



agency for science and higher education



Improvement of quality assurance  
and enhancement systems in higher education

**Report  
of the Expert Panel  
on the Re-accreditation  
of the University Postgraduate (Doctoral) Programme**

***Speech, Language and Hearing Disorders***

**Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences  
University of Zagreb**

**Date of the visit:  
December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2019**

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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 *Speech, Language and Hearing Disorders* on the basis of the Self-Evaluation Report of the Programme, other documentation submitted and a visit to the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb.

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:

- Professor Kateřina Vitásková, Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, Czech Republic
- Professor Katrin Skoruppa, University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland
- Professor Gary Morgan, City University London, United Kingdom
- Professor Kristina Hansson, Lund University, Sweden
- Nuno Miguel Ribeiro Paulino, PhD student, University of Lisbon, Portugal

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

- Professor Kateřina Vitásková, Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, Czech Republic
- Professor Katrin Skoruppa, University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland
- Professor Gary Morgan, City University London, United Kingdom
- Professor Kristina Hansson, Lund University, Sweden
- Nuno Miguel Ribeiro Paulino, PhD student, University of Lisbon, Portugal

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

- Mia Đikić, coordinator, ASHE
- Petra Košutar, assistant coordinator, ASHE
- Igor Opić, interpreter at the site visit
- Ivana Rončević, translator of the Final Report.

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.

## ***SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME***

**Name of the study programme contained in the licence:** Postgraduate doctoral study programme of Language, Speech and Hearing Disorder

**Institution delivering the programme:** University of Zagreb

**Institution providing the programme:** Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences

**Place of delivery:** Zagreb

**Scientific area and field:** Social Sciences, Field of speech and language pathology

**Number of doctoral candidates (all):** 11

**Number of HEI funded doctoral candidates:** 3

**Number self-funded doctoral candidates and employer-funded doctoral candidates:** 8

**Number of inactive doctoral candidates:** 2

**Number of teachers:** 24 (17 employed at the Faculty and 7 external)

**Number of supervisors:** 0

**Number of doctoral candidates with officially appointed supervisors:** 0

### **Learning outcomes of the study programme**

Outcomes result from two modules:

- 1) Obligatory module consisting of teaching activities exclusively directed towards statistical-methodological knowledge and knowledge of ethical principles in research, as well as latest knowledge in all three areas of speech and language pathology. This module highlights specific competences in the area of speech and language pathology, especially its research part.
- 2) Obligatory extracurricular module consisting of all research activities that encourage the development of generic skills and result in the dissemination of newly developed knowledge.

**Table with the learning outcomes**

OBLIGATORY AND ELECTIVE COURSES	OUTCOMES
1. Research methods	<p><b>Shape and apply suitable research draft taking into consideration research questions.</b></p> <p><b>Assess and evaluate different types of research drafts and discuss their suitability.</b></p>
2. Data analysis in speech and language pathology research - selective topics	<p><b>Apply basic and complex statistical methods and programming packages with the aim of solving research questions.</b></p>
3. Multivariate statistical methods	<p><b>Interpret collected data within the scope of scientifically founded theoretical schemes and approaches.</b></p>
4. Research ethics	<p><b>Support ethical principles in scientific activity with the aim of taking and developing social responsibility in implementation of different types of research in speech and language pathology.</b></p>
5. Academic writing and effective public communication	<p><b>Present new knowledge orally and in writing to disseminate new insights in the area of speech and language pathology.</b></p> <p><b>Apply appropriate communication strategies to promote new insights regarding prevention and intervention in speech and language pathology.</b></p>
6. Language and communication disorders and specific learning disability	<p><b>Apply critical thinking about new insights in speech and language pathology and integrate them in the existing knowledge system.</b></p>
7. Voice, speech and swallowing disorders	<p><b>Recognise new research problems.</b></p>
8. Hearing impairments	<p><b>Shape, apply and critically evaluate scientific insights in the specific part of speech and language pathology (language, communication, voice, speech, swallowing and hearing)</b></p>
9. Elective course 1	
10. Elective course 2	
11. Elective course 3	
<b>MANDATORY RESEARCH-RELATED ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>OUTCOMES</b>

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Write and present a seminar literature review paper related to the dissertation topic                      | <b>Integrate information in the interest area and critically assess them with the aim of determining research question</b>   |
| 2. Write and present a seminar paper concerning dissertation methodology                                      | <b>Shape and discuss research draft</b>  |
| 3. Individual consultation with the mentor  | <b>Argue and evaluate different research questions and drafts.</b>   |
| 4. Publish one paper related to the dissertation research in a journal with international peer review process | <b>Present new knowledge in writing.</b>   |
| 5. Active participation at a scientific conference/congress with a single authored research paper             | <b>Present new knowledge orally.</b>   |
| 6. Independent research work related to the dissertation topic  | <b>Integrate scientific insights in writing and apply suitable statistical methods, taking into consideration ethical principles in scientific activity, with the aim of developing new insights in speech and language pathology.</b> |

### Structure of programme

	Course work	Obligatory research-related activities	Elective activities
<b>1<sup>st</sup> year</b>	28	17	15
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> year</b>	9	10	41
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> year</b>	/	58	2
	<b>37 (20.5%)</b>	<b>85 (47%)</b>	<b>58 (32.5%)</b>

## ***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:

1. **issue a confirmation on compliance** for performing parts of activities (renew the licence).

*Please note that the expert panel cannot give an overall quality assessment at this point since no students have completed a synopsis or a dissertation yet.*

## ***RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME***

1. Reduce the number of obligatory courses and focus more on generic competences.
2. More support should be available towards the end of the program, focussing on the dissertation topic and research activities related to the dissertation.
3. Even more collaboration with other PhD programs should be established, especially within the faculty.
4. Continue the efforts to raise awareness of the Language, Speech and Hearing Disorders and the PhD program in various places in order to increase funding.
5. The faculty should nominate a support person external to the PhD program who can be consulted in case of potential conflicts and difficult situations.

## ***ADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME***

1. The uniqueness of the program.
2. Strong connection to the local SLP community and associations.
3. Specific courses and other activities designed to accompany the students methodologically.
4. A big enthusiasm, personal energy, and collaborative interest of programme leaders, visible also in the field of international collaboration.

## ***DISADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME***

1. Still a lot of obligatory lectures on specific SLT content which are not relevant for all students – more flexibility needed.
2. The workload of the students, especially those working full-time besides their studies.
3. The program seems a bit isolated from other doctoral programs/students in other departments/faculties – although this seems to be the case only for the formal lectures.
4. Little attention to activities from year four onwards – although some workshops etc. seem to be planned.
5. Possible level of student support depends on the individual supervisor and his/her infrastructure- the faculty could rethink their allocation of the scarce resources (e.g. less courses, but more research and travel allowance, English proofreading, maybe even part-time scholarships).



### ***EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE***

1. Students' survey and handling of the students' assessment.
2. Very good contact with stakeholders, permanent and balanced.
3. The support offered on an international level – establishing and helping new program in Bosnia and Herzegovina to grow.
4. The existence of the speech, language & hearing clinic and the laboratories, - scientific collaborators in practice, the established SLT clinic serving as a bridge to enhance future EBP policy.
5. Good relationship between the supervisors and the students.
6. Encouraging students to attend activities such as scientific conferences.

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

<b>Minimal legal conditions:</b>	<b>YES/NO notes</b>
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 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 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.	YES
<b>Additional/ recommended conditions of the ASHE Accreditation Council for passing a positive opinion</b>	<b>YES/NO notes</b>
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	a) YES b) YES c) YES d) YES

<p>publications, participation in scientific conferences and/or projects in the past five years (table 2, Supervisors and candidates);</p> <p>c) confirms feasibility of the draft research plan upon admission of the candidate (or submission of the proposal);</p> <p>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;</p> <p>e) trained for the role before assuming it (through workshops, co-supervisions etc.);</p> <p>f) received a positive opinion of the HEI on previous supervisory work.</p>	<p>e) YES</p> <p>f) YES</p>
<p>6. All teachers meet the following conditions:</p> <p>a) holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position;</p> <p>b) active researcher, recognized in the field relevant for the course (table 1, Teachers).</p>	<p>a) YES</p> <p>b) YES</p>
<p>7. The supervisor normally does not participate in the assessment committees.</p>	<p>YES</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>YES</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>N. A.</p>

## QUALITY ASSESSMENT

	<b>Quality assessment (“high level of quality” or “improvements are necessary”) and the explanation of the Expert Panel</b>
<b>1. RESOURCES: TEACHERS, SUPERVISORS, RESEARCH CAPACITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	
1.1. HEI is distinguished by its scientific/ artistic achievements in the discipline in which the doctoral study programme is delivered.	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The study program serves as a national centre of excellence –and the program has very good contact with stakeholders. The program leaders have been actively involved in influencing positions and changing general rules and counselling services legislation, focusing on the need to have even more research experienced persons in this field.</p> <p>There is discussion in the SER of scientific (or artistic) reputation of the study programme (programme management, supervisors and teachers/researchers, as well as alumni) at the local and international level. The impact of faculty publications in the past five years, the quality and quantity of the publications according to the criteria relevant for the programme field and discipline, achievements especially in national research cooperation, programmes and projects, participation in scientific centres of excellence, organizing various national and international research fora, and other achievements in the relevant area of specialisation (knowledge or technology transfer, publications specific for the field etc.) are mentioned in the SER. National and international collaborations are established and planned focussing on joint scientific collaboration in ICT, robotic trial, psychology – assessment, ASD, team brain research, mental health after brain damage.</p>
1.2. The number and workload of teachers involved in the study programme ensure quality doctoral education.	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The faculty and the study programme teachers are dedicated to the teaching and scientific support, they have a close relationship with students, stakeholders</p>

	<p>and the employers of the graduates, they are dedicated to counselling and professionally enthusiastic, supportive.</p> <p>At least 50% is delivered by the program's own faculty, with appropriate attention given to their total teaching workload.</p>
<p>1.3. The teachers are highly qualified researchers who actively engage with the topics they teach, providing a quality doctoral programme.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are needed</b></p> <p>Some internationally relevant research outputs are produced within the faculty, but such outputs should be expected from more full professors. The Expert Panel recommends more encouragement of the teachers to publish internationally and together with the students as co-authors. Even students' coursework could be made publishable (e.g. systematic reviews).</p>
<p>1.4. The number of supervisors and their qualifications provide for quality in producing the doctoral thesis.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>Because they lead the field and they have enough supervisors at the moment, but the Expert Panel cannot base the judgement on completed theses, unfortunately.</p> <p>The programme employs a sufficient number of quality supervisors (with candidate : supervisor* ratio below 3 : 1) with a number of high quality publications relevant for the programme area and field. The supervisors actively lead and/or participate in international and/or national scientific research projects. The supervisor's performance is of a high quality and the performance of the candidates (and their publications coming out of doctoral research in SER and some of which were checked during the visit) is sufficient.</p>
<p>1.5. The HEI has developed methods of assessing the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The teachers and supervisors have established and developed a set of formal mechanisms of assessing and monitoring the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors, based on research excellence.</p>

<p>1.6. The HEI has access to high-quality resources for research, as required by the programme discipline.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>Especially regarding existing laboratories, facilities, equipment and research technology, as well as advisors ready to help with the infrastructure.</p> <p>The programme provides the candidates with state-of-the-art research infrastructure (i.e. with modern equipment and laboratories on hearing, language and speech (including sign language recording and analysis, audiology equipment, observation-ready rooms, eye tracking and EEG labs), quality library resources, access to relevant databases etc.) with an independent area for data and information searching. Access to participants in research projects seems to be challenging in some cases, but this is an internationally known problem. Better participant compensation, but also more public engagement events may facilitate recruitment.</p>
<p><b>2. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE PROGRAMME</b></p>	
<p>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.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The program is based on good planning and social context; it is planned together with stakeholders.</p> <p>The SER discussed the needs identified prior to launching the programme; The HEI has established regulations on launching and approving doctoral programmes. The programme has been launched and approved in line with the regulations. The programme justification is documented, a thorough analysis of social, academic, economic or other needs of the community is included and was introduced and explained during the discussion with the Expert Panel members.</p>
<p>2.2. The programme is aligned with the HEI research mission and vision, i.e. research strategy.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>There is a good agreement within all levels, the leaders of the programme are now focussing more also on special and inclusive educational needs related to the speech and hearing contemporary issues, which is valuable.</p>

	<p>The programme is aligned with a quality research strategy, as well as the HEI development strategy.</p> <p>There is an overall good quality of the research strategy of the programme, it demonstrates the HEI's research focus and potentials (see above), the SER discusses the ways in which the programme content, choice of candidates and supervisors etc. are aligned with these.</p>
<p>2.3. The HEI systematically monitors the success of the programmes through periodic reviews, and implements improvements.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>There is evidence of improvements based on the periodic reviews and the programme leaders have established different mechanism for monitoring – unfortunately with no alumni yet. But the systematic approach is visible and correct.</p> <p>The mechanisms for periodically reviewing and improving the quality of the doctoral programme have been established (ordinances, guidelines, procedures, well established practices etc.). The programme has been periodically reviewed with comparison on the national and international level; there is a continuous monitoring and analyses of research productivity of supervisors and candidates; the faculty established the system of collecting and analysing feedback from candidates, alumni and drop-outs, especially concerning the supervision system and the support provided by the HEI, or reasons to drop out; there is a functional system of collecting and analysing feedback from other stakeholders (e.g. employers); there is evidence of changes implemented on the basis of these procedures.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The procedure is established, the program follows university regulations and there is an obvious system for changing supervisors etc.</p> <p>The quality of supervision was assessed using the documents included in the SER and at the site visit. The quality of supervision was presented in the SER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the candidates' research performance (table 2, or additional lists and analyses of publications);</li> <li>- feedback from current and former candidates;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- completion rates;</li> <li>- documents, procedures and practices of changing supervisors and mediating in case of problems between a supervisor and a candidate;</li> <li>- documents, procedures and practices of awarding successful supervisors, etc.</li> </ul> <p>The above described mechanisms of monitoring and improving the quality of supervision exist.</p>
<p>2.5. HEI assures academic integrity and freedom.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>The programme has good ethical systems and students are free to decide the topic areas of their dissertations and defence could be carried out in public. The programme needs more support for preventing plagiarism and protecting the freedom of research – there is no software to be used in this purpose.</p>
<p>2.6. The process of developing and defending the thesis proposal is transparent and objective, and includes a public presentation.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>Good processes have been established e.g. “the orange book” which is a comprehensive handbook for students. The programme/ HEI has developed the procedures of producing and defending the doctoral thesis proposal (as described in an ordinance, or some other document);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- forms a committee, at least one member of which is external (from another institution);</li> <li>- has published a detailed proposal defence protocol (made available to the reaccreditation panel);</li> <li>- has created and published proposal templates and clear presentation guidelines (both made available to the reaccreditation panel);</li> <li>- has created and published templates for proposal assessment (made available to the reaccreditation panel as attachment to SER or during the site visit);</li> </ul>
<p>2.7. Thesis assessment results from a scientifically sound assessment of an independent committee.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The procedures related to the developing and defending the doctoral thesis are well described, the supervisors are not members of the assessment</li> </ul>



	<p>committee. The programme encourages participation of external or international examiners in the thesis defence committee, encourages candidates to have at least one publication with an internationally competitive peer-review in the field of thesis, prior to completion of doctoral education, thesis guidelines had been created and published and were available to the reaccreditation panel; as well as thesis assessment guidelines, a detailed thesis defence (viva) protocol a template for recording the thesis defence (viva)</p> <p>- There are no theses or thesis defence records, since no theses have yet been defended.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The “orange book” and the information available are perfect.</p>
<p>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 carried out and supported, so that doctoral education can be completed successfully).</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>More explanation needed for students of how the fee is used/distributed for different activities – explaining what tuition fees are spent on to insure further development of the doctoral programme. The programme has established a system of funding the programme (based especially on the 3-year fee) and the candidates within the institution. The funding could be more secured by the HEI; the research funding useful for solving social, scientific or economic challenges should be much more visible. The HEI does not fully secure funding for the candidates' research and research results' dissemination costs.</p>
<p>2.10. Tuition fees are determined on the basis of transparent criteria (and real costs of studying).</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The criteria are transparent, but should be much more clearly explained to the students.</p>
<p><b>3. SUPPORT TO DOCTORAL CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROGRESSION</b></p>	
<p>3.1. The HEI establishes admission quotas with respect to its teaching and</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p>

<p>supervision capacities.</p>	<p>- The number of available supervisors and their teaching workload is sufficient, the competencies of the supervisors suit the candidates' research proposals; the number of candidates a teacher already supervises does not exceed 3 candidates per supervisor on the programme as a whole; teaching workload of supervisors does not exceed the existing legal thresholds.</p> <p>The HEI clearly defines the obligations of supervisors and co-supervisors, candidates and research teams.</p>
<p>3.2. The HEI establishes admission quotas on the basis of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social, economic and other needs.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The programme and HEI leaders have been considering their possibilities, they would like to support even other parts of Croatia with no established SLT and hearing programmes yet – high motivation and dedication to this is visible - to support for the number of highly educated researches/SLTs – they have a unique Master's program.</p> <p>The HEI discussed the admission quotas with respect to the needs of the society and the academia, while taking into account the number of students expected to complete the programme (as based on the average completion rate). The admission quotas of the programme are based on wider scientific/ artistic, cultural, social and economic needs. The international students present a challenge for the future, the aim is to train them to make research, not to provide therapy.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p><b>Improvements necessary</b></p> <p>The programme/HEI leaders should be encouraged to look for co-funding within Croatia, but also from international sources.</p> <p>The funds for candidates' research provided through these will be assessed in relation to the number of candidates and the share of project and other types of funding in financing the programme (with the exception of self-funded candidates). The programme is not fully funded or co-funded by research projects, economy or some other public source, but the funding from third parties, such as employers, is based on</p>

	individual contracts guaranteeing and defining the type of support provided.
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 education, efforts are invested so that each candidate has a sustainable research plan and is able to complete doctoral research successfully.	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The programme leaders have been involved in taking care of the students from the beginning of their study, they pay a lot of attention to the students, and they are available for discussion.</p> <p>There is a good collaboration of the academic staff with the employers, they are connected to the process, ready to help and support, there are good connections with SLP professional associations of the faculty members involved in the programme; private practice employers were also very satisfied with the students and they are ready to cover the funds (investment) they allocate some budget for talented and motivated students, as well as public facilities.</p> <p>The programme leaders are trying to help with the management of the workload of the working students, who participated in the discussion of creating the programme. They are also trying to do co-supervision, multidisciplinary research, and for them it is also important to target the public and professional interests on the local level.</p>
3.5. The HEI ensures that interested, talented and highly motivated candidates are recruited internationally.	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The programme leaders are open to admit all persons who would like to apply for the Croatian programme. The opportunities to apply are clear and sufficiently promoted. The programme admits the best undergraduate and graduate students leaning towards a career in research, with the call for applications published also internationally, and the best applicants admitted – but at the moment it is only available for those who are able to study in Croatian. However, the students can discuss the main issues in English, on an international basis and the teachers were available to teach in English if necessary.</p>
3.6. The selection process is public and based on choosing the best applicants.	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>Good quality of taking complaints, the offer is open, the HEI ensures that the best applicants are admitted and has mechanisms of identifying them. The programme</p>

	publishes the call for applications in a timely manner, the criteria for selection of applicants include past performance, demonstrated interest in artistic or scientific research, publications, recommendations by teachers and a prospective supervisor, and a research proposal. An interview with the applicant is a compulsory part of the selection procedure.
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.	<b>High level of quality</b> The selection is transparent and in line with public criteria, the complaints procedure is also transparent, and there has been none so far.
3.8. There is a possibility to recognize applicants' and candidates' prior learning.	<b>High level of quality</b> The HEI has established a quality procedure (e.g. has an ordinance) of recognizing prior learning and achievements relevant for the doctoral programme, e.g. recognition of ECTS from a master or another doctoral programme (began, or completed), publications etc., as well as non-formal and informal learning. They are recognizing masters of science as well. The procedure is launched upon applicant's request, and based on clear criteria/ procedures.
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.	<b>High level of quality</b> The candidates have an obvious right to study, to have consultants, etc. – all related obligations and rights are specified very thoroughly.  Candidates are informed on all of their rights and obligations upon admission.
3.10. There are institutional support mechanisms for candidates' successful progression.	<b>Improvements are necessary</b> There is not a special institutional fund/budget to support excellent students to publish, attend conferences, participate in scientific and international activities - so more offers such as junior grants, awards from students competitions could be provided – the disposal for attending valuable conferences, translations to be paid (the national funding is an issue ).
<b>4. PROGRAMME AND OUTCOMES</b>	

<p>4.1. The content and quality of the doctoral programme are aligned with internationally recognized standards.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The content is based on the high demands of ASHA and other international SLT and audiology standards , the content is well designed and the quality of the programme is high, but there is a concern of the panel regarding the length of the programme and its initial phase.</p> <p>The quality is assessed on the basis of the programme as it is delivered to the panel.</p> <p>The programme is research-oriented and focused on the candidate's independent work. Teaching is included as required by the needs of candidate's research and enables the candidate to acquire generic (transferable) skills and international experience.</p> <p>The methods and procedures of meeting international standards of doctoral education in the relevant discipline by comparing the programme to those of international HEIs in the following features were explained</p> <p>The programme provides a space for interdisciplinarity on the basis of the content mostly (many various conduct disorders issues, intellectual, visual/hearing), motor, but the other programs are more independent at the moment, more experienced – the dynamics of those programmes is different - but for the future, the programme leaders/HEI are ready to collaborate if there is a mutual wish.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The learning outcomes are good with the ordinary PhD programmes learning outcomes.</p> <p>The programme learning outcomes are well described, assure and monitor the achievement of intended learning outcomes and candidates' obligations (assessment procedures), successful performance of teachers and supervisors and quality in general.</p> <p>In addition to research competencies, the programme also provides for competencies in research ethics.</p> <p>The programme meets the CroQF level 8.2 by quality descriptions of the programme learning outcomes. The specific research competencies (interviews with</p>

	<p>candidates, programme description and submitted theses demonstrate the quality of acquired research competencies, such as collecting information and sources, critical reading and identifying biases, interviewing skills, construction of measuring instruments etc.), project planning and management competencies (developing research proposals, organising research, timely identification of potential issues, budgeting, leading a research group), competencies in research methodologies i.e. inference (using relevant hardware and software, statistical analyses, statistical inference, making conclusions based on quantitative data), reading and writing skills (speaking and listening, presenting data and conclusions to non-experts), teaching and assessment skills, competence in demonstrating individual professional and ethical authority, readiness to accept ethical and social responsibility for performing research successfully, delivering socially useful research results as well as potential social impact, readiness to face new social and economic challenges are implemented in the programme and its outcomes.</p>
<p>4.3. Programme learning outcomes are logically and clearly connected with teaching contents, as well as the contents included in supervision and research.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>More courses should be focussed on individual disorders, basic contents, more general evidence-based methods and approach, systematic reviews, more general skills.</p> <p>The learning outcomes are logically, but partly or insufficiently aligned with individual courses, supervisory work and research. The programme should allow the students and the teachers to interact more with other programs, e.g. workshops, formal organizational or methodological issues, and focus more on interdisciplinary ethical issues.</p>
<p>4.4. The doctoral programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes and competencies aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF.</p>	<p>Mostly <b>N/A</b></p> <p>No finishing or finished alumni yet.</p> <p>The programme leaders/HEI offered samples of candidates' publications and samples of seminar</p>

	papers during the visit.
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.	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The methods are based on a students-centered approach, functional and continual discussion, peer learning, but</p> <p>The Panel Members recommend some more cross-students-generation learning methods to be added.</p> <p>The quality of teaching methods is assessed, e.g. if courses are delivered <i>ex-cathedra</i> or using methods more appropriate for developing individual research skills, such as colloquia, research, experimental or laboratory work and connected teaching methods, methodological workshops etc., which will be regarded as a high level of quality.</p> <p>In general, the methods used are appropriate for achieving intended learning outcomes.</p>
4.6. The programme enables acquisition of general (transferable) skills.	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The programme provides for acquisition of generic (transferable) skills (managerial skills, presentation, writing and project management skills, applying for funding etc.) .</p> <p>If students are co-authors, the costs are shared for the funding of proof-reading – students are stimulated to present in English, to translate by themselves and improve their foreign language skills, students get credits for publishing English papers; the motto is that “the language should not be the barrier”, the focus is on research training as a principle.</p>
4.7. Teaching content is adapted to the needs of current and future research and candidates' training (individual course plans, generic skills etc.).	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>The Panel recommends to have more flexibility and see that improvement are needed, e.g. in terms of having more classes focusing on data analysis, less classes, more open research, students should have time and opportunity to spend one month in another laboratory etc.; students need support even during the last years.</p> <p>The students should have more flexibility during the study flow – the student from private settings, less classes sometimes, more flexibility with choosing</p>

	<p>specific classes and topics.</p> <p>Courses delivered are not fully flexible and adapted to individual academic needs and research plans, but the HEI and programme leaders are aware of the fact, and prepared to make specific improvements. The students appreciate they can go deeper into the topics, the scientific discussion with teachers and supervisors is a great starting point for everyone – critical thinking, discussion, work groups, very satisfied with it, they learned about time management etc. The HEI uses examples and/or programme structure to demonstrate that teaching is individualised and adapted to candidates' research plans. The Individual annual research plans of the candidates were attached.</p>
<p>4.8. The programme ensures quality through international connections and teacher and candidate mobility.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>- The programme/HEI improves its quality through internationalisation and mobility, on the basis of the internationalisation of the doctoral programme which is achieved by providing opportunities for and using research staff mobility; the programme/HEI systematically provides information on opportunities for candidate mobility, encourages and achieves it; the programme/HEI ensures means to attract and attracts international faculty and excellent candidates to the programme (or a part of it); the HEI is acquainted with the European Charter of Researchers and Code of Conduct and implements its principles. There is a collaboration e.g. with Spain, the United Kingdom, Netherlands, Georgia, Sweden, collaboration in joint projects as well, visiting professors from U.S. are coming.</p>



**\* 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.