



**REPORT
of the Expert Panel
on the
RE-ACCREDITATION OF
Academy of Applied Arts
University of Rijeka**

**Date of the site visit:
May 25th and 26th 2015**

July 2015

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INTRODUCTION

This report on the re-accreditation of the Rijeka Academy of Applied Arts was written by the Expert Panel appointed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education, on the basis of the self-evaluation of the institution and supporting documentation and a visit to the institution.

Re-accreditation procedure carried out by 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*), is obligatory once in five years for all higher education institutions working in the Republic of Croatia, in line with the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

The Expert Panel is appointed by the ASHE Accreditation Council, an independent expert body, to perform an independent peer-review-based evaluation of the institution and their study programmes.

The report contains:

- a brief analysis of the institutional advantages and disadvantages,
- a list of good practices found at the institution,
- recommendations for institutional improvement and measures to be implemented in the following period (and checked within a follow-up procedure), and
- detailed analysis of the compliance to the Standards and Criteria for Re-Accreditation

The members of the Expert Panel were:

- David Quin, Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Ireland, Panel chair
- Prof. Egle Ganda Bogdaniene, Vilnius Academy of Arts, Lithuania
- Prof. Branko Matulić, The Academy of Arts, University of Split, Croatia
- Prof. Božica Dea Matasić, The Academy of Arts, University J.J. Strossmayer Osijek, Croatia
- Vjekoslav Kiš, The Academy of Applied Arts, University of Rijeka, Croatia

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

- Davor Jurić, coordinator, ASHE
- Marina Grubišić, coordinator, ASHE
- Goran Briški, translator, ASHE

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

- The Management;
- The Working Group that compiled the Self-Evaluation;

- The students, i.e., a self-selected set of students present at the interview;
- The Vice-Dean for Education, Study Programmes and Student Affairs, programme coordinators and teachers;
- The Vice-Deans for Artistic And Scientific Affairs, International Cooperation and research projects' leaders;
- Heads of Departments and Chairs;
- Administrative staff;
- Teaching assistants and junior researchers.

The Expert Panel also had a tour of the library, IT rooms, student register desk, and the classrooms at the Rijeka Academy of Applied Arts, where they held a brief question and answer session with the students who were present.

Upon completion of re-accreditation procedure, the Accreditation Council renders its opinion on the basis of the Re-accreditation Report, an Assessment of Quality of the higher education institution and the Report of Fulfilment of Quantitative Criteria which is acquired by the Agency's information system.

Once the Accreditation Council renders its opinion, the Agency issues an Accreditation Recommendation by which the Agency recommends to the Minister of Science, Education and Sports to:

1. **issue a confirmation on compliance** with the requirements for performing higher education activities or parts of activities (renew the licence),
2. **deny the license** for performing the higher education activities or parts of activities to the higher education institution, or
3. **issue a letter of recommendation** for the period up to three (3) years in which period the higher education institution should make the necessary improvements. The letter of recommendation may include suspension of student enrolment for the defined period.

The Accreditation Recommendation also includes an Assessment of Quality of the higher education institution as well as recommendations for quality development

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED INSTITUTION

NAME OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: Rijeka Academy of Applied Arts

ADDRESS: Slavka Krautzeka 83, 51000 Rijeka

NAME OF THE HEAD OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: Professor Josip Butković, Dean

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE: The Academy has two departments: Department of Fine Arts and Department of Applied Arts. The Academy has Chair of painting, Chair of sculpture, Chair of graphics, Chair of drawing, Chair of Art History and general subjects, and Chair of Intermedia.

LIST OF STUDY PROGRAMMES:

Undergraduate university study programmes:

Art Education: 3 years – 180 ECTS

Applied Arts: 3 years – 180 ECTS

Graduate university study programmes:

Art Education: 2 years – 120 ECTS

Applied Arts: 2 years – 120 ECTS

Media Arts and Practices: 2 years – 120 ECTS

NUMBER OF STUDENTS (part-time/full-time/final-year): 274 full-time students

NUMBER OF TEACHERS (full-time, external associates): 38 full-time teachers, 8 external associates

NUMBER OF SCIENTISTS (doctors of science, elected to grades, full-time): 34

TOTAL BUDGET (in kuna): 11.567.804 HRK

MSES FUNDING: 10.978.571 HRK (94,9 %)

OWN FUNDING: 667.922 HRK (5,8 %)

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION:

The Academy of Applied Arts at the University of Rijeka was established by the decision of the Senate of the University of Rijeka on 6 December 2004. It began operating on 1 November 2005 on the grounds of Permission of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports on 21 December 2004. The first generation of students enrolled in the academic year 2005-2006.

The forerunner of today's Academy was the Department of Art Education and Fine Arts, founded in 1963, at the former Faculty of Education in Rijeka (today's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences). From the academic year 2005-2006, when it officially became an independent institution, the Academy has been delivering two undergraduate study programmes: Art Education and Applied Arts, in the duration of four years, on the grounds of permissions obtained from the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports on 16 June 2005. From the academic year 2009-2010, the Academy delivers two graduate study programmes in both Art Education and Applied Arts, in the duration of one year.

Upon completion of undergraduate study programme, the students acquire the academic title of Bachelor of Arts in Art Education or Applied Arts, and upon completion of graduate study programme, they acquire the academic title of Master of Arts in Art Education, or Applied Arts. In 2013, the structure of study programmes was amended, from 4 + 1 to 3 + 2, so that both four-year undergraduate studies became three-year study programmes (180 ECTS). Duration of graduate study programmes was increased from one to two years, with the acquisition of 120 ECTS credit points.

In the academic year 2013-2014, based on the decision of the Senate of the University of Rijeka and the entry into the Register of study programmes of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, in addition to our two graduate study programmes (Art Education and Applied Arts) the Academy started delivering a new graduate study programme called Media Arts and Practices. At the beginning of the academic year 2006-2007, the Academy moved to a renovated building at the new university campus and uses around 5800 m² of space.

In 2007, the Academy filed an application to the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports for registration into the Register of Scientific Organisations, since it had the required number of teachers in artistic-teaching grades.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE EXPERT PANEL

ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. The panel commends the very obvious enthusiasm of the Academy teachers and the amazing amount of development work they have done in a very short time.
2. The panel commends the size, quality and structure of Academy facilities, work space and equipment.
3. The Academy is to be commended for starting research projects and international cooperation – this collaborative work should continue and evolve over the next five years.
4. The panel commend you on the Self Evaluation Report, the quality of your documentation and on the honesty of your presentations and arguments.
5. The panel commends Rijeka Academy on its important position within the community of Rijeka. The panel encourages the Academy to continue to develop its relationship with the local community – they are crucially important stakeholders in your institution.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. On study programmes, there seems to be a definite confusion and tension between Chairs and Departments, leading to ambiguity in the development and improvement of Academy study programmes. This confusion and tension needs to be cleared up.
2. On study programmes, there needs to be a clear differentiation between Bachelor Programmes and Master Programmes (the competencies and outcomes need to be clear).
3. Effective procedures for monitoring and improving the quality of your study programmes need to be developed. These procedures need to include students and stakeholders.
4. The Academy needs effective mechanisms and structures for the improvement and development of teaching, learning and assessment skills. These mechanisms may have to be created collaboratively, at a Croatian national level.
5. The Academy needs clear professional orientation services for students (counselling, mentorship) to ensure the professional and personal development of the students.

FEATURES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. Rijeka Academy of Applied Arts has enthusiastic and motivated teaching staff and well-focused students.
2. Rijeka Academy of Applied Arts has a well-defined niche position in arts education in Croatia and so attracts students from across the country.
3. Rijeka Academy has excellent spatial provision, adequate facilities and equipment.
4. Rijeka Academy supports student and teacher mobility.
5. Rijeka Academy has strong links with local business, arts organisations and with the local community.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. Management of the Higher Education Institution and Quality Assurance

1.1 APURI has a quality policy, mission, vision but lacks its own strategic document, or at least an action plan with specific goals. Taking into account such a concept arising from the decision of the Senate of the University of Rijeka, it is recommended that the Academy make their own strategic document with specific (5 year) targets and monitoring mechanisms.

1.2 APURI has an organizational structure that is partly connected to the university resources, with a well-defined horizontal and vertical responsibility, though there seems to be some confusion around the responsibilities of Chairs and Departments. It is recommended that students and external stakeholders should be involved in the development of strategy both in organizational structure and in the preparation of supporting documents.

1.6 Although APURI has all the necessary documentation which clearly describes the procedures of quality improvement and those relating to the monitoring of the quality of teaching and teachers, their implementation is still in its initial stage. It is necessary for the entire APURI (all staff and students) to increase awareness of the need for daily improvement of teaching and monitoring its quality, especially teachers' skills.

1.7 It is necessary to improve the monitoring of the quality of artistic creation and research and align it with the vision of development of the applied arts. In all these processes students and external stakeholders should be included.

2. Study Programmes

2.1 Mechanisms for monitoring and improving the quality of study programmes are in starting phase. Stakeholders and students are not enough involved in monitoring and improving the quality of study programmes.

The panel recommends:

- more actively involve students into development of study programme quality
- improve student survey questionnaire ensuring that survey results will be analysed, assessed and influence the advancement of study quality
- involve students' Council into the survey
- formalize cooperation with external stakeholders (employers, public and private sector and the civil society) and involve them in monitoring and renewal of study programme quality
- involve assistants into study programme quality renewal
- reconsider relations between Department, chair and study programme.

2.2 As quotas are allocated by the University, the Academy is not obliged to execute regular analyses of social needs.

During the institutional evaluation the analyses of the society need for graduates of study programmes initiated and carried out by the Academy were not provide.

There is no systematically executed cooperation with the Employment Board. Quotas are not affected by the results of the analyses.

2.4 Learning outcomes are stated for the study programme, module and course level and partly correspond to the stated EQF and CroQF level/comparable programmes at European institutions.

The level of the Institution study programme learning outcomes partly correspond to the stated EQF and CroQF level. Learning outcomes are stated for the study programme, module and course level.

The link between course level learning outcomes and learning outcomes stated at the study programme level could be presented more precisely.

The difference between the learning outcomes of BA and MA study programme levels should be more obvious.

The learning outcomes present the minimal acceptable standard for passing. Learning outcomes include cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains.

2.7 The teaching plan and programme list the method, or a combination of methods, of curriculum development used in developing the study programme. The institution has partly defined the criteria for assessing the content and quality of the study programme.

The content and the quality of study programmes are partly comparable to those implemented at renowned European institutions.

The study programmes are developed in line with appropriate curriculum development methods.

The institution has defined criteria for assessing the content and the quality of the study programmes, and who and when performed the assessment. In order to base the content of study programmes on the latest scientific/artistic discoveries, it is recommended that the Academy actively join the activities of professional networks.

2.9 The students and teachers have not enough access to the most relevant and up-to-date sources of scientific and professional literature, and the amount of available sources is not comparable to what is available at renowned European institutions.

Students and teachers don't have enough access to relevant and up-to-date learning resources (library, including journal databases, modern computers, etc.).

The institution allocates a part of its income, tuition fees, and project funds to improve it. However, the bigger library could be established in Academy building, also establish media resources library and it is necessary to expand journal databases and to equip it with more computer work stations.

3. Students

3.3 One of the problems the institution is facing is certainly the lack of professional orientation service that would ensure professional and personal development of the students. The only information students are available to get is their mentor's opinion and they depend on the mentor's will to help them find themselves and the focus of their future research and any kind of development.

There could be some cooperation between the Academy of Applied Arts and companies in the region which would be in need of their services. Students could participate in designing company's visual identity or make posters, commercials, etc. There should be a professional person in charge of the office who would keep up with all the projects, exhibitions and financial aid applications students could apply for. They should inform students about all those possibilities and help them with the paperwork if needed.

The orientation services office would also be very helpful to students when deciding on which department they would like to choose, how to choose their mentor, and offer them some kind of information about the possibilities of employment- which students are currently not getting.

Some of the students are talking to their mentors about these issues, cooperating on different projects with them and in that way they get some valuable information

Students should have courses or workshops which would teach them how to write about their work, how to fill out the forms and enter various competitions or apply for any kind of residency, loan, or workshop they could participate in.

3.7. Students have some problems when it comes to expressing their opinions and giving suggestions for improvement. The people to whom they usually address their problems are their mentors, but it is up to their mentor to either react or to ignore the information their student has given them.

Some students participate in problem- solving and decision- making process by enrolling in the student council, where they represent all of the students and actively participate in the meetings of academic council where they have the same rights as any other member of the council.

The main problems happen when the institution changes or cancels some study programs, and students don't participate in decision- making process.

Students who enrol in one program should be able to take all of the courses that program offers them at the moment of their enrolment. If the course is being cancelled all students should be informed on time, and they should be able to influence that decision, as well as decisions regarding any kind of changes in the curriculum.

Syllabus should be available to students before they enrol in a certain course- not after the course has already started.

3.8. As most of the students' opinions and suggestions for improvement of the quality of studying are delivered to the institution through the student council, the students enrolled in the council receive the feedback on council meetings.

Since some student suggestions and opinions are delivered to teachers and mentors personally, the communication between mentors (or teachers) and students is crucial for student's voice to be heard. The size of the institution allows good communication between most of the teachers as well as teachers and students.

Regarding suggestions and opinions on quality of studying, students are encouraged to talk to Vice Dean for Education, Study programs and Student Affairs.

Each year students are offered to fill out the questionnaire about their opinion on all of their teachers. They did not get the feedback on those questionnaires, even though they should have.

4. Teachers

4.2. The institution carries out the policy of growth and development of human resources, but is facing the national problem of prohibition of employment of the new teaching staff. Solution for this problem should be one of the main goals in the near

future of all Croatian academies. Cooperation of institutions in this field is necessary and crucial if they want to be recognized in their specific structure and needs.

4.4. The institution needs better developed policies for artistic-teaching staff that ensure their professional development, as needed to advance the institution's mission. It is also a challenge on a national level for all artistic-teaching staff and all art academies.

The institution, in cooperation with other art academies, should organize more obligatory workshops, lectures and consultations for teachers. They should be encouraged to recognize this need for development of quality of their teaching skills, as they recognize the need for their artistic professional upgrading.

The panel suggests that Academies and Universities across Croatia should collaborate on the collective development of teaching skills. The provision of structured Learning, Teaching and Assessment courses (perhaps at a Croatian national level) for teachers and assistant teachers would be an effective 'reward' for teachers and assistant teachers. Such a structured, collective approach would improve teaching and learning conditions for teachers, assistant teachers and (most importantly) students across Croatia.

Teachers should also be encouraged to enrol in more exchanges and international workshops, seminars etc. Experience of colleagues from abroad would help in teachers' personal development as well as the development of future plans for the institution itself.

5. Scientific and Professional Activity

The expert panel observes that Rijeka Academy must be very clear about defining very high quality applied art practice and 'art research' as VALID and valuable research methods. Contributions to knowledge and human society must be made. Research through art practice is only valid research if learning, discovery and the communication, iteration and dissemination of research discoveries are systematically built into its processes.

5.1. The Academy is basing its strategic research strategy on the University Strategy and had no specific Academy research strategy. Rijeka Academy is very much at the start of its research journey and has already been involved in prestigious collaborative projects – especially in Creative Startup and Adriart. Hopefully, the learning from these early research projects will feed back into the Academy to assist in the development of Academy research initiatives and projects over the next five years

5.4. Rijeka Academy is not yet publishing in the most prestigious, global publishing or exhibition arenas. This is partly because Rijeka Academy is still young, relatively small and relatively regional (even in the Croatian perspective). Also, Rijeka Academy is only starting to involve itself in larger, international collaborative research and interdisciplinary projects and so it still has less of a story to tell. The Academy should have this publication target as part of its research strategy for the next five years in support of the Academy's and the University's mission and vision.

5.5. Rijeka Academy appears to have little or no effective mechanisms in place for recognising and encouraging the excellence of its employees. Reward systems might (in time) include allowing teachers, but especially assistant teachers, to access Academy facilities (especially studio facilities) when they're not actually working at the Academy (after hours, at weekends and even during holidays). Other 'reward' systems might in time include supporting and encouraging the provision of, or access to, structured Learning, Teaching and Assessment courses (perhaps at a Croatian national level) for teachers and assistant teachers. The panel suggests that Academies and Universities across Croatia should start to collaborate on the collective development of teaching skills. Another 'reward' would be a clear and transparent system for assistant teacher progression (from 'external' to internal after a defined amount of time, progression from assistant to teacher within another defined, transparent duration). The Academy should work hard to improve the hours and working conditions of assistant teachers, most or all of whom seem to be working up to three times more than their contracted hours. Also, the current situation where some Assistant Teachers remain as assistant teachers for 10 years or more on the same pay is completely unacceptable from an international professional perspective.

5.8. Rijeka Academy has started the technology transfer and the transfer of knowledge with industry and the public sector. The panel would encourage the Academy to develop concise Academy guidelines and policies for such external activity – making it clear what is appropriate and what is not appropriate, what the benefits and risks for the Academy, for external stakeholders and for student learning and (finally) clear, simple mechanisms for the handling of any revenue – again so that such (even modest) finance can be fed directly back into the Academy to benefit students. Also, the panel would encourage the Academy to start to develop interdisciplinary and research projects with other Departments, Faculties, Chairs and Courses within Rijeka University. Though a challenge to develop, such cooperation can present great benefits in terms of mutual understanding and professional respect.

5.9. Once again, the panel would encourage the Academy to develop concise, clear and simple Academy guidelines and policies for such external activity (see above).

5.10. Not Applicable. This criterion is not applicable to Rijeka Academy (currently no doctoral study programmes are conducted at the Academy).

6. International Cooperation and Mobility

6.3. The panel considers that Rijeka Academy has only partly (and somewhat informally) encouraged the international cooperation and mobility of its teachers. There appears to be quite a lot of informal, verbal encouragement of informal teacher mobility and cooperation, but very little structured fit with the strategic activities of the Academy or University. Also, there doesn't seem to be any clear analysis of teachers' international experience. How does the international experience feed back into the activities of the Academy, the mission and vision, the development and enhancement of study programmes and the enhancement of student learning?

6.4. Rijeka Academy is a member of very few (or no) formal international educational and artistic bodies and so has limited opportunities to share research findings and experiences with similar institutions around the world. Informal collaborations have started and a more formalised expansion of such activity should be encouraged over the next five years.

6.5. The Rijeka Academy has only started to create adequate conditions for attracting students from abroad. The students pointed out that most of the Polish students were in Rijeka only because the Polish institutions were extremely proactive in the area of Erasmus and international student mobility. Rijeka Academy needs more Erasmus and bilateral agreements with international partner institutions. Rijeka Academy also needs some web pages in English, telling the Academy's story, telling about the opportunities for study in Rijeka and telling about the attractions of the town of Rijeka itself. Also, to start to deliver some course components, or some subjects through English would have attractions for international students and could benefit Rijeka Academy students (learning their subject vocabulary in English would, on graduation, increase their employability and opportunities for professional mobility).

6.6. Once again, the panel feels that the Rijeka Academy has only started to create adequate conditions for attracting teachers from abroad. Rijeka Academy needs more Erasmus and bilateral agreements with international partner institutions. Rijeka Academy needs some web pages in English, telling the Academy's story, telling about the opportunities for teaching in Rijeka and telling about the attractions of the town of Rijeka itself. Also, to start to deliver some course components, or some subjects through English would have attractions for international teachers and could benefit Rijeka Academy students (learning their subject vocabulary in English would, on graduation, increase their employability and opportunities for professional mobility).

7. Resources, Administration, Space, Equipment and Finance

7.2. The panel agrees that, for an Art institution of such size, Rijeka Academy has insufficient non-teaching staff. The SER points out particular problems in financial and library management. Also, many of the 'external' Assistant Teachers were only appointed a month before the validation visit. Teachers were quite clear that the situation before the new assistants arrived was very difficult, for teachers and for students. The panel would encourage Rijeka Academy to retain the assistants and to improve their working conditions and offer them opportunities for progression.

7.4. Some of the safety protocols (the provision of dust masks, chemical storage, fume extraction, fire extinguishers, and some basic safety training) at the Rijeka Academy are starting to conform to European standards. Not all students, staff and visitors were provided with safety goggles in the stone and wood sculpture areas – unacceptable in an international context. The panel would encourage the Academy to develop a fire evacuation plan and to conduct fire drills at least once or twice a year (first year students especially will not know what to do or where to go in the event of a fire – they must be told, walked through the exit procedures and then be given a chance to experience a full evacuation of the building. Such an evacuation should be completed within minutes. Strategies for the evacuation of students, staff and visitors with disabilities must also be developed and regularly reviewed).

7.6. The Rijeka Academy SER quite openly and honestly identified the non-provision of adequate library facilities as a problem for staff and especially for students. A library is not just the provision of books. In the 21st century, it also requires reading rooms for students, the provision of computers, scanners and printers, access to modern research databases like JSTOR and Lynda, subscription to relevant e-journals and the purchase of e-books (which should be accessible to students off-campus). The panel does appreciate that The Academy has attempted to make some library provision, despite the lack of funding. The panel feels that access to the Rijeka University library (which is on the same campus as the Academy) and a clear agreement of the University library to buy appropriate art books and journal subscriptions etc. could solve the Academy's library 'difficulties' in a very short time.

7.8. The panel note that the Rijeka Academy's own funds were recently used to employ the additional 'external' Teaching Assistants. The panel would encourage Rijeka Academy to retain the Teaching Assistants, to regularise their employment status, to improve their working hours and working conditions and to provide them with opportunities to professionally develop (both artistically and educationally) and to progress upwards in time through the teaching profession.

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE TO THE STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR RE-ACCREDITATION

Institutional management and quality assurance

1.1. APURI has a quality policy, mission, and vision but lacks its own strategic document, or at least an action plan with specific goals. Taking into account such a concept arising from the decision of the Senate of the University of Rijeka, though it is recommended to make their own strategic document with specific targets and monitoring mechanisms.

1.2. APURI has an organizational structure that is partly connected to the university resources, with a well-defined horizontal and vertical responsibility, though there seems to be some confusion around the responsibilities of Chairs and Departments. It is recommended that strategic involvement of students and external stakeholders both in organizational structure and in the preparation of supporting documents.

1.3. APURI its strategic documents in line with the university, but it is recommended to develop own strategic documents.

1.4. All study programs are consistent with the mission and vision of APURI. It is recommended to further develop the existing programs of study that should be marked as directed towards applied arts.

1.5. The quality policy and quality assurance system is well developed with good supporting documents. Space for improvement still has especially concerning the involvement of students and external stakeholders in all forms of activity improve quality culture.

1.6. Although APURI has all the necessary documentation which clearly describes the procedures of quality improvement and those relating to the monitoring of the quality of teaching and teachers, their implementation is still in its initial stage. It is necessary for the entire APURI to increase awareness of the need for daily improvement of teaching and monitoring its quality, especially teachers' skills.

1.7. It is necessary to improve the monitoring of the quality of artistic creation and research and align it with the vision of development of the applied arts. In all these processes should include the students and external stakeholders.

1.8 APURI has the ethical standards for teaching and scientific activities with which they are familiar to all students, teachers and other stakeholders, and all procedures to monitor unethical behaviour are comparable with those of the renowned European institutions.

Study programmes

2.1. Mechanisms for monitoring and improving the quality of study programmes are in starting phase. Stakeholders and students are not enough involved in monitoring and improving the quality of study programmes. Their involvement in programme quality improvement and programme renewal has been insufficient.

Student surveys are formal. As survey questionnaires are made by the university, the questions do not properly reflect peculiarities of art studies and specific needs of the students. There is no system that would analyse, summarize, assess and implement students' wants. The description of feedback has not been created and feedback system has not been implemented.

External stakeholders (employers, public and private sector and the civil society) have not been sufficiently involved in study quality monitoring and programme renewal. Communication with social partners is being carried out informally; yet, it does not ensure systematic cooperation and regular participation of social partners in study quality monitoring.

Study programmes have general programme descriptions which include learning outcomes; additionally, there are descriptions of separate courses. The course descriptions clearly define the aims, annotations, forms and methods, types and criteria of evaluation; but the links between the Programme and course results could be better highlighted.

Provided examples of diploma supplements encompass undertaken courses and acquired competencies.

Regular Alumni survey and result analysis has not been carried out.

There is positive evidence that informal communication with external stakeholders (employers, public and private sector and the civil society) and students is active.

It is not clear how study programme monitoring and renewal is going on, who is responsible for it and who participates in study quality processes.

The panel recommends:

- more actively involve students into development of study programme quality
- improve student survey questionnaire ensuring that survey results will be analysed, assessed and influence the advancement of study quality
- involve students' Council into the survey
- formalize cooperation with external stakeholders (employers, public and private sector and the civil society) and involve them in monitoring and renewal of study programme quality
- involve assistants into study programme quality renewal
- reconsider relations between Department, chair and study programme

2.2. Since the enrolment quota is defined at the level of University, HEI is not required to regularly analyse the needs of society. However, passing rate and available resources are analysed and taken into account when determining the enrolment quota. There is no systematic cooperation with the Croatian Employment Service. Although the results of analyses do not significantly affect the enrolment quota, they are defined in accordance with the size of the institution, the availability of teaching and research resources, as well as the number of enrolled students and passing rate, in order to ensure sustainability.

During the institutional evaluation the analyses of the society need for graduates of study programmes initiated and carried out by the Academy were not provided.

2.3. The method for establishing quotas is documented, available resources and pass rates are analysed and taken into account when setting quotas

Enrolment quotas are regard to the institutional size and availability of teaching and research resources (e.g. number and qualifications of the teaching staff, equipment, library resources, etc.), student pass rates and the number of previously enrolled students are monitored, in order to avoid an unsustainable increase.

In certain cases students who are enrolled have insufficient art study skills which are due to reduced teaching of Art fundamentals in gymnasiums. However, lecturers flexibly adjust teaching and learning programmes as well as methods to different level of first year students.

2.4. Learning outcomes are stated for the study programme, module and course level and partly correspond to the stated EQF and CroQF level/comparable programmes at European institutions.

The level of the Institution study programme learning outcomes partly correspond to the stated EQF and CroQF level. Learning outcomes are stated for the study programme, module and course level.

The link between course level learning outcomes and learning outcomes stated at the study programme level could be presented more precisely.

The difference between the learning outcomes of BA and MA study programme levels should be more obvious.

The learning outcomes present the minimal acceptable standard for passing. Learning outcomes include cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains.

2.5. Learning outcomes stated for the study programme, module and course level are based on regular assessments of student learning during the whole course of study.

Teachers at a study programme ensure that the assessment of student learning is in line with the defined learning outcomes, that the full range of learning is being assessed, and that the assessment is appropriate to the qualification level. During the evaluation samples of graduate, master and doctoral theses, tests, projects, essays, etc. were presented. Assessment of competences during the course of study is based on the learning outcomes stated on the study programme, module and course level. Assessment includes the whole spectrum (cognitive, affective, psychomotor) of the learning outcomes defined at each level. The assessment methods are reviewed and analysed. The assessment methods in BA and MA levels could be more versatile.

2.6. Student workload is assessed realistically and based on standards defined to calculate hours necessary to perform all student activities. The ECTS allocated to each course are based on an assessment of the student workload.

Workload indicates the time students typically need to complete all learning activities (such as lectures, seminars, projects, practical work, self-study and examinations) required to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

Full-time student's workload is between 1500 to 1800 hours, and 1 ECTS credit equals 25 to 30 working hours. Norms are defined for calculating the time necessary to complete students' obligations in ECTS credits. The ECTS credits are attached to courses in line with those norms. ECTS credit allocation has been revised.

2.7. The teaching plan and programme list the method, or a combination of methods, of curriculum development used in developing the study programme. The institution has partly defined the criteria for assessing the content and quality of the study programme.

The content and the quality of study programmes are partly comparable to those implemented at renowned European institutions.

The study programmes are developed in line with appropriate curriculum development methods.

The institution has defined criteria for assessing the content and the quality of the study programmes, and who and when performed the assessment. In order to base the content of study programmes on the latest scientific/artistic discoveries, it is recommended that the Academy actively join the activities of professional networks.

2.8. Teachers make use of various teaching methods, which include integrative and practical learning.

The institutional teaching and learning methods are comparable to those of renowned European institutions.

The teaching plan and programme include a variety of teaching and learning methods adequate for university or professional study programmes. Integrative learning is

encouraged via cooperative and individual learning methods. Cooperation with relevant professionals and practical learning are encouraged. Teaching peer-review system is in place. It has been recommended to employ more different teaching and learning methods in BA and MA levels.

2.9. The students and teachers have not enough access to the most relevant and up-to-date sources of scientific and professional literature, and the amount of available sources is not comparable to what is available at renowned European institutions.

Students and teachers don't have enough access to relevant and up-to-date learning resources (library, including journal databases, modern computers, etc.).

The institution allocates a part of its income, tuition fees, and project funds to improve it. However, the bigger library could be established in Academy building, also establish media resources library and it is necessary to expand journal databases and to equip it with more computer work stations.

2.10. Cooperation with partner organizations is efficient and includes stakeholders. Students' practical work is aimed at achieving learning outcomes. Data on its effectiveness is collected by students and partner organizations.

Employers were contacted to accept students and enable them to apply what they have learned (through e.g. student projects, internships, volunteering, etc.). It has been recommended to more often include such cooperation into study process and to assess it relevantly.

Students

3.1. The competencies of the applicants evaluated upon admission are aligned with the demands and expectations of their future careers. HEI performs regular analyses of the admission criteria, taking into consideration students' academic success. Additional examination gives realistic insight of students' capabilities.

3.2. The institution also supports students in their extracurricular activities. Students pointed out that there are some workshops and field trips organized which are not in the curriculum. They are not particularly interested in sport activities but mostly focused on art, and they are supported by teachers and mentors in organizing such events. They are by no means prevented in participating in any extracurricular activity in which they might be interested in.

3.3. One of the problems the institution is facing is certainly the lack of professional orientation service that would ensure professional and personal development of the students. The only information students are available to get is their mentor's opinion and they depend on the mentor's will to help them find themselves and the focus of their future research and any kind of development.

There could be some cooperation between the Academy of Applied Arts and companies in the region which would be in need of their services. Students could participate in designing company's visual identity or make posters, commercials, etc. There should be a professional person in charge of the office who would keep up with all the projects, exhibitions and financial aid applications students could apply for. They should inform students about all those possibilities and help them with the paperwork if needed.

The orientation services office would also be very helpful to students when deciding on which department they would like to choose, how to choose their mentor, and offer them some kind of information about the possibilities of employment- which students are currently not getting.

Some of the students are talking to their mentors about these issues, cooperating on different projects with them and in that way they get some valuable information

Students should have courses or workshops which would teach them how to write about their work, how to fill out the forms and enter various competitions or apply for any kind of residency, loan, or workshop they could participate in.

3.4. Knowledge assessment criteria as well as learning outcomes are regulated by the rules of the University of Rijeka and can be found on the pages of the University. Since the Academy of Applied Arts is relatively new institution, that is reasonable. In the future the institution should define its' own Regulations on Studying because of the specific field they represent which is different than any other field at the University of Rijeka.

As the Academy of Applied Arts the institution should focus on "applied arts". The need for that as well as expectations while enrolling in the program was shown by the students. Focus on applied arts would make this institution specific in its field and differentiate it from any institution in the broader area.

3.5. Academy of Applied Arts in Rijeka keeps data of all their former students, contacts them and collects statistic data on their employment.

Their Alumni club is very well organized and cooperates with current students of the Academy of Applied Arts.

The statistics and data the institution keeps come from their cooperation with Croatian Employment Office.

3.6. The main way the institution informs the public about its study programs, learning outcomes, qualifications and employment opportunities is by having their website. The institution also organizes "The open door days" as well as the final exhibition during which everybody who is interested in any part of the institutions activities is welcome to come, see their work and ask any questions.

The website of the institution is only in Croatian language so foreigners can't easily get the information they might want without contacting someone from the institution directly.

3.7. Students have some problems when it comes to expressing their opinions and giving suggestions for improvement. The people to whom they usually address their problems are their mentors, but it is up to their mentor to either react or to ignore the information their student has given them.

Some students participate in problem- solving and decision- making process by enrolling in the student council, where they represent all of the students and actively participate in the meetings of academic council where they have the same rights as any other member of the council.

The main problems happen when the institution changes or cancels some study programs, and students don't participate in decision- making process.

Students who enrol in one program should be able to take all of the courses that program offers them at the moment of their enrolment. If the course is being cancelled all students should be informed on time, and they should be able to influence that decision, as well as decisions regarding any kind of changes in the curriculum.

Syllabus should be available to students before they enrol in a certain course- not after the course has already started.

3.8. As most of the students' opinions and suggestions for improvement of the quality of studying are delivered to the institution through the student council, the students enrolled in the council receive the feedback on council meetings.

Since some student suggestions and opinions are delivered to teachers and mentor personally, the communication between mentors (or teachers) and students is crucial for student's voice to be heard. The size of the institution allows good communication between most of the teachers as well as teachers and students.

Regarding suggestions and opinions on quality of studying, students are encouraged to talk to Vice Dean for Education, Study programs and Student Affairs.

Each year students are offered to fill out the questionnaire about their opinion on all of their teachers. They did not get the feedback on those questionnaires, even though they should have.

Teachers

4.1. The institution employs a sufficient number of qualified full-time teachers to ensure the quality and continuity of teaching and learning on all study programs, but most of them are overburdened. Qualifications of the artistic-teaching staff are in line with strategic goals of the institution and adequately cover core disciplines. However, there is a lack of technicians for different fields. They should be helpful support for artistic teachers.

The institution even took extra effort to take part time assistants despite government restrictive policy for employment of the new teaching staff. It is advisable to keep them and allow them to work on their projects and professional development. As a form of stimulation and awarding these assistants, since their salary is so low, it would be useful to provide them with working space within the Academy. Without these part time assistants, the number of teachers would not be sufficient to cover all study programs. Also, in line with the profile of this institution as the Academy of Applied Arts, it would be advisable to organize more guest-professors from applied arts field.

4.2. The institution carries out the policy of growth and development of human resources, but is facing the national problem of prohibition of employment of the new teaching staff. Solution for this problem should be one of the main goals in the near future of all Croatian academies. Cooperation of institutions in this field is necessary and crucial if they want to be recognized in their specific structure and needs.

4.3. The institution takes into account the number of full-time teachers, maintaining the optimal ratio between students and full-time teachers. However, there are noticeable differences in professional engagement from one professor to another, and some of the assistants take too much burden in this process. It is advisable to full-time teachers not to forget that they are not just artists, but teachers with obligations to students of this academy.

4.4. The institution needs better developed policies for artistic-teaching staff that ensure their professional development, as needed to advance the institution's mission. It is also a challenge on a national level for all artistic-teaching staff and all art academies. The institution, in cooperation with other art academies, should organize more obligatory workshops, lectures and consultations for teachers. They should be encouraged to recognize this need for development of quality of their teaching skills, as they recognize the need for their artistic professional upgrading.

The panel suggests that Academies and Universities across Croatia should collaborate on the collective development of teaching skills. The provision of structured Learning, Teaching and Assessment courses (perhaps at a Croatian national level) for teachers and assistant teachers would be an effective 'reward' for teachers and assistant teachers. Such a structured, collective approach would improve teaching and learning conditions for teachers, assistant teachers and (most importantly) students across Croatia.

Teachers should also be encouraged to enrol in more exchanges and international workshops, seminars etc. Experience of colleagues from abroad would help in teachers' personal development as well as the development of future plans for the institution itself.

4.5. Policies governing the assignment of teachers' workload provide for a fair and equitable distribution of effort and include teaching, research, mentorship and student consultations.

However, the distribution of effort considering different administrative obligations of teaching staff such as participating in various boards, councils, commissions or writing ordinances, should be more equitably distributed. If they are not, it causes discontentment and burn-out syndrome in the ones that do more than the others. Also, it is advisable to include mechanisms of awarding extra efforts, and achievements of certain teachers.

4.6. HEI ensures that teaching and research activities of the employed teaching staff are not affected by their external commitments.

Most of the teaching staff external commitments are in the field of their artwork, which is compatible with their academic careers. It is obligatory to report their professional external activities to HEI, and to organize the schedule according to their possibilities. Attention is paid that teaching and the students are not missed. Impact of those external commitments should be positive on quality and efficiency of their work on the parent institution.

Scientific and professional activity

The panel observes that Rijeka Academy must be very clear about defining very high quality applied art practice and 'art research' as VALID and valuable research methods. Contributions to knowledge and human society must be made. Research through art practice is only valid research if learning, discovery and the communication, iteration and dissemination of research discoveries are systematically built into its processes.

5.1. The Academy is basing its research strategy on the University Strategy and had no specific Academy research strategy. Rijeka Academy is very much at the start of its research journey and has already been involved in prestigious collaborative projects – especially in Creative Startup and Adriart. Hopefully, the learning from these early research projects will feed back into the Academy to assist in the development of Academy research initiatives and projects over the next five years.

5.2. Rijeka Academy is already cooperating with other institutions and organisations, both in Croatia and abroad. The Academy is to be commended for this activity and should be encouraged to build on and expand its collaborative network over the next five years.

5.3. For the number of research projects it is currently involved in, and for the modest number of research projects it envisions over the next five years, Rijeka Academy probably has an adequate number of researchers. The panel accepts that many of the Rijeka Academy teachers have strong, informal personal professional networks, in

Croatia and abroad (Across Europe, in the U.K. and U.S.A.) and these personal professional networks can result in benefits and opportunities for Academy and for students. The Academy can only do what it can do with the human resources available.

5.4. Rijeka Academy is not yet publishing in the most prestigious, global publishing or exhibition arenas. This is partly because Rijeka Academy is still young, relatively small and relatively regional (even in the Croatian perspective). Also, Rijeka Academy is only starting to involve itself in larger, international collaborative research and interdisciplinary projects and so it still has less of a story to tell. The Academy should have this publication target as part of its research strategy for the next five years in support of the Academy's and the University's mission and vision.

5.5. Rijeka Academy appears to have little or no effective mechanisms in place for recognising and encouraging the excellence of its employees. Reward systems might (in time) include allowing teachers, but especially assistant teachers, to access Academy facilities (especially studio facilities) when they're not actually working at the Academy (after hours, at weekends and even during holidays). Other 'reward' systems might in time include supporting and encouraging the provision of, or access to, structured Learning, Teaching and Assessment courses (perhaps at a Croatian national level) for teachers and assistant teachers. The panel suggests that Academies and Universities across Croatia should start to collaborate on the collective development of teaching skills. Another 'reward' would be a clear and transparent system for assistant teacher progression (from 'external' to internal after a defined amount of time, progression from assistant to teacher within another defined, transparent duration). The Academy should work hard to improve the hours and working conditions of assistant teachers, most or all of whom seem to be working up to three times more than their contracted hours. Also, the current situation where some Assistant Teachers remain as assistant teachers for 10 years or more on the same pay is completely unacceptable from an international professional perspective.

5.6. Rijeka Academy does publish and exhibit adequately. This activity must continue to be encouraged and developed over the next five years in support of the Academy's, and the University's mission and vision.

5.7. Rijeka Academy is to be commended for already being involved in an adequate number of domestic and international artistic, educational and even research projects.

5.8. Rijeka Academy has started the technology transfer and the transfer of knowledge with industry and the public sector. The panel would encourage the Academy to develop concise Academy guidelines and policies for such external activity – making it clear what is appropriate and what is not appropriate, what the benefits and risks for the Academy, for external stakeholders and for student learning and (finally) clear, simple mechanisms for the handling of any revenue – again so that such (even modest)

finance can be fed directly back into the Academy to benefit students. Also, the panel would encourage the Academy to start to develop interdisciplinary and research projects with other Departments, Faculties, Chairs and Courses within Rijeka University. Though a challenge to develop, such cooperation can present great benefits in terms of mutual understanding and professional respect.

5.9. Once again, the panel would encourage the Academy to develop concise, clear and simple Academy guidelines and policies for such external activity (see above).

5.10. Not Applicable.

This criterion is not applicable to Rijeka Academy (currently no doctoral study programmes are conducted at the Academy).

International cooperation and mobility

6.1. The Rijeka Academy does enable and facilitate the mobility of students from other higher education institutions.

6.2. Rijeka Academy students have opportunities to complete part of their study programme abroad. However, Academy students did complain about having to repeat an entire year on return to Rijeka Academy - because (for example) one theoretical subject had not been completed whilst they were abroad - study programme catch up mechanisms and 'reasonable accommodations' should be available to students to avoid such unnecessary hardship. Also, the students international mobility opportunities are restricted to a limited number of partner Erasmus institutions and a number of institutions with which Rijeka Academy has bilateral agreements. Rijeka Academy should be encouraged to continuously increase the number of agreements (both Erasmus and bilateral) with international partner institutions, thereby progressively increasing the number of mobility opportunities for Rijeka Academy students and for students from abroad.

6.3. The panel considers that Rijeka Academy has only partly (and somewhat informally) encouraged the international cooperation and mobility of its teachers. There appears to be quite a lot of informal, verbal encouragement of informal teacher mobility and cooperation, but very little structured fit with the strategic activities of the Academy or University. Also, there doesn't seem to be any clear analysis of teachers' international experience. How does the international experience feed back into the activities of the Academy, the mission and vision, the development and enhancement of study programmes and the enhancement of student learning?

6.4. Rijeka Academy is a member of very few (or no) formal international educational and artistic bodies and so has limited opportunities to share research findings and experiences with similar institutions around the world. Informal collaborations have

started and a more formalised expansion of such activity should be encouraged over the next five years.

6.5. The Rijeka Academy has only started to create adequate conditions for attracting students from abroad. The students pointed out that most of the Polish students were in Rijeka only because the Polish institutions were extremely proactive in the area of Erasmus and international student mobility. Rijeka Academy needs more Erasmus and bilateral agreements with international partner institutions. Rijeka Academy also needs some web pages in English, telling the Academy's story, telling about the opportunities for study in Rijeka and telling about the attractions of the town of Rijeka itself. Also, to start to deliver some course components, or some subjects through English would have attractions for international students and could benefit Rijeka Academy students (learning their subject vocabulary in English would, on graduation, increase their employability and opportunities for professional mobility).

6.6. Once again, the panel feels that the Rijeka Academy has only started to create adequate conditions for attracting teachers from abroad. Rijeka Academy needs more Erasmus and bilateral agreements with international partner institutions. Rijeka Academy needs some web pages in English, telling the Academy's story, telling about the opportunities for teaching in Rijeka and telling about the attractions of the town of Rijeka itself. Also, to start to deliver some course components, or some subjects through English would have attractions for international teachers and could benefit Rijeka Academy students (learning their subject vocabulary in English would, on graduation, increase their employability and opportunities for professional mobility).

6.7. The Rijeka Academy has developed many forms of inter-institutional cooperation through Erasmus and other European projects, bilateral agreements and joint programmes. The panel would encourage the continuation and development of such cooperation over the next five years.

Resources: administration, space, equipment and finances

7.1. The Rijeka Academy has good spatial provision – the building was renovated around 10 years ago and is well-maintained, clean and functional. Some computers are provided (especially for graphics). The Academy has attempted to make some library provision, despite the lack of funding. The panel feels that access to the Rijeka University library (which is on the same campus as the Academy) and a clear agreement of the University library to buy appropriate art books and journal subscriptions etc. might solve the Academy's library 'difficulties' in a very short time.

7.2. The panel agrees that, for an Art institution of such size, Rijeka Academy has insufficient (almost no?) non-teaching staff. The SER points out particular problems in financial and library management. Also, many (at least 6?) of the 'external' Assistant

Teachers were only appointed a month before the validation visit. Teachers were quite clear that the situation before the new assistants arrived was very difficult, for teachers and for students. The panel would encourage Rijeka Academy to retain the assistants and to improve their working conditions and offer them opportunities for progression.

7.3. Not Applicable: Because the Rijeka Academy has few or no non-teaching staff, it apparently has no well-developed policies ensuring the professional development of such staff in line with the institutions mission.

7.4. Some of the safety protocols (the provision of dust masks, chemical storage, fume extraction, fire extinguishers, and some basic safety training) at the Rijeka Academy are starting to conform to European standards. Not all students, staff and visitors were provided with safety goggles in the stone and wood sculpture areas – unacceptable in an international context. The panel would encourage the Academy to develop a fire evacuation plan and to conduct fire drills at least once or twice a year (first year students especially will not know what to do or where to go in the event of a fire – they must be told, walked through the exit procedures and then be given a chance to experience a full evacuation of the building. Such an evacuation should be completed within minutes. Strategies for the evacuation of students, staff and visitors with disabilities must also be developed and regularly reviewed).

7.5. The provision of modern equipment (tools, kilns, extraction equipment) seems to be in line with the mission of the Academy. Computer equipment is in short supply – the Macs in the graphics department were funded through an external project (very laudable). In equivalent institutions in Europe, it would be usual to provide more common computer spaces for students, where written assignments could be researched and worked on.

7.6. The Rijeka Academy SER quite openly and honestly identified the non-provision of adequate library facilities as a problem for staff and especially for students. A library is not just the provision of books. In the 21st century, it also requires reading rooms for students, the provision of computers, scanners and printers, access to modern research databases like JSTOR and Lynda, subscription to relevant e-journals and the purchase of e-books (which should be accessible to students off-campus). The panel does appreciate that The Academy has attempted to make some library provision, despite the lack of funding. The panel feels that access to the Rijeka University library (which is on the same campus as the Academy) and a clear agreement of the University library to buy appropriate art books and journal subscriptions etc. could solve the Academy's library 'difficulties' in a very short time.

7.7. Students are all able to complete their studies at the Academy. However, students did complain about the often seemingly random provision of courses and course components. On their return after summer holidays, students sometimes discovered

that courses they hoped to begin in the new semester were cancelled or discontinued. This made it difficult for students to plan or to strategize their learning and studentship. Sources of funding and all conditions related to funding seem transparent and do not limit institutional autonomy. The panel notes that funding difficulties experienced by the Rijeka Academy are governed by external and national constraints.

7.8. The panel notes that the Rijeka Academy's own funds were recently used to employ the additional 'external' Teaching Assistants. The panel would encourage Rijeka Academy to retain the Teaching Assistants, to regularise their employment status, to improve their working hours and working conditions and to provide them with opportunities to professionally develop (both artistically and educationally) and to progress upwards in time through the teaching profession.