REPORT
OF THE EXPERT PANEL
ON THE RE-ACCREDITATION
OF THE UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE (DOCTORAL) PROGRAMME
KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY AND INFORMATION TRANSFER
UNIVERSITY OF ZADAR

Date of the visit:
5 April 2017

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INTRODUCTION

The Expert Panel appointed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) created this Report on the Re-accreditation of the University Postgraduate (Doctoral) Programme **Knowledge Society and Information Transfer** on the basis of the Self-Evaluation Report of the Programme, other documentation submitted and a visit to the **University of Zadar**.

The Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE), a public body listed in EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education) and a full member of ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), re-accredits higher education institutions (hereinafter: HEIs) and their study programmes in line with the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (Official Gazette 45/09) and 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 (OG 24/10). In this procedure parts of activities of higher education institutions and university postgraduate study programmes are re-accredited.
Expert Panel is appointed by the Agency's Accreditation Council, an independent expert body, to carry out independent evaluation of post-graduate university study programmes.

The Report contains the following elements:
- Short description of the study programme,
- The recommendation of the Expert Panel to the Agency's Accreditation Council,
- Recommendations for institutional improvement and measures to be implemented in the following period (and checked within a follow-up procedure),
- A brief analysis of the institutional advantages and disadvantages,
- A list of good practices found at the institution,
- Conclusions on compliance with the prescribed conditions of delivery of a study programme,
- Conclusions on compliance with the criteria for quality assessment.

Members of the Expert Panel:
- President of the Expert Panel, Professor Andrew McGettrick, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom,
- Professor Bjørn Erik Munkvold, Universitetet i Agder, Norway,
- Professor Henrique Madeira, Universidade de Coimbra, Portugal,
- Professor Sofia Gaio, University Fernando Pessoa, Portugal,
- Professor Theo Thomassen, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands,
- Professor Tanja Oblak Črnič, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia,
- Akram El-Korashy, Max Planck Institute for Software Systems, Germany, doctoral candidate,
- Abhishek Tiwari, Potsdam University, Germany, doctoral candidate.

The higher education institution was visited by the following Expert Panel members:

- Moderator, Professor Tanja Oblak Črnič, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia,
- Professor Sofia Gaio, University Fernando Pessoa, Portugal,
- Professor Theo Thomassen, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands,
- Abhishek Tiwari, doctoral candidate, Potsdam University, Germany.

In the analysis of the documentation, site visit and writing of the report the Panel was supported by:

- Josip Hrgović, coordinator, ASHE,
- Đurđica Dragojević, interpreter at the site visit and translator of the Report, ASHE.

During the visit to the Institution, the Expert Panel held meetings with the representatives of the following groups:

- Management,
- Study programme coordinators,
- Doctoral candidates,
- Teachers and supervisors,
- External stakeholders,
- Alumni.

The Expert Panel also had a tour of the library, IT rooms, student register desk and the classrooms.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme contained in the licence: **Knowledge society and information transfer**
Institution delivering the programme: **University of Zadar**
Institution providing the programme: Department of Information Sciences
Place of delivery: **University of Zadar**
Scientific area and field: **Social Sciences, Information and Communication Sciences**
Number of doctoral candidates: **61**
Number of teachers: **28;** Number of supervisors and the number of doctoral candidates they supervise: **27 official supervisors, 3 supervisor advisers, 16 co-supervisors, 33 doctoral candidates**
Number of doctoral candidates with officially assigned supervisors: **33**

Learning outcomes of the study programme:
> LO1: understand and interpret theoretical concepts in the wider social sciences field, especially in the information and communication sciences area
> LO2: establish and interpret theoretical frameworks and models in the field of information and communication sciences
> LO3: interpret taxonomies and ontologies in relation to organization of information
> LO4: interpret and apply ethical norms in scientific work and scholarly communication in the information age
> LO5: understand and describe cognitive processes in searching, seeking and use of information (study of reading, history and sociology of reading and books, information literacy, etc.)
> LO6: understand and interpret theories and models in the area of information needs and behaviour
> LO7: understand the changes in publishing and bookselling industry, and interpret the scientific paradigms of publishing and bookselling
> LO8: recognize, interpret and become able to systematically act in the area of organization, preservation and use of written heritage (issues in digitizing written heritage, local studies, multiculturality and interculturality, etc.)
> LO9: expertly and independently use research methodology, especially in their own dissertation research.

	Study programme outcomes								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
IZO141	x	x	x						
IZO142				x					x
IZB001-IZB003			x					x	
IZIP01-IZIP03					x	x			
IZN001-IZN003							x		
Research								x	
Supervised work								x	
Dissertation writing and defence								x	

RECOMMENDATION BY THE EXPERT PANEL TO THE ASHE'S ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

Upon the completion of the re-accreditation procedure and the examination of the materials submitted (Self-Evaluation Report etc.), the visit to the higher education institution and interviews with HEI members in accordance with the visit protocol, the Expert Panel renders its opinion in which it recommends to the Accreditation Council of the Agency the following:
RENEW THE LICENSE

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. Harmonize individual subjects and planned scientific research activities with the learning outcomes of the study programme.
2. Reformulate the learning outcomes so that they reflect what students are able to do/demonstrate as a result of the programme, bearing in mind that this is a doctoral study programme.
3. Improve on procedures aimed at monitoring the coherence of the learning outcomes of the courses and assuring their achievement on a structural basis from course design to evaluation.
4. Prioritize the increasing of the number of candidates studying and doing research abroad. The panel recommends HEI to become involved in more research/international projects in order to fund more students.
5. To increase the international level of the programme, more efforts should be made on the outgoing mobility of students to international universities. HEI and the programme would also benefit from a closer relation with the alumni.
6. More attention should be paid to international publications and high-impact factor publications.

7. A more transparent and regular monitoring system that would allow students to express their evaluation of supervisors is needed.
8. The panel recommends HEI to consider establishing formal mechanisms such as industrial advisory boards to stimulate the collaboration between the University and local industries.

ADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME
1. The programme has a broad scope.
2. It is multidisciplinary in character.
3. It has a strong international orientation.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME
1. The amount of external candidates is relatively high, which might explain the high drop-out rate.
2. The rate of candidates studying and doing their research abroad is low.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE
1. The organisation of international conferences and the publication of their proceedings.
2. A system of peer-review among teachers.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRESCRIBED CONDITIONS FOR THE DELIVERY OF A STUDY PROGRAMME

Minimal legal conditions:	YES/NO Notes
1. Higher education institution (HEI) is listed in the Register of Scientific Organisations in the scientific area of the programme, and has a positive reaccreditation decision on performing higher education activities and scientific activity.	**YES**
2. HEI delivers programmes in the two cycles leading to the doctoral programme, i.e., first two cycles in the same area and field/fields (for interdisciplinary programmes), and employs a sufficient number of teachers as defined by Article 6 of 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 (OG 24/10).	**YES**;
3. HEI employs a sufficient number of researchers, as defined by Article 7 of the Ordinance on Conditions for Issuing Licence for Scientific Activity, Conditions for Re-Accreditation of Scientific Organisations and Content of Licence (OG 83/2010).	**YES**
4. At least 50% of teaching as expressed in norm-hours is delivered by teachers employed at the HEI (full-time, elected into scientific-teaching titles).	**YES**
5. Student: teacher ratio at the HEI is below 30:1.	**YES**
6. HEI ensures that doctoral theses are public.	**YES**
7. HEI launches the procedure of revoking the academic title if it is determined that it has been attained contrary to the conditions stipulated for its attainment, by	**YES**

severe violation of the studying rules or based on a doctoral thesis (dissertation) that has proved to be a plagiarism or a forgery according to provisions of the statute or other enactments.	
Additional/ recommended conditions of the ASHE Accreditation Council for passing a positive opinion	**YES/NO** **Notes**
1. HEI (or HEIs in joint programmes) has at least five teachers appointed to scientific-teaching titles in the field, or fields relevant for the programme involved in its delivery.	**YES**
2. In the most recent reaccreditation, HEI had the standard Scientific and Professional Activity marked as at least "partly implemented" (3).	**YES**
3. The doctoral programme is aligned with the HEI's research strategy.	**YES**
4. The candidate : supervisor ratio at the HEI is not above 3:1.	**YES**
5. All supervisors meet the following conditions: a) PhD, elected into a scientific title, holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position and/or has at least two years of postdoctoral research experience; b) active researcher in the scientific area of the programme, as evidenced by publications, participation in scientific conferences and/or projects in the past five years (table 2, Supervisors and candidates); c) confirms feasibility of the draft research plan upon admission of the candidate (or submission of the proposal); d) ensures the conditions (and funding) necessary to implement the candidate's research (in line with the draft research plan) as a research project leader, co-leader, participant, collaborator or in other ways; e) trained for the role before assuming it	**a) YES**: scientific-teaching position **b) YES** (Table 1 Teaching Staff) **c) YES**: confirms feasibility of the draft research plan submission of the proposal (synopsis) **d) Mostly**: supervisor generally includes doctoral students in their projects, and funding is provided according if possible **e) YES**: the University regularly holds a workshop for doctoral supervisors (the Department's assistant professors who are supervisors participated in the workshop) **f)** only the supervisors whose doctoral candidates are also assistants at the University of Zadar are evaluated (Guidelines on Assessment of Assistants, Postdoctoral Students and Supervisors of the University of Zadar, Form 4), http://www.unizd.hr/Portals/0/doc/Pravilnik o_ocjenjivanju_rada_asistenata_20141202.pdf , procedure chart, http://www.unizd.hr/Portals/0/doc/doc_pdf_d

(through workshops, co-supervisions etc.); f) received a positive opinion of the HEI on previous supervisory work.	okumenti/pravilnici/shematski_prikaz_pravilnik_o_ocjenjivanju_rada_as_posljedok_mentira_20161108.pdf See Supplement 6 Student evaluation results
6. All teachers meet the following conditions: a) holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position; b) active researcher, recognized in the field relevant for the course (table 1, Teachers).	**YES**
7. The supervisor normally does not participate in the assessment committees.	**NO**: The supervisor participates in the assessment committees as required by the University of Zadar Guidelines on Postgraduate Studies, http://www.unizd.hr/Portals/0/pdf/Pravlinik_o_poslijediplomskim_studijima_20060711.pdf
8. The programme ensures that all candidates spend at least three years doing independent research (while studying, individually, within or outside courses), which includes writing the thesis, publishing, participating in international conferences, field work, attending courses relevant for research etc.	**YES**
9. For joint programmes and doctoral schools (at the university level): cooperation between HEIs is based on adequate contracts; joint programmes are delivered in cooperation with accredited HEIs; the HEI delivers the programme within a doctoral school in line with the regulations and ensures good coordination aimed at supporting the candidates; at least 80% of courses are delivered by teachers employed at HEIs within the consortium.	/

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

	Quality assessment ("high level of quality" or "improvements are necessary") and the explanation of the Expert Panel
1. RESOURCES: TEACHERS, SUPERVISORS, RESEARCH CAPACITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE	
1.1. HEI is distinguished by its scientific/ artistic achievements in the discipline in which the doctoral study programme is delivered.	**High level of quality** HEI is in compliance in the field of the doctorate programme. The programme of doctoral studies in Knowledge Society and Information Transfer has important strengths, namely: • The interdisciplinary profile of the programme; • The international basis of the programme in terms of collaboration with international universities and teachers; • The number of international events and conferences organized; • The growing number of publications. To further increase the international level of the programme, more efforts should be made on the outgoing mobility of the students in the programme to international universities. The HEI and the programme would also benefit from a closer relation with the alumni.
1.2. The number and workload of teachers involved in the study programme ensure quality doctoral education.	**High level of quality** The share of teachers of the University of Zadar involved in the delivery of the doctoral studies is 69.05%, which well exceeds the legal ratio of 50%. A positive fact is that 7 teachers from international universities participate in the programme. Workload of teachers in the programme is in balance with the workload at the 1st and 2nd levels.
1.3. The teachers are highly qualified researchers who actively engage with the topics they teach, providing a quality doctoral programme.	**Improvements are needed** The ratios of scientific publications have increased significantly in recent years. However, more attention should be paid to international publications and high-

	impact factor publications.
1.4. The number of supervisors and their qualifications provide for quality in producing the doctoral thesis.	**High level of quality** The ratio of candidates and supervisors is 1:1.12 which fulfils by far the legal requirements. Supervisors seem very involved in research projects as out of 27 supervisors, 11 participated in 20 international projects, and 17 participated in 27 national projects. Moreover, the large number of papers published in collaboration between supervisors and students points to the dynamics of supervising and its quality.
1.5. The HEI has developed methods of assessing the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors.	**High level of quality** HEI has formal mechanisms of quality assurance regarding qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) is well defined and the Action Plan Assurance System provides good inputs for quality measurement.
1.6. The HEI has access to high-quality resources for research, as required by the programme discipline.	**Improvements are needed** The University provides access for students to relevant software and to relevant resources through the University of Zadar Library. Nevertheless, the University should acquire more literature available especially for supporting elective modules of the programme, especially resources in English. Students also have access to national e-resources licenced subscriptions but for specific areas database subscriptions should be increased.
2. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE PROGRAMME	
2.1. The HEI has established and accepted effective procedures for proposing, approving and delivering doctoral education. The procedures include identification of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social and economic needs.	**High level of quality** The HEI has evaluated the main reasons for proposing the study programme, its procedure and also the main visions and aims of the programme. What is evidenced is strong international support and collaboration of the study programme with the universities from the USA, Austria, Slovenia and Italy.
2.2. The programme is aligned with the HEI research mission and vision, i.e. research strategy.	**High level of quality** The programme was aligned with the University of Zadar strategic programme (2009-2014) from the start, and later upgraded in compliance with the University strategy 2015-

		2019.
2.3.	The HEI systematically monitors the success of the programmes through periodic reviews, and implements improvements.	**High level of quality** HEI continues to monitor the success of the programme and changes have been made according to the internal evaluations. The study evaluation (i.e. a survey) was conducted among the programme students and doctoral candidates. Based on its results, the list of elective courses was revised and extended.
2.4.	HEI continuously monitors supervisors' performance and has mechanisms for evaluating supervisors, and, if necessary, changing them and mediating between the supervisors and the candidates.	**Improvements are needed** It is not exactly clear what kind of monitoring system (except the survey from 2013/14) is in place on the programme. Here, the improvements would be needed, for instance, a more transparent and regular monitoring system that would allow students to express their evaluation of supervisors.
2.5.	HEI assures academic integrity and freedom.	**High level of quality** According to the documentation, the programme makes use of the Turnitin software in order to assure the academic integrity and freedom of their students.
2.6.	The process of developing and defending the thesis proposal is transparent and objective, and includes a public presentation.	**High level of quality** As is stated in the submitted documentation and presented publicly, there are transparent procedures in place that are used in order to enable the objective thesis proposal and public presentation. No limitations on this part were found in the evaluation process.
2.7.	Thesis assessment results from a scientifically sound assessment of an independent committee.	**High level of quality** The thesis assessment is in line with the legislative procedures and regulations of the University of Zadar, in particular the regulations on postgraduate studies.
2.8.	The HEI publishes all necessary information on the study programme, admissions, delivery and conditions for progression and completion, in accessible outlets and media.	**High level of quality** All information is publicly available and published online.
2.9.	Funds collected for the needs of doctoral education are distributed transparently and in a way that ensures sustainability and further development of doctoral education (ensures that candidates' research is	**High level of quality** The evidence on how the tuition fees are distributed was available and as it was possible to conclude based on the available documents that the funds are distributed transparently. In addition, the distribution also allows the participation of the doctoral candidates in research

carried out and supported, so that doctoral education can be completed successfully).	projects and conferences in which they can publicly present their own scientific work.
2.10. Tuition fees are determined on the basis of transparent criteria (and real costs of studying).	**High level of quality** The tuition fee is proposed by the official institutions.
3. SUPPORT TO DOCTORAL CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROGRESSION	
3.1. The HEI establishes admission quotas with respect to its teaching and supervision capacities.	**High level of quality** The HEI provides a high-quality admission policy. The supervisor vs. student ratio is almost 1:1 and the teaching workload is equally distributed. Supervisors are assigned to a PhD student, in the second semester of the study programme based on student's research proposals.
3.2. The HEI establishes admission quotas on the basis of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social, economic and other needs.	**Improvements are needed** As per self-evaluation report, there are 61 doctoral candidates enrolled. However, only 33 students officially have a supervisor. The report also mentions that 23 students are inactive. Almost 90% of students (54 out of 61) are either self-funded or funded by the employer. There is no direct connection between the employer of the students and the University. The panel recommends HEI to consider establishing formal mechanisms such as industrial advisory boards to stimulate the collaboration between the University and local industries.
3.3. The HEI establishes the admission quotas taking into account the funding available to the candidates that is, on the basis of the absorption potentials of research projects or other sources of funding.	**Improvements are needed** 54 out of 61 candidates are either self-funded or funded by the employer. This directly reduces their availability for research and hence their productivity. The panel recommends HEI to become involved in more research/international projects in order to fund more students.
3.4. The HEI should pay attention to the number of candidates admitted as to provide each with an advisor (a potential supervisor). From the point of admission to the end of doctoral	**High level of quality** The ideal study duration is 6 semesters i.e. 3 years for full time students. The study is organized in 6 point groups. Students are required to obtain 180 ECTS before their thesis defence. Students get to do independent research

education, efforts are invested so that each candidate has a sustainable research plan and is able to complete doctoral research successfully.	only in the 4th semester, and in the 5th semester they start writing the thesis. This is not sustainable. The panel recommends HEI to reduce the course workload to provide sufficient time to candidates for their research.
3.5. The HEI ensures that interested, talented and highly motivated candidates are recruited internationally.	**High level of quality** The HEI provides a fair procedure to hire PhD students. The website and e-learning platforms are created in English. This helps international students to get a better insight in the courses.
3.6. The selection process is public and based on choosing the best applicants.	**High level of quality** The HEI provides a fair procedure to hire the PhD students. The following key points are taken into account in the selection process: 1. Their previous qualifications (GPA, ECTS etc.), 2. Research motivation, 3. Letter of recommendation, 4. Interview.
3.7. The HEI ensures that the selection procedure is transparent and in line with published criteria, and that there is a transparent complaints procedure.	**High level of quality** The HEI ensures that the selection is clear and that applicants have a right to complain. The selection procedure is documented and the list of admitted applicants is public. There is a time limit for complaints and responses to complaints. The applicants who were not admitted have a right to review the strengths and weaknesses of their application and, possibly, receive guidelines to improve their research plans.
3.8. There is a possibility to recognize applicants' and candidates' prior learning.	**High level of quality** The selection procedure at the HEI involves identification of student's capabilities. Candidates are required to prove their previous learning via previous studies. The motivational letter and the direct interview ensure that prior learning is recognized.
3.9. Candidates' rights and obligations are defined in relevant HEI regulations and a contract on studying that provides for a high level of supervisory and institutional support to the candidates.	**High level of quality** The HEI provides relevant documents on the rights and obligations of candidates through the Regulations on Doctoral Studies. While interviewing PhD students, the panel members came to know that PhD students are fully aware of their rights and obligations.

	Improvements are needed
	The HEI should focus on following points:
3.10. There are institutional support mechanisms for candidates' successful progression.	1. Motivate students to publish in high-quality conferences,
	2. Facilitate students to visit international conferences,
	3. Promote team work via peer reviews or involving them in international projects.
4. PROGRAMME AND OUTCOMES	
4.1. The content and quality of the doctoral programme are aligned with internationally recognized standards.	**High level of quality**
	The content of the programme as described in the guide to the programme, and particularly in chapter II about programme purpose and principles of the study, is aligned with internationally recognized standards. It is broad and multidisciplinary and has taken information science as a kind of umbrella discipline, while mainly catering to public institutions in the heritage and publishing fields. Although quite similar in breadth and diversity to the previously established doctoral programme in Information and Communication of the University of Zagreb, it is not designed as a competitive, but as a complementary programme.
	The programme is sufficiently research oriented, as is demonstrated by completed and current research projects, doctoral dissertations and publications (e.g. conference papers). The classes, although large in number in relation to the research part of the programme, are aimed at developing the generic and specific research needs of the candidates, in a well-balanced ratio between mandatory and elective courses (Programme Guide VI).
	From the beginning of their study on, candidates are prepared for independent and creative work in research and development, management of their own research careers, inclusion in the teaching process and further scientific and educational advancement (SER Supplement 15).
	Doctoral candidates are directly involved in research projects in which they develop the capacity for independent and creative work (SER Supplement 16).
	The doctoral programme is comparable in content and structure to similar studies at the international level and the competence of professionals who complete this

	programme are comparable to similar studies at the international level. National and international experts of high standing are involved in teaching and supervision. Scholars from abroad teach the classes through thematic doctoral schools and scholarly conferences (SER Supplements 13 and 14). Teachers and lecturers from Croatia abroad are highly respected by the candidates for their competencies. The quality of the programme is aligned with the University's strategic documents and with internationally recognized standards.
4.2. Programme learning outcomes, as well as the learning outcomes of modules and subject units, are aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF. They clearly describe the competencies the candidates will develop during the doctoral programme, including the ethical requirements of doing research.	**Improvements are needed** The learning outcomes of the study programme were not elaborated within individual subjects or within planned scientific research activities. However, programme learning outcomes as well as the learning outcomes of modules and subject units (course objectives, intended outcomes, content, teaching and learning methods), are clearly described in the guide to the programme and the internal and external syllabi respectively in terms of the competencies candidates will have developed upon completion of the programme. As far as it can be assessed on the basis of products delivered by the candidates, they indeed acquire the required academic skills and competencies, including competencies in research ethics. Checking plagiarism is among the common control procedures. The University of Zadar considers the fact that the learning outcomes of the study programme were not elaborated within individual subjects or within planned scientific research activities as an insufficiency which should be corrected in the future. The review panel agrees.
4.3. Programme learning outcomes are logically and clearly connected with teaching contents, as well as the contents included in supervision and research.	**Improvements are needed** In general terms, learning outcomes of doctoral studies follow the learning outcomes defined at the level of the entire study. It could not be assessed however to what degree the procedures assure their coherence and monitor their achievement in the courses on a structural basis from course design to evaluation. The panel recommends the HEI to improve on such procedures and their application.
4.4. The doctoral programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes and	**High level of quality** Learning outcomes and competencies are achieved, as is

competencies aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF.	demonstrated in doctoral dissertations, papers resulting from the doctoral research, publications dealing with topics from doctoral dissertations and presentations in conferences.
4.5. Teaching methods (and ECTS, if applicable) are appropriate for level 8.2 of the CroQF and assure achievement of clearly defined learning outcomes.	**High level of quality** Educational approaches and teaching methods, laid down in the syllabi of teaching and extracurricular activities, vary according to the type of activity. Verbal and frontal knowledge transfer is the predominant method in the courses; in seminars, projects, workshops and summer schools methods are used that are specifically adjusted to these activities. Essay writing is regularly practiced as a teaching method. All methods used are aimed at developing the expected learning outcomes.
4.6. The programme enables acquisition of general (transferable) skills.	**High level of quality** Doctoral candidates and their supervisors are engaged in workshops, courses and lectures aimed at developing generic skills. Thematic workshops are aimed at developing skills in research planning, searching, collecting and organizing references, processing and analysis of research data and presenting the results of research work. Courses and lectures are focusing on developing generic research skills in a more theoretical way.
4.7. Teaching content is adapted to the needs of current and future research and candidates' training (individual course plans, generic skills etc.).	**High level of quality** Courses delivered are tailored to the doctoral candidates' individual academic needs and research plans. Supervisors encourage doctoral students to conduct research related to their research areas, as well to national and international research projects.
4.8. The programme ensures quality through international connections and teacher and candidate mobility.	**High level of quality** The programme was developed and implemented in collaboration with universities and lecturers in other European countries and the United States. Partner agreements with European and North-American programmes enable mobility of teaching and scientific staff. Candidates are encouraged to take advantage of mobility options and to participate in international conferences organised or co-organized by the University of Zadar and conferences abroad. The University may prioritize the enhancement of the number of candidates studying and doing research abroad.

* NOTE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXPERT PANEL TO THE ASHE'S ACCREDITATION COUNCIL AND QUALITY LABEL

The role of the Expert Panel in the re-accreditation of doctoral study programmes is manifold. The Expert Panel or part of the Expert Panel visiting a higher education institution drafts a report on the basis of a self-evaluation report, the accompanying relevant documentation, and a site visit to HEI. The draft report is adopted by all members of the Cluster Expert Panel, while the president of the Cluster Expert Panel is responsible for coordinating the assessment levels.

The report contains an assessment on whether a doctoral study programme delivered at a higher education institution complies with the prescribed laws and by-laws, as well as any additional/recommended requirements defined by the Agency's Accreditation Council, and whether a higher education institution can obtain a positive, i.e. satisfactory quality assessment according to the criteria set out in this document. Moreover, the Expert Panel must make recommendations for quality improvement.

Based on the assessment of all these elements, the Expert Panel may propose to the Accreditation Council of the Agency to issue either a confirmation on compliance, a letter of expectation for the period up to three (3) years in which period the higher education institution should eliminate the identified deficiencies, or to deny the license.

If the Expert Panel has assessed that a doctoral study programme delivered by a higher education institution does not meet legal and other requirements or that the quality of a study programme is not ensured (i.e. that HEI does not meet additional requirements or recommendations made by the Accreditation Council, or has a very poor quality assessment), they should propose to the Accreditation Council to deny the license.

If the Expert Panel considers that the relevant laws and bylaws have been met by a higher education institution, but that certain elements mentioned above do not meet the quality requirements, while they consider that the identified shortcomings can be corrected within a time frame of three years, they should issue a letter of expectation.

If the Expert Panel considers that all legal and additional/recommended requirements have been met and the quality assessment is satisfactory, i.e. that a study programme fulfils the learning outcomes appropriately defined for that level and scientific area, they may propose the issuance of a certificate and have a HEI commit to quality improvement and reporting to the Agency during the follow-up period.

Finally, if the Expert Panel has, in accordance with the criteria mentioned above, proposed issuing the certificate of compliance and assessed that, in addition to meeting the minimum quality requirements – i.e. the qualification framework level - for a study programme, the programme should be identified as a doctoral programme of a 'high level of quality', the Expert Panel may propose to the Agency's Accreditation Council that such a doctoral study programme be awarded the 'high quality label'. Thus the Agency, with the consent of the Accreditation Council, grants a higher education institution the right to use the label for their academic and promotional purposes.

The 'high quality label' cannot be proposed or awarded to a programme or a higher education

institution that does not comply with the requirements laid down by the laws and bylaws mentioned in this document, and any additional requirements recommended by the Accreditation Council. Moreover, the quality assessment awarded to a study programme should reflect a high level of quality inasmuch that at least half of the sub-criteria in each of the quality assessment criteria are assessed as being of high quality. The Accreditation Council of the Agency issues a final opinion on the label awarded. The content and form of the quality labels shall be prescribed by the Agency in a relevant general act.

The Accreditation Council of the Agency discusses the final report with all recommendations and suggestions, and issues their opinion on the report. Based on a prior opinion of the Accreditation Council, the Agency issues an Accreditation Recommendation to the minister responsible for science and higher education, and upon receipt of the minister's final decision on the outcome of the procedure, awards the 'high quality label" to a higher education institution.