applicants who secured their right of enrolment-undergraduate study programmes

During the entire year, CAO replied to applicants' queries, responding to 8675 telephone queries, 2711 e-mail queries and 1408 queries submitted via the form available on the website www.studij.hr. Also, CAO staff regularly updated information on the www.studij.hr website, in both Croatian and English.

During 2017, CAO continued working on the system for centralised applications to undergraduate study programmes (NISpVU2) and the system is currently in the testing process.

APPLICATIONS TO GRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

For the third year in a row CAO continued to administer centralised application to graduate studies through the National System of Applications to Graduate Studies (NISpDS). Applications took place between July 1st 2017 and September 30th 2017, when the final ranking lists for enrolment into graduate study programmes were published. The centralised application, through NISpDS, covered: five constituents of the J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek (Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Department of Culturology, Academy of Arts in Osijek), the Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, the Croatian Catholic University, nine constituents of the University of Rijeka (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Faculty of Health Studies, Polytechnics and Informatics, Faculty of Teacher Education, Department of Physics, Department of Mathematics, Department of Biotechnology, Department of Informatics), 21 constituents of the University of Zadar (Department of English, Department of Economics, Department of Ecology, Agriculture & Aquaculture, Department of Ethnology & Anthropology, Department of Philosophy, Department of French and Iberoromance Studies, Department of Geography, Department of German Studies, Department of Information Sciences, Department for Teacher and Pre-school Teacher Education, Department of Classical Philology, The Department of Croatian Language and Literature and South Slavic Philology, Department of Linguistics, Department of Pedagogy, Department of History, Department of History of Art, Department of Psychology, Department of Sociology, Department of Italian Language and Literature, Department of Tourism and Communication Studies, Department of Theology and Catechism), Slavonski Brod Polytechnic, Polytechnic "Lavoslav Ružička" in Vukovar, Polytechnic "Marko Marulić" in Knin, Polytechnic of Požega, Polytechnic of Šibenik, Međimurje Polytechnic in Čakovec, College for Technology and Business – Pula Polytechnic, the College of International Relations and Diplomacy Dag Hammarskjöld. There were a total of 3715 open slots at the higher education institutions conducting the centralised application of graduate study programmes through NISpDS. CAO received and processed 518 sets of documents from a total of 2207 applicants, of whom 2083 or 94% secured their right to enrolment.



SUPPORT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Throughout 2017, CAO continued to provide continuous support to higher education institutions and informed the coordinators about all necessary activities in NISpVU and NISpDS, and replied to their queries. In 2017, CAO received 254 telephone and 880 email queries from coordinators.

In 2017, CAO held a meeting with members of the Committee for Improving the Enrolment Procedure to Higher Education Institutions, which was also attended by representatives of the Ministry of Science and Education, with the aim of harmonising all activities and deadlines and developing the necessary recommendation for the application to higher education institutions.

CANDIDATE APPLICATIONS OUTSIDE THE REGULAR EDUCATION SYSTEM OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA FOR ENROLMENT IN THE FIRST GRADE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL

This year, CAO has once again successfully participated in the process of application to the first year of secondary schools in the Republic of Croatia, which included candidate registration, verifying the accuracy of personal data and rating the candidates outside the regular education system through the National Information System Registration and Entry High school (NISpuSS) and providing information to the entire procedure. CAO processed documents of 215 candidates in the summer enrolment period, and the documents of 40 candidates in the autumn enrolment period, out of the total of 700 candidates registered by CAO.



Chart 11: Number of applications outside the regular education system of the Republic of Croatia for enrolment in the first grade of secondary school

MONITORING GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY AND RESEARCHING STUDENT EXPERIENCE

In 2017, CAO continued to participate in the project of monitoring graduate employability. The aim of the project is to collect data on the transition to the labour market directly from the graduates.

From May 2016 to December 2017, within the framework of the SKAZVO project- Improvement of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Systems in Higher Education, CAO conducted research in cooperation with the Faculty of Organization and Informatics (FOI) of the University of Zagreb. The research itself was preceded by the collection of data on students who completed undergraduate university or professional studies and graduate university or specialist graduate professional studies in higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia for the academic year

2015/2016. Higher education institutions that agreed to participate in the project collected contract information of graduate students and by the end of 2016 passed on the information to ASHE.

Out of a total of 12 759 graduate students invited to participate, 7201 graduate students accessed the online questionnaire, while 2857 successfully completed the full questionnaire, and stated that in 2016 they had completed an undergraduate or graduate level of study and started looking for a job. The aim of this research was to collect information on the generation of students who graduated from the higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia in 2016, their satisfaction with preparing for the labour market within the higher education institutions and the transition from the higher education system to the labour market and first employment.

Furthermore, from mid-April to mid-July 2017, "Understanding students' university choices," Research was conducted in collaboration with the University of Princeton. A call for participation in the online questionnaires was sent to respondents (33 226); a total of 5358 respondents accessed the questionnaire, and a complete questionnaire was filled out by 2529 respondents. The key goals of this research are to reduce uncertainty in selecting a study programme and to better understand the factors influencing the choices through a better form of information.

During both research studies conducted, 11 401 phone calls were sent to target groups with the aim of informing them about the importance of such research and their effect on the improvement of quality of higher education and achieving a much better procedure for conducting surveys. The results of both research studies will be published during 2018.

Furthermore, the Analysis of the impact of external quality assurance processes in higher education institutions has shown that besides the quality assurance itself, the key role of the external evaluation process of higher education is to strengthen the institutions commitment to continuous development of the process to improve business standards.

With regard to the perception of quality of various stakeholders, the analysis showed that the administration and other staff of higher education institution evaluate the quality of higher education through the contents of the study programme and teaching staff, while the students, being the most important measure of quality, emphasize the experience of their studies.

In order to bring attention to the students' needs, and let their voice be heard, when considering the quality of higher education institutions, the Agency carried out research on certain aspects of student experience in the generation of students enrolled in 2012/2013 undergraduate and integrated study programmes. The research results will be published during 2018.





RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN
HIGHER EDUCATION
QUALIFICATIONS

Recognition is a formal acknowledgement of the value of a foreign education qualification or period of study, issued by the competent authority, for the purpose of the continuation of education or employment. ASHE, or rather its National ENIC/NARIC Office, conducts the procedure of professional recognition of foreign higher education qualifications for the purpose of accessing the labour market in Croatia.

NATIONAL ENIC/NARIC OFFICE

ASHE's National ENIC/NARIC Office is an information centre for academic mobility and recognition of foreign higher education qualifications. The Office is an active member of the European Network of National Information Centres on recognition and mobility (ENIC/NARIC), takes regular part in the Network's meetings and online discussions, and is a partner in a number of European projects.

NARIC network (National Academic Recognition Information Centres) was founded on the initiative of the European Commission, with the purpose of improving academic recognition of qualifications in member states of the European Union, European Economic Community (European Economic Area, EEA) and joint members of Central and Eastern Europe and Cyprus. ENIC network (European Network of National Information Centres on academic recognition and mobility) was founded by the Council of Europe and UNESCO in order to ensure academic mobility and quality application of principles of the Convention on Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in Europe (so called Lisbon Convention). The network consists of information centres of the member states of European Cultural Convention or UNESCO Europe Region, with government bodies as their founders. The aim of the Network is to encourage academic mobility.

In 2017, the Office took part in a number of activities aimed at supporting the strategic goal of encouraging and facilitating academic and professional mobility of students and professionals in Europe and beyond, while also contributing to the development of quality assurance platforms for all levels of education.

The Office activities, primarily the procedures for recognition of foreign higher education qualifications, are based on European policy guidelines and criteria that help the Office contribute to encouraging mobility.

The National ENIC/NARIC Office provides assistance to institutions and experts responsible for the recognition and validation of qualifications of different levels and types of education, training and professional development, as well as to staff working in human resources. In 2017, special attention was devoted to the recognisability and diversity of expert information which facilitates the recognition of foreign qualifications in Croatia, but also the recognition of Croatian qualifications abroad.

For that purpose, the Office regularly issues clarifications that contain all information on the status of a higher education qualification in the country of origin, as well as an opinion on the comparability of a foreign educational level to the levels of education in Croatia, made by using relevant European mobility instruments for the evaluation of foreign higher education qualifications which increase the visibility of foreign qualifications (qualification frameworks, diploma supplement etc.).

In this way, the Office contributes to the final decision on employing a person or enrolling them to a study programme, which is in line with the European best practice on recognition of foreign higher education qualifications.

The Office also conducts the procedure of professional recognition of foreign higher education qualifications and, upon request by the HEI's Offices for Academic Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications, participates in academic recognition by issuing advice for the recognition of qualifications and periods of study abroad.

In addition to providing expertise in administrative procedures and issuing advice and clarifications, the National ENIC/NARIC Office replies daily to questions from foreign and Croatian physical and legal persons about the national and foreign education systems and national and foreign higher education programmes and qualifications.

In 2017 the National ENIC/NARIC Office:

- fully recognised 1747 higher education qualifications for the purpose of accessing the labour market
- responded to 155 requests for advice in academic recognition of foreign higher education qualifications
- issued 103 clarifications of Croatian and foreign higher education qualifications
- replied to 85 requests for the verification of qualification authenticity
- replied to more than 2900 e-mail queries on professional recognition of foreign higher education qualifications in Croatia and abroad, as well as on foreign and Croatian higher education systems and foreign and Croatian higher education study programmes and qualifications.

RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

The recognition of foreign higher education qualifications in Europe and EU member states is done in accordance with the guidelines of The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (so called Lisbon Convention). External quality assurance of higher education is conducted in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The Lisbon Convention (ratified by Croatia in 2001) prescribes that the signatory states establish information centres (network ENIC and NARIC), whose primary function is to enable all interested parties access to information on foreign and national system of (higher) education and qualifications, to provide advice on the recognition and evaluation of foreign higher education qualifications and, in accordance with the relevant legislation, make decisions on the recognition, or rather evaluation of foreign educational qualifications.

There is no regulation that requires signatory states to have the mentioned centres and bodies for external quality assurance in higher education as part of the same organisation, like it is with ASHE and the Croatian ENIC/NARIC Office, but such practice and close cooperation is strongly encouraged (ENQA, 2017, p. 9-10).

The EAR, the 2016 international recognition manual for higher education institutions, established a principle of the Lisbon Convention, the so-called burden of proof: when a person sends the necessary documentation, it is up to the expert body that conducts the recognition procedure to prove if a certain foreign qualification does not meet the conditions for recognition. The Convention signalled a break with the previous practice of establishing the equivalence of qualifications and a start of a new practice of recognition (acceptance), which is mandatory unless substantial differences between the foreign and the corresponding qualification in the host country can be proven in one of these five elements – level, workload (duration of studies), quality, profile and learning outcomes.

In addition to the Convention itself, many supporting documents have since been adopted – recommendations, examples of good practice, guidelines, instructions etc. Furthermore, with the 2015 Yerevan ministerial Communiqué, the EHEA countries committed to ensuring that qualifications from other EHEA countries will be automatically recognised at the same level of higher education as the corresponding qualification in the host country (a bachelor degree from an accredited higher education institution within EHEA should be recognised as a bachelor's degree in all EHEA countries). When making a decision to enrol or employ a candidate, only the last two elements – profile and

learning outcomes - should be considered. It should be noted that the concept of automatic recognition primarily refers to the acceptance of foreign higher education systems, or rather of systems of external quality assurance based on defined procedures, standards and criteria, publicly available information and bodies in charge of conducting those procedures. In this sense, accepting the ESG as a starting point for the development of national criteria for external quality assurance procedures represents one of additional instruments for building mutual trust and incorporating it into national education systems.

From the 1st July 2004, Croatia has been conducting the procedure of foreign higher education qualifications on the basis of the Lisbon Convention principles, or rather the Act on Approving the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region, and in accordance with the Act on Recognition of Foreign Educational Qualifications, which replaced the Act on the Recognition of Foreign School Certificates and University Diplomas that prescribed the procedure of nostrification.

Recognition of foreign higher education qualifications implies a formal acknowledgement of the value of a foreign higher education qualification, and does not confer any status rights, academic degrees or titles nor any other titles in accordance with Croatian regulations. The procedure of recognition of foreign higher education qualifications focuses only on the level of acquired knowledge, skills and competencies, without a comparison of study programmes.

*You and your colleagues at the Agency for Science and Higher Education
have my warmest thanks for the speed with which you handled my request!*
Vinko Rožić

In accordance with the relevant regulations, ASHE carries out the procedure of professional recognition of foreign higher education qualifications (for the purpose of accessing the labour market in Croatia for unregulated professions). The criteria that have to be met are:

- that a higher education institution which was awarded a qualification had been accredited by a competent accreditation body in the country in which it is located;
- that a foreign higher education programme had been accredited by a competent accreditation body of the respective country
- In case of a joint degree, all institutions participating in the delivery of the study programme, as well as the study programme itself, have to be accredited by a competent accreditation body of the respective countries in which the institutions participating in the joint degree are located.

The recognition procedure also includes the following criteria:

- minimal level and type of qualification that is necessary to access the study programme which leads to the qualification being recognised
- access to further education and/or employment that the qualification gives.

If the stated criteria are not met, ASHE cannot fully recognise a foreign higher education qualification, which is in compliance with the international practise.

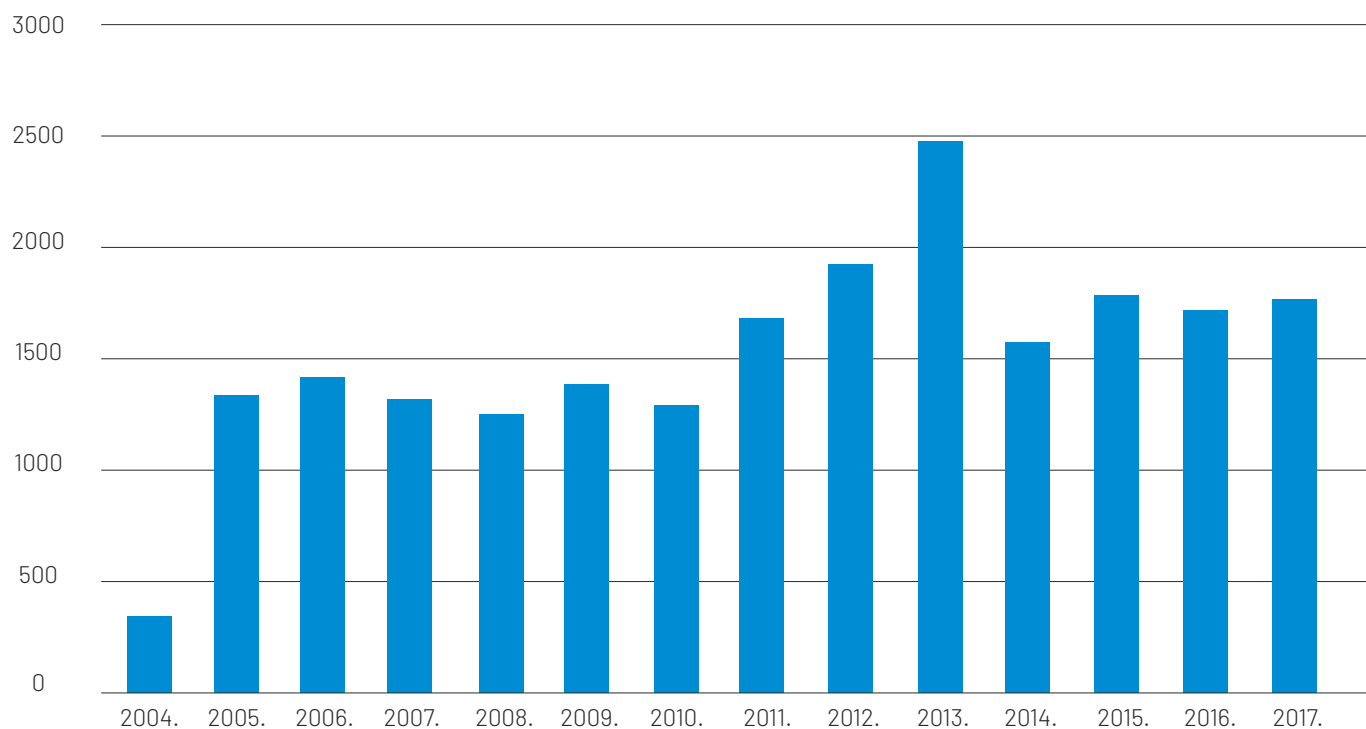


Chart 12: Number of requests for the recognition of foreign higher education qualifications (2004 – 2017)

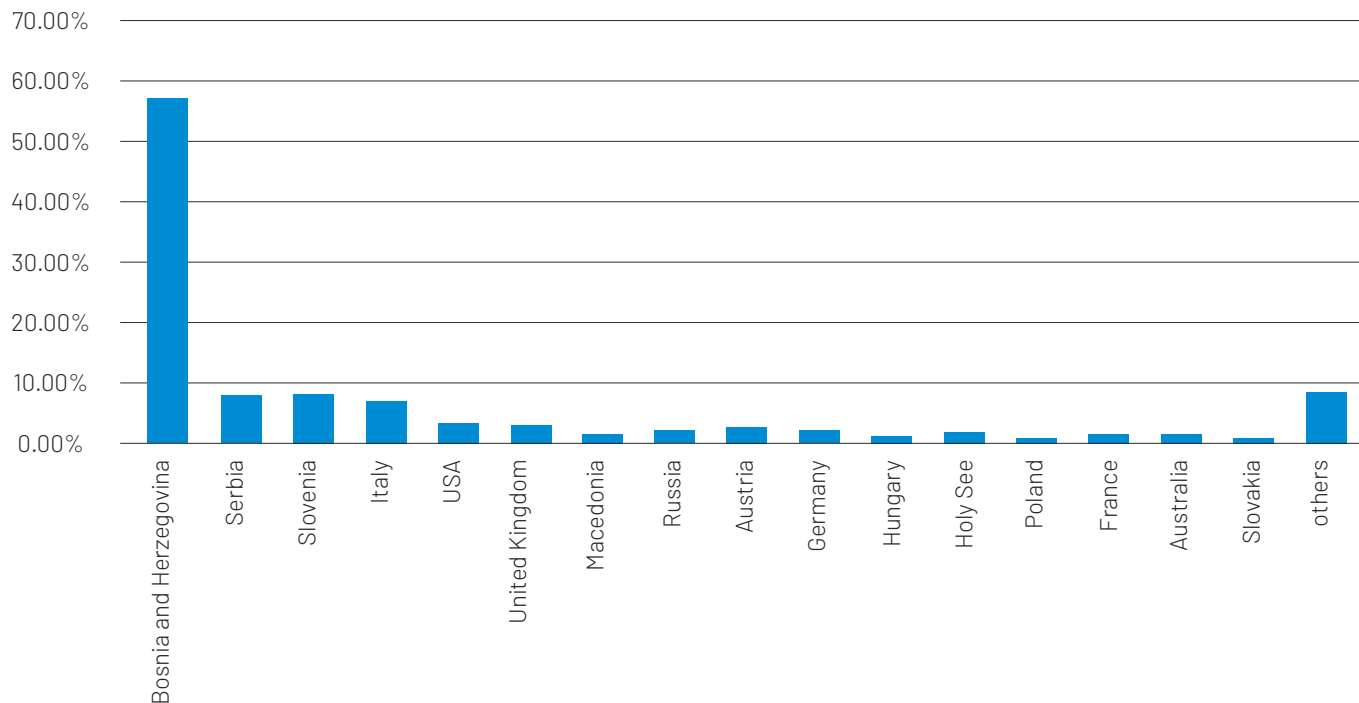


Chart 13: Percentage of foreign higher education qualifications received in 2017 (by country of origin)

Out of the total number of applications for professional recognition of foreign higher education qualifications in Croatia in 2017, around 84% were submitted by Croatian citizens, while the remaining 16% were submitted by foreign nationals, mostly citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina with some 5% of the overall number of requests.

Most of the submitted foreign higher education qualifications were obtained in one of the neighbouring countries, mainly in Bosnia and Herzegovina which accounts for more than 60% of the total number of applications in 2017.

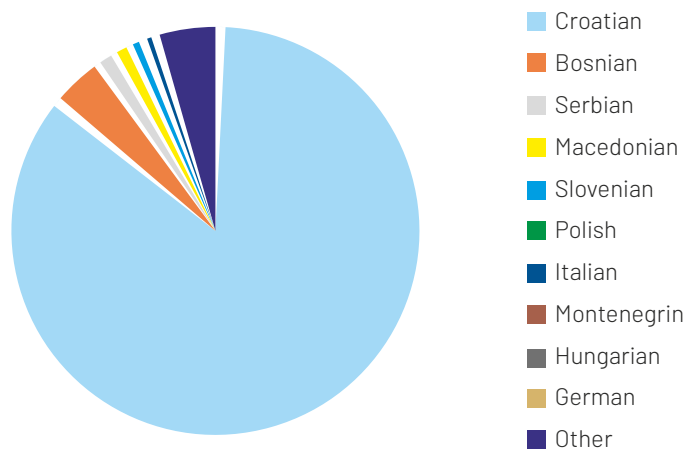


Chart 14: Percentage of foreign higher education qualifications received in 2017 (by applicants' nationality)

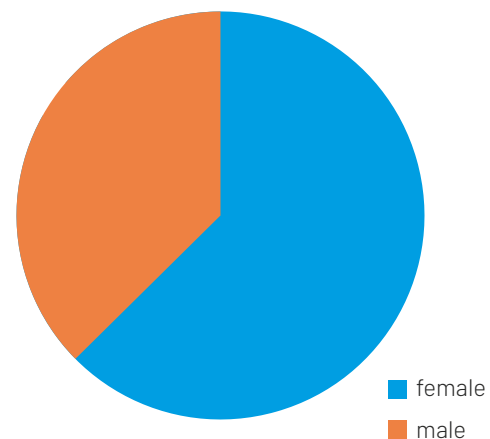


Chart 15: Percentage Of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications Received In 2017 (according to the applicant's gender)

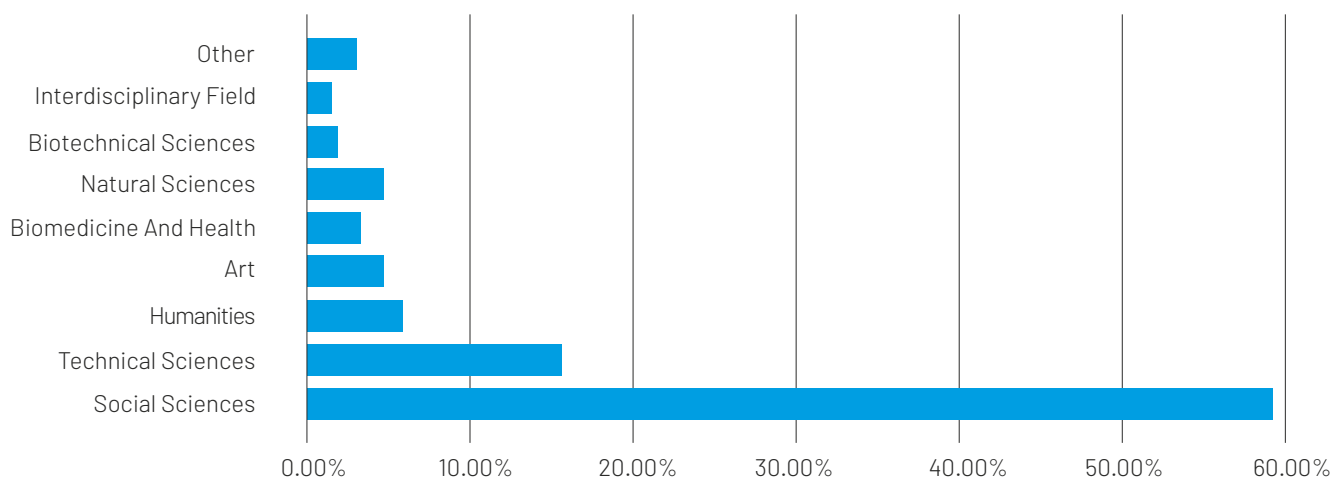


Chart 16: Percentage of foreign higher education qualifications received in 2017 (according to scientific area)

IMPROVING THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR THE RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

The years experience, which have shown that there is a need to change the current Recognition Act, led to an initiative to amend the Act, which in September of 2015 resulted in a Draft Act on the Recognition of Foreign Qualification (a collaboration between all stakeholders). The aim of the proposed Draft is to eliminate the weaknesses of the existing legal and institutional framework in order to improve the procedure of recognition of foreign education qualifications which determines the level of a foreign education qualification and, in case of recognition for the purpose of employment in unregulated professions, gives an opinion on other elements of a qualification which are relevant for the applicant and the employer. This Recognition Act Draft charts a potential direction for improving the quality of the recognition system. However, we are aware that it does not cover all parts of the system which, unfortunately, still represents a weak link in the effort to open the Croatian labour market and its education to knowledge and competencies acquired abroad, or rather it hampers the professional and academic mobility of citizens. Among other things, this refers to a serious inclusion of all relevant stakeholders, especially representatives of state and public administration in this system with the aim of harmonising regulations with the reform that was introduced into the system by the Recognition Act and similar issues. Therefore, future development of an even better system of the recognition of foreign education qualifications necessitates a further strengthening of the cooperation between the Ministry of Science and Education, the National ENIC/NARIC Office, relevant government and public institutions, and representatives of the labour market, higher education institutions, etc., as well as a clear definition of their respective responsibilities.

The new Recognition Act would strengthen evaluation as part of the recognition of foreign education qualifications (which is defined in details in bylaws - the evaluation criteria). Together with the clarification document that is introduced by the Draft Recognition Act, this would open up the possibility of a more detailed explanation of external quality assurance of education in a particular country, as well as the ability to point out their potential problems or nonconformities and give much more information that is useful to the labour market, educational institutions and others; this would also enable us to act in accordance with the European guidelines, which we could not fully incorporate into the existing Act. Since Croatia has already strengthened new reform instruments for improving the quality of education, including the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF), what remains to be done in the upcoming period is to finalise the Draft of the Recognition Act. The aim of this new Draft should also be to strengthen the use of the mentioned instruments for encouraging professional and academic mobility even more, and to improve the evaluation of foreign qualifications.

In 2017, the National ENIC/NARIC Office continued its active participation in the Working Group for Improvement of the Legislative Framework for Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications, and the Committee for Inter-Sectorial Coordination for Regulated Professions.

In working with these bodies, the Office provides systematic reviews of international qualification recognition, the connected processes, best practice examples and practical guidelines for the Croatian context, all based on years of experience in working with the ENIC/NARIC network and the Lisbon Recognition Commission.

In 2017, the National ENIC/NARIC Office continued to participate in the activities of the Working Group for Improvement of the Legislative Framework for Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications, working on the new Act on Recognition of Foreign Educational Qualifications.

Moreover, the Office took part in devising a plan to align Croatian legislation on the recognition of foreign professional qualifications with the relevant amended *acquis communautaire*, or rather to train the administrative structure that follows the field of recognition of foreign professional qualifications, as a precondition for accessing regulated professions.

RECOGNITION OF CROATIAN EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS ABROAD

When it comes to the recognition of Croatian qualifications abroad, we cannot talk about a single, uniform approach and procedure. Namely, there are different procedures that depend on the host country and its legislation, on the type of qualification and, most importantly, on the purpose of the recognition (employment and/or continuation of education).

For example, the Irish ENIC/NARIC office, which is part of the national agency in charge of assuring the quality of education (Quality and Qualifications Ireland - QQI), published on its website a categorisation of Croatian qualifications according to the equivalent level of the Irish National Framework of Qualifications - NFQ. In this case, this categorisation represents advice for recognition that are not binding for legal entities and do not enable automatic recognition of qualification for the purpose of employment, education, or a recognition of professional training in case of regulated professions which remains in the sphere of discretionary power of competent bodies and legal entities: employers, educational institutions, and responsible state regulatory bodies in case of regulated professions. From a number of other examples, we can perhaps mention the Italian ENIC/NARIC office (Centro di Informazione sulla Mobilità e le Equivalenze Accademiche - CIMEA), which published a table with the information on which government body is responsible for the recognition of qualifications for a particular purpose. There is also the international project European Area of Recognition (EAR), which has assembled many ENIC and NARIC centres and resulted in two useful manuals:

- European Area of Recognition Manual (EAR)
- The European Recognition Manual for Higher Education Institutions (EAR - HEI)

These manuals act as additional tools for a quality evaluation of foreign qualifications.

Finally, information on the recognition of Croatian qualifications in Germany can be found on the Anabin portal, while the best starting point for finding information on the recognition of qualifications in a particular country is the ENIC/NARIC website (information for a particular country can be found under the headline Policies and procedures for the recognition of qualifications).

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE RECOGNITION OF CROATIAN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS ABROAD

Evaluation of a foreign qualification includes the verification of the accreditation of the study programme and the institution which issued the qualification. In this sense, ASHE's work on external quality assurance in higher education, together with the efforts on the national level for the introduction of new reform tools for improving the quality of education (such as the CROQF), facilitate the recognition of Croatian higher education qualifications abroad. However, the international recognisability of a national agency for quality assurance, or rather its membership in ENQA and/or EQAR, should not mandate the recognition of a foreign qualification acquired in a higher education system of a country in which this agency operates and whose quality it assures.

The recognition of foreign qualifications is conditioned on the value of a particular study programme, while a transparent and measurable system of external quality assurance that is based on internationally agreed-upon standards represents added value to other instruments aimed at increasing academic and professional mobility. This clearly contributes to an easier, fairer and more comprehensible procedure of evaluation, or rather recognition of foreign qualifications. From this perspective, this is a long process, marked by a syntagma of maintaining a mutual trust, whose logical long-term result is the facilitation of the recognition process. In this segment, we are talking about a connection that is not

necessarily direct, but arises from the overall work of agencies for quality assurance in higher education, but also from policy activities in the systems of higher education undertaken by European ENIC and NARIC centres. Furthermore, this is a question of the recognition of foreign qualifications in a wider context, independent of the purpose of recognition, where it is precisely this purpose that necessitates an additional investigation of the quality of a qualification's content which includes the expertise from members of the academic community (in case of continuation of education) or employers (in case of the labour market). Recognition of foreign qualifications, in accordance with the legislation of every individual country that signed the Lisbon Convention and depending on the purpose of recognition, stays in the domain of competent government bodies and legal entities, as is the case in Croatia.

In order to improve the recognition of Croatian qualifications abroad even further, ASHE will (and already does):

- in cooperation with its National ENIC/NARIC Office, continue to work on the international recognisability of Croatian qualifications by improving available information (which it already does), and by working on projects such as DEQAR and MASTERMIND, as well as by taking part in the further development and implementation of the CROQF
- participate in existing initiatives for facilitating recognition for certain professions, such as the cooperation with national and international professional associations, and qualifying for labels like EUR-ACE (awarded to high-quality engineering study programmes)
- strengthen its cooperation with other QA agencies with the aim of accepting their accreditation decisions.

In addition to the expert opinion of its ENIC/NARIC Office, ASHE's procedures of external evaluations of higher education institutions also have a direct effect on the quality of the recognition of foreign qualifications for the purpose of continuing education (academic recognition), and consequently on academic mobility. In the revised ESG from 2015, this area was identified by the standard 1.4 that deals with consistent implementation of previously established regulations connected with admission to study programmes, student progression, recognition and certification:

1.4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Standard:

Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

Guidelines:

Providing conditions and support that are necessary for students to make progress in their academic career is in the best interest of the individual students, programmes, institutions and systems. It is vital to have fit-for-purpose admission, recognition and completion procedures, particularly when students are mobile within and across higher education systems.

It is important that access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.

Induction to the institution and the programme is provided.

Institutions need to put in place both processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression.

Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components of ensuring the students' progress in their studies while promoting mobility. Appropriate recognition procedures rely on:

- institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention
- cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country.

Graduation represents the culmination of a student's period of study. Students need to receive documentation that explains their qualifications, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.

According to the ESG, higher education institutions should incorporate into their internal quality assurance all the mentioned segments, meaning the availability of information for students, the harmonisation of the work of the university office for academic recognition with the Lisbon Convention, the consistency of adopted decisions and the related database, as well as the efficiency of the recognition system on all levels of the institution.

Accordingly, standards adopted by ASHE prior to the new cycle of re-accreditation of Croatian HEIs respect these efforts, and deal with this problem in the third group of standards (Teaching process and student support) primarily through the ESG standard 3.6. (the higher education institution allows students to gain international experience), which evaluates attitudes towards students who spend part of their study abroad, primarily through the recognition of ECTS credits, and standard 3.7. (higher education institution ensures adequate study conditions for foreign students), which evaluates the HEI's attitude towards foreign students, an issue that is also dealt with in the key (discriminatory) standard 3.1. (admission criteria or criteria for the continuation of studies are in line with the requirements of the study programme, clearly defined, published and consistently applied), since the admission process implies all interested parties, including those that need academic recognition.

Next steps for the ENIC/NARIC Office:

- education of all ASHE coordinators by the ENIC/NARIC Office that would focus on explaining the principles of the Lisbon Convention, and introducing the conclusions and recommendations of two important related documents – the two EAR manuals and reports of the FAIR project, as well as the current legal amendments concerning recognition in Croatia; the education should also provide examples of the ways in which the CROQF and learning outcomes are used in recognition, so that coordinators would know what to focus on in the field in order to facilitate the recognition of qualifications whose quality they are assuring
- continued cooperation of higher education institutions with the ENIC/NARIC and CAO on improving and harmonising the existing practices
- (minor) revisions of ASHE criteria based on the conclusions of those educations
- joint education of ASHE coordinators, the ENIC/NARIC Office and HEI employees in charge of the recognition of foreign higher education qualifications, during which they would discuss the applicability of the revised criteria and the method of their implementation
- continued education for HEIs (especially their offices for academic recognition) as part of the ongoing activities of the network of HEIs established within the FAIR project in cooperation with ASHE, the ENIC/NARIC Office, the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes and the Ministry of Science and Education, which would cover topics like choosing a foreign partner HEI, recognition within and out of the Erasmus programme, evaluation of foreign qualifications as part of the admission process, developing criteria for the evaluation of achieved learning outcomes, mobility within Croatia and the CROQF, using available instruments for the evaluation of foreign qualifications (qualification frameworks, manuals, diploma supplements, ECTS credits etc.), and recognition of atypical qualifications – informal and non-formal learning, qualifications of refugees' and people who had non-standard education pathways.
- creating a network of all offices that work on the recognition of foreign qualifications; our plan is to create two networks (such an example already exists for the ENIC/NARIC offices which are part of the ENIC/NARIC network) – one would be for competent bodies and persons in charge of the recognition of foreign professional qualifications (regulated professions), and the other for person in charge of recognition for the purpose of employment and the continuation of education at universities, polytechnics and colleges. The aim of this initiative is to achieve interinstitutional communication, primarily by email, that would speed up the procedures, disseminate good recognition practices and establish communication that is not slow and inefficient.

ASSISTANCE CENTRE FOR PROVIDING INFORMATION ON THE RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

With the new Act on Regulated Professions and the Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications coming into force, the National ENIC/NARIC Office is no longer the national contact point for the recognition of foreign professional qualifications, but has been renamed the Assistance centre for providing information on the recognition of professional qualifications. The Office has been continuously working on developing its role as the Assistance centre for providing information on the recognition of foreign professional qualifications which, according to the Act on Regulated Professions and the Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications, it had since 2009, but which was activated upon Croatia's entry into the EU. In 2016, in accordance with the Act on Regulated Professions and the Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications and Directive 2005/36/EC, the Assistance centre provided citizens and assistance centres of other European Economic Area (EEA) Contracting States with:

1. necessary information on the recognition of foreign professional qualifications in the Republic of Croatia – information about national legislation which governs the access to and pursuit of regulated professions, including social legislations and, if necessary, ethical rules;
2. assistance in achieving rights arising from the Act on Regulated Professions and Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications;
3. information on regulated professions and how to access them in other EEA Contracting States;
4. necessary information on the Database of Regulated Professions and the recognition of foreign professional qualifications in the Republic of Croatia.

The role of the Assistance centre in providing information on the recognition of professional qualifications is purely informational: based on the available information, the Centre refers applicants to competent bodies. If necessary, competent bodies can request an opinion on a particular foreign higher education qualification that contains information on the status of the HEI and study programme in question, the level of education in the country of origin and the comparison to a level of education in Croatia (if possible). The Database of Regulated Professions offers a number of statistical data, which depend on the information being inputted. The Database is not filled by the Assistance Centre, but by appointed employees of competent bodies. According to the available information, in 2017 there were 303 requests for recognition filled with various competent bodies.

Table 6: Number of requests for the recognition of professional qualifications (2017)⁴

| Competent authority in Croatia | Number of applications for the recognition of foreign professional qualifications (2017) |
|--|--|
| Croatian Nursing Council | 50 |
| Croatian chamber of health professionals -Medical radiation technology | 21 |
| Croatian Medical Chamber | 158 |
| Croatian Chamber of Civil Engineers | 51 |
| Croatian Chamber of Architects | 10 |
| Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts | 1 |
| Other | 12 |
| Total | 303 |

⁴ Data from the Database of Regulated Professions and Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications.



ASHE INTERNATIONAL
ACTIVITIES

The whole year of 2017 was marked by a number of international activities, which were primarily connected with projects in which ASHE is either the leader or a partner, but also those that were realised in direct cooperation and the exchange of experiences and knowledge with international partners in the area of higher education. In 2017, ASHE further strengthened its international recognisability and affirmed the credibility of its work. This was the year that ASHE's visibility and quality received international confirmation with a renewal of full membership in the umbrella European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and a confirmed inclusion in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). ASHE has proven itself as a desirable and competent partner and associate on the international level, as attested by numerous invitations for speaking at professional conferences, collaborating on projects, holding educations and conducting external quality evaluations of foreign HEIs.

A large number of ASHE's activities have been conducted as part of the SKAZVO project (Improvement of quality assurance and enhancement systems in higher education), which began in June 2016 and was funded from the Operational Programme "Efficient Human Resources" 2014 - 2020 of the European Social Fund to the amount of almost 20 million and 400 thousand Kuna. The goal of this project is to develop a new model of external evaluation of the quality of higher education in Croatia, which will be effectuated through a number of activities conducted by ASHE employees and other stakeholders.

ASHE International Evaluation

After ASHE passed a very demanding procedure of international re-accreditation in 2016 that was conducted by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), in 2017, based on the results of that re-accreditation, it received a confirmation that its work is in line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), which is why its full membership in ENQA was renewed.

The External Review Report, written by the international expert panel after the external review, states that ASHE is a recognised and well-established national agency in Croatia which has an important role in improving the quality assurance in higher education.

ASHE was commended for the quality of its employees, their engagement in the Agency's activities, and knowledge of national and international practices in quality assurance. The Report also highlighted ASHE's cooperation with different stakeholders who take part in its activities, and the inclusion of foreign experts into various procedures. As an example of good practice, the panel also singled out the role of coordinators - ASHE employees - as persons who ensure consistency of the process and help experts with the interpretation the relevant criteria.

International review panel, chaired by Professor Jürgen Kohler, PhD, professor of law at Greifswald University, Germany and a former president of the German Accreditation Council, addressed the following ASHE activities during the external review: initial accreditation of higher education institutions and programme, re-accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes, re-accreditation of doctoral study programmes and audit of higher education institutions.

Furthermore, on the 20th June 2017, the Register Committee of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education made a decision to renew ASHE's EQAR status, which was an important confirmation of ASHE's reliability and responsibility for procedures of external quality assurance on the national level and the level of EHEA, in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015).



CEENQA Annual General Assembly 2017 in Zagreb

Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA) held its annual conference, with an accompanying programme, on the 28th and 29th of April 2017 in Zagreb, which was organised by ASHE on the premises of the University of Zagreb Rectorate.

This two-day event assembled some fifty international and Croatian experts on quality assurance in higher education who discussed various possibilities for enhancing the quality of higher education at the national and European level.

CEENQA is the oldest organisation for quality assurance in higher education in Europe, founded in 2001. It has 29 member agencies from 20 countries of Central and Eastern Europe which cooperate in the field of development and harmonisation of quality assurance activities, thus contributing to the development of the European Higher Education Area.

ASHE has been a full member of this respectable organisation since 2008, and it actively participates in its activities.



CEENQA Annual General Assembly in Zagreb

ASHE signs cooperation agreement with HEA

ASHE and the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HEA) signed an agreement on the cooperation in the area of quality assurance in higher education and the exchange of experts in external evaluation procedures.

On behalf of both agencies, the agreement was signed in Zagreb on the 11th January 2017 by ASHE Director, prof. Jasmina Havranek, PhD, and HEA Director, prof. Enver Halilović, PhD.

The goal of this agreement is to strengthen the cooperation between ASHE and HEA in the area of external quality assurance in higher education, and to promote a culture of quality by an exchange of best practices. The long-term result of this cooperation should be the facilitation of cross-border exchange of knowledge on QA procedures, increased internationalisation of higher education, and the mobility of employees and experts of both agencies.

ASHE signs cooperation agreement with the Russian Register

In July 2017, ASHE signed a cooperation agreement with the Russian Register, an association that provides services on certification, expertise and conformity assessment of various aspects related to management, products and personnel.

ASHE will cooperate with Russian Register in the area of independent accreditation in higher education, exchange of information on the quality of foreign higher education institutions and study programmes, exchange of experiences and good practice in procedures of external quality assurance in higher education, promoting cooperation by an exchange of experts, organisation of seminars, conferences and round tables with the aim of improving the QA system, and other activities.

MEMBERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

ASHE is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), the Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEEENQA), an international association of institutions interested in the topic of academic ranking and excellence in higher education and science – IREG Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence, and is included on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). ASHE is also a member of the International Quality Group of the American Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) and has an observer status in the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN). ASHE is a long-term member of European networks of national information centres on academic mobility and recognition – ENIC (European Network of National Information Centres on academic recognition and mobility) and NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centres). ASHE is furthermore a member of IAAO-a (International Association of Admissions Organisations).

INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

Table 7: Projects funded by the European Union and other sources

| Project name | Partners | Coordin. inst. | Duration | EU programme / source of funding |
|--|---|---|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Improvement of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Systems at Higher Education Institutions (SKAZVO) | - | ASHE | June 2016 – November 2018 | European Social Fund |
| Modernisation, Education and Human Rights (MEHR) | ASHE and higher education institutions from Sweden, Portugal and Croatia, European Student Union | Swedish agency UKÄ | September 2016 – June 2019 | Erasmus + |
| Modernisation of Higher Education Institutions through enhancement of Human Resources Management function (HRMinHEI) | Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka; College Algebra Danube University Krems, Austria; University of Tampere, Finland | ASHE | September 2016 – September 2018 | Erasmus + |
| Strengthening Professional Higher Education and VET in Central & South Eastern Europe (PROCSEE) | European Association of Institutions in Higher Education – EURASHE, Belgium; Knowledge Innovation Centre, Malta; Sdruzeni profesniho terciarniho vzdelavani, Czech Republic; National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania; Hungarian Rectors' Conference, Hungary | Skupnost Visjih Stokovnih Sol Republike Slovenije | November 2015 – | Erasmus + |



| Project name | Partners | Coordin. inst. | Duration | EU programme / source of funding |
|---|--|---|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Building Professional Higher Education Capacity in Europe (BuildPHE) | Skupnost višjih strokovnih šol Republike Slovenije, Croatian Council of Polytechnics and Colleges, Czech Association of Schools of Professional Higher Education, EURASHE, The Knowledge Innovation Centre Malta, TTK University of Applied Sciences Talin | State higher vocational School in Tarnow, Poland | October 2015 - December 2017 | Erasmus + |
| Information System On pre-Bologna Academic Qualifications (ISOBAQ) | NARIC centres | National Centre for Information and Documentation, Bulgaria, NACID | June 2016 - March 8, 2018 | Erasmus + |
| University for recognition: facing new challenges of foreign diploma recognition (SURE) | NARIC centres | CIEP FRA | June 2016 - December 2017 | Erasmus + |
| Recognition of Non-Country Specific Awards (RENSA) | NARIC centres from Malta, Ireland and Lithuania | UK NARIC | May 2016 - August 2017 | Erasmus + |
| Focus on Automatic Institutional Recognition (FAIR) | ENIC/NARIC centres, ministries of education, and higher education institutions from 6 European countries- Croatia, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Germany and Netherlands | NUFFIC, the umbrella Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education | December 2014 - July 2017 | Erasmus + |



| Project name | Partners | Coordin. inst. | Duration | EU programme / source of funding |
|--|---|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Emphasis on developing and upgrading of competences for academic teaching (EDUCA-T) | - | Croatian Ministry of Science and Education | June 2016 - June 2018 | Erasmus + |
| Database of External Quality Assurance Reports (DEQAR) | 17 European quality assurance agencies, German Accreditation Council (GAC), Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (HRK) | European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) | November 2017 - November 2019 | Erasmus + |
| Ensuring Access to Croatian Public e-services within e-Citizens Platform for EU/EEA citizens (CEF eID) | Financial Agency (FINA), Ministry of Finance – Tax Administration, Croatian Pension Insurance Institute, Croatian Health Insurance Fund, CARNet, University Computing Center (SRCE) and the Croatian National Tourist Board | The Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Croatia | June 2016 - June 2017 | CEF programme |

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME EFFICIENT HUMAN RESOURCES 2014 – 2020 EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND (ESF)

Improvement of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Systems at Higher Education Institutions (SKAZVO)

The SKAZVO project (Improvement of quality assurance and enhancement systems in higher education) was co-financed by the European Union within the framework of the Operational Programme "Efficient Human Resources" from the European Social Fund.

SKAZVO project (2016 – 2018) is conducted with the aim of developing a new model of the quality assurance system of higher education in Croatia. The project will develop new and improve the existing external evaluation procedures for Croatian higher education institutions and study programmes, but also improve the quality of study programmes and further strengthen the competences of HEI staff. The project will launch new activities such as collecting information and informing the general public about higher education, and develop counselling services for present and future students; it will also strengthen the role of ASHE as an educator at the national and the international level that will see us organising thematic seminars and workshops for higher education institution and other relevant stakeholders, by ourselves or in cooperation with experts from a particular field.

Thus, in 2017 ASHE held a series of workshops in multiple Croatian towns on the topics of learning outcomes, re-accreditation of doctoral studies, writing self-evaluation documents for re-accreditation, the new criteria and standards for the re-accreditation of higher education institutions, professional orientation in the system of higher education etc.

Professional orientation in the higher education system: current state and challenges

In order to gather information on the work of career centres and the challenges that HEI managements face during their establishment, ASHE conducted among members of HEI management and career advisers. The goal of this survey was to develop an analytical foundation for seminars, called Professional orientation in the higher education system: current state and challenges, which ASHE held in Zagreb on the 15th September 2017, and in Zadar on the 22nd September 2017.

The purpose of these seminars was to exchange experiences and provide mutual support in the development of career centres in the higher education system, in accordance with the Strategy of lifelong guidance and career development in Croatia 2016 – 2020 that encourages the establishment of an institutional model for providing career guidance services at higher education institutions and the recognition of examples of good practise that can serve as a model for further system development.

By organising these two seminars, ASHE wanted to contribute to the realisation of the following goals:

- gaining insight into the issue of establishing career centres at HEIs
- recognising the challenges facing HEI management regarding the establishment of career centres and the work of the existing centres
- drawing conclusions on the possibility of establishing career centres at HEIs for the purpose of providing appropriate support to students
- drawing conclusions on the necessity of education for career advisors that ASHE can provide within the SKAZVO project in 2018.

The discussion centred on career centres at HEIs, whose task it is to connect students and employers, help students with defining their education goals and develop practical skills that are in demand on the labour market. These centres also provide information to future students on study programmes and competencies they will acquire, and help them get a better picture of their own abilities and interests so that they can make the best possible decision on their chosen profession. More than 50 participants at each seminar had a chance to get acquainted with the role and activities of career centres from the perspective of higher education institutions, business and students.

The seminars were organised as part of the ESF SKAZVO Improvement of quality assurance and enhancement systems in higher education.



Seminar for career advisors in Zagreb

ERASMUS+ PROGRAMMES

Modernisation of Higher Education Institutions through enhancement of Human Resources Management function(HRMinHEI)

Encouraging the excellence of academic staff, and strengthening the organisational efficiency and competitiveness of HEIs are the main goals of the HRMinHEI project (Modernisation of Higher Education Institutions through enhancement of Human Resources Management function), carried out by ASHE between September 2016 and September 2018.

Project partners are higher education institutions from Croatia and Europe: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka, College Algebra, Danube University Krems from Austria and the University of Tampere from Finland. The projects is co-financed from the EU programme Erasmus+ to the amount of 241,725 Euro.

Project purpose is to strengthen human resources management at higher education institutions and to develop innovative self-assessment tools for benchmarking human resources management.

The HRMinHEI project will also result in the publications of several documents and tools that will be useful to partner countries and HEIs in the entire Europe:

- review of national policies on human resources management in European higher education
- online self-assessment tool as Open Educational Resources (OER) for systematic evaluation and benchmarking of human resources management at European higher education institutions
- documented human resources management processes developed at HEIs - partners in the project - as a model for other higher education institutions
- guidelines for the development of human resources management function at HEIs in Croatia, Austria and Finland.

Acting on the need to raise awareness of human resources' contribution to the development of the whole society, this project will encourage higher education institutions to improve the effectiveness of their human resources management and thus strengthen their contribution to social and economic growth and improve the cooperation between countries of the European Higher Education Area.

HRMinHEI project complements the main determinants of the Erasmus + programme and EU Modernization Agenda for Higher Education adopted in 2011.

Erasmus+ i programom Europske unije za modernizaciju visokog obrazovanja iz 2011. godine.

Focus on Automatic Institutional Recognition (FAIR)

National meeting of the FAIR (FAIR (Focus on Automatic Institutional Recognition) project took place on the 27th February 2017 at the Ministry of Science and Education in Zagreb.

The project had 35 partners: HEIs, ministries, agencies and international organisations (European University Association, European Consortium for Accreditation) from the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Spain and Croatia, as well as ENIC-NARIC Denmark (as transnational evaluator). Project partners from Croatia were the Ministry of Science and Education, ASHE, University of Zagreb, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, University of Rijeka and University of Split.



The final project activity was to organise a national meeting in order to discuss project recommendations for the improvement of academic recognition, and to reach an agreement on the manner of their implementation. During this meeting, there was a discussion on the ways to improve the procedures of academic recognition that are incorporated into the new Draft of the Amendments to the Act on the Recognition of Foreign Educational Qualifications (within the National Recommendations item on the agenda) The meeting also included the presentation on the principles of the policies of recognition, followed by the experiences of HEIs that took part in the project, and then mr. sc. Emta Blagdan from ASHE presented the national recommendations for the recognition of foreign higher education qualifications.

The objective of the FAIR project, funded from the Erasmus+ programme, was to improve the academic recognition of foreign higher education qualifications in Europe by implementing elements of automatic recognition of the qualification level. The holder of the project is the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of Netherlands, while administrative support is provided by the Dutch organisation for the internationalisation in education (EP Nuffic). The project started on the 1st December 2014 and ended in July 2017.

The role of HEIs involved in the project was: to evaluate their procedures of academic recognition, contribute to the development of improved recognition procedures and the implementation of good practice, and take part in the analysis of project impact.

Some of the main project activities were: evaluation of existing procedures of academic recognition, analysis of collected information, project partner meetings, implementation of improved procedures of academic recognition at each HEI, analysis of the improved procedure's impact, and analysis of the conducted activities and the development of recommendations for the national and EU level.

Report of the ERASMUS+ FAIR project (Focus on Automatic Institutional Recognition) was published on the 5th July 2017.

Recognition of Non-Country Specific Awards (RENSA)

The aim of the Recognition of Non-Country Specific Awards (RENSA) project, which is managed by the UK NARIC and in which ASHE is a partner, was further development and sharing of good practice and information to support fair recognition of non-country specific qualifications.

In the context of the RENSА project, qualifications marked as non-country are entirely international and are not part of a national education system of any country. These may include, but are not limited to qualifications offered by international awarding bodies and nationally recognised awarding bodies offering customised international awards which fall outside the remit of the national regulator. The project resulted in guidelines and instructions for the evaluation of non-country specific qualifications. The draft of this document was presented through a webinar and the accompanying meetings held during the 24th conference of ENIC and NARIC centres in June in Copenhagen. The project formally ended in August 2017, while the guidelines and instructions will be publicly presented in early 2018.

Information System on Pre-Bologna Academic Qualifications (ISOBAQ)

The objective of the ISOBAQ project (Information System On pre-Bologna Academic Qualifications), which is managed by NARIC centre Bulgaria with ASHE as one of the partners, is to create and provide to the NARIC network one more recognition tool (information system) for enhancing the visibility, comparability, transparency and trust-based fair recognition, which would promote mobility in the field of education and employment.

This information system was developed which contains structured information about the existing national legislation and levelling of the existing pre-Bologna qualifications towards the current national HE qualifications and the corresponding qualification frameworks.

Such a structured source of information will serve to bridge the differences between pre-Bologna higher education qualifications and the European Qualifications Framework. This provides an additional benefit to this tool for comparison, evaluation, fair recognition and transparency. The project is expected to end in the first trimester of 2018.

Building Professional Higher Education Capacity in Europe (BuildPHE)

The objectives of this project were to:

- encourage institutions of professional HE to analyse their internal policies for cooperation between education, research and entrepreneurship
- implement improvements and reforms in the policies and practices connected with the cooperation with the labour market, and support the sharing of best practices with respect to interventions for strengthening the knowledge triangle
- design a set of supporting tools, in particular framework policies and/or implementation guides, to strengthen active cooperation between HEIs and partners from outside academia.

The project connected policy makers and management of institutions of professional higher education (PHE), who will collaborate within the structures set up by their national associations for PHE, members of the consortium. Through their participation in the project, each of these institutions analysed their connection with the world of work, formulated improvements with the help of best practice in the field and mainstreamed these practices into their institutional strategies.

The main results of the project:

- HEI self-evaluation documents that detail the quality level of their cooperation and connection with the world of work
- plans for implementation made by HEIs themselves, which include policies and strategies for improving cooperation with the labour market
- joint meeting of different stakeholders' representatives from entire Europe
- collection of support tools for improving the cooperation between professional higher education and the labour market.

Emphasis on Developing and Upgrading of Competences for Academic Teaching (EDUCA-T)

ASHE took active part in the working group of the Educa-T project (Emphasis on developing and upgrading of competences for academic teaching), coordinated by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Croatia. The project was co-financed from the Erasmus+ programme (Key activity 3). It began on the 15th June 2016 and will last till the 14th June 2018. The project was designed to provide support to activities on the national level, and its focus is on strengthening the role of HEI teaching staff and increasing awareness on the importance of improving quality of learning and teaching in higher education. The project working group, which includes ASHE representatives, will develop recommendations on quality teaching and learning in Croatian higher education, as well as a national profile of competencies and a preliminary curriculum for improving the competencies of teachers in higher education.

Modernisation, Education and Human Rights (MEHR)

The three-year MEHR project, initiated in September 2016, continued the work of ECAs (European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education) Working Group 4 that dealt with the topic of using learning outcomes and their evaluation in re-accreditation procedures. Learning outcomes have become an inseparable part of quality assessment procedures and accreditation of higher education study programmes in several countries. However, the level of learning outcomes application still differs between different countries. Building on the evidence from the established platform, the project aims to develop guidelines for quality assurance of learning outcomes' evaluation (with an emphasis on human rights issues). This will enable QA agencies to conduct self-evaluations of their work in the area of the evaluation of quality of learning outcomes connected with human rights as part of their assessment procedures.

The value of the MEHR project lies in its research of the value that QA agencies contribute to the definition and application of learning outcomes in the area of human rights, based on conducted external evaluations.

Project consortium includes institutions (agencies and HEIs) from three European countries of various size, education structures and systems of higher education, as well as different levels of development of tools and procedures for the evaluation of learning outcomes (Croatia, Portugal and Sweden), and representatives of the European Students' Union (ESU). Partners from Croatia are ASHE and the University of Rijeka.

Future project activities were defined at the project meeting that was held in September, 2017. The task of ASHE and the University of Rijeka will be to widen the focus of the project survey to include the following study programmes: psychology, pedagogy, social pedagogy, social work, early and pre-school education and training, primary school education, and teacher-training programmes.

The next workshop and conference will be held in May 2018 in Portugal.

Database of External Quality Assurance Reports (DEQAR)

ASHE is a partner on the project called Database of External Quality Assurance Reports (DEQAR), coordinated by the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

DEQAR is a two-year project, lasting from November 2017 to the 31st October 2019, whose goal is to develop a European database with information on the results of the evaluation on higher education institutions. The objective of the project is to ensure easier access to reports and decisions resulting from the evaluations of higher education institutions carried out by EQAR-registered agencies, thereby increasing transparency in QA procedures in higher education in the European area. Another goal is to provide support and fulfil the needs of users in areas like qualification recognition and student mobility. The project will be funded by the European Erasmus + programme. First public presentation of the database will take place in May 2018.

The database is expected to have a wide spectrum of users, including

- the information centres for the recognition of qualifications (ENIC/NARIC)
- persons in charge of academic recognition at higher education institutions
- students
- quality assurance agencies
- ministries and other government bodies.

In order to overcome shortcomings that are often encountered by users, the database aims to inform users on which higher education

institutions passed an external QA procedure conducted by an EQAR-registered agency, and facilitate access to QA reports. ASHE has been registered with EQAR since 25th November 2011, and has renewed its membership in accordance with the EQAR Council's decision on the 20th June 2017.

OTHER PROGRAMMES

The Ensuring Access to Croatian Public e-Services within e-Citizens Platform

Public presentation of the project Ensuring Access to Croatian Public e-Services within e-Citizens Platform for EU/EEA Citizens was held on the 10th March 2017 at the Ministry of Public Administration.

The purpose of the project is to enable citizens from other EU member states to gain access to public electronic services provided by Croatian institutions within the e-Citizen platform by using their national credentials, or rather the instruments for electronic identification issued in other member states.

The project is coordinated by the Ministry of Public Administration in cooperation with the Financial Agency and seven institutions, including the Agency for Science and Higher Education. ASHE's contribution will be in the part relating to the application to study programmes through the National System of Applications to Graduate Studies, whose aim is to enable candidates from the European Union to apply to study programmes in the same way as candidates from Croatia, meaning through the central government portal e-Citizens.

In addition to ASHE, citizens of other countries will have access to service provided by the Ministry of Finance - Tax Administration, Croatian Pension Insurance Institute, Croatian Health Insurance Fund, University Computing Centre (Srce), Croatian Academic and Research Network (CARNet) and the Croatian National Tourist Board.

The project began on the 15th June 2016, and ended in the 14th June 2017. It was co-financed by the European Union (total project value is 614 979 EUR, while EU funds amount to 461 234 EUR, which is 75% of total project value).

COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS FROM THE AREA OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENCE AND PRESENTATION OF ASHE'S WORK ABROAD

Robert W. Robertson visits ASHE

Professor Robert W. Robertson from the Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute visited ASHE in June 2017, and held a presentation for ASHE staff on the topic of online studies.

Professor Robertson is one of the leading distance learning experts with many years of experience in organizing, development and teaching online courses.

In addition to delivering the presentation for ASHE staff, Professor Robertson held a lecture in Zagreb on the topic of distance learning for representatives of higher education institutions, which focused on his experience in conducting online studies, their quality and the future of such studies.



Cooperation with the Canadian PEQAB agency

In September 2017, ASHE signed a cooperation agreement with the Canadian Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB), which is in charge of the quality of professional studies in the Ontario province and was responsible for developing and maintaining the first qualification framework in Canada. As part of the cooperation, ASHE representatives visited PEQAB and got acquainted with the work of higher education institutions, ministries and other institutions in Ontario. After that, on the 16th October 2017, Mary Catharine Lennon and Jason Yeung, representatives of the Canadian agency, visited ASHE in Zagreb.

A meeting was held with the Director, Prof. Jasmina Havranek, PhD, and representatives of ASHE, who presented to their Canadian colleagues the Croatian system of higher education, its qualifications framework and numerous other activities that are coordinated by ASHE.

PEQAB representatives stayed in Croatia from 16th – 21st October 2017, during which they met with representatives from the University of Zagreb and University of Dubrovnik, followed by representatives of the Ministry of Science and Education, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, Algebra Open University, Zagreb School of Economics and Management, and the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb. They also participated in a workshop organized by ASHE with the European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA) in Dubrovnik on the 20th and 21st October 2017.

PRESENTATIONS AND PARTICIPATIONS AT PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES AND PUBLICATIONS IN RECENT INTERNATIONAL JOURNALS AND NEWSLETTERS

ASHE hosted ECA seminar on institutional accreditation

ASHE was the host of the seminar on institutional re-accreditation, organised by The European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA). The seminar took place on the 20th and 21st October 2017 at the University of Dubrovnik.

The seminar was organised with the aim of exchanging practical information and experiences on evaluation in different countries, as well as opportunities and challenges encountered by the agencies, with an emphasis on the legislative framework that defines their work. In addition to ASHE representatives, the seminar was attended by the agencies from Canada, Germany, Estonia, Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Spain, Poland, Slovenia, Lithuania, Latvia and Cyprus.

The participants were introduced to the new re-accreditation cycle in Croatia, the reform of external QA in Slovenia, and the QA systems in Poland and Canada; during group work, the participants shared their experiences and made suggestions for improving the process of quality assurance.

The European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education includes 17 national agencies in charge of licensing and accrediting HEIs in EU member states, and one of its active members is also the Agency for Science and Higher Education.



The seminar on institutional accreditation

ECA seminar on institutional accreditation in Europe

Within the ESF project Improvement of quality assurance and enhancement systems in higher education (SKAZVO), ASHE is working on new criteria and standards for evaluation the quality of higher education institutions in the new re-accreditation cycle, or rather on improving the procedure of re-accreditation of HEIs. In this sense, ASHE considered multiple conceptual platforms or types of external QA procedures, taking into account the revised ESG as well as the national context, with the aim of developing the most appropriate model for Croatian HEIs and for further enhancement of the quality of their work.

on the institutional accreditation in Europe, held as part of ECA Working Group 2 (of which ASHE is a member), represents further contribution to ASHE's deliberations on the topic. Namely, during the seminar, two of ASHE sister agencies – Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) and Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency Hanover (ZEvA) – presented their plans for future re-accreditation cycles, new evaluation models (for institutional evaluation), open issues and experiences from previous external evaluation procedures that were mostly oriented towards programme. Plans for its future procedure of institutional accreditation were also shortly presented by the Portuguese agency A3ES.

The seminar, organised by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA), was held on the 31st January 2017 in Lisbon, at the National Council of Education. The seminar was hosted by the Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education (A3ES) from Portugal.

Annual meeting of ECA members

ASHE representatives took part in the annual meeting of members of The European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education – ECA and the round table that took place on the 22nd and 23rd June 2017 in Paris.

ASHE takes an active part in the work of ECAs working groups that focus on innovations in quality assurance, as well as innovation strategies and the Consortium's promotional activities. Meetings of working groups' members took place on the first day of this event, while the second day was dedicated to a round table held in preparation for the next EHEA ministerial conference that is scheduled for 2018 in Paris. The guests of the round table were Ms Mariana Saad from the Secretariat of the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) and professor Eliane Kotler, member of BFUG Advisory Group, who presented the Group's work, role and structure in more detail.

The discussion also focused on topics like learning outcomes and employability, internal QA at HEIs, implementation of the European approach to the quality assurance of joint studies, and the internationalisation and increased cooperation between QA agencies; related to these topics were also presentations of projects involving ECA-member agencies.

ENQA seminar Exploring Synergies between Quality Assurance and Qualifications Recognition

As part of the ESF SKAZVO project, participated in ENQA seminar called Exploring Synergies Between Quality Assurance and Qualifications Recognition, which was held on the 1st and 2nd June 2017 in Dublin, Ireland. The seminar was organised by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and hosted by the Quality and Qualifications Ireland.

The goal of the seminar was to present conclusions reached on the basis of a survey developed within ENQA's Working Group 7 for quality assurance and recognition of qualifications, which was sent to all European agencies for QA in higher education (ENQA working group on quality assurance and recognition). Conclusions that crystallised from the survey were presented as an introduction to the two-day seminar during which presenters, together with the active involvement of all participants, considered the best way to apply ESG standard 1.4 into quality assurance procedures (Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area). ESG standard 1.4 instructs HEIs to consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification. Also, the guideline for this standard states that providing conditions and support necessary for students to make progress in their academic career is in the best interest of the individual students, programmes, institutions and systems. Therefore, it is vital to have fit-for-purpose admission, recognition and completion procedures, particularly when students are mobile within and across higher education systems.



ENQA seminar in Ireland

Higher Education Institutions Conference 2017

ASHE took part in the Higher Education Institutions Conference 2017: Strategies for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which was organised by the Zagreb School of Economics and Management and held in Zadar on the 10th and 11th May 2017. In addition to Metka Tekavčič, Professor from the University of Ljubljana, Kjell R. Knudsenom, Professor Emeritus from the University of Minnesota Duluth from the USA (Labovitz School of Business and Economics), and Tomislav Sokol, Assistant Minister for Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia, participant in the discussion on Higher Education policymaker's role in the 4th Industrial Revolution was also Irena Petrušić, PhD, from ASHE. Topics of discussion were connected with the role of policy makers in higher education, internationalisation and mobility and the financing of higher education.

ENQA working group on quality assurance and e-learning

Meeting of the ENQA working group on quality assurance and e-learning was held on the 21st September 2017 in Brussels. As a member of the working group, ASHE representative also participated in the meeting as part of the ESF SKAZVO project.

After the meeting, there was a Peer Learning Activity (PLA) on QA in online education, organised by ENQA and EADTU (European Association of Distance Teaching Universities). The PLA took place on the 21st and 22nd September 2017, also in Brussels. In addition to ASHE representatives, it gathered more than 45 stakeholders from all parts of Europe: representatives of different universities, QA agencies, and government and umbrella organisations. They identified the next steps in the development of long-distance (online) learning, and the results from the PLA will contribute to the follow-up of the implementation of Bologna process principles.

Participation of ASHE in ENQA seminar

A seminar for agencies that recently passed external evaluation was held in The Hague on 12th and 13th October 2017, in the organisation of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). The seminar was held for the purpose of exchanging experiences from conducted evaluations, and challenges in the implementation of recommendations and the recognition of good practice. ASHE representative presented the Agency's experience in developing its Action plan in accordance with recommendations from the previous evaluation procedure.

Participants had a chance to exchange information on the preparation and implementation of evaluations, as well as the application of the amended Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).



ENQA Annual General Assembly

ENQA Annual General Assembly

The annual General Assembly of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), attended by ASHE representatives, was held in the French city of Sevres on the 26th and 27th October 2017. The Assembly chose a new president for the next mandate, Mr Christoph Grolimund, Director of the Swiss QAA agency. Furthermore, seven agencies renewed their ENQA membership, while one agency confirmed its affiliate status. The Assembly elected three new members were elected to the ENQA Board, and adopted the 2017 Annual Report and 2018 Activity Plan.

Some of the main points of discussion were the preparation for ENQA announcement of the next, 2018 conference of ministers responsible for higher education, the relationship between programme and institutional evaluation and their strengths and weaknesses. The topic were also changes in higher education and their effect on higher education quality assurance. In the poster section, there was a presentation of new evaluation models used by some agencies, including the proposal of ENQA working group on QA of distance (online) learning, of which ASHE is a member.

Participation of ASHE in the ENQA Reviewers' Seminar

The third Reviewers' Seminar of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) took place on 20th – 21st November 2017 in Brussels. The seminar, which was organised by ENQA and hosted by the Flemish Council of Universities and University Colleges – Quality Assurance Unit (VLUHR – QAU), was also attended by ASHE representative. The seminar aimed to update participants on changes introduced by the new ENQA Agency Reviews model, or rather to introduce several smaller result analyses for the evaluations conducted by ENQA, in accordance with the amended Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

ASHE at the 12th EQAF

From 23rd to 25th November 2017, representatives of the ASHE participated in the 12th European Quality Assurance Forum – EQAF 2017.

The Forum took place in Riga, and was organised by ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE on the topic of Responsible QA: committing to impact. How can external QA in higher education ensure transparent and responsible action? In trying to answer that question, the 12th Forum explored current developments in research, policy and practice from across Europe that tackle the need for QA to meet the needs of a wide range of internal and external stakeholders. ASHE made its contribution to the topic by its presentation and active participation in discussions.

ASHE representative named as an ENQA reviewer

ASHE representative was entered into ENQA database of reviewers, participated as a panel member in the 2017 external evaluation of the Higher Education Accreditation Agency of Republika Srpska (HEAA RS), and was appointed as the secretary of the panel for external evaluation of the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), scheduled for 2018.

ASHE at the World Education Day conference

Director of the Agency for Science and Higher Education, Prof. Jasmina Havranek, PhD, gave a lecture on managing higher education institutions at the World Education Day. The conference took place in the Chinese city of Dalian between the 27th – 29th September 2017.

The 24th Annual Joint Meeting of the ENIC and NARIC Networks

This year, ASHE again took part in the 24th international Annual Joint Meeting of the ENIC and NARIC Networks, which took place between 25th – 27th June 2017 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The meeting was organised by the European Commission, the Council of Europe, UNESCO and the Danish Agency for Science and Higher Education – Danish ENIC-NARIC Centre. Some of the discussion topics were the digitalisation of the recognition procedure (example of the French ENIC/NARIC centre), and evaluation of new forms of education (MOOCS – Massive open online course, international degrees); also presented were higher education systems of Eritrea, Nigeria and Lebanon, news on activities connected with possibilities for the recognition of qualifications of persons under international and temporary protection, as well as other topics connected with issues of higher education and the work of the ENIC/NARIC centres.



World Education Day

ASHE National ENIC/NARIC is an information centre for academic mobility and recognition of foreign higher education qualifications, part of the European Network of National Information Centres on recognition and mobility, since its establishment in 2005 has been a regular participant in these annual meetings, primarily for the purpose of exchanging experiences and information on the status and implementation of the Lisbon Declaration in individual countries, national QFs, possibilities of participating in European projects and accomplishing common goals in higher education on the European and global level.

Each year, ENIC/NARIC meetings gather together representatives from over 60 countries; they are always an important and interesting event which represents a chance for exchanging good practice and information between ENIC/NARIC centres.

ASHE hosted the regional meeting of ENIC and NARIC centres

The fourth regional meeting of ENIC and NARIC centres took place in October 2017, at ASHE premises in Zagreb. The meeting is traditionally organised for the purpose of discussing current issues connected with the recognition of foreign higher education qualifications, with an emphasis on the challenges facing the countries in the region.

The meeting was attended by representative of ENIC and NARIC centres of Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The topics of the meeting were quality assurance in higher education in the context of the recognition of foreign higher education qualifications and the ESG standard 1.4, a recurring discussion on the problem of external QA of higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the next steps of CIP (Centre for Information and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education) and HEA (Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance of Bosnia and Herzegovina). The regional meeting reached the following conclusions:

1. In order to ensure an adequate procedure of recognition of foreign education qualifications, and especially higher education qualifications in the context of higher education quality assurance, criteria for the evaluation of foreign qualifications should be based on several important points:

- a) external quality assurance of higher education must be based on clear, expert and formally defined national or international criteria and procedures
- b) procedures of external QA in higher education are conducted by independent bodies or agencies
- c) information on accredited study programmes and higher education institutions should be clear and publicly available
- d) strengthening the re-accreditation of study programmes and HEIs as one of the key criterion for the evaluation, or rather formal recognition of a foreign higher education qualification.

2. Further improvement of the cooperation between ENIC and NARIC centres and national institutions for external QA.

3. Centre for Information and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education (CIP) of Bosnia and Herzegovina will work on the further improvement of its cooperation with the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HEA).

Conference RPL and inclusion in the light of increased migration

As part of the ESF project Improvement of quality assurance and enhancement systems in higher education (SKAZVO), ASHE representatives participated in a conference entitled Refugees' impact on Bologna reform – Recognition of Prior Learning and inclusion in the light of increased migration, which took place on the 12th and 13th June 2017 at Malmö University in Malmö, Sweden. The conference was organised by The Swedish Council for Higher Education and The Swedish Ministry of Education and Research.

The conference, arranged within the framework of the Bologna Working group 2 on implementation, was focused on the recognition of prior learning and opportunities for lifelong learning for migrants, especially on the level of higher education.

It presented examples of good practice within the EHEA on procedures and methods for RPL, with special focus on inclusion and provision of more appropriate learning opportunities and access to higher education for migrants. This was the focus of the conference, or rather of the presentations and workshops, which thus provided an opportunity to share experiences among the practitioners, policy makers, but also all other interested parties from EHEA countries. Finally, the goal of the conference was to encourage HEIs and other stakeholders within the EHEA to develop their schemes and procedures for the recognition of prior learning and other initiatives.

The outcome of this conference will be a detailed report with examples of good practice, and reports to the relevant working groups within the Bologna Follow up Group.

Some of the issues that were discussed during plenary sessions and in group discussions were:

How do we provide more appropriate learning opportunities for migrants?; Are the admission procedures in place fit for purpose?; What measures for RPL are in place, what could be implemented better and what needs to be developed?

The 7th International Conference of Admissions Organisations

In late September 2017, ASHE took part in the 7th International Conference of Admissions Organisations (IAAO) that took place in Sweden. In their presentations, ASHE representatives informed other participants about the new activities of the Central Applications Office, and presented the status of the development of the new information system of applications to study programmes (NISpVU2).

ASHE at the final project conference of Mastermind Europe

At the final conference of the Erasmus+ project final conference of the Erasmus+ project Mastermind Europe, held in Amsterdam in early July, ASHE representative gave a presentation entitled National information system of applications to graduate studies in Croatia.

The goal of the conference was to introduce participants to the results of the Mastermind Europe project, or rather to the ways of improving admissions to graduate study programmes for candidates from other countries. The conference was attended by deans of higher education institutions involved in the project, coordinators of master programmes, policy makers, university administrators and representatives of the European Commission in charge of education.

Implementation of the Bologna process and the general process of globalisation in higher education, economy and society have resulted in the ever growing and diversifying offer of master studies, whose aim is to attract as many students as possible. Enrolment of students from other universities, different programmes and of different nationalities went from being an exception to being the rule, which is why it requires quick changes in the enrolment system. These new norms also demand new parameters for student enrolment, as well as a transformation of the Bologna system. The implementation of the necessary changes will also be facilitated by instruments whose development began with the Mastermind Europe project – such as survey reports on admission practices related to graduate studies, establishment of thematic groups in multiple countries with the task to critically observe those processes and give suggestions for improvement, developing a database of experts, etc.

Study visit to the Israeli Council for Higher Education

In May 2017, ASHE representatives went on a study visit to the Israeli Council for Higher Education, where Vesna Dodiković-Jurković, PhD, gave a presentation on ASHE's scope of work and the system of higher education and science in the Republic of Croatia. They shared experiences and examples of good practice in quality assurance in both countries, and discussed the possibilities for improving cooperation.

ASHE representatives also visited the University of Haifa and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where they exchanged experiences on internal and external quality assurance in higher education.

Study visit to the German accreditation agency ZEvA and the higher education institution Leibniz-Fachhochschule

ASHE representatives spent the 29th and 30th November on a study visit to Germany as part of the SKAZVO project that is co-financed from the ESF Operational Programme "Efficient Human Resources". They visited the German agency ZEvA, and talked with their employees about activities and procedures for assuring quality in higher education and different types of evaluation (institutional, programme, thematic, accreditation of joint studies, international dimension of evaluation – cross-border evaluation etc.). During the visit to the Leibniz-Fachhochschule (University of Applied Sciences), they discussed the HEIs internal QA system with an emphasis on connecting the HEI to the labour market.

Study visit to the Estonian agency EKKA and the Tallin University of Technology

Between the 31st October and 2nd November 2017, ASHE representatives went on a study visit to Estonia, as part of the SKAZVO project that is co-financed from the ESF Operational Programme "Efficient Human Resources".

They visited the Estonian agency for quality assurance EKKA and the Tallin University of Technology with its Innovation and Business Center MEKTORY. With representatives from the Agency and the University, ASHE staff talked about QA systems in Estonia, Croatia, Japan and Malaysia.

Study visit to the German ASIIN and Hochschule Niederrhein

From 13rd to 15th November 2017, ASHE representatives went on a study visit to Germany, as part of the SKAZVO project that is co-financed from the ESF Operational Programme "Efficient Human Resources". They visited a German agency for the accreditation of study programmes ASIIN in Düsseldorf and the Hochschule Niederrhein in Krefeld. With representatives from the Agency and the University, ASHE staff talked about programme accreditation and QA systems.

Visit to the Macedonian Board for Accreditation and Evaluation of Higher Education

At the invitation of the Macedonian Board for Accreditation and Evaluation of Higher Education, ASHE representatives participated in the workshop Towards a sustainable model for quality assurance processes, at which Vesna Dodiković-Jurković, PhD, gave a presentation entitled Croatian experience of quality assurance in higher education.

Presentation of ASHE's work at the University of Sarajevo

At the invitation of Prof. Rifat Škrijelj, PhD, Rector of the University of Sarajevo, ASHE Director Prof. Jasmina Havranek, PhD, and associates visited the University of Sarajevo. They gave a number of presentations for the Rectorate employees and Senate members on external quality assurance, which included topics such as the application of the new ESG, ASHE's scope of work and external quality assurance in the EHEA, Croatian model of re-accreditation of higher education institutions, and the possibility for international and scientific cooperation.

Study visit of Educa-T project working group members to Sweden and Finland

As part of Erasmus+ KA3 project Emphasis on developing and upgrading of competences for academic teaching (Educa-T), coordinated by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MZO), a study visit to Sweden and Finland was organised from 14th – 19th May 2017. Six members of the project Working Group, including a representative from the Agency for Science and Higher Education, took part in the visit.

The participants visited Swedish Higher Education Authority (UkÄ), Division For Higher Education Development at Lund University, Centre for Teaching and Learning at Malmö University and the Centre for University Teaching and Learning, HYPE at Helsinki University.

The purpose of the visit was to get acquainted with the approach to the development of teaching competences in the Swedish and Finnish higher education systems. Participants also had the opportunity to learn about the models of organization and implementation of educational programmes and other educational activities for teachers at higher education institutions, as well as types and contents of individual educational activities. They also gained insights into the models that HEI managements use to stimulate and assess the development of teaching competences as well as insights into approaches to developing a higher education institution's organizational culture based on common values, quality and continuous dialogue at all levels of the institution. This will help members of the Working Group to achieve the anticipated project results: to develop the national profile of teachers' competences in higher education, make a proposal for a framework curriculum for improving the teaching competences, and contribute to raising awareness of the importance of quality teaching and learning in higher education.

EUF Open Space Project Incubator

From 26th to 29th June 2017, at the University of Naples Federico II, Italy, the European University Foundation (EUF) organised the Open Space project incubator for Erasmus+ projects in higher education. As part of the ESF SKAZVO project, ASHE representative participated in this event which presented examples of good practice of ongoing international projects, and included lectures and workshops for successful preparation and application of projects. The goal of the conference was to connect potential partners for projects in higher education and to lead HEIs through the development of their projects. The conference gathered more than 60 participants from all parts of Europe, representatives of different HEIs and of various interested institutions.

Presentation at the seminar on the internationalisation of higher education

Seminar on the internationalisation of higher education and science was organised by the Institute for the Development of Education and the US Embassy in Zagreb on the 10th May 2017, at the premises of the Ministry of Science and Education. The seminar was focused on the internationalisation of higher education and the establishment of sustainable partnerships between Croatian and US higher education institutions. ASHE representative gave a presentation on the links between higher education quality assurance and internationalisation and academic mobility, based on the analysis of external evaluation procedures (re-accreditation and thematic evaluation of doctoral studies).

ASHE at the 2nd Regional meeting of agencies for quality assurance in higher education

Following the first Regional meeting of agencies for quality assurance in higher education, which was organised by ASHE in November 2015 in Zagreb, the second Regional meeting of QA agencies took place in Banja Luka on the 31st March 2017. It was hosted by the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



In addition to ASHE representatives, the other participants represented the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (NAKVIS), Serbian Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (KAPK), The Quality Assurance Agency of Higher Education of Albania and the host – the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The main topic was the accreditation of study programmes, that is the experience of QA institutions in the preparation and realisation of those procedures. The discussion also revolved around the possibility of forming a regional association of QA agencies and bodies with the aim of connecting, strengthening cooperation and communication, and sharing good practices.

ASHE at the 17th Croatian Conference on Quality

ASHE is a long-standing member of the Croatian Society for Quality (HDK), active in its work and educational activities. Among the activities it takes part in is the participation in annual conferences and scientific symposiums on quality, which the HDK organises in order to strengthen the national quality infrastructure and networking of its members, as well as to share experiences in the application of various international quality standards. In 2017, ASHE took part in the 17th Croatian Conference on Quality and the 8th scientific symposium of the Croatian Society for Quality, organised under the slogan of “Quality through knowledge – results through quality”. The accepted paper, entitled “Development of ASHE as a result of investing in the development of human resources”, was presented by Vesna Dodiković-Jurković, PhD, in the section reserved for examples of quality management in higher education.

ISO Forum Croaticum panel

In 2017, ASHE took part in a number of panels under the title ISO Forum Croaticum, organised by the Croatian Economic Chamber. Part of the activities was dedicated to the implementation of international standard ISO 9001: 2015.

Participation in the Quality Day of the University of Zagreb

On the 28th November 2017, the University of Zagreb organised its first Quality Day. By presenting its experience and good practice in the university QA system, Croatia's largest university joined the worldwide celebration of quality. It also represented support to the Quality Day that is already celebrated by some University constituents. Here we would emphasise the already traditional Quality Day at the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Forestry, which in its sixth edition on the 24th March 2017, entitled “Improving higher education quality – from assurance to excellence”, assembled numerous Faculty and University stakeholders and ASHE staff.

Presenting examples of good practice within the Mamforce project

In the framework of its participation in the project Towards the real equality between men and women – harmonising work and private life, ASHE conducted a series of activities. Among other activities, ASHE took part in the workshop “Harmonising work and private life – why is it important, especially for women?”, in which Vesna Dodiković-Jurković, PhD, gave a presentation “Agency for Science and Higher Education – examples of good practice within the Mamforce project”.

Participation in the panel on public agencies in Croatia

In 2017, there was a number of initiatives for the reform of public administration in the Republic of Croatia. In April, ASHE participated in the Panel for public administration called "Public agencies: in search of a reform", organised by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the Institute for Public Administration.

INQAAHE published information on ASHE work in its newsletter

INQAAHE featured many information on the activities of ASHE.

In its newsletter from June 2017, the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) published the news that the Agency for Science and Higher Education was awarded the Mamforce standard as part of the project "In Pursuit of Full Equality between Men and Women: Reconciliation of Private and Family Life".

Thus INQAAHE announced the information on the publication "Analysis of the five-year cycle of re-accreditation of higher education institutions (2010 – 2015)", in which ASHE published the first comprehensive information on higher education institutions in Croatia and their activities based on the results of the first comprehensive evaluation of all public and private institutions in Croatia in the period 2010 – 2015.

Furthermore, INQAAHE reported on ASHE's activities related to the HRMinHEI project, conducted by our Agency in cooperation with HEIs from Croatia and Europe – Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Rijeka and College Algebra from Croatia, the Austrian Danube University Krems and the University of Tampere from Finland.

They also announced an international seminar organised by ASHE and ECA on the 20th and 21st October 2017 in Dubrovnik for representatives of agencies for quality assurance in higher education.

Higher Education Discovery published an article on ASHE

Higher Education Discovery (HED) published an article on ASHE and the Croatian QA system for science and higher education. HED is an international newsletter that publishes information from higher education and science of 80 countries worldwide.



PRESENTATIONS

Havranek J., *Do we in Higher Education Always Choose the Right Leaders?*, World Education Day – 2017 conference, Dalian, China, 27th – 29th September 2017.

Havranek J., *The role of alumni activities in improving connection between higher education and the labour market*, Assembly of the University of Zagreb Alumni Association ALUMNI UNIZG, Zagreb, Croatia, 30th June 2017.

Havranek J., *Quality Assurance activities in Higher Education in Croatia*, Moscow, Russia, 25th – 27th May 2017.

Bezjak S., *New re-accreditation cycle in light of CROQF*, conference Croatian Qualifications Framework: Opportunity for a quality implementation of an educational reform, Zagreb, Croatia, 4th December 2017.

Bezjak S., *New re-accreditation cycle in Croatia*, seminar for QA agencies: evaluating programmes within institutional evaluations, Dubrovnik, Croatia, 20th – 21st October 2017.

Bezjak S., Đorđević M., *Current state at higher education institutions*, seminar Professional orientation in the higher education system: current state and challenges, Zagreb, Croatia, 15th September 2017.

Bezjak S., *New HEI re-accreditation cycle*, Workshop for professional development of teachers of study programmes Military Engineering and Military Management, Mali Lošinj, Croatia, 12th – 15th July 2017.

Bezjak S., *Influence of re-accreditation on improving the quality of the higher education system*, professional conference: Presenting a synthesis of the five-year HEI re-accreditation, Zagreb, Croatia, 7th July 2017.

Bezjak S., *Evaluating study programmes in light of CROQF*, workshop for the University of Sarajevo teachers, Sarajevo, BiH, 4th July 2017.

Bezjak S., *Implementing ESG at Croatian HEIs and the new re-accreditation cycle*, The first professional conference of HEI secretaries and student services' employees: Exchanging experience and knowledge, Bjelovar, Croatia, 2nd June 2017.

Bezjak S., *Outcomes of the 1st cycle of institutional re-accreditation in Croatia and future plans*, CEENQA Workshop: Ways forward to make external QA a more efficient process, Zagreb, Croatia, 28th April 2017.

Bezjak S., *External quality assurance in higher education*, University of Rijeka student workshop, Rijeka, Croatia, 22nd April 2017.

Bezjak S., *New criteria in higher education evaluation procedures and New criteria for the evaluation of study programmes harmonised with the CROQF – plans for their development*, professional development: Developing the legislation for scientific organisations, Zagreb, Croatia, 21st February 2017.

Bezjak S., *Incorporating the new ESG version in the standards for the new cycle of HEI accreditation*, seminar: Implementing the ESG at Croatian higher education institutions, Zagreb, Croatia, 20th February 2017.

Bezjak S., Đorđević M., Plužarić Ž., *Role of career services at HEIs in connecting higher education and the labour market*, Zagreb, Croatia, 7th June 2017.

Dodiković-Jurković V., *Development of ASHE as a result of investing in the development of human resources*, Quality through knowledge, 17th Croatian Conference on Quality and the 8th scientific symposium of the Croatian Society for Quality, Opatija, Croatia, May 2017.

Dodiković-Jurković V., *Croatian Higher Education and Scientific System*, study visit to the Israeli Council for Higher Education, Jerusalem, Israel, May 2017.

Dodiković-Jurković V., *ESG new possibilities – new challenges*, University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo, BiH, June 2017.



Dodiković-Jurković V., *Agency for Science and Higher Education - examples of good practice within the Mamforce project*, workshop Harmonising work and private life - why is it important, especially for women?, Zagreb, Croatia, November 2017.

Dodiković-Jurković V., *Croatian experience of quality assurance in higher education*, workshop Towards a sustainable model for quality assurance processes, Skopje, Macedonia, December 2017.

Drvodelić I., *Graduate Tracking in the Republic of Croatia*, University Business Forum, Vis, Croatia, 19th October 2017.

Drvodelić I., *Croatia presentation*, International Association of Admissions Organisations, Stockholm, Sweden, 27th September 2017.

Faraguna F., Faraguna K., Matešić M., Dragojević Đ., *Rescuing a misinterpreted Bologna reform*, European Quality Assurance Forum, Riga, Latvia, 25th November 2017.

Francetić V., *Central application of graduate study programs in Croatia*, Mastermind Europe final conference, Vrije University, Amsterdam, Netherlands, 5th – 8th July 2017.

Plužarić Ž., *Public Relations in the Public sector - example of ASHE*, Faculty of Political Sciences, Zagreb, Croatia, 3rd April 2017.

Stanić M., *New National information system of application to higher education institutions (NISpVU)*, Smart Public Sector, Zagreb, Croatia, 29th March 2017.





INTERNAL QUALITY
ASSURANCE

ASHE has an integrated quality assurance system, in line with ESG and ISO 9001, an integrated Quality Manual and a Risk Management Strategy.

In 2017, the QA system was adjusted to the new and revised ISO 9001 and ESG (2015) standards. The annual internal QA audit assessed the functionality of internal quality assurance mechanisms, implementation of the annual operational plan, and the effectiveness of external evaluation procedures carried out. ASHE staff satisfaction was evaluated via regular annual survey. Based on the collected data and suggestions, further planning and improvements were carried out. All the information and analyses were presented to the Management Board and employees.

In line with its strategy, ASHE continually invests in human resources, which is recognised as essential for sustainable development. Participation in MAMFORCE project Towards the real equality between men and women - harmonising work and private life included the implementation of the Mamforce audit. The audit report was presented at a strategic workshop, and an action plan for improvement was drafted, of which all employees were informed. The implementation of the action plan resulted in a number of seminars and workshops for ASHE employees, organised in cooperation with partners EDUCA Mix and Prava formula. In particular, the following thematic workshops were held:

- Competency model for employees and heads of units
- Improving work efficiency: Improved organisation for greater satisfaction and productivity
- Performance evaluation
- Talent management
- Ambassadors of change
- AACSB accreditation of the Zagreb School of Economics and Management, and evaluation of learning outcomes
- Supporting the development of women's leadership - participation in the Change Code programme.

One of the outcomes of these activities was the development of an employee competency profile for all positions within the Agency, whereby a direct link was established with the results of ASHE's previous participation in the work of ENQA Staff Development Group aimed at all European quality assurance agencies.

Seminars and workshops that were held in cooperation with HR professionals (Prava formula) helped in drafting of a performance management system, comprising following elements:

- development of a model of key, leadership and professional competencies, including communication competencies, for all positions within ASHE
- development of talent management processes: system goals, performance appraisal criteria, talent development system and processes
- development of performance management system: process, performance monitoring criteria, template for monitoring and development planning, link with the system of promotion and advancement
- development and implementation of a trainings plan for ASHE staff in charge of performance management, career management and HR development activities - coaching and mentoring skills.

In September 2017, Det Norske Veritas GL (DNV) carried out the audit of ASHE in line with ISO 9001; the transition to the new standard ISO 9001:2015 was assessed as successful, and ASHE was awarded a certificate.

In 2017, the Agency underwent an international accreditation procedure that reaffirmed its position and credibility of a European quality assurance agency operating in accordance with the ESG, allowing effectively for its cross-border operation, i.e. conducting international accreditation and evaluation activities. Renewed membership in ENQA and EQAR confirms the credibility of ASHE's work and, consequently, the credibility of the qualifications issued by the Croatian higher education institution accredited by ASHE. As a result, the qualifications issued by HEIs accredited by ASHE are recognized and relevant within and beyond the EHEA.



PUBLIC RELATIONS

Promoting quality in higher education and science as well as informing are important tasks of the Agency for Science and Higher Education, which is reflected in the planning and implementation of communication activities directed at:

- Professional public (universities and constituents, polytechnics and colleges, scientific organizations, academic and scientific community members, organizations which ASHE is a member of – ENQA, EQAR, CEENQA, INQAAHE etc., foreign higher education institutions, members of expert panels etc.)
- The general public (students and future students, parents, media, policy makers and public sector bodies).

In the past year, ASHE conducted the following activities:

- Publishing its 2016 Annual Report and the 2017 Activities plan and sending it to all relevant stakeholders in the system of higher education and science in Croatia; the report was also sent to ENQA and its members as well as to EQAR; the electronic version, in Croatian and English, was published on www.azvo.hr
- ASHE published the electronic newsletter in Croatian and English on its website and sent it to all stakeholders
- Informing higher education institutions on ASHE's news and activities in the system of higher education and science
- Publishing press releases and sending them to relevant media and stakeholders
- Updating the journalists' queries and proactively informing about ASHE's activities
- Informing the public and stakeholders through the website and social networks of Facebook and Twitter
- Communication activities on SKAZVO and HRMinHEI projects
- Participating in the organization of seminars and conferences
- With the aim of increasing international visibility of publishing news from ASHE's scope in the electronic newsletters that include ENQA, EQAR, CEENQA and INQAAHE
- An ASHE representative held a lecture on public relations in the public sector for journalism students at the Faculty for Political Science of the University of Zagreb

Thank you for your cooperation and openness towards journalists from srednja.hr

Duje Kovačević, media journalist for srednja.hr





CORPORATE SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY

MAMFORCE standard

Within the scope of the project Towards the real equality between men and women – harmonising work and private life⁵, the Agency for Science and Higher Education has in 2016 participated in an independent assessment of working conditions and human resources management practices, with a particular emphasis on family responsibilities and gender balance of employees. The assessment was carried out in accordance with the MAMFORCE methodology®, and data was collected and analysed from various organisational sources – a questionnaire for the management and employees, and interviews with employees.

Based on the information collected, Mamforce team drafted a report with recommendations in six areas:

- employee involvement and communication
- responsible management
- flexibility
- Support to employees and families
- leadership
- talent management.

Based on these recommendations, the Agency drafted an action plan for a period of one year, and carried out activities to further improve its HR management processes, particularly in the area of gender equality and family policies.

In the last quarter of 2017, a re-assessment was carried out in accordance with the MAMFORCE methodology. Upon the analysis of the measures implemented and the resulting achievements, the Agency was awarded with the Advanced MAMFORCE Standard for gender and family policies, received by the Agency's director, prof. Jasmina Havranek. PhD at the ceremony held on 19th December 2017 in the Croatian Parliament.

Specifically, in cooperation with HR professionals, the Agency developed and initiated the implementation of a performance management system based on the assessment of individual, departmental and organisational goals and employees' competencies. The assessment of individual competencies requires active involvement of all employees, as they are assessed and monitored by the 360-degrees approach, which includes assessing one's own competencies, as well as those of colleagues within the department, colleagues from other departments, superiors and subordinates.

The performance management system and planning of employees' professional development enable clear communication of team and individual goals defined in ASHE annual plan, which gives employees a clearer picture of individual roles in organisation's overall achievements.

The purpose of the performance management system is to align individual and organisational goals, to enhance organisational and individual performance through structured feedback, to provide the basis for developing leadership roles and responsibilities, and to attract and retain talents.

⁵ The project was carried out under the auspices of the Office of Ombudsperson for Gender Equality, with partners Croatian National Theatre Split, RIJEČI/PRAVE/PREDSTAVE association and Spona. The project was valued at EUR 437,172.29, of which EUR 350,000 is financed by the European Union.

Croatian Society for Quality Charter for Special Contribution in Education and Promotion of Quality

Each year in November, the Croatian Society for Quality (CSQ) organises a Croatian Quality Day, a national contribution to the European Quality Week. The event also includes the awarding of CSQ charters in a number of categories:

- Charter for Encouraging and Implementing Quality in Croatian Economy (for small, medium and large organisations)
- Charter for Encouraging and Implementing Quality in Croatian Economy (for individuals)
- Charter for Special Contribution in Education and Promotion of Quality (for organisations)
- Charter for Special Contribution in Education and Promotion of Quality (for individuals)
- Charter for Lifetime Achievement.

On the basis of CSQ's annual public call and nomination by the Council of Polytechnics and Colleges, the Agency for Science and Higher Education was awarded with the 2017 Charter for Special Contribution in Education and Promotion of Quality in the 'organisations' category, a confirmation that the joint efforts of ASHE's employees and the quality of our educational activities are recognised by the stakeholders. ASHE received the same award in 2014 as well.

The awarding ceremony took place at the event marking the 15th Croatian Quality Day under the slogan *Quality changes!*



ASHE received Charter for Special Contribution in Education and Promotion of Quality



ASHE was awarded with the Advanced MAMFORCE Standard



FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR 2017

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2017

- A621155 – Administration and general transactions
- A621179 – National Council for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development
- A621182 – Council of Polytechnics and Colleges
- A621186 – Evaluation of scientific institutions
- A621187 – Evaluation of higher education institutions
- A621190 – Audit of higher education institutions and scientific organisations
- A621191 – Monitoring employment of graduates
- A621192 – Central Applications Office
- A867004 – Committee for Ethics in Science and Higher Education
- K621178 – Equipment and maintenance
- K621194 – National Information System for Applications to Higher Education Institutions
- K867008 – European Social Fund – SKAZVO project (Improvement of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Systems in Higher Education)
- T867003 – IPA RPL – Competitive Croatian Higher Education for Better Employability
- A867005 – Strengthening Professional Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training in Central and South-Eastern Europe (PROCSEE)
- A867006 – BUILDPHE – Building Professional Higher Education Capacity
- A867009 – HRMinHEI Project – Modernisation of Higher Education Institutions through enhancement of Human Resources Management function
- A867002 – EURASHE – Harmonisation of Approaches for Vocational Education in Europe
- A867010 – MEHR – Modernisation, Education and Human Rights
- A867011 – Ensuring Access to e-services within e-Citizens Platform for EU/EEA citizens (CEF eID)

Based on the financial reports, total revenue in 2017 amounted to HRK 23,164,255.

It consisted of:

- state budget resources for 2017: HRK 18,362,188
- business revenue: HRK 655,381
- ESF project – Improvement of Quality Assurance and Project Enhancement Systems in Higher Education (SKAZVO): HRK 3,315,311
- other EC-funded projects: HRK 738,364
- other revenues: HRK 93,011

Total expenditure in 2017 amounted to HRK 23,746,429. It comprised business expenditure in the amount of HRK 21,717,351 and expenditure for acquisition of non-financial assets in the amount of HRK 2,029,078.



Table 8: ASHE 2017 expenditure

| EXPENDITURE | | HRK |
|--------------------|--|-------------------|
| A. | Business expenditure (1+2+3+4+5) | 21.717.351 |
| 1. | Staff expenditure | 9.230.618 |
| 1.1. | Salaries (gross) | 7.655.646 |
| 1.2. | Salary contributions | 1.290.154 |
| 1.3. | Other staff costs | 284.818 |
| 2. | Material costs | 11.843.009 |
| 2.1. | Travel costs and other remunerations | 3.973.039 |
| 2.2. | Material and energy expenditure | 359.675 |
| 2.3. | Service costs | 6.547.835 |
| 2.4. | Other expenditure not included above | 962.460 |
| 3. | Financial expenditure | 39.912 |
| 4. | Subsidies | 97.266 |
| 5. | Grants given abroad and to the users of the public budget | 506.546 |
| B. | Acquisition of non-financial assets | 2.029.078 |
| TOTAL (A+B) | | 23.746.429 |

A. Business expenditure

Item 1. Staff expenditure includes:

- salaries (gross) and
- other staff expenditure (gifts for children, severance pay, help after an extended sick leave, etc.).

Item 2. Material costs include:

- 2.1. Travel costs and other remunerations
- 2.2. Material and energy expenditure
- 2.3. Service costs
- 2.4. Other costs not included above.

Item 2.1. Travel costs and other remunerations that include:

- travel costs for members of expert panels participating in external evaluation procedures (initial accreditation, re-accreditation, thematic evaluation of higher education institutions and research organisation, audits), travel costs for members of ASHE professional bodies, and other external associates and employees, remunerations for transport costs to and from work;
- costs of professional trainings, seminars and other educational programmes.

Item 2.2. **Material and energy expenditure includes:**

- office materials, energy, materials for current and investment maintenance, small inventory, car tires and other costs.

Item 2.3. **Service costs includes:**

- maintenance of other information systems - Centrix system for administration and data management, IP telephone centre and contact centre, software for financial administration, and other programmes;
- costs of renting (offices, space for seminars, workshops, training courses and committees' sessions, working groups and other bodies);
- intellectual services:
 - temporary work contracts with Croatian and foreign members of expert panels working on external quality assurance procedures implemented by the Agency (initial accreditation, re-accreditation, thematic evaluation of higher education institutions and research organisation, audit);
 - temporary work contracts with members of professional and administrative bodies working with the Agency (members of the Accreditation Council, NCSHETD, Committee for Ethics in Science and Higher Education, Scientific Field Committees, Scientific Area Councils, CPC, and other committees established in accordance with the work plan and as required);
 - student work for Central Applications Office;
- telephone, postage (Scientific Field Committees, ENIC/NARIC, SPU) and transport costs;
- promotion and information services (ASHE Annual report, Analysis of the five-year cycle of re-accreditation of higher education institutions 2010-2015, brochures and materials for conferences, and other Agency events);
- communal services;
- design and printing costs, and other services.
- archiving services.

Item 2.4. **Other expenditure not included above that includes:**

- costs of the Agency's Management Board
- insurance premium
- membership fees (national and international).

B. Acquisition of non-financial assets:

- software licences;
- IT programmes costs (contracts for the maintenance and upgrading of NISpVU system - National Information System for Applications to Study Programmes in Croatia), costs of maintenance and upgrading of the information system MOZVAG;
- office, computer and communication equipment, equipment for the maintenance of heating and ventilation system, etc.





ACTIVITY PLAN

ACTIVITY PLAN 2018

- Re-accreditation of seven higher education institutions in the pilot project SKAZVO, funded by the European Social Fund
- Re-accreditation of higher education institutions according to the re-accreditation Plan which was conducted by the Accreditation Council of the Agency for Science and Higher Education
- Conducting procedures for re-accreditation of university (doctoral) studies
- Conducting the initial accreditation for performing higher education activities according to the received requests and performing higher education activities in the online environment
- Conducting initial accreditation for carrying out scientific activity according to the requests received
- Conducting the audit pilot project and beginning the implementation of the new audit cycle
- Conducting the thematic evaluation upon request
- Conducting activities from the Strategy of Education Science and Technology
- Supporting HEIs in the implementation of CROQF and the new ESG
- Completing the reconstruction of the MOZVAG system based on the conducted analysis of the pilot external evaluation
- Developing the procedure of external evaluation for entering study programmes in the CROQF Register
- Monitoring graduate satisfaction and employability
- Providing expert and administrative support to the work of the strategic and expert bodies in the system of science and higher education (NSCHETD, Committee of Ethics in Science and Higher Education, Council of Polytechnics and Colleges, Field Committees for Appointment to Scientific-Teaching and Teaching Grades at Polytechnics and Colleges, Scientific Field Committees for Appointment to Scientific Grades, Scientific and Artistic Area Councils, and the Science and Higher Education Funding Council);
- Participating in ongoing international projects and applying for new ones;
- Developing human potentials-lifelong learning (educating ASHE employees);
- Educational activities-the education of expert panels which conduct procedures of external evaluation and thematic education of HEIs and scientific organisations, organising conferences, seminar and workshops
- Regular activities of the national network of QA units at higher education institutions
- Establishing a single ASHE database with the most important information from the system of higher education and science;
- Improving the integrated internal system of quality assurance in accordance with the new ESG and ISO 9001, as well as new models of external evaluations



- Active participation in the development of the national information system of higher education and science;
- Conducting a centralised system of application to graduate study programme
- Developing the Knowledge Base;
- Developing a ranking system of candidates for enrolment to study programmes
- Collecting and analysing data of candidates who are not covered by existing national information systems
- Collecting and analysing data of candidates outside the regular education system in Croatia who want to enrol into the first grade of secondary school
- Improving cooperation with partners from the area of professional development (of secondary and higher education students)
- Conducting the procedure of application to undergraduate integrated study programmes at Croatian HEIs
- Informing candidates about enrolment to HEIs in Croatia
- Developing a studij.hr mobile application that informs about the procedures for application to study programmes at Croatia HEIs
- Recognition of foreign higher education qualifications
- Providing information on the recognition of foreign professional qualifications
- Providing information on the national education system, foreign education systems and the recognition of foreign higher education qualifications
- Processing data and producing statistics and analytics on the level of the system;
- Active cooperation with external stakeholders (MSE, The Education Science and Culture Committee of the Croatian Parliament, Croatian Rectors' Conference, CPC, State Archives, Croatian Employment Service, Ministry of Public Administration, etc.)
- Cooperating with institutions from the public and private sector as well as with non-governmental and non-profit organisations
- Providing IT support to ASHE business processes
- Exchange of experts
- Presentations at expert conferences
- Informing the public on ASHE activities
- Promotional activities



GLOSSARY

ACCREDITATION COUNCIL – ASHE's expert body, composed of representatives of the system of higher education and science, business community and non-governmental organisations.

ACCREDITATION RECOMMENDATION – ASHE's independent expert opinion adopted on the basis of conducted evaluation and sent to the Ministry in charge of science and higher education that decides on the outcome of the evaluation procedure.

ACCREDITED STUDY PROGRAMMES – study programmes which, after the conducted re-accreditation procedure, receive MES licence that confirms the compliance with prescribed conditions

CENTRAL APPLICATIONS OFFICE (CAO) – national information centre for applications to study programmes at higher education institutions in Croatia. CAO combines activities related to applications to study programmes and those related to compliance with the requirements for enrolment at higher education institutions. CAO also handles applications of candidates coming from outside the regular Croatian educational system for enrolment into the first grade of the secondary school

CROATIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (CroQF) – instrument which defines the entire system of qualifications on all educational levels in Croatia through standards of qualifications that are based on learning outcomes and harmonised with the needs of the labour market, individuals and the society

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION (ENQA) – umbrella European association for quality assurance in higher education whose primary task is taking care of the quality of higher education in the entire European Higher Education Area

EXTERNAL EVALUATION – the process whereby a specialized agency collects data, information, and evidence about an institution, a particular unit of a given institution, or a core activity of an institution, in order to make a statement about its quality. External evaluation is carried out by a team of external experts, i. e. representatives of the academic community or experts in a particular area from other socio-economic branches

FIELD COMMITTEES FOR APPOINTMENT TO SCIENTIFIC-TEACHING AND TEACHING GRADES AT POLYTECHNICS AND COLLEGE – issue opinion on whether applicants meet the minimal conditions for appointment into teaching grades

FINAL REPORT OF THE EXPERT PANEL – written by the expert panel following the site-visit to the institution under evaluation. The report contains quality grade of the evaluated institution, which is based on materials submitted by the HEI and insights from the site-visit. Quality grade is given by each member of the expert committee on a separate template, which serve to calculate the average grade. The report should also mention recommendations for improvement. The panel's final report and the optional comment of the higher education institution are sent to the Accreditation Council

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS – higher education institutions in Croatia are universities (with their constituent units – faculties and art academies), polytechnics and colleges.

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS' RE-ACCREDITATION PLAN – re-accreditation is carried out in accordance with the annual plan determined by ASHE's Accreditation Council and published on the website www.azvo.hr

INITIAL ACCREDITATION – procedure of external quality evaluation of new institutions and/or new study programmes whose aim is to determine whether they meet the necessary requirements and standards. The outcome of this procedure is the accreditation recommendation for the purpose of issuance of licence to higher education institutions for performing higher education activity and/or delivering study programmes, and the issuance of licence to scientific organisations for performing scientific activity

INTERNAL EVALUATION – procedure of systematic gathering of administrative data and students' opinions, followed by moderated interviews with lecturers and students, which results in a self-evaluation report. Basically, self-evaluation represents collective institutional reflection and an opportunity for quality enhancement

LEARNING OUTCOMES – competencies that a person acquires through learning and proves after the learning procedure; learning outcomes describe what a student should know, understand and be able to do on successful completion of the learning process

LICENCE – administrative document issued by MSES on the basis of conducted evaluation which has determined that the evaluated institution meets the conditions for performing activity and/or delivering study programmes

MOZVAG – information system which supports ASHE's quality assurance procedures. In addition to ASHE, other users of the MOZVAG system are Croatian higher education institutions, NCSHETD, and numerous domestic and foreign reviewers, reporters and auditors

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE, HIGHER EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT (NCSHETD) – the highest expert body which takes care of the development and quality of all scientific activities and the system of science, higher education and technological development in Croatia

NATIONAL ENIC/NARIC OFFICE – ASHE's information centre on academic mobility and the recognition of foreign higher education qualifications

NATIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEM OF APPLICATION TO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (NISpVU) – system which handles the entire process of application to study programmes, or rather higher education institutions in Croatia. The system contains information on secondary school grades, State Matura exam results, categorisation of athletes, results of national and international academic competitions and other special achievements of all candidates, regardless of where and when they finished secondary school. This data forms the basis for the development of rankings used by higher education institutions to enrol students

NETWORK OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND STUDY PROGRAMMES – strategic document that contains guidelines and criteria for the establishment of higher education institutions and study programmes, adopted by the Croatian Parliament at the proposal of the then National Council for Higher Education

QUALITY (in higher education) – a multidimensional concept which pertains to contextual settings of an educational model, institution's mission and goals, and specific standards of a given system, education institution, study programme or scientific area

QUALITY ASSURANCE – continuous process of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining and improving) the quality of a higher education system, institution or programme. Many systems differentiate between internal quality assurance (e.g. intra-institutional practice with the purpose of monitoring and improving the quality of higher education) and external quality assurance (e.g. within or above the institutional scheme of quality assurance of higher education institutions and study programmes)

QUALITY GRADE – awarded by the expert panel on the basis of standards set in the documents Criteria for the Assessment of Quality of Higher Education Institutions within Universities or the Criteria for the Assessment of Quality of Polytechnics and Colleges

RE-ACCREDITATION CYCLE – all public and private higher education institutions, as well as all research organisation listed in the Register of Scientific Organisations, are subject to re-accreditation which is conducted in five-year cycles. First re-accreditation cycle began in the academic year 2010/2011 and finished 2015/2016, after which a new cycle began

RE-ACCREDITATION MODEL – Croatia has a combined model of re-accreditation which investigates two elements: compliance with the minimal academic quality threshold and the quality grade. The procedure assesses whether institutions have processes and mechanisms for self-evaluation and continuous improvement of programmes as well as all other institutional segments

RE-ACCREDITATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS – external evaluation procedure that assesses compliance with minimal requirements (academic threshold) and gives a quality grade. The goal of the re-accreditation is to determine whether the evaluated higher education institution meets the minimum criteria prescribed by 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. Re-accreditation outcomes:

- issuing confirmation on compliance with conditions for continued activity or part of activity,
- denial of license for activity or part of activity
- issuing a letter of expectation with the deadline for resolving deficiencies of up to 3 years

RE-ACCREDITATION OF SCIENTIFIC ORGANISATIONS – the procedure of re-accreditation of scientific organisations listed in the Register of Scientific Organisations

RE-ACCREDITATION OF SCIENTIFIC ORGANISATIONS OUTSIDE THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND PUBLIC SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE – scientific organisations listed in the Register of Scientific Organisations that are not universities or their constituents, higher education institutions or public research institutes are subject to period re-accreditation every 5 years. These are scientific organisations founded by the Republic of Croatia, private scientific organisations and other legal entities listed in the Register of Scientific Organisations. The goal of the re-accreditation is to determine the compliance with conditions for continued scientific activity, which is a prerequisite for future funding from the state budget

REGISTER OF SCIENTIFIC ORGANISATIONS – maintained by MSES; entry is based on the Licence for Performing Scientific Activity

REGULATED PROFESSION – professional activity or group of professional activities, access to which or the pursuit of which is subject to the possession of specific professional qualifications, as well as professional activity or group of professional activities pursued by members of professional organisations with a professional title

SCIENTIFIC FIELD COMMITTEES – take part in the appointment to scientific grades in accordance with the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education and accompanying regulations

SELF-EVALUATION – document produced by the institution under evaluation in line with the Instructions for Self-Evaluation of Higher Education Institution. The prepared self-evaluation is sent to all members of the expert panel, who are obliged to study it and prepare comments on the perceived advantages and disadvantages of the institution under evaluation

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA (ESG) – an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance in higher education that are used in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASHE – Agency for Science and Higher Education

CAO – Central Applications Office

CEENQA – Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

CPC – Council of Polytechnics and Colleges

CROQF – Croatian Qualifications Framework

ECA – European Consortium for Accreditation

EHEA – European Higher Education Area

ENIC – European Network of National Information Centres on academic recognition and mobility

ENQA – European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

EQAR – European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education

ESG – Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

FC – Field Committee

MSE – Ministry of Science and Education

NARIC – National Academic Recognition Information Centres

NCHS – National Council for Higher Education

NCS – National Council for Science

NCSHETD – National Council for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development

NISpVU – National Information System of Application to Higher Education Institutions

QAS – Quality Assurance System

SFC – Scientific Field Committee



CONTACTS

Agency for Science and Higher Education

Donje Svetice 38/5
10 000 Zagreb
01/6274 800
www.azvo.hr

Director's Office

phone: 01/6274 895
fax: 01/6274 801
ured@azvo.hr

Public Relations

phone: 01/6274 837
fax: 01/6274 801
javnost@azvo.hr

Central Applications Office

phone: 01/6274 844
fax: 01/6274 849
spu@azvo.hr

National ENIC/NARIC Office – recognition of foreign higher education qualifications

phone: 01/6274 888
fax: 01/6274 889
enic@azvo.hr

Office for Scientific Field Committees and Scientific Area Councils

phone: 01/6274 840
fax: 01/6274 822
maticni@azvo.hr

International Cooperation

phone: 01/6274 880
fax: 01/6274 889
medjunarodna@azvo.hr

Department of Higher Education

phone: 01/6274 811
fax: 01/6274 814
visoko@azvo.hr

Department of Accreditation in Higher Education

phone: 01/6274 811
fax: 01/6274 814
akreditacija-visoko@azvo.hr

Department of Science

phone: 01/6274 823
fax: 01/6274 801
znanost@azvo.hr

Department of Accreditation in Science

phone: 01/6274 853
fax: 01/6274 814
akreditacija-znanost@azvo.hr

Department of Audit

phone: 01/6274 832
fax: 01/6274 814
kvaliteta@azvo.hr

Department of Analytics and Statistics

phone: 01/6274 864
fax: 01/6274 814
analitika@azvo.hr

Department of Research and Development

phone: 01/6274 879
fax: 01/6274 814
razvoj@azvo.hr

General Administration

phone: 01/6274 890
fax: 01/6274 892
opci-poslovi@azvo.hr





agency for science and higher education