Pursuant to the provisions of Article 8, Paragraph 3 of the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science (Official Gazette 151/22) and the provisions of Article 32, Paragraph 1, Items 1 and 2 of the Statute of the Agency for Science and Higher Education (CLASS: 003-05/13-01/0001; FILE NUMBER: 355-01-23-29) at its 10th session, held on 8 February 2024, the Accreditation Council adopted the following

QUALITY STANDARDS FOR EVALUATIONS IN THE PROCEDURE OF INITIAL ACCREDITATION OF UNDERGRADUATE, GRADUATE, INTEGRATED, SPECIALIST AND SHORT-CYCLE ONLINE STUDY PROGRAMMES

Article 1

(1) Quality standards for evaluations in the procedure of initial accreditation of undergraduate, graduate, integrated, specialist and short-cycle online study programmes (hereinafter: Quality Standards) shall apply to study programmes which are fully delivered by means of computer technologies and interactive teaching materials, thereby permitting access to learning in specific conditions when teacher and student are physically remote (hereinafter: online studies).

(2) Quality Standards include standards, elements and quality indicators and criteria for the initial accreditation of online studies, against which the level of their fulfilment is determined and a quality assessment is passed.

Quality Standards are grouped into units (four assessment areas) content-wise, and they refer to various aspects of quality evaluation of online studies.

(4) For the purposes of this document, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

Standard is a clearly defined level of quality of a particular aspect of quality of a higher education institution.

Element of the standard is taken into account when assessing compliance of an aspect of quality of a higher education institution and a study programme against a standard.

The *criterion for the initial accreditation of the study programme* is related to Article 12 of the Quality Assurance Act (151/22), which must be complied with during the initial accreditation of a higher education institution/study programme, and it is marked red in the text.

Indicators are used to assess the level of compliance with the standards.

Sources for checking the fulfilment of the standards are documents of the higher education institution, websites and other materials that serve to check and assess the level of fulfilment of the standards. The sources listed in this document are merely examples that a higher education institution can use as guidelines in the preparation of study programme proposals, as well as help to the expert panel in assessing the level of fulfilment of Quality Standards. Both the higher education institution and the expert panel can use other sources and information available in the application form and collected during the site visit to the higher education institution.

The level of fulfilment of the standard is a quantitative and a qualitative assessment passed by an expert panel which includes recommendations for quality improvement.

(5) Gendered terms used in this document are used neutrally and refer equally to all genders.

Article 2

In the procedure of initial accreditation of online studies, the following Quality Standards shall apply:

I. **Internal quality assurance**

1.1. Clear justification for the introduction of the new online study programme has been provided with regard to the mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution, as well as economic and societal needs.	**Not fulfilled**	**Partially fulfilled**	**Fulfilled**

Elements and indicators of the standard

In the course of planning and proposing the new online study programme, the higher education institution took care that the online study programme is specific and does not overlap with similar programmes in central and south-eastern Europe and the neighbouring countries, as well as in the Republic of Croatia in general, to the extent that this is possible, i.e. relevant.

In the course of planning and proposing the online study programme, the following was taken into account: e-learning is part of the higher education institution's strategy or is part of a special strategy to digitally innovate / transform the institution, in addition to which the strategy includes an explanation why e-learning was chosen as an appropriate learning strategy (e.g., adapting to current societal needs, greater availability of the study programme, competitive academic environment, joint programmes, mobility and the like).

In the course of planning and proposing the new online study programme, an analysis of programme compatibility with the mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution was taken into account.

In the course of planning and proposing the new online study programme, an analysis of the justification of introducing the new programme was taken into account, in particular with regard to scientific, artistic, cultural and humanistic needs (if applicable), i.e. societal/economic needs.

The proposed online study programme is aligned with labour market needs and ensures the employability of students in the Republic of Croatia.

Admission quotas are aligned with labour market needs and resources of the higher education institution, and are part of consistent strategic planning.

Admission quotas aligned are with scientific needs (in the case of university study programmes).

Minimal institutional requirements of the proposed online study programme are comparable to similar accredited programmes in the Republic of Croatia and EU member states.

In the course of proposing the online study programme, an opinion of the Croatian Employment Service was submitted on the compatibility of the programme with the labour market, i.e. evidence that an application to issue an opinion on this matter was submitted to the Croatian Employment Service at least 30 days prior.

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution;

- analysis of justification for proposing the online study programme;
- analysis of student employability upon completion of the online programme;
- opinion of the Croatian Employment Service on the compatibility of the study programme with the labour market, i.e. evidence that an application to issue an opinion on this matter was submitted to the Croatian Employment Service at least 30 days prior;
- optimal number of students who may enrol in the online programme in accordance with labour market needs and the higher education institution's capacities;
- analysis of minimum institutional requirements for comparability of the proposed online programmes with similar accredited study programmes in the Republic of Croatia and EU member states.

1.2. The online study programme has undergone an appropriate internal quality assurance process and has been formally approved by the higher education institution.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

The higher education institution has made its quality assurance policy available on its website, and the policy covers all educational aspects for university/professional studies, relevant research aspects and e-learning.

The development of the new online programme has undergone an internal quality assurance process which involved internal and external stakeholders (alumni, employers, the local community, etc.) and students.

The higher education institution collected and analysed relevant data which were used to decide to propose the new online programme, i.e. make changes to an existing programme/mode of delivery of an existing programme.

The new online programme was approved by a competent expert body (for example, senate, faculty or academy council, polytechnic council or management board).

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- publicly available quality assurance policy;
- rules and procedures for the adoption of new online programmes / changes to the delivery mode of existing programmes;
- evidence of student and external stakeholder involvement in the development of new online programmes or changes to the delivery mode of existing programmes;
- adopted decision of a competent expert body to propose the online study programme.

1.3. The higher education institution will collect, analyse and use relevant data for the effective management and continuous enhancement of the online study programme in accordance with the published quality assurance policy.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

The management and continuous enhancement of the online programme is aligned with the quality assurance policy of the higher education institution.
Processes and key indicators which will be used to monitor the quality of the online programme delivery have been defined, as well as methods of collecting necessary data.
Mechanisms for regular teacher performance evaluation (annually or each semester) have been planned.
Mechanisms for regular evaluation of online course delivery (annually or each semester) have been planned.
Periodic external evaluations have been planned which include gathering information on plans for the continuous enhancement of online studies and online courses.
Target values and deadlines have been defined for all key indicators.
Student, staff and where possible other stakeholder feedback will be used for the continuous enhancement of the online programme.
Monitoring will be used to determine if the distribution of ECTS credits, defined learning outcomes and estimated workload are feasible, realistic and appropriate.
Mechanisms which will be used to assess and adapt delivery mode and teaching methods, as well as student assessment and examination methods, have been defined. Monitoring processes will make use of data on the online programme duration, completion rate and drop-out rate.

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- published quality assurance policy;
- processes and data which will be used to monitor various aspects of the online study programme;
- key indicators which will be used to monitor online programme quality and data collection methods;
- plan for assuring online programme quality, including target values for key indicators and deadlines;
- rules, procedures and activities used to adopt and assure programme quality and continuous enhancement;
- processes used in quality assurance of online programme delivery and use of teaching and learning methods, assessment and examination methods (surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, etc.);
- procedures used to enhance the online study programme;
- key indicators which will be used to monitor the quality of teaching delivery by teaching staff and methods of collecting these;
- key indicators which will be used to monitor the quality of e-courses.

1.4. The higher education institution informs the public about the study programmes it offers, as well as plans to launch new (online) programmes, i.e. changes made to existing ones.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

The information published by the higher education institution is clear, well organised, up-to-date, easily searchable and publicly available.
The higher education institution publishes information on the online programme admission and progress requirements, recognition of prior learning, intended learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods, student rights and obligations, and qualifications which may be gained.
The higher education institution uses various communication channels to inform the target public about the online programme and enrolment opportunities.
The higher education institution publishes information on the opportunities available to students to continue their studies or find employment on completion of their studies.

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- brochures on study programmes;
- open house days;
- organisation of fairs for prospective applicants;
- website of the higher education institution;
- social media.

II. Study programme

2.1. The proposed online study programme is compatible with the qualification standard added to the Croatian Qualifications Framework Register. [1]	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
Elements and indicators of the standard The proposed online study programme is compatible with the qualification standard added to the Croatian Qualifications Framework Register. **Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:** • the qualification standard listed in the Croatian Qualifications Framework Register; • study programme proposal.			

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[1] If the qualification standard is not listed in the Croatian Qualifications Framework Register, the standard does not apply.

2.2. Intended learning outcomes at the level of the online study programme are aligned with the competences a student should gain by completing the study programme, as well as with the CroQF and EQF level.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

The intended learning outcomes must be achievable in an online environment.

The intended learning outcomes of the online study programme have been clearly defined, and examples of good practice have been used for this purpose (for example, the *ECTS Users' Guide* from 2015).

The intended online programme outcomes are aligned with the requirements of the profession and internationally recognised professional standards, and they ensure that the programme is contemporary.

The intended online programme outcomes clearly reflect the competences required to participate in the labour market, continue one's education or meet other needs of individuals, society or scientific discipline.

The intended online programme outcomes are comparable with the intended outcomes of related programmes in the Republic of Croatia and EU member states.

The intended online programme outcomes also include the development of generic (general/key/transferable) and profession-specific competences.

The intended online programme outcomes have been formulated so as to allow students to acquire digital skills (21st century skills) which include oral, multicultural and other communication skills, critical and analytical thinking skills, information literacy, leadership skills, collaboration, teamwork and the like.

The intended learning outcomes and competences acquired on an online study programme may be no different from outcomes and competences acquired on a study programme with different modes of delivery, particularly on traditional programmes predominantly taught in the classroom.

The intended online programme outcomes are aligned with the descriptor of the relevant Croatian Qualifications Framework and EQF level.

In case a graduate online programme is being proposed, the intended programme outcomes reflect a clear distinction in terms of study level between the proposed programme and the existing undergraduate programme.

In case a graduate online programme is being proposed, the higher education institution has a document constituting evidence of an accredited undergraduate programme in the same scientific or artistic field.

In case a university specialist study programme is being proposed, the higher education institution has a document constituting evidence of an accredited graduate programme, i.e. university integrated undergraduate and graduate programme in the same scientific or artistic field.

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- online study programme proposal;
- employer survey with regard to competences required on the labour market;
- analysis of compatibility with labour market needs;
- alignment of intended learning outcomes with recommendations of professional associations, where applicable;
- alignment of intended learning outcomes with internationally defined learning outcomes for the relevant profession, if any;

- alignment of intended programme outcomes with Croatian Qualifications Framework level descriptors;
- Table 1. Table linking units of learning outcomes from qualification standard with programme outcomes

2.3. The intended course outcomes are aligned with the intended learning outcomes at the level of the online study programme.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

The higher education institution has clearly defined the intended learning outcomes for all elements comprising the online study programme (courses, modules, practicals, seminars, practice, projects, etc.).
The list of learning outcomes of the online study programme is extensive and detailed, and includes everything the student needs to master on the successful completion of the work and study involved in each element.
The intended learning outcomes of each element of the online study programme are aligned with its mode of delivery (online).
Courses delivered online are modular, i.e. they comprise smaller rounded units (covering topics or weeks of study). Each individual unit includes defined learning outcomes, what is expected of students and means of assessing the intended learning outcomes.
The higher education institution checks and ensures the alignment of learning outcomes at the study programme and course level.
The intended course-level outcomes also include the development of generic (general/key/transferable) and profession-specific competences.
The intended course-level outcomes have been formulated so as to allow students to acquire digital skills (21st century skills) which include oral, multicultural and other communication skills, critical and analytical thinking skills, information literacy, leadership skills, collaboration, teamwork and the like.

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- online study programme proposal;
- regulations on studying and/or student grading;
- intended learning outcomes of the online study programme;
- Intended learning outcomes at course level;
- Table 2. Programme-level learning outcomes.

2.4. The online study programme content allows students to achieve all the intended learning outcomes.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

The online study programme, in addition to profession-specific knowledge, anticipates the acquisition of generic competences, including digital competences.

The online study programme content ensures horizontal and vertical student mobility within the national and European education area.

The higher education institution provides evidence of the alignment of the content of each course with the intended course outcomes.

The higher education institution ensures that courses are offered in an appropriate sequence and has clearly defined the prerequisites for enrolment on each particular course.

The core disciplines for the acquisition of all professional competences are well represented.

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- online study programme proposal;
- intended learning outcomes of the online study programme;
- Intended learning outcomes at course level;
- prerequisites for enrolment on individual courses;
- inclusion of core disciplines necessary for the profession.

2.5. ECTS distribution is aligned with the anticipated actual student workload.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

ECTS credits are allocated in accordance with rules and recommendations applicable in the European Higher Education Area.
ECTS credits are allocated for every element of the online study programme based on total student workload, which includes all planned activities.
An appropriate number of ECTS is allocated for each student obligation in accordance with the actual student workload.
The higher education institution has appropriate mechanisms to ensure ECTS allocation is aligned with the actual student workload.

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- online study programme proposal;
- ECTS credits allocated to courses on the online study programme;
- planned mechanisms to check the alignment of ECTS credits with the actual student workload;
- planned mechanisms for enhancement and revision of student workload expressed as ECTS credits.

2.6. Student/professional practice is an integral part of the online study programme (if applicable).	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

Student/professional practice is an integral part of online study programmes and will be carried out outside the higher education institution, in cooperation with the labour market, where this is applicable.
Student /professional practice is allocated an appropriate number of ECTS.
Mechanisms are ensured to allow student/professional practice to be carried out in a systematic and responsible manner which will ensure the achievement of intended learning outcomes connected with student/professional practice.
Mechanisms are ensured whereby practical activities and practicals will be carried out as planned by the online study programme in a virtual environment (virtual laboratories, virtual worlds, other opportunities afforded by the online environment), where this is applicable.
The opportunity to learn and acquire practical skills is planned.

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- online study programme proposal which includes practical skills;
- intended online programme outcomes and individual course outcomes which include the acquisition of practical skills;
- procedure for assessing the achievement of practice-related intended learning outcomes;
- number of ECTS credits allocated for student/professional practice;
- contracts with employers, regulations on student/professional practice;
- feedback from employers in cooperation with whom student/professional practice will be carried out;
- planned mechanisms to assure the quality of student/professional practice (student logbooks, evaluation questionnaires for students and mentors at the higher education institution and outside the institution, etc.).

2.7. If the completion of the online study programme allows students access to a regulated profession, the programme is aligned with national and European regulations and the recommendations of national and international professional associations.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

The online study programme is aligned with the minimum training conditions defined by EU directives and the Act on Regulated Professions and the Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications.

The proposed online study programme is included in the list of regulated professions in the Republic of Croatia, where applicable.

The higher education institution acknowledges and applies the recommendations of professional associations.

The online programme produces professionals who are competitive on national and international labour markets.

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- opinion of a competent body on compliance with the requirements stipulated for regulated professions (included in the list of regulated professions in the Republic of Croatia);
- consent/opinion of a competent professional chamber included in the list of regulated professions or another professional association (provided there is one) on the acceptance of the proposed study programme and the opportunity to take a qualifying professional examination;
- analysis of online study programme alignment with rules and recommendations.

III. Teaching process and student support

3.1. Admission requirements and criteria as well as the admissions procedure regarding the online study programme are clearly defined and transparent, and guarantee that students will possess the necessary prior knowledge.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

Requirements for admission to or continuation of online studies, admission criteria and procedure, and requirements for the completion of online studies and issuing of qualifications are clearly defined, published in timely manner and publicly available.

The planned criteria for admission to or continuation of online studies ensure the selection of candidates with appropriate prior knowledge, which is aligned with the requirements of the online study programme.

The higher education institution has defined procedures for the recognition of prior learning.

The higher education institution has defined the manner of evidence which will be required/accepted for admission.

Detailed information has been provided on the requirements students must meet in order to join the online study programme, which includes the following:

− necessary computer equipment and bandwidth speed in accordance with the requirements of online studies;
− prior knowledge required to attend the chosen online study programme (e.g. knowledge of specific digital tools or additional knowledge and skills, such as language proficiency and the like);
− operative knowledge of computer equipment and specific software for the chosen online study programme.

Students may enrol in the programme online: documentation may be submitted in accordance with a predefined procedure used to verify the authenticity of original documents, tuition fees may be paid and other administrative issues may be regulated online.

Information is provided for part-time students regarding the estimated time necessary for the completion of studies.

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- clear admission criteria (evaluation of high school performance, State Matura level, elective exams, additional assessments of knowledge and skills);
- defined decision-making procedure in relation to the admission criteria;
- defined procedures for recognising Croatian and foreign higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning in case of continuation of studies;
- anticipated number of students on the online programme (for the first year of study);
- proposed manner of publishing all information related to enrolment in the online study programme.

3.2. The planned teaching methods guarantee student-centred teaching and the achievement of all intended learning outcomes.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

Various means of online programme delivery have been planned in accordance with the intended learning outcomes.

Various teaching methods have been planned on the online programme that encourage interactive and research-based learning, problem solving, creative and critical thinking, and independence and responsibility (for example, individual and group projects, cooperative learning, problem-based learning, field work and other interactive methods).

The planned teaching methods are adapted to a diverse student population (non-traditional student population, part-time students, senior students, under-represented[2] and vulnerable groups[3], etc.).

Flexibility is ensured with regard to time, place and course of studying.

Classes may be followed synchronously and asynchronously.

Regular office hours are planned for the duration of online courses and once online courses have ended.

The student workload has been distributed appropriately throughout the day, week, semester and year so as to avoid overloading students.

Mechanisms for the assessment and adjustment of programme delivery mode and teaching methods have been ensured.

Support has been ensured for users with specific requirements (content and activities have been prepared in alternate form).

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- online study programme proposal and curriculum;
- means of teaching delivery and use of teaching methods;
- planned mechanisms to monitor the quality of teaching delivery and use of teaching methods (surveys, questionnaires, talks with stakeholders, etc.);
- learning management systems (LMS), virtual learning systems (VLS), repositories and the like.

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[2] ***Under-representation** in higher education is defined as a lower participation of a certain group of students in relation to their percentage and situation in other European countries. The under-represented groups are as follows: students whose parents have lower educational qualifications, female students in technical fields and male students in the humanities; mature students; students with disabilities; students with children; minority students.

[3] **Vulnerability** is perceived as difficulties in the academic or social integration of students, associated with certain personal characteristics of students.

3.3. The planned teaching methods and teaching materials meet the requirements of quality online instruction.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

Teaching materials have been added to the LMS as a resource/activity (e.g. Book, Lesson, Page) and will allow student progress to be monitored as well as provide a tailored learning path.

There is digital access to the online course readings, if available.

In addition to text-based teaching materials, units include links to additional resources, videos, images, quizzes for self-assessment, a glossary, games, etc.

Course-level outcomes are clearly specified in online courses.

Each topic of an online course clearly specifies the learning outcome(s) it helps students achieve.

Online courses clearly specify the teaching methods which will be used in their delivery.

Online courses contain instructions for independent learning and independent completion of student tasks.

Teaching materials are predominantly in the language in which the online course is taught, but it is possible to include teaching materials in another language as optional course readings if the students speak the language in question.

Communication is ensured between students as well as between students and teacher (asynchronous and synchronous) via forum, chat, videoconferencing tools, email or other means.

If lectures are included, they have been adapted for the online environment (several short interactive lecture segments or recorded lectures), lectures are followed by opportunities for asynchronous discussion – moderated forums with a clearly defined discussion topic, rules of communication and participation and/or synchronous discussion – online or in the classroom (e.g. using the flipped classroom model).

Student feedback is gathered on the level of satisfaction with the course (surveys, blog or the like).

Within the online course, information is gathered on student activity in the LMS.

Course activities also allow students to acquire digital skills (21st century skills) which include oral, multicultural and other communication skills, critical and analytical thinking skills, information literacy, leadership skills, collaboration, teamwork and the like.

Teaching materials in .pptx, .pdf ili .docx format constitute additional materials.

Ongoing monitoring and quality enhancement is ensured with regard to teaching methods, materials and content used in online teaching.

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- demonstration of e-learning platform;
- partial demonstration of courses (several topics/units);
- teaching materials developed for one complete unit (topic, week, module);
- examples of digital educational content.

3.4. The higher education institution proves that adequate support is in place for students.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

The following is in place: introductory instructions, videos or workshops for students on attending online studies (how to work and communicate in an online environment, time management, independent work and the like, including clear instructions regarding academic honesty, e.g. unethical behaviour when taking exams, plagiarism, referencing rules, etc.).
Students are provided with consistent and ongoing training with regard to working in the online environment.
Students are provided with assistance in using digital services planned within the online study programme during the higher education institution's working hours.
The higher education institution has ensured that students will have the opportunity to receive guidance on studying and career opportunities (e.g., tutors, supervisors and other advisors as support in student learning and progress).
Methods of enhancing student motivation and self-regulation of learning have been planned (e.g. holding thematic workshops, advice on how to structure studying, individualised advice on studying strategies and the like).
The higher education institution has planned functional procedures for student career guidance, psychological and legal counselling, support to students with disabilities, support in outgoing and incoming mobility, and library and student administration services, at university or faculty level.
The planned student support is tailored to a diverse student population (part-time students, mature students, students from abroad, students from under-represented and vulnerable groups, students with learning difficulties and disabilities, etc.).
Students have the opportunity to communicate with external stakeholders in the teaching process (external lecturers, heads of laboratory practicals, persons responsible for implementing student/professional practice, persons responsible for graduate research and other projects).
There are persons at the higher education institution to whom students can talk about attending and passing specific courses (teacher-mentors for each course).
Tools are available for interaction and cooperation between students as well as between students and teachers (LMS, wiki, e-portfolio, videoconferencing tools, etc.).
Opportunities for cooperation, networking or socialising outside the teaching process have been planned for students as well as for students and teachers.
The higher education institution involves students on the online study programme in the organisation of its events (conferences, round tables, panel discussions).
The higher education institution employs an adequate number of qualified professional, administrative and technical staff.

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- regulations on studying;
- regulations on job profiles at the institution;
- information packages for new students;
- instructions, etc. to prepare students for working in the online environment;

- number, qualification structure and availability of library and administrative staff;
- decisions on establishing the library and advisory services and their rules of procedure;
- established student support and counselling services (psychological, academic/study, legal, career guidance) at the level of university or university constituent;
- availability of teaching staff to students (for example, information on office hours is provided).

3.5. Objective and consistent assessment and grading of student achievements is planned in order to ensure the acquisition of all intended learning outcomes.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

The knowledge assessment plan is appropriate to online teaching delivery and describes how knowledge will be assessed.

The criteria and methods for assessment and grading are aligned with the intended learning outcomes and planned teaching methods, are clear and intended to be published before individual courses begin.

Mechanisms are planned to ensure the impartiality and objectivity of assessing and grading student achievements.

The planned assessment methods take into account special circumstances of certain groups of students (modifying examination procedures to suit e.g. students with disabilities), while at the same time ensuring the achievement of intended learning outcomes.

A student appeals procedure is planned, as well as provision of timely feedback on the results of assessment and grading.

Opportunities have been planned for the provision of timely and frequent feedback on student progress through the online programme.

Assessment in the online environment is fit for purpose and allows students to demonstrate the extent to which they have acquired the intended learning outcomes; it may include self-assessment and peer assessment.

The higher education institution has planned formative and summative assessment of students.

Different assessment options have been defined for students with learning difficulties or for students with disabilities.

Means of preventing unethical behaviour when taking exams have been defined (e.g. randomised exam questions, time limits for answering individual questions, use of dedicated software such as Safe Exam Browser or similar, or use of computer peripherals such as webcams).

Procedures of sanctioning students have been defined when they have been found to engage in unethical behaviour when taking exams.

If assessment includes the grading of student papers or projects submitted online during the course of the semester or year, it is recommended that authenticity checking tools be used.

Assessment is carried out remotely once the student's identity has been verified, videoconferencing and other tools are used, and other security measures are in place (the test may only be accessed once, it is password protected and time limited, etc.).

Grades obtained as a result of assessment conducted in the manner described above are equal to other grades.

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- online study programme proposal;
- assessment and grading criteria and methods;
- defined procedure on how to ensure objectivity and consistent implementation of assessment and grading;
- defined procedure on how to implement activities to support skills development related to testing and examination methods in the online environment for those who assess students;
- defined procedure on how to modify examinations processes (for example, for students with disabilities);
- availability and backing up of grades and other assessment results;
- planned functional student appeals procedure.

IV. Teaching capacities and infrastructure

4.1. The higher education institution ensures adequate teaching capacities to deliver the online study programme and achieve the intended learning outcomes.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

At the time of submitting the application, the higher education institution is employing teachers who are delivering courses in the total value of at least 50% of any type of direct instruction in the case of the first year of a university study programme, i.e. 35% of any type of direct instruction in the case of the first year of a professional study programme (the higher education institution must submit employment contracts to the Agency which constitute evidence that this requirement has been met for the academic year ahead).

The higher education institution employs an adequate number of teachers full time on an indefinite term basis.

At philological studies, a maximum of half the teachers may hold the teaching positions of language instructor, senior language instructor and language instructor advisor.

The ratio between the total number of enrolled students and the total number of full-time teachers and those with nominal teaching titles does not exceed 30 : 1 (when calculating the ratio, the number of working hours of teachers who are not employed full time is added up to the number of working hours required of a full-time teacher).

Total annual teaching load of all teachers does not exceed 20% of the total annual standard teaching load (in the case of public higher education institutions).

Total annual teaching load of an individual teacher does not exceed 20% of the total annual standard teaching load.

The teaching load on an online study programme includes the following:

– in the case of the lead instructor and associates on the course: course planning, preparation and creation as well as teaching in the online environment;
– online activities where teacher participation is planned (e.g. teacher-led and teacher-moderated online discussions, lectures delivered via videoconference, synchronous and asynchronous communication with students, etc.);
– monitoring student work in the online environment, providing advice on studying and encouraging groups and individuals;
– preparing and carrying out assessment activities, primarily formative assessment, and feedback provision to students on their progress, as well as formative and summative assessment;
– other specific needs of individual programme delivery (if there are any).

The status of teachers engaged in online delivery has been regulated and there is a procedure whereby a record is kept of the time they have invested in teaching online.

The teachers are qualified to deliver the course(s) which they teach.

Teachers involved in course delivery have undergone in-house or external training on teaching online, and/or they have advanced experience with this type of instruction on accredited online study programmes or accredited study programmes with an online component.

Lead instructors are qualified for the courses they lead.

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- information on whether courses on the online study programme have been covered;
- information on student/teacher ratio;
- information on teacher workload;
- information on the number of teachers holding a doctoral degree;
- information on each teacher involved in the delivery of the online study programme (their CV, employment contract, decision on appointment to a title, evidence of the teacher being registered in order to receive health and pension insurance);
- teacher qualifications for working in the online environment;
- information on lead course instructors;
- examples of digital educational content created by teachers;
- alignment of staff numbers with the relevant CroQF standard;
- Table 3. Student-teacher ratio at the higher education institution;
- Table 4. Value of all types of direct instruction included in online study programme;
- Table 5. Teachers on online study programme.

4.2. Qualifications and work experience of external associates is appropriate for the delivery of the online study programme and the achievement of intended learning outcomes.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

Teachers involved in online course delivery have undergone in-house or external training on teaching online, and/or they have advanced experience with this type of instruction on accredited online study programmes or accredited study programmes with an online component.
External associates have relevant work experience.
External associates include the latest research, trends and professional expertise from the labour market in the teaching process.
The higher education institution encourages the participation of external associates in the supervision of final and graduation theses.
The higher education institution encourages the organisation of student/professional practice at the external associate's home institution (if applicable).
The higher education institution organizes training on preparation and delivery of online teaching for external associates from the business sector and/or from abroad, and introduces them to the regulations and practices in the field of higher education (for example, ECTS credits, learning outcomes, teaching methods).

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- list of external associates, institutions at which they are employed and their positions;
- qualifications of external associates for the courses they teach (their CVs)
- teacher qualifications for working in the online environment;
- written statement provided by each external associate stating that they are prepared to teach classes;
- written statement by the head of the teacher's home institution where they are employed, as well as the course and the period for which permission is granted;
- examples of co-supervision;
- examples of digital educational content created by teachers;
- contract regulating the organisation of student/professional practice;
- Table 5. Teachers on online study programme.

4.3. The higher education institution ensures adequate teacher support with regard to working in the online environment.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

The higher education institution has clearly presented how support was provided to teachers in their professional development as it applies to teaching in the online environment prior to applying for the initial accreditation of the online study programme.

The higher education institution has ensured support to teachers in their professional development as it applies to teaching in the online environment throughout the delivery of the online study programme.

Teacher training has been conducted and ongoing teacher training has been ensured on the topic of teaching in the online environment.

Teacher support is in place regarding the preparation and delivery of online courses (support in teaching methodology, instructional design, person/team responsible for multimedia development).

Institutional recommendations or instructions on online course development have been provided, including guidelines on the visual appearance and compulsory elements of online course content.

Teacher support is in place with regard to use of available digital technologies required for online delivery.

Teacher support is in place with regard to use of digital services planned within the online study programme during the higher education institution's working hours.

Teacher support is in place with regard to technical and graphic design aspects of preparing and developing online teaching materials.

Teacher support is in place with regard to the development of open educational resources (OER) required for teaching, as well as the use of materials developed by other teachers and available through open access and/or networking via massive open online courses (MOOCs), with appropriate respect for intellectual property.

Teacher support is in place with regard to the preparation of teaching materials in accordance with digital accessibility guidelines.

A system is in place whereby teachers are incentivized and rewarded for developing new methods of teaching in the online environment, developing digital educational content and online course design.

The higher education institution encourages teachers to take part in conferences on online learning.

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- examples of teacher training and other forms of teacher support regarding work in the online environment;
- office/team/person responsible for teacher support regarding development of teaching materials (multimedia);
- examples of institutional recommendations/guidelines regarding the visual appearance and compulsory elements of online course content;
- established system of incentivizing/rewarding teachers;
- number of conferences attended and number of scientific and professional papers published on the topic of online learning.

4.4. The higher education institution ensures adequate management-organizational-administrative capacities to deliver the online study programme and achieve the intended learning outcomes.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

There is/are (a) person(s) in charge of the following, in addition to the competent vice-dean/vice-rector:
− online teaching design and delivery in accordance with the institutional strategy;
− preparation of procurement plans and infrastructure improvement plans for the purposes of online teaching delivery;
− needs analysis and continuous professional development of teachers with regard to the use of digital technologies and their appropriate use in the educational process;
− defining methods of student assessment and reporting on student achievements in online classes.
There is/are (a) person(s) in charge of student exchange agreements for online study programmes delivered with other higher education institutions (virtual student mobility, joint studies and courses, European university alliances, etc.).
A service is in place which will monitor the operations of the entire system daily and be equipped for troubleshooting within a 24-hour period, should this be unavoidable and feasible.
The institution has the following dedicated persons for online communication with students:
− person/service responding to queries related to the online study programme (student office): admissions, attendance, collecting grades, various certificates, etc.;
− person/service responding to any technical queries related to attending classes, e.g. students are having trouble navigating the system, cannot follow online lectures, cannot log on to the system, are experiencing technical issues when accessing learning materials for class or exams (e.g. Safe Exam Browser is not working, the webcam cannot be turned on, there are issues accessing the videoconferencing software, etc.);
− head of online studies – someone who keeps track of whether all students have enrolled on the online study programme, if they have been assigned to groups (if groups are planned), advises students at the level of the online programme if they are having trouble following classes, need to take a break from studying, are considering dropping out, are deciding which elective courses to choose, etc.

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

• regulations on job profiles at the institution;
• decision/document appointing persons in charge of planning and delivery of the online study programme at the management-organizational-administrative level;
• decision/document appointing persons in charge of online communication with students;
• service in charge of monitoring the system.

4.5. The premises, equipment and entire infrastructure (classrooms, laboratories, library, etc.) as well as technical requirements are appropriate for the delivery of the online study programme and ensure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

The premises, equipment and entire infrastructure (laboratories, IT service, work facilities, etc.) are adequate for the delivery of the online study programme and ensure the achievement of intended learning outcomes and the conduct of scientific activity in an online environment, i.e. with the aid of digital technologies.

The premises, equipment and entire infrastructure (laboratories, IT service, work facilities, etc.) are adequate for the conduct of professional and/or scientific research.

The higher education institution has ensured an adequate number of computers, computer equipment and software.

Internet access is ensured 24/7 in all rooms, as well as 24/7 server access at the institution and/or cloud access from remote locations.

Stability has been ensured of the computer and communication infrastructure required for online study programme delivery.

A virtual environment has been ensured for online teaching delivery (e.g. LMS, videoconferencing software, wiki, or any other organised environment for online teaching delivery).

Regular backups and updates have been ensured of all materials and data in the virtual environment used for online teaching delivery, even when it is necessary to explore additional technical solutions to back up grades and other data on student results.

Digital services have been ensured which students and teachers require to carry out planned activities (e.g. institutional email account, online library access, user account for LMS, wiki or other environments, AAI@EduHr electronic identity required to access a broader range of digital services offered within the educational system, etc.).

The use of learning analytics has been ensured to measure and report on the activities and performance of all users and content of the learning management system.

Privacy and security have been ensured with regard to the use of data on the users of the learning management system.

Online availability of grades and other data on student success has been ensured for students and teachers.

It has been ensured that any student work produced in courses delivered online, throughout the year, is produced in an atmosphere of cooperation and trust between the student and teacher on an individual course, and may and should be distributed only within the group of students the student is collaborating with (if such collaboration is planned).

The final theses of students on online study programmes must be publicly available and stored in the same manner and for the same period of time as the final theses of students attending study programmes delivered in-person (in the Digital Academic Archives and Repositories system).

If the institution proposing the online study programme has access to an examinations centre

− the examinations centre (hall) is equipped with computers and has 24/7 internet access at the institution, as well as 24/7 server access at the institution and/or cloud access from remote locations;
− videoconferencing software is ensured for remote access.

If the institution proposing the online study programme does not have access to an examinations centre

− exams can be taken online at any remote location (e.g. at the student's home, etc.);
− the student is responsible for the security and stability of the computer and communication infrastructure at the remote location where the exam is taken.

<u>Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:</u>

• information on the premises (documents proving ownership or the right to use the premises);
• evidence of the institution's own equipment or leased equipment required for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes;
• demonstration of the e-learning system;
• optimal number of prospective students given the number of teachers;
• access to relevant databases;
• alignment of material conditions with the relevant CroQF level;
• Table 6. Premises.

4.6. The library premises and resources, as well as access to additional services ensure the availability of literature and library services for the delivery of the online study programme.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

The higher education institution has ensured the literature needed to deliver the proposed online study programme.
Students and teachers on the proposed online study programme have access to library materials in print and/or electronic format.
The library premises and resources, including additional resources, meet the conditions for a high quality of study in accordance with, among other things, the conditions specified in the Standard for Higher Education, University and Scientific Libraries (Official Gazette, 81/22).
Access to online learning materials is ensured (e.g. relevant publicly available sources are selected and recommended, information is provided on (the use of) scientific databases.
The library materials of the institution running the online programme may be searched online, regardless of whether they are available in print or electronic format.
The issue of copyright materials has been regulated.
Students may communicate with librarians online.
Print copies may be delivered and returned by post.
The higher education institution publishes teaching materials in electronic format – e-books, e-textbooks, e-handbooks, reviewed teaching materials, all in compliance with copyright regulations.
The higher education institution creates digital educational content for instructional purposes – video, animations, interactive content, illustrations.

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- examination of library premises;
- availability of up-to-date teaching materials;
- number of copies of required readings for each course on the proposed online study programme;
- subscriptions to appropriate bibliographic databases and databases with full-text access;
- availability of the network library catalogue of the higher education institution;
- availability of teaching materials via protected website;
- Table 7. Library premises and resources;
- number of copies of published teaching materials;
- pieces of digital educational content created.

4.7. The higher education institution ensures the availability of the necessary funds to organise the activities and quality delivery of the planned online study programme.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled

Elements and indicators of the standard

Funds have been ensured for online study programme delivery and achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

The higher education institution has provided evidence of financial sustainability and efficiency.

There is a financial plan for a minimum of 3 years, estimating funding sources, expenses associated with online study programme delivery, as well as maintenance and procurement of new computer equipment and software required for online learning.

The public higher education institution has provided evidence of sufficient funds to deliver the online study programme in the form of a concluded programme agreement, or projections of income from tuition fees or other sources.

Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:

- calculation of the estimated cost of the planned online study programme (per student, per year of study);
- financial plan of income and expenses for a period of at least three years which clearly indicates the source of funding for all existing study programmes as well as the proposed online study programme, and a breakdown of expenses;
- evidence of ensured funds aligned with a cost statement;
- Table 8. Financial sustainability.

Article 3

The Quality Standards shall be published on the website of the Agency for Science and Higher Education and they shall enter into force on the day of their publication.

President of the Accreditation Council

Prof. Mirjana Hruškar, Ph.D.