



UNIVERSITY

## **VERN' University Self-Analysis**

Zagreb, October 2025

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## Introduction

Founded in 1990, VERN' is the result of more than three decades of systematic development, innovation and commitment to excellence in higher education in the Republic of Croatia. VERN' began its formal work as a higher education institution in 2000 under the name College of Entrepreneurship Economics with public certification rights, based on the license and decision of the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth in the Republic of Croatia.

As the first private business higher education institution in Croatia, VERN' has been focused on educating experts who possess practical, interdisciplinary and market-relevant knowledge and skills. With its first program, the professional undergraduate study in Economics entrepreneurship, VERN' established an educational framework that both represents the basis of the undergraduate level of study and shapes the entrepreneurial and proactive business culture that the University continuously nurtures and develops.

In 2007, in accordance with the growing educational capacities and academic ambitions, the College grew into VERN' University of Applied Sciences, the first Croatian private polytechnic with a focus on business education and the development of an entrepreneurial worldview. Over the following years, VERN' systematically expanded its range of study programs, strengthened international cooperation and further developed infrastructural, human resources and scientific-teaching capacities, while building a recognizable identity of a higher education institution based on the values of entrepreneurship, interdisciplinarity and innovation. In this development, the emphasis was consistently placed on the *Teaching Oriented* model of education, which puts the student at the center of the teaching process and focuses on modern teaching methods, transferable skills and applicable knowledge relevant to the dynamic labor market.

As a confirmation of the development and quality of educational, organizational, and developmental processes, VERN' acquired the status of a university in 2020 through the legal process of merging with the newly established VERN University, thus becoming the first private university in the Republic of Croatia to emerge from a higher education institution in business. By acquiring the status of a university, VERN' opened a new chapter in institutional development and significantly expanded the possibilities for conducting university undergraduate and graduate programs, for implementing scientific research activities, and for international cooperation and inclusion in the European Higher Education Area.

Through its transformation into a university, VERN' has built upon its existing educational identity, one focused on students and entrepreneurship, by adding new emphasis on science and research. This in turn enabled VERN' University to move from an exclusively *teaching-oriented* model to a combined model that includes a *scientific oriented* component as well. Although it is a relatively young university that has existed for less than five years, of which the first two years of operation were influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, VERN' University strives to systematically develop scientific capacities by strengthening research infrastructure, encouraging scientific productivity and establishing a stimulating environment for research.

## Growth and development of VERN'

Founded in **1990**, VERN' started as an agency for mediation in education abroad (application office for foreign schools in Croatia).

In **1994**, VERN' began to carry out its own one-year professional education programs with the appropriate license for what was at the time referred to as the 5th level of education.

In **2000**, VERN d.o.o. founded the College of Economics of Entrepreneurship with public certification rights. In the same year, the curriculum of this study program underwent an international evaluation conducted by an expert team from the Finnish University of Vaasa.

In **2001**, VERN' began to introduce the Bologna standards as one of the first institutions in the Croatian higher education system.

In **2002**, in cooperation with the University of Vaasa from Finland, the Italian Institute ISTUD, the University of Zadar and the Center for Entrepreneurship of Zadar County, VERN' joined the European Union's Tempus program with the main goal of developing curricula and entrepreneurship education in the region.

In **2003**, the higher education institution began the process of implementing the quality management system.

In **2004**, VERN was certified for the first time according to the requirements of the international standard ISO 9001:2000. This system defines all relevant processes and procedures related to the activities of a polytechnic, as well as the responsibilities of the Management Board and employees. Since 2004, regular internal and external audits of the quality management system have been carried out.

In **2005**, a license was obtained for the professional study program of Business Informatics and for three specialist graduate professional studies: Entrepreneurial Management, Business Communications Management, and Accounting and Finance.

In **2007**, the College of Entrepreneurship Economics with public certification rights grew into the VERN' University of Applied Sciences, the first Croatian private polytechnic, oriented towards business education, with a strong emphasis on the development of an entrepreneurial worldview.

In **2009**, VERN' was the protagonist of the first successful consolidation project in the higher education sector. VERN's higher education group includes the Zagreb School of Economics and Management, which specializes in the education of management personnel in tourism (Tourism Studies and Sustainable Tourism Development Management).

In **2010**, the drafting of the strategic development document for the following ten years – "VERN' 2020 – Strategic Development Framework 2010 – 2020" was completed.

**The year 2011** is marked by the beginning of the graduate professional study of IT Management and the acquisition of the College of Journalism, which was merged with VERN' in December.

**In 2012**, VERN' opened an international university center on the island of Vis.

**In 2013**, the Committee for External Quality Evaluation, organized by the Agency for Science and Higher Education, conducted an external quality evaluation of the VERN' University of Applied Sciences. At the end of 2013, the merger of the Kairos College of Public Relations and Media Studies was completed.

**In 2014**, VERN' University of Applied Sciences was awarded the international ESG Certificate (*Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*) for an efficient, developed and functionally structured quality assurance system in education, based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. In the same year, the procedure of initial accreditation for the new Technical Management study program was carried out (the program received its first license in 2007, and in 2014 it was merged with VERN' and the accreditation process was initiated).

**In 2015**, VERN' University of Applied Sciences was awarded an international certificate for successful quality management in accordance with the requirements of the international standard ISO 9001:2008.

**In 2016**, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia (now known as the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth) issued a license to VERN' University of Applied Sciences to conduct the professional undergraduate study program of Film, Television and Multimedia Design and the professional graduate study of Human Resources Management.

**In 2016**, the process of initiating the initial accreditation process for VERN' University formally began. After finishing the first phase of the initial accreditation, the Ministry of Science and Education issued approval for the establishment of a higher education institution.

**In 2018**, initial accreditation of the professional graduate study of Film and Television Directing and Production was carried out. In the same year, VERN' underwent a certification audit in accordance with the ISO 9001:2015 standard.

**In 2020**, the first three-year initial university accreditation in the Republic of Croatia was successfully completed according to the highest international standards, and on June 26, 2020, the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth of the Republic of Croatia issued licenses to VERN' University to carry out three university undergraduate studies. In the academic year 2020/2021, the programs of Cyber Communications and Network Science, as well as of Transmedia Dramaturgy begin. The Internet of Things (IoT) begins to be implemented a year later.

**In 2021**, the process of integration of the University of Applied Sciences with VERN' University was completed, which in January moved into the premises of the new VERN' Cube academic campus, at Palmotićeva street 82/1.

**2023** marked the first VERN' University Day by awarding an honorary doctorate to Doris Pack, a former MEP and prominent politician, and the first Rector's awards to the best students.

**In 2024**, the process of transforming three graduate professional study programs into graduate university programs began.

**In 2025**, the second rector of VERN' University was elected and appointed, prof. dr. sc. Vedran Mornar.

## VERN' University

VERN' University (hereinafter: the University), as a young institution founded in 2020, stands out as an institution that systematically builds a bridge between academic excellence and the practical application of acquired knowledge. Through clearly profiled study programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, the University continuously monitors and responds to the challenges of the labor market, ensuring that educational content reflects the current needs of the modern business environment. This approach enables students to acquire competencies that are both academically relevant and market-applicable, thus contributing to the strengthening of their professional mobility and competitiveness.

Today, the University carries out 10 study programs at the undergraduate level, of which 7 are professional study programs and 3 are university study programs, and they are designed to provide students with specific knowledge and competencies for the very first day of classes. These studies last three years and carry 180 ECTS credits, making them especially valuable as they combine theoretical background with practical work on real projects, preparing students for the labor market.

At the graduate level, the University carries out seven study programs, which last two years and carry 120 ECTS credits. These programs are designed as an extension to undergraduate education, with the aim of deepening professional knowledge and developing management competencies.

All study programs at the University are designed according to the principle of competence-based education and project-based teaching. Emphasis is placed on interdisciplinarity, critical thinking and the development of solutions to specific real-life challenges. Through various forms of cooperation with the business sector, including mandatory professional practice, guest lectures, workshops and projects, students gain valuable insights into work processes. All this results in high employability, as more than 98% of the University's students are employed during their studies or immediately after graduation.

As a young university that has only existed for five years, the University thus confirms its mission to foster personal and social development, through education that is relevant, dynamic and forward-looking.

## Study programs

The University carries out professional undergraduate and graduate studies, and actively participates in the development of new study and educational programs in accordance with the needs of the labor market. The University currently offers seven (7) undergraduate professional study programs, three (3) undergraduate university study programs as well as seven (7) graduate professional study programs.

### Undergraduate professional study programs:

- Entrepreneurship Economics
- Tourism – Tourism and Hotel Management
- Film, Television and Multimedia Design
- Public Relations and Media Studies
- Journalism
- Business Informatics
- Technical Management

### Undergraduate university study programs:

- Transmedia Dramaturgy
- Cyber Communications and Network Science
- Internet of Things (IoT)

### Graduate professional studies:

- IT Management
- Film and Television Direction and Production
- Sustainable Tourism Development Management
- Entrepreneurial Management
- Accounting and Finance
- Human Resources Management
- Business Communications Management

A list of studies with all relevant details can be found at the following link: [study programs](#).

To this day, 1840 students have graduated from the University in various undergraduate and graduate study programs in the fields of economics, tourism, communications, computer science, creative industries and technical fields, while a total of 7109 students have graduated from the VERN' University of Applied Sciences, which is the polytechnics academic predecessor of VERN' University, whose employability of over 98% proves the adaptation of study programs to the current needs of the labor market.

The University monitors the needs of the market economy in order to adequately respond to them and prepare students for the real sector and for the jobs of the present and the future.

Activities are underway to develop new study programs aimed at preparing students for the professions of the future.

Special emphasis is placed on the development of study programs focused on the digital economy, creative industries, sustainable development and entrepreneurship. The University has recognized the importance of interdisciplinarity and therefore fosters an educational model that integrates different disciplines with the aim of developing relevant competencies for the market of the future.

Although the University is one of the smaller universities in terms of the number of students, this allows for an individualized approach in teaching, such as working in smaller groups and allowing for quality mentoring support. This is something that students and alumni regularly point out as one of the key advantages of studying at the University.

Within the University, there is a platform #educationmeetsbusiness that aims to adequately connect the needs of the labor market with the education system. As part of this project, there is also an Office for Practical Training, which connects the academic community with the business sector, opening up additional opportunities for students in terms of professional development, practice and employment.

## Self-Analysis Writing Process

In accordance with the Plan for the Re-accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in 2025, adopted on 10 July 2024 by the Accreditation Council of the Agency for Science and Higher Education, the University Management, at the proposal of the Rector, appointed a Committee for the preparation of Self-analysis and preparation for the re-accreditation process (Sources: [Decision on the appointment of the Committee for the preparation of the Self-analysis and preparation for the re-accreditation procedure](#) and [Decision on Amendments to the Decision on the Appointment of the Committee for the Preparation of Self-Analysis and Preparation for the Re-Accreditation Procedure](#)). The main objective of the Commission was to coordinate the work and ensure the best possible preparation for the upcoming re-accreditation process.

What followed in December 2024 as well as in March and October 2025 were meetings with employees to present the details and the planned activities to prepare for the re-accreditation ([Source: Re-accreditation Preparation Plan – Employee Meeting Presentation](#)). This ensured an inclusive approach, whereby all employees were informed in a timely manner and invited to actively participate, in the form of giving comments and suggestions to improve the process. The plan of activities and responsibilities according to individual standards, as well as the timeline for the preparation of the Self-Analysis, were also presented.

At the beginning of June 2025, the University received a letter from the Agency for Science and Higher Education announcing the visit of the Expert Committee in the week from 10 to 14 November 2025, while the deadline for the submission of the Self-analysis with an analytical annex from ISPIK was set for 13 October 2025.

During the preparations for the re-accreditation and the preparation of the Self-Analysis, members of the Committee and employees of the University's professional services participated in training and educational workshops, and held a series of meetings, including:

- Workshops for module editors in the CroRIS system (February 2025);
- Training for the preparation of the Self-analysis within the framework of re-accreditation, 6 May 2025 in Zagreb, for representatives of higher education institutions covered by the Re-accreditation Plan 2025;
- Training on data entry for the preparation of an analytical annex, organized by AZVO, the University Computer Center (SRCE) and the Ruđer Bošković Institute, May 12, 2025;
- Regular weekly coordination meetings of the Commission (November 2024 – October 2025);
- Topic-specific meetings with members of the Committee and other stakeholders as needed (November 2024 – October 2025);
- Meetings with employees to inform them about the progress of the process and their involvement in the preparation of the Self-analysis (December 2024, March 2025, and October 2025);
- Adoption of the Self-Analysis and the Analytical annex at the session of the University Management Board on October 20, 2025.

Specific employees of departments of the University's business and academic systems were involved to collect the data necessary for the preparation of the Self-analysis and entry of data into the ISPiK information system. Data from databases, such as the internal system of *Eduneta* and CROSBİ, were also used.

In addition to the guidelines of the Agency for Science and Higher Education, core documents of the University and documentation from previous evaluations were used in the preparation of the Self-Analysis.

The particular value of the process of preparation for the re-accreditation of the University lies in the broad and systematic involvement of all relevant stakeholders within the University, with an emphasis on the active participation of employees from different organizational units. Such participatory approach ensured that the preparation of the Self-Analysis was not just an administrative task carried out by several leaders of the institution, but a process of collective reflection of all employees and assessment of the development so far, as well as the strategic direction of the institution. This ensured a comprehensive, credible and content-based presentation of the quality of the University's work and its role in higher education and society as a whole.

# 1. Management and quality assurance at the higher education institution

## **1.1. The mission of the higher education institution directs the process of operational planning and the development of the quality assurance process.**

### **1.1.1. The higher education institution has a publicly announced modern mission which, in addition to defined values and goals, represents a framework and direction of action.**

In a dynamic and increasingly complex socio-economic context, the missions, visions and values of educational institutions are deeply rooted landmarks that guide development, shape culture and determine the role of universities in society. For the University, as a modern higher education institution with an entrepreneurial orientation, these determinants are at the same time the starting point and the goal of its activities, and the foundation of all its academic, research and social initiatives.

#### **Vision of the University**

***Educated, business-minded, and socially responsible people are the bearers of sustainable development and the well-being of a community***

The vision of the University is based on the basic assumption that educated, business-minded and socially responsible individuals are the key bearers of sustainable development and the well-being of a community. At the heart of this vision is a human being who, through their knowledge, initiative and ethical action, contributes to the creation of a sustainable, inclusive and prosperous society. This vision sets a high standard that the University strives towards, especially in its educational approach and interaction with the wider community.

The University has a publicly announced and modernly envisioned mission which, with clearly defined values and goals, represents the framework and direction of the entire operation.

#### **Mission of the University**

***Through academic excellence and socially responsible entrepreneurial activities, the University develops scientific, professional, and entrepreneurial competencies in the fields of economy, technology, and creative industries, and encourages employment and career development through interaction, fulfillment, and satisfaction through innovative and multidisciplinary study programs***

### **1.1.2. The mission clearly defines the specific role of higher education institutions in conducting higher education activities, scientific and professional work and contributing to the development of a contemporary and modern society. The mission positions the institution in both domestic and international contexts, and guides the development of the content of study and educational programs, as well as all activities of the higher education institution.**

The mission of the University is based on the idea of academic excellence and socially responsible entrepreneurship. The University fosters scientific, professional, and entrepreneurial competencies among its students.

It is a strong belief that the Mission and Vision together very clearly define the specific role of the University in performing higher education, scientific and professional activities as well as in contributing to the development of modern society; further elaboration is not deemed necessary.

The Mission itself clearly and directly positions the University in the domestic and international context as a higher education institution that "***develops scientific, professional and entrepreneurial competencies in its students in the fields of economy, technology and creative industries, and encourages employment and career development (of its graduates) through innovative and multidisciplinary study programs.***"

In accordance with the previously mentioned vision and mission, the University is focused on the following features of its specific and recognizable teaching model:

- **expertise:** acquired knowledge and competences specific to the chosen field/profession,
- **scientific competences:** acquired knowledge and skills for the application of scientific methods, critical thinking, and the development of new knowledge and innovations that contribute to the development of the profession and society
- **critical thinking:** researching and creative problem solving, making thoughtful and informed decisions, taking responsibility for one's own learning,
- **entrepreneurial competencies:** developed entrepreneurial skills (creativity, innovation, communicativeness, recognition of opportunities, and risk-taking),
- **business:** acquired knowledge and skills for business planning, negotiation, presentation, ICT, business literacy, foreign languages (business discourse), and business ethics.
- **interaction:** acquisition of knowledge and skills in predominantly small study groups based on problem-oriented case analyses, and directed towards the needs and development of the individual student; encouraging student participation and involvement in the educational process,
- **fulfilment:** by organizing optional (extracurricular) activities, encouraging students to live a fulfilling life, rich in cultural, sports and social content, and
- **satisfaction:** acquiring knowledge through a demanding, but at the same time interesting and exciting process that imbues students and teachers alike with creative enthusiasm and satisfaction.

In this context, **the values of the** University are listed, which are especially emphasized in the daily work and activities in accordance with the declared vision and mission.

#### **Values of the University**

- *We respect others and those who are different as a pledge of our own freedom and humane social relations.*

- *We recognize personal strengths, evoke, support, and develop the aspiration for excellence and achievements of individuals as the basic building block of the community's well-being.*
- *We encourage openness, boldness, diligence, responsibility, and ethics as qualities that lead to individual success and prosperity of a society.*

The values that the University cherishes form a fundamental component of its organizational culture. Respect for others and those who are different, openness to new ideas and people, striving for excellence, integrity, ethics, and personal responsibility are concretely manifested in everyday relationships, teaching practices, management methods, and principles of cooperation.

The University thus shapes its identity as an open, inclusive, and responsible institution, which views education as a process of shaping dedicated and empowered citizens. In this sense, the University's mission, vision, and values are living elements that are constantly being re-examined, developed, and reaffirmed in every aspect of institutional life.

In the domestic context, such a mission emphasizes the importance of academic excellence and entrepreneurial spirit, which contributes to the development of the local community, economy, and labor market. The institution is becoming recognized for the education of professionals who are prepared to respond to modern professional challenges and to actively participate in social processes. In the international context, the focus on social responsibility and the development of competencies in entrepreneurship, business, and creative industries is aligned with European and global trends in higher education, which allows for the University to promote international cooperation, student and teacher mobility, and encourage participation in joint projects and networks.

At the same time, the mission directs the development of the content of study and educational programs, which are based on modern scientific knowledge and the needs of the labor market, with the aim of developing professional, entrepreneurial, and business competencies of students. Practical content, interdisciplinary approaches, and cooperation with the economy are incorporated into educational programs, which encourage innovation, independence, and responsible action. Interaction and satisfaction as integral parts of the mission highlight the importance of a partnership between students, faculty, and the institution, creating a stimulating and motivating academic environment.

Across all activities of the higher education institution, the mission directs scientific research work towards topics that have practical and social value, encourages cooperation with the economic and public sectors, and promotes social responsibility and sustainable development. The culture of excellence and satisfaction encourages a number of aspects, namely: the motivation of teachers and students, the development of creativity and lifelong learning, and strengthens the identity and recognition of the institution. This positions the higher education institution as a center of knowledge, innovation and responsible action, which contributes to the progress of the domestic and international environment with its educational, research, and social activities.

### **1.1.3. Representatives of various stakeholder groups participate in the development and definition of the mission of a higher education institution. The mission statement is the starting point for the process of strategic planning and the setting of strategic goals.**

Representatives of various stakeholder groups such as lecturers, administrative staff, external associates, students and alumni participate in the process of shaping and revising the mission. The Mission Statement is the starting point for strategic planning and setting of strategic goals of the University, as well as the framework in which quality assurance processes are developed and implemented.

The last revision of the mission and vision was carried out during the University staff meeting on March 5, 2025 ([Source: Employee Meeting Program](#)). Through two interactive workshops held as part of the employee meeting, in which lecturers, administrative staff, external associates, management, and active and graduate students participated, the values of the University were analyzed and reaffirmed and a SWOT analysis of the University was made ([Source: Employee meeting – Workshop](#)). In this process, personal and social values that are lived on a daily basis in the academic and business community of the University, based on respect, openness, integrity, ethics, responsibility, and professionalism, were highlighted.

The process was inclusive and participatory, allowing all stakeholders, lecturers, administrative staff, and student representatives, to express their thoughts, priorities, and visions for the future. This further strengthened the sense of belonging, collective responsibility, and joint action, which forms the basis of the University's identity as a modern higher education institution focused on social progress.

The results of the workshops showed that the employees of the University highly value expertise, integrity, and ethics, with an emphasis on professional standards and responsibility. The importance of flexibility, innovation, and willingness to adapt, as well as the creation of a friendly and inclusive environment in which interpersonal relationships and teamwork have a strong place, were particularly emphasized. Such values contribute to efficiency and productivity, as well as to nurturing a sense of belonging to the community.

### **1.1.4. The mission statement is the starting point for the process of strategic planning and setting strategic goals.**

In this way, the University shapes its identity as an open, inclusive, and accountable institution that views education as a process of empowering engaged and responsible citizens. The mission, vision, and values of the University are the pivotal elements of institutional identity that are continuously reviewed and verified through daily activities.

By doing so, the mission of the University is directed in a strategic and operational manner. Through clearly defined values and goals, the University consistently connects academic excellence and social responsibility with the development of study programs, scientific research and professional activities, and with its own role in society. In this sense, the mission of the

University represents a key starting point for building, implementing, and constantly improving the [development strategy of the University](#).

## **1.2. The higher education institution has defined the internal structure and processes that are responsibly, efficiently and effectively managed, and the stakeholders of the higher education institution are involved in the decision-making processes.**

### **1.2.1. The governance of a higher education institution is based on the academic self-government of higher education institutions and the autonomy of universities.**

VERN is a privately founded university, and it performs the activity of higher education as a public service. The University has established a clear, transparent, and functional internal structure, based on academic self-government and institutional autonomy, which enables responsible, efficient, and effective management of processes. In accordance with the principles of good governance, key stakeholders, management, academic and administrative staff, students, external associates, and partners from the business and social environment are systematically involved in decision-making processes.

With regard to the private founder, and in accordance with the Law on Scientific Activity and Higher Education, the University does not depend on external factors in deciding on its internal administration, finances, and administration, as well as in establishing its own policy of education, research, advisory work, and related activities. The institutional autonomy of the University encompasses the organizational, financial, academic autonomy and autonomy of the teaching staff. The University independently manages the processes of electing the head of the institution as well as all governing bodies. Financial autonomy is ensured through market sources of financing that do not depend on the state budget. The autonomy of teaching staff is realized through the selection of highly qualified lecturers, support for their freedom of choice of teaching, professional, scientific, and artistic development, freedom and ethics of research, freedom in determining the content and methods of teaching, and other academic freedoms of lecturers.

### **1.2.2. The autonomy of universities includes the regulation of internal organization and management in accordance with the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education and subsidiary laws and regulations; establishing educational, scientific, artistic and professional programs; deciding on the acceptance of projects and international cooperation; financial autonomy as part of the program agreement and responsibility towards the community.**

The management of the University is based on the legislative framework defined by the Scientific Activity and Higher Education, and the Institutions Acts, as well as by bylaws and internal legal documents ([Source: University Statute](#)). Regulations that define individual processes within the University are referenced in later chapters.

As stated in the previous chapter, with respect to the private founder, the University has a high level of institutional autonomy that encompasses organizational, financial, academic and teaching staff autonomy.

Thus, the University has established a system of academic and business activities in two parallel, interdependent, and closely related scopes, the Academic Subsystem and the Business Subsystem, jointly aimed at achieving common goals, with common legal and administrative services. Such an organizational model enables the efficient management of all aspects of the institution's work, from the planning and implementation of teaching and scientific activities, to strategic development, operational management, and institutional sustainability. The model is designed with the aim of ensuring a high level of quality education, transparency in management, and flexibility in responding to the needs of the labor market and social challenges.

This division ensured complete academic autonomy at the University, since the academic subsystem is autonomous in the management and operation of all academic processes, especially teaching, scientific, artistic, and professional in practically all their segments.

Thus, the academic subsystem has the autonomy to:

- decide on the establishment of educational, scientific, artistic, and professional programs;
- decide on the acceptance of projects and international cooperation.

Below is a detailed description of both subsystems:

### **Academic subsystem**

The academic subsystem is a fundamental part of the University and includes all teaching, scientific, and development activities related to the implementation of study programs, quality assurance of teaching, professional, scientific, and artistic production, and the encouragement of professional and scientific training. The Rector is responsible for the functioning of the academic subsystem, manages academic processes, develops academic policy and ensures compliance with the legal framework and standards of higher education in the Republic of Croatia and the European Union.

Within the academic subsystem, the following operate:

- University Senate – the highest academic body that makes decisions related to the development and improvement of study programs, appointment and promotion of teachers, research activities, and other academic policies, and adopts internal acts in accordance with regulations, with the final acceptance of some of them requiring the confirmation of the Management Board or the Board of Directors. [The composition of the Senate](#) is determined according to the following determinants: the President of the Board of Directors, the Rector and the Director-General are members of the Senate by position, at least 60% of the Senate consists of members elected to scientific and teaching titles and employees of the business branch, undergraduate and graduate students are represented in the Senate in such a way that they constitute at least 10% of the Senate, and postgraduate students in such a way that they constitute at least 5% of the Senate.
- Quality Council – is an expert and advisory body of the Senate and the Management Board that takes care of the development of [quality assurance and improvement](#)

mechanisms and coordinates evaluation procedures at the University level. It regularly reports to the Management Board and the Senate on its work, gives opinions at the request of the Management Board, and performs other tasks determined by the internal acts of the University.

- Heads of undergraduate and graduate studies – are responsible for the organization, implementation, and improvement of the teaching process and ensuring the quality and compliance of study programs with academic standards and the needs of the labor market. Coordination of highly competent staff that includes lecturers with academic and professional references and external associates from relevant economic sectors.
- Office for Quality Assurance and Improvement – the operational body in charge of supervising and developing the internal quality assurance system (VERN'Qual). The Office is responsible for the implementation of internal quality assurance measures and provides administrative and professional support to the Quality Council and the Vice-Rector for Science and Quality. Its key activities include collecting and analysing stakeholder feedback, conducting student surveys and internal audits, and making suggestions for improving the quality system in accordance with national standards;
- International Relations Office – is responsible for the development, coordination, and implementation of international projects, student and lecturer mobility, and for strengthening partnership networks with foreign higher education and scientific institutions;
- Office for Research and Science – is responsible for encouraging, coordinating, and implementing scientific research and professional projects, as well as for the development of innovative programs and cooperation with the economy and the community;
- Internship Office: provides support to students in finding internships, as well as all other tasks related to implementation, and monitors the entire process through communication with interns and host organizations;
- Internal Academy: ensures continuous internal education of lecturers and employees and the development of their personal and professional (academic, professional, scientific-research, and teaching-methodological) competencies;
- Student Office: at the operational level, it implements solutions related to student statuses and performs all other administrative procedures related to students.

### **Business subsystem**

The Business Subsystem of the University includes organizational units in charge of managing financial, administrative, communication, logistical and other aspects of work. This subsystem ensures the stable and sustainable functioning of the University, as well as strategic support for academic activities. The business subsystem is headed by the Chief Executive Officer, who coordinates the work of all administrative services and implements strategic decisions of the Management Board.

The main functional units of the business subsystem include:

- Office of the CEO – the central unit for the strategic and operational management of the business aspects of the institution;
- Office of Accounting and Finance – responsible for financial planning, reporting, cost control, and ensuring financial transparency;
- Human Resources Office – manages the processes of recruitment, professional development of employees, and compliance with legal regulations;
- Department of Communications – responsible for the promotion of the University, communication with the media, and coordination of enrolment campaigns;
- Department of Logistics – coordinates the use of spatial and technical resources of the University, ensures reliable IT infrastructure, data security and support for teaching and administrative activities;
- University Secretariat: provides legal support to the academic and business subsystem, coordinates the work of the student office and drafts acts in accordance with regulations in the field of higher education;
- Office for Projects, Lifelong Learning and Public Procurement: manages and administers the entire process of lifelong learning and administers the entire process of applying and monitoring projects (business, EU funds, scientific and professional);
- Office of Sport and Recreation: coordinates and organizes all sports and recreational facilities at the University.

The business subsystem works closely with the academic subsystem to ensure integration for the implementation of strategic objectives, operational efficiency, and institutional resilience. It is this duality in terms of management that makes the University more flexible and resilient to the challenges of increasingly intense and frequent changes.

### **University Management**

The university is governed on four levels:

- Administrative, consisting of the Management Board (composed of the President of the Management Board, the Rector and the Chief Executive Officer);
- Academic, which consists of the Senate as the highest academic body of the University;
- Executive, consisting of Vice-Rectors and Executive Directors
- Implementation, consisting of heads of studies (academic) and heads of organizational units (executive directors).

The supervisory function is performed by the Management Board.

### **Management**

The University Management unites the business and academic subsystems into a single system of management and coordination of the work and development of the University. The Management Board consists of:

- President of the Management Board – supervises the entire business and ensures coordination between the academic and business subsystems;

- The Rector of the University – is the legal representative, manages the academic subsystem and processes, ensures academic excellence and represents the University in all academic activities.
- CEO – responsible for the coordination and functionality of the business subsystem.

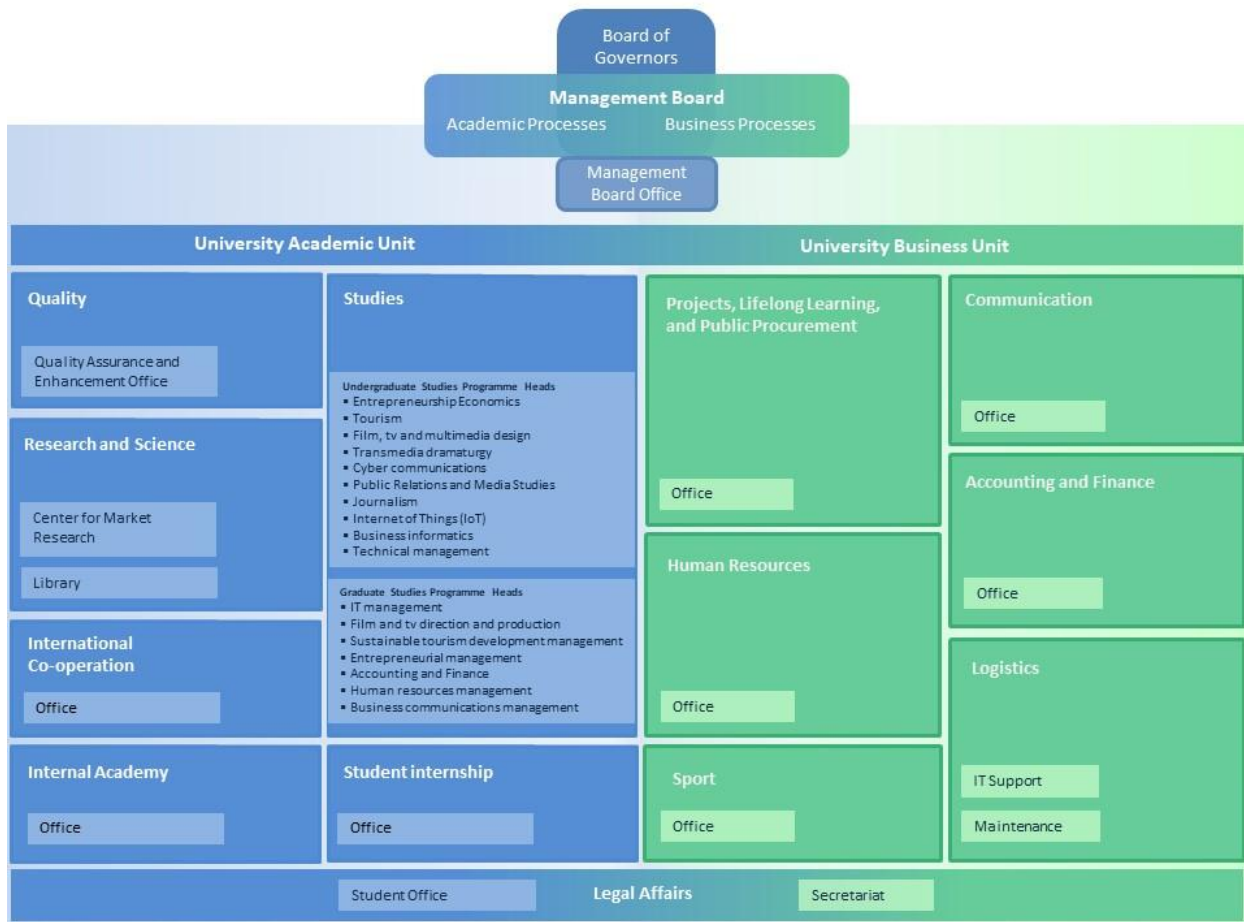
The Management Board acts in accordance with the applicable legal regulations, internal acts of the University, and strategic development guidelines. Such an organizational architecture enables stable, transparent, and efficient management in accordance with the requirements of the Agency for Science and Higher Education (AZVO) and the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The management process of the University is defined through key strategic elements (mission, vision, values, strategic goals, including quality policy and monitoring of the realization of set goals).

The strategic goals of the University are a framework for the recognition of future actions. The identified opportunities, such as further development by creating new study programs through the university institution or expansion beyond the national business framework, are incorporated into the set guidelines for strategic action.

Given its mission, the University strives to develop governance models that are based on agility, transparency, and sustainability. Financial management shall be carried out in accordance with the principles of efficiency and rationality, with particular attention paid to long-term sustainability and diversification of sources of income.

The entire organizational structure can be illustrated by the following organizational chart:



**1.2.3. Using the quality assurance system and available information systems, the higher education institution collects data, processes it, analyses it and creates reports using various methods. Based on the results of the analyses, further activities and improvements are planned using a risk- and opportunity-based approach. The administration and the competent authorities take well-founded decisions. Students and other stakeholders are involved in these processes.**

The University's own VERN'Qual quality assurance system plays a key role in supporting management processes. Through the collection and processing of data through surveys, internal analyses, stakeholder feedback, and external evaluations, the University engages in ongoing evaluation of its processes and grounds its decision-making in concrete, data-informed indicators. The administration and competent authorities use these insights to make strategic and operational decisions that lead to improvements at all levels of the University's work. The VERN'Qual quality assurance system is described in more detail in the chapter [1.5](#).

The University intensively uses information systems to monitor business and academic processes, which are discussed in more detail in the chapter [1.3](#), most of which have been developed at the University and financed by its own funds.

Students are systematically involved in evaluation and advisory processes, especially through their participation in the Senate and the Quality Council of the University. In this sense, the University fosters a culture of participation and open communication with all stakeholders, and especially encourages student engagement in filling out student surveys as an important element of improving the quality of teaching and the overall student experience.

**1.2.4. The higher education institution shall regularly and transparently report on the implementation of the strategy, operations and the implementation of program agreements, where applicable.**

As a private higher education institution, the University is not subject to the Government Regulation on Programme Funding for Public Higher Education Institutions and Public Scientific Institutes in the Republic of Croatia, nor to the law regulating the budget system and by-laws adopted on the basis of the law regulating the budget system. The University regularly monitors the implementation of its strategy, the achievement of its goals and operations. ([Source: Annual Activity Plan and Implementation Report for 2024](#)). Also, the University regularly reports to its employees during regular collective meetings ([Source: Collective Meeting Program](#)).

**1.2.5. A higher education institution manages financial resources transparently, efficiently, purposefully and sustainably.**

Please refer to the chapter [4.6](#) containing financial data, and in particular the sub-chapter [4.6.4](#).

### **1.3. A higher education institution ensures the collection, analysis, and use of information relevant to the efficient management of all activities and publishes information about its work.**

#### **1.3.1. Using the quality assurance system and available information systems, a higher education institution collects data (on employees, students, programs, etc.) by various methods, analyzes them, and uses relevant information for the purpose of monitoring trends, reporting on its activities, planning further activities and making informed decisions. Students and other stakeholders are involved in these processes.**

The University systematically collects, analyses, and uses data on students, employees, and study programs through quality assurance systems and available information systems. National systems, such as the “*Postani student*” portal and the Student Rights Information System (ISSP), have been supplemented with the University's internal tools, thus ensuring comprehensive monitoring of teaching and administrative processes.

The analyzed data serves as a basis for monitoring trends, creating reports, planning activities, and making decisions in accordance with the mission and strategic goals of the University. Students and other stakeholders are involved in the process, strengthening transparency, participation, and ensuring that decisions are based on relevant information. In this way, the University fully meets the requirements of the standard on the systematic use of data for quality assurance.

#### **1.3.2. A higher education institution shall use information systems to monitor indicators on the fulfilment of legal requirements for the performance of higher education and scientific or artistic activities, where applicable.**

The integration of internal and national systems enables the University to comprehensively monitor and manage legal, high-quality, and safe processes in higher education and scientific activity. All data on the fulfilment of legal requirements have been updated in the ISPiK information system based on data obtained from its own information system. This approach continuously confirms the University's compliance with legal frameworks, safety standards, and quality requirements, thus ensuring a high degree of trust and responsibility in academic and managerial work.

#### **1.3.3. The higher education institution has a strategy for the digital transformation of education, which is integrated into the overall strategy for institutional development and quality improvement.**

The [Digital Transformation Strategy was also adopted](#), in which the University envisions its development as a leading and fully digitally transformed educational institution that sets new standards in the higher education sector in the Republic of Croatia and the region. The vision of a digitally transformed University implies an environment in which technology is no longer an auxiliary tool, but a key element of everyday functioning, excellence, and innovation.

#### **1.3.4. A higher education institution shall electronically keep records of data and ensure access to and exchange of data in accordance with the national legislative framework.**

The University systematically monitors and documents the scientific, artistic, and professional activities of its lecturers through the national information system CroRIS, which combines data on scientists, institutions, projects, publications, and other elements of scientific work. Data on higher education institutions and study programs are also recorded in the registers of the Ministry of Science, Education, and Youth, which ensures accurate and up-to-date records.

For internal academic and business administration, the University uses its own Eduneta system, which enables simple and efficient management of data and processes. All information systems and records are aligned with the principles of interoperability with national applications, which enables secure, transparent, and efficient data exchange.

The University uses the infrastructure of the Croatian Academic and Research Network (CARNET) for secure and efficient electronic communication, and the SRCE University Computing Centre provides key computer and information services and connectivity with national and international networks. Administrative and commercial processes are supported by the Agency for commercial activity (AKD), while the Information System of Higher Education Registers (ISeVO) enables centralized data exchange with national registers. The digital diploma register ensures electronic verification and validation of issued diplomas, increasing the transparency and security of academic qualifications, and the ISPiK system enables secure management of confidential data.

The project "Digital transformation of the VERN University to strengthen competitiveness", implemented in the period from April 3, 2023 to April 3, 2025 as part of the Grant Agreement from the Recovery and Resilience Program ([Source: Agreement – Digital Transformation](#)), represents a strategic initiative aimed at the systematic integration of digital transformation into the business processes and academic activities of the University.

The "VERN' student" and "VERN' teaching" applications for students and lecturers, developed as part of the Digital Transformation Project, have been introduced as a strategic tool for all stakeholders within the academic and business system. Through the modules for conversations, notifications, documents, and reminders, faster and clearer internal communication is enabled.

By implementing these applications, digital communication has been improved on several levels. Special emphasis is placed on functionalities that enable targeted structured communication with candidates in the enrollment process, which significantly improves the quality of user experience, especially for new generations of students who are oriented towards digital communication channels. The application has significantly improved communication between students, lecturers, and administrative staff through the digitization of class schedules and exams, the establishment of a system for the exchange of documents, and the possibility of monitoring student regularity and academic results. Push notifications, digital schedules, documents, and chat modules ensure a constant and two-way connection of all participants in the educational process.

The University electronically keeps records of persons registered for the enrolment procedure, students, certificates, diplomas, supplementary documents, employees, and external associates. Records are stored and processed in Eduneta internal information system, which encompasses a wide range of administrative and academic activities. The system shall provide secure and timely access to data to all authorised users and shall ensure the exchange of data with relevant national systems in accordance with applicable legislation. Eduneta is a key tool for systematic monitoring and record-keeping, as well as an important instrument for the efficient management of educational and scientific processes, which contributes to transparency, quality and continuous improvement of the University's work.

#### **1.3.5. A higher education institution has prescribed measures for the use of information systems and ensuring information security and implements them consistently.**

The University has clearly defined measures for the use of information systems and ensuring information security, which are consistently implemented in accordance with the applicable legal frameworks. The data collection and processing processes are in accordance with the Personal Data Protection Act and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ([Source: Data Subject Consent Form](#)). [The Regulations on the Content and Use of Information Systems](#) was adopted, which regulates the keeping, content, method of entry, protection, interoperability and security of records on students, employees, enrolments, curricula and documents at the University.

At the University level, a personal data protection officer has been appointed to supervise the application of the prescribed security measures ([Source: Decision on the appointment of the personal data protection officer](#)). The Eduneta information system, in which all data on students, employees, enrollments, certificates and diplomas are electronically kept, is designed to ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of data, with strict access control and regular security checks.

#### **1.3.6. Clear, accurate, objective and valid information on study programs and the work of a higher education institution is publicly and easily available in Croatian and another world language.**

Information on all study programs offered by the University is published and available in Croatian and English on the [University website](#). In the segment of public information on the website, the activities of the University are presented through periodical publications in the main sections [Current Affairs](#) and [Events](#), as well as in the thematic sections Formula of Success, VERN' Sport and VERN' Culture, as well as the program of cooperation with the industry [#EducationmeetsBusiness](#).

In addition to distribution through the website, these posts are also distributed through the official accounts of the University on social networks and channels such as [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), and [TikTok](#), depending on the topic and form of publication.

**1.3.7. A higher education institution is obliged to inform the interested public about: enrolment criteria, enrolment quotas, study and educational programs, learning outcomes and qualifications, forms of support available to students, procedures applied in teaching, learning and assessment, pass rates, and learning opportunities available to students, as well as success in employing graduates.**

Detailed information on enrolment criteria, enrolment quotas, study and educational programs, learning outcomes and qualifications, forms of support available to students, evaluation, as well as success in employing graduates has been published on the [University's website](#). In addition, the University informs the interested public and applicants of the State Matura through updated data on the [website of the National Information System for Higher Education Institutions](#).

As part of the public information segment, the University also conducts presentations in secondary schools, aimed at students of the final grades of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina ([Source: Report on the tour of secondary schools](#)). These activities enable a systematic presentation of study programs, admission criteria, learning outcomes, and qualifications that students acquire during their studies, as well as opportunities for personal and professional development. The presentation activities of the University are also directed towards the central events of higher education, previously towards [the University of Zagreb Festival](#), and in the last few years towards the [EXPO University of Dubrovnik Festival](#). At these events, visitors are informed about the ways of enrollment at the University, study programs, and extracurricular activities.

Information on study programs, admission criteria, enrolment procedure, and qualifications, as well as forms of support, are also communicated to students and the interested public at the [Open Undergraduate Study Hour](#) and [the Orientation Day](#), which are held separately for undergraduate and graduate levels, at beginning of the new academic year.

The University recognizes its social role through formal academic activities and through continuous engagement in socially relevant initiatives. Information about these activities is available to the general public through thematic informative announcements on the website, organization of public panel discussions and PR announcements ([Source: PR announcement plan](#)), but also through direct actions of students and lecturers of the University. The socially useful activities of the students of the University include the organization [of humanitarian and volunteer actions](#) and other initiatives that contribute to the well-being of the community.

Examples of such activities reflect the diversity and strategic approach of the University in achieving social responsibility. [The international professional conference TeachDays25](#), aimed at supporting teachers, shows the University's contribution to the educational community through public discussions. [The production partnership at the Kliofest History Festival](#) contributes to the spread of public awareness and civic education, while [the academic partnership at the LEAP Summit conference](#) encourages the involvement of students and lecturers in socially useful projects and familiarization with technological and entrepreneurial trends. In addition, initiatives such as [the Innovation Academy summer school](#), in which the University participates as a project partner, and [the establishment of the fact-checking service TurFacto](#) for checking media facts in

the tourism sector, which the University implemented in partnership with the Croatian Association of Digital Publishers (HUDI), emphasize the University's commitment to informing the public and developing media literacy.

The University regularly, every quarter, monitors data on the registered unemployment rate of its graduates and informs the public about it. Information takes place through the website of the University. In the section of the project of cooperation with the economy #EducationmeetsBusiness "[Employability of VERN's alumni](#)", the data on the registered unemployment rate of graduates of the University are updated every quarter, both at the general level and at the level of each study. The registered unemployment rate is calculated on the basis of the registered unemployment data that the University receives from the Croatian Employment Service at the end of each quarter ([Source: University Student Unemployment Rate](#)).

A representative summary of information on studies, academic activities, extracurricular content, student successes, and business careers of former students of the University is available in [the University brochure](#), and in [the VERN'um newsletter](#), which is thematically oriented towards active and future students. In addition to digital form, both editions are also available in printed form.

These publications are distributed within the University, but also externally, at presentations in high schools that representatives of the University, together with active students, hold in front of graduates throughout Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The aim of these activities is to provide detailed information about study programs and life at the University, to encourage informed decision making when it comes to enrolling into university, and to promote the academic and extracurricular opportunities that the University has to offer. In addition, these editions are also presented at thematic events and educational fairs, where the University actively participates in the presentation of its programs and initiatives.

## **1.4. The higher education institution supports ethics and transparency of work, academic integrity and freedoms, and prevents all forms of unethical behavior, intolerance, and discrimination**

### **1.4.1. The higher education institution continuously promotes, supports, and ensures ethics and transparency of work, academic integrity, and freedom among all stakeholders (in theory and practice) within the entire organization, thus demonstrating its social responsibility.**

The University effectively implements continuous measures to promote ethics, academic integrity, and transparency of work by adopting and updating strategic documents, legal acts, and the application of technological tools. In 2021, in addition to the Policy for the Prevention of Academic Dishonesty and Unauthorized Takeover of Copyright ([Source: Policy for the Prevention of Academic Dishonesty and Unauthorized Takeover of Copyright](#)).

At the University, academic ethics as a value is present in the daily work of the lecturers, other employees from the business subsystem, students, and external associates. All stakeholders encourage a culture of responsible, honest, and open action, and academic integrity and respect for diversity represent a solid basis for all processes, which is determined in [the Development Strategy](#) and the Policy for the Prevention of Academic Dishonesty and Unauthorized Takeover of Copyright as the basis of action.

### **1.4.2. Higher education institution employees, students, and external stakeholders base their work on the principles of academic ethics.**

Clear rules and transparent evaluation procedures, the prohibition of plagiarism, and proper verification of the originality of papers enable, with the active role of the Ethics and Disciplinary Committee, honesty and trust within the institution (Source: [Instructions for the prevention of plagiarism in student papers](#)). Students are introduced to the principles of academic ethics during the introductory orientation program, where the Rector and the academic staff convey to them the basic values of the University and clear guidelines on responsibility in studying and working. During the study program, emphasis is placed on the development of awareness of one's own responsibility and ethical behavior, through numerous workshops, classes, and practical projects. Students of the University base their work on the principles of academic ethics, which they confirm by signing a statement on the independent preparation of the undergraduate or master's thesis, which ensures respect for sources and academic integrity ([Source: Statements on the independent preparation of the bachelor or graduate thesis](#)). External stakeholders and partners, from mentors in practice to guest lecturers, collaborate according to the same high standards of the academic community, whereby the University fosters a reliable and ethically aware environment for students, staff, and the wider community.

#### **1.4.3. The higher education institution effectively implements measures to prevent unethical behavior, intolerance, and discrimination.**

The University has adopted a new Code of Ethics ([Source: Code of Ethics](#)) in which it has determined the principles of professional and personal integrity, ways of protecting academic freedom and autonomy, preventing and sanctioning all forms of discrimination, promoting a culture of respect and tolerance, preventing conflicts of interest and abuse of position, protection and respect for intellectual property, mechanisms for reporting and dealing with ethical violations, and promoting social accountability and inclusiveness.

In 2025, [a new Ethics Committee](#) was appointed, which, based on the alignment with the new legislative framework, operates on the basis [of the Ethics Committee's Rules of Procedure](#), and whose scope is the implementation of the principles set out in the updated Code of Ethics. Also, [the Decision on the Establishment of the Disciplinary Committee for Employees and External Associates](#) and [the Regulations on Disciplinary Liability of Employees and External Associates and the Work of the Disciplinary Committee](#) harmonize the procedure in case of violation of the provisions of the Code of Ethics, which replaced the possibility of sanctioning certain acts through the institute of warning applied in the employment relationship.

The University has adopted [House Rules](#), which have been placed in all spaces at the University.

#### **1.4.4. The higher education institution carries out activities to sanction unethical behavior, intolerance, and discrimination, ensuring fair and impartial implementation of procedures for all involved.**

The University systematically and proactively implements measures to prevent unethical behavior, intolerance, and discrimination, ensuring a safe and supportive academic environment. After the disciplinary proceedings have been conducted, the decisions on the imposition of disciplinary measures are recorded in the Eduneta system. In addition, students who have been imposed a disciplinary measure are deprived of the right to a reduction in tuition fees based on their academic performance, which additionally has an educational effect and encourages compliance with ethical standards.

Inappropriate and unethical behavior is sanctioned by the application of disciplinary measures by conducting disciplinary proceedings regulated by the Regulations on Disciplinary Responsibility of Students and Participants of Educational Programs at the University ([Source: Regulations on Disciplinary Responsibility of Students and Participants of Educational Programs at VERN University](#)) and the Regulations on the Work of the Disciplinary Committee for Employees and External Associates. These regulations define minor and serious disciplinary offenses, which include unethical behavior and actions that significantly disrupt the academic process and academic standards. The Disciplinary Committee ([Source: Decision on the Appointment of the Disciplinary Committee for Students and Participants of Educational Programs at VERN University](#)) of the University also includes representatives of the student community, i.e. spokespersons for student groups, which ensures transparency and the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the process of evaluating and deciding on unethical

behavior. In the event of violations, lecturers, associates and students may be subject to disciplinary measures depending on the severity of the disciplinary offense committed, and in the most serious cases, students cease to have their right to study, employees have their employment terminated, and their cooperation with associates has been terminated.

**1.4.5. The system of competence for resolving conflicts and irregularities is defined and functional at all levels of higher education institutions.**

The legal framework of the University has been established in a way that enables the efficient implementation of procedures before the competent bodies authorized to resolve conflicts and irregularities. The largest number of situations that may arise in the teaching process is resolved at the lowest level, under the jurisdiction of the Head of Studies and the Vice-Rector for Studies. [The Regulations on the Procedure for Internal Reporting of Irregularities and the Appointment of a Confidential Person](#) was adopted, on the basis of which the University appointed a confidential person for reporting irregularities and his/her deputy ([Source: Decision on the appointment of a confidential person](#)), a person authorized to receive and resolve complaints in the field of protection of the dignity of workers, and a personal data protection officer acting in accordance with the applicable regulations ([Source: Data Protection Officer – Decision](#)). All appointed persons are authorized to take measures appropriate to the specific circumstances of each individual case. In the area of disciplinary liability, in the first instance, decisions are made by the Secretary of the University or by the Disciplinary Committee, depending on the type of violation. Decisions made in the first instance may be appealed, which are decided by the Rector in the second instance. In exceptional cases, when procedures are carried out that may result in the recall of the Rector, the final decision is made by the Board of Directors.

**1.4.6. The higher education institution encourages research into the causes and consequences of unethical behavior, the effectiveness of measures taken to prevent it, reports on research results and monitors trends.**

The University systematically encourages research into the causes and consequences of unethical behavior in its community by encouraging the continuous scientific and professional activity of its employees and students and the public publication of the results of such activities, especially in the teaching process in courses closely related to ethics, academic integrity, law and related fields.

**1.4.7. The higher education institution applies new technologies with the aim of eradicating all forms of unethical behavior. The higher education institution systematically solves the problems of plagiarism, copying and falsification of results.**

The university uses a variety of tools and software packages available, including free and official systems, to independently detect plagiarism, overwriting, and falsification of results. Once irregularities have been identified, the procedure continues in accordance with the University's Code of Ethics. Since its establishment, the University has used the official plagiarism checker PlagScan, and since 2025 it has continued to use the Turnitin tool, which is available to all

lecturers ([Source: Turnitin license account](#)). Lecturers also have the option of independently using freely available tools for checking the authenticity of papers, such as Plagiarism Checker, Viper, or The Antiplagiarism Scanner, to further ensure the academic quality and integrity of the teaching process.

[The Regulations on Disciplinary Liability of Students and Participants of Educational Programs](#) and [the Regulations on the Disciplinary Liability of Employees and External Associates and the Work of the Disciplinary Committee](#) consider plagiarism, copying, and falsification of data as serious disciplinary offenses that are subject to appropriate disciplinary measures.

## **1.5. The quality assurance system is periodically improved and revised based on the results of the implementation of regular internal and external quality assurance procedures.**

### **1.5.1. The higher education institution supports the development of a quality culture that promotes the importance of active participation in internal and external quality assurance processes among all higher education institution stakeholders so that they can fulfill their purpose, act as a catalyst for change, and offer new perspectives.**

In successfully achieving academic standards and meeting the needs of all stakeholders in higher education, the University has adopted and consistently applies the highest national and international norms and quality standards. Systematic care for quality, as well as responsibility for maintaining the existing level and its continuous improvement, are the permanent orientation of the University, which it achieves in cooperation with internal and external stakeholders. To achieve this, the University has established a functional VERN'Qual quality assurance and management system that is in line with *the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG). VERN'Qual represents a unique quality system that operates in accordance with ESG standards and is evaluated according to them. Its purpose is to ensure, maintain, and continuously improve quality in all areas of the University's activities. The VERN'Qual system encompasses all processes and is regulated by *the Quality Policy* ([Source: Quality Policy](#)), *the Quality Manual* ([Source: Quality Manual](#)), and other internal documents. The organizational structure of the system consists of the Management Board, the Quality Council, and the Office for Quality Assurance and Improvement.

In order to continuously raise awareness of current trends in the context of the development of the quality culture, the University ensures the participation of all its stakeholders in internal and external quality assurance procedures. These are, first of all, employees and students, but also members of the Management Board and ownership structure, external associates, and representatives of the academic and business community (employers – practitioners, business partners on academic projects, scientific institutes, etc.).

The University provides the necessary education and information about the VERN'Qual quality system for all permanent employees involved in various processes and segments of activity, as well as for external associates in the teaching process. As part of this, workshops were held in January 2025 with the aim of informing University employees about the VERN'Qual quality system and preparing them for the internal assessment planned for September 2025 ([Source: List of workshop participants](#)).

Furthermore, the University ensures the systematic participation of representatives of various stakeholder groups, the academic and business community, students and external associates, in the work of the Quality Council ([Source: Regulations on Quality Assurance and Improvement](#)) and the Internal Audit Committee ([Internal Audit Committee](#)).

**1.5.2. The quality assurance system is periodically improved and revised based on the results of the implementation of regular internal and external quality assurance procedures in accordance with ESG, and stakeholders are informed in a timely, clear, accurate, and objective manner.**

Internal and external quality assurance procedures are carried out with the aim of identifying room for further improvement of the VERN'Qual quality system. Stakeholders are informed about the results of the procedures in a timely and objective manner through Eduneta internal information system, e-mail, and orally at meetings of the Senate, Management Board and [Quality Council \(Source: Minutes of Quality Council meetings\)](#). The [findings are used for further enhancements](#). The quality system is further developed on the basis of reports on the implementation of planned activities in individual processes, as well as reports on the implementation of the VERN'Qual activity plan.

**1.5.3. A higher education institution shall carry out the internal evaluation procedure of the quality assurance system in a cycle that is shorter than the length of the external evaluation cycle.**

Since the last external evaluation procedure, which was conducted on 9 and 10 April 2019, the University has conducted two internal evaluations of the system, in February 2020 ([Source: Internal Assessment Plan 2020](#)) and in September 2025 ([Source: Internal Evaluation Plan 2025](#)), which is included in the external evaluation cycle in the period between April 2019 and November 2025. The internal assessment procedure at the University is regulated by the Internal Assessment Procedure, which describes in detail the internal evaluation procedure at the University ([Source: Internal Assessment Procedure](#)). The last, 19th internal audit was carried out in September 2025 ([Source: 19th Internal Audit Report](#));

**1.5.4. A higher education institution ensures the competence of internal assessors and encourages them and enables them to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills.**

The work of the Internal Audit Committee includes stakeholders from various segments of the University's activities, the academic and business community, and student representatives, who have been previously informed and trained through workshops on the activities and obligations of the Committee members. The workshops are organized by the Head of the Office for Quality Assurance and Improvement, a certified manager, and quality assessor. For the purposes of internal judgement, in September 2025, the workshops were held on February 19 and September 3 of the same year ([Source: Minutes of the meetings](#)).

**1.5.5. Higher education institution shall ensure that the preparation for internal and external quality assurance procedures considers the progress made since the last internal and external quality assurance procedures which in turn form a cycle of continuous improvement and contribution to the responsibility of the institution.**

The VERN'Qual quality system is based on the principles of Deming's concept of the circle methodology (PDCA – Plan-Do-Check-Act), which is based on continuous improvements. The

processes of the system, integrated into the work of the organizational units of the University, are managed in such a way that planning is based on reports on the realization of the goals of the previous period. In the case of partial or unrealized realization, the causes are determined and measures are proposed to prevent recurrence.

**1.5.6. The joint impact that internal and external quality assurance processes have on the development of a higher education institution is analysed and monitored. Higher education institutions publish clear, accurate, objective, valid and easily accessible information on internal and external evaluation procedures.**

In order to ensure continuous improvements, an Action Plan for the multiannual period is developed on the basis of internal and external assessment reports ([Source: Action Plan for the Multiannual Period](#)), as well as the Annual Plan of Activities of VERN'Qual, which is prepared by the Vice-Rector for Science and Quality ([Source: Annual Plan of Activities of VERN'Qual for 2025](#)). The last Internal Audit Report was prepared on September 16, 2025 ([Source: Internal Audit Report](#)) and distributed to all participants in the process through Eduneta internal system.

**1.5.7. Higher education institutions publish clear, accurate, objective, valid and easily accessible information on internal and external evaluation procedures.**

In the context of the interaction of internal and external quality assurance, the University continuously analyses and monitors key indicators of the achievement of goals at all levels, from strategic to operational, in accordance with the time dynamics determined by the planning documents. The University informs the public about the results of internal and external evaluations in a timely and transparent manner through the internal Eduneta platform and official e-mail.

## 2. Study programs and lifelong learning programs

## **2.1. The anticipated learning outcomes of the study program are in accordance with the competencies that the student should acquire upon completion of the study program and correspond to the level of the CROQF (ESG 1.2).**

### **2.1.1. The anticipated learning outcomes of study programs and all elements of study programs (courses, modules, exercises, seminars, supplementary projects, etc.) are clearly defined, and examples of good practice are used to define the envisaged learning outcomes (e.g. ECTS Guide 2015).**

The University systematically uses learning outcomes as a fundamental tool to ensure the quality and relevance of the study programs. They are harmonized with national and European standards (CROQF and EKO), and elaborated according to the Dublin Descriptors and Bloom's taxonomy, which allows for clear monitoring of the level of student achievement. The outcomes are precisely defined and vertically connected, starting from the outcomes that describe the academic level, i.e. mapping the outcomes of the study program to the outcomes of teaching units (individual elective courses, projects, seminars, and practice). (Source: [Table 2.1 of the Analytical annex to the Self-Analysis](#)).

### **2.1.2. The envisaged learning outcomes are in line with the mission and objectives of the higher education institution.**

In accordance with the fundamental principle of the VERN' University Strategy 2030, the institutional mission which emphasizes creativity, entrepreneurship and business expertise while developing social responsibility and modern horizontal knowledge and skills, has been integrated into the final learning outcomes. The outcomes therefore reflect an entrepreneurial approach, academic excellence and responsibility towards the community.

### **2.1.3. The anticipated learning outcomes of study programs and all elements of study programs are mutually harmonized.**

The University conducted an audit of the consistency between the outcomes at the level of the study program and the outcomes of individual courses, which is documented in the form of a matrix of program outcomes in [the analytical annex, Table 2.1](#). The matrices of the study program show the interconnection of goals, learning outcomes and all courses. At the undergraduate level, elective courses in this context are designed to expand the knowledge acquired through compulsory courses and allow students to direct their education towards their own interests or professional goals. At the graduate level, joint elective courses also serve to expand knowledge and research abilities, encourage critical thinking, integration of interdisciplinary content and the development of advanced professional competencies necessary for independent and responsible action.

The learning outcomes of the study programs together form a coherent and harmonized whole that ensures the achievement of all the envisaged competencies of the study program. Learning outcomes at the level of the study program represent the basis for the formation of learning

outcomes at the course level, which then serve to select teaching methods, define methods of knowledge assessment and develop an assessment system later described in the standard [2.2.4](#).

The correlation between expected and achieved outcomes is regularly checked through lecturer feedback, but also through student feedback . ([Source: Results and report of the student survey](#)).

**2.1.4. The anticipated outcomes are used as a starting point for the development and revision of the study program, the implementation of the study program, and the evaluation and evaluation of student achievement. They are designed to enable unhindered progress of students through their studies.**

As part of the institutional improvement, the University systematically approached the revision of the envisaged learning outcomes, which directly responded to the recommendations from the previous re-accreditation process. The revision process began with the development of the Strategic Framework for the period 2020-2030, which is an integral part of the University's comprehensive development strategy. In accordance with this framework, during 2021 and 2022, working groups composed of heads, lecturers and practitioners were formed, which conducted a thorough analysis of the existing syllabuses and implementation plans. After the adoption of the Activity Plan for the follow-up period, an additional working group was formed in charge of reviewing and harmonizing all syllabuses at the undergraduate and graduate level ([Source: Decision on the formation of the working group and minutes of the meeting](#)) and a series of meetings of the working group were held in order to harmonize all syllabuses ([Source: Minutes of the meetings of the working groups for ECTS credits](#)). Also, a workshop on learning outcomes for course holders was held ([Source: Workshop for course holders - syllabus revision](#)). In the systematic audit of outcomes at the graduate level, guided by the legislative guidelines and principles of the CROQF, the methods of knowledge assessment (colloquia, essays, project assignments, diploma theses) were also harmonized. After the entire process of harmonizing the outcomes of studies and the implementation of the audit of learning outcomes at the undergraduate and graduate levels, the results of the implementation of all activities were presented at the 2024 employee meeting and emphasis was placed on the key parts of the implemented process in order to inform and raise awareness of the collective about the importance of what has been done ([Source: Presentation at the employee meeting - implementation of activities](#)). Study leaders regularly monitor the alignment of learning outcomes through course performance plans and teacher feedback. The outcomes are an integral part of the syllabus and are available to students on the Eduneta portal every academic year. An example from one subject shows the consistency of outcomes, teaching methods and knowledge testing ([Source: Syllabus and Implementation Plan](#)). All audits reflect the current compliance of teaching content with clearly defined learning outcomes, and the application of all levels of Bloom's taxonomy allows for a variety of methods of testing knowledge in courses.

For the purpose of more transparent evaluation of students and their advancement through studies, the University regularly organizes workshops for the professional development of lecturers, focused on didactics and teaching methodology, preparation of interactive teaching, student-centered approach and active learning. Special attention is paid to the evaluation and

evaluation of student work, including common teaching mistakes, different types of knowledge assessment, and linking learning outcomes with their verification procedures. As part of professional development, the University involves lecturers in methodological-didactic workshops within the VERN'Academy ([Source: Methodical-didactic workshop](#)), with a special emphasis on constructive alignment. This systematically improves the methodological knowledge of lecturers and emphasizes the importance of quality planning and preparation of classes, especially for new associates who directly affect the quality of the teaching process. As proof of the application of constructive alignment, examples of exams with clearly indicated learning outcomes are also attached ([Source: Examples of exams](#)).

**2.1.5. The anticipated learning outcomes of the study programs are in accordance with the descriptors of the level of the CROQF and the ECO at which the program is proposed. The qualifications awarded under the program are clearly described and presented.**

The anticipated learning outcomes of the study programs carried out by the University correspond to the level and profile of the qualifications they acquire. The implementation of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) ensures comparability and recognition of competences, which encourages mobility at the national and European level. In shaping learning outcomes, the University fully follows the criteria prescribed by the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF), whereby the levels of qualifications corresponding to the undergraduate and graduate level of a study programme are clearly differentiated. The learning outcomes of the program are structured in such a way that they precisely correspond to the expected knowledge, skills and competencies defined for each level, with a clear progression between the undergraduate and graduate levels. In undergraduate studies, students are trained to evaluate specialized facts, concepts, and theoretical frameworks within a particular field. In graduate studies, previous knowledge and skills are upgraded, providing a higher degree of specialization, as well as the intellectual autonomy and the ability to independently deal with complex problems. At this level, students apply the knowledge they have learned in unfamiliar and more demanding contexts, develop critical thinking and innovative problem-solving skills, and acquire competencies necessary for professional responsibility and active cooperation within multidisciplinary teams. The ability to connect theory and practice, and to effectively manage development activities in professional contexts that are often complex and unpredictable is expected. The focus of students on a personal level is manifested in strategic decision-making, ethical judgments and team leadership, which confirms professional autonomy. Learning outcomes at both levels clearly reflect the complexity and the extent of professional independence expected of the student (Sources: [Supplementary Document Undergraduate Study](#), [Supplementary Document Graduate Study](#)).

**2.1.6. The envisaged learning outcomes of the study programs clearly reflect the competences needed for inclusion in the labour market, continuation of education or other personal needs of the individual/society**

The envisaged learning outcomes of study programs clearly reflect the competencies needed to continue in the education process, due to the fact that after completing professional or university

undergraduate studies, students can continue their education within the institution, in related graduate studies. Special emphasis is placed on horizontal connectivity through elective courses that allow students flexibility and individualization of their studies. In this way, students develop additional competencies in various fields and acquire the foundations for further training. Feedback from external stakeholders is of particular value in ensuring the quality of study programs. Partners from the business sector who cooperate with the University expressed general satisfaction with the knowledge and skills that students showed while working with them, emphasizing their creativity, analyticity and ability to think in a structured way. Communication between the University and employers mainly takes place through lecturers, course holders and the Office for Practice, which is described in more detail in the chapter [2.3](#). The alignment of learning outcomes with labour market needs is also confirmed by the high employability indicators of graduates ([Source: CES data on employability](#)), with the share of registered unemployed at the end of 2024 being only 1,63 % of all University graduates ([Table 3.6. Analytical annex](#)). Such indicators of high employability, i.e. low unemployment of graduates of the University have been such since the first day of VERN's operation. One of the reasons for this is that particular attention has been placed on the development of professional competences that support employability, self-employability and active and responsible participation in society. Some alumni examples are a testament to this ([This is a testament to the success of this approach](#)), with the results of the University's best Alumni showing that learning outcomes are significantly aligned with the needs of the labour market, as much on the national as on the international level.

#### **2.1.7. The anticipated learning outcomes of study programs are comparable to the anticipated learning outcomes of related programs in the Republic of Croatia and EU countries.**

As part of the process of harmonization with quality standards, learning outcomes are compatible with the programs of other higher education institutions in the European Union. In terms of content and structure, they are aligned with the European Qualifications Framework and enable horizontal and vertical mobility of students as well as the recognition of qualifications in the European Higher Education Area. Horizontal student mobility, which enables the transition between domestic and foreign higher education institutions with the recognition of previously earned ECTS credits and learning outcomes, also confirms the compliance of study programs with similar programs in the Republic of Croatia and the countries of the European Union. This ensures that the envisaged learning outcomes are comparable, allowing for easier recognition of previous formal education, the determination of differential examinations and continuity in studies without loss of quality or level of competence achieved. This approach contributes to the transparency and compatibility of study programs within the European Higher Education Area ([Source: Example of Continuing Studies Abroad](#)). Through a modular structure and compliance with the qualification frameworks, the study programs enable students to transition between related studies, both within the University and from other higher education institutions from the Republic of Croatia or the EU as later described in the standard [2.2.7](#).

### **2.1.8. The envisaged learning outcomes of the study programs also include the development of generic (general/key/transferable) and professionally specific competencies.**

A high degree of alignment of educational objectives with the development of final competencies has been achieved. All study programs include the development of general generic competencies, such as communication and business literacy, analytical thinking, teamwork, ICT skills, ethical principles and knowledge of foreign languages, as well as the acquisition of professional and specialized knowledge and skills. In this way, the integrity of education is ensured and students are employed in various sectors, including multicultural or international frameworks ([Source: Example of the knowledge they acquire during their studies](#)).

### **2.1.9. The envisaged learning outcomes of the study programs include the strengthening of ethical awareness and the ability to think ethically and apply ethical principles in decision-making related to professional and profession-related issues that occur in a multicultural context.**

Learning outcomes include competences of ethical thinking and action, social responsibility and the ability to face multicultural challenges. In the review of the outcomes of the University's studies, it is evident that standards such as ethical awareness and critical thinking are systematically integrated into study programs. The programs include ethical principles that are operationalized through the learning outcomes of individual courses, where students are taught the development of ethical awareness and responsibility, with an emphasis on integrity and social responsibility. In addition, the learning outcomes of individual courses encourage critical thinking and judgment within professional and social topics and emphasize the importance of applying ethical principles in decision-making related to the practice of a particular profession. ([Source: Example of a syllabus with ethical content](#)). At the graduate level, the emphasis is on making strategic decisions in accordance with ethical principles, promoting equity and inclusion in human resources management, ethical communication in an intercultural context, and assessing the effects of public policies on local communities.

Some programs further emphasize the multicultural context, which ensures the preparation of students to work in diverse professional environments. This dimension is further strengthened by the participation of students and lecturers in international exchange programs (e.g. Erasmus+), which contributes to the development of intercultural competences and the application of ethical principles in a global educational and professional environment.

## **2.2. The higher education institution has established processes for the planning and development of new and monitoring and periodic revision of existing study programs.**

### **2.2.1. The processes for the development of new and continuous improvement of existing study programs are clearly defined, involve internal and external stakeholders, are consistently implemented and undergo a formal approval process within the higher education institution.**

The University has developed a systematic, transparent and inclusive methodology for planning, developing and regularly reviewing study programs. The primary goal of this system is to ensure the permanent up-to-date nature of the curriculum, its scientific and professional foundation and compliance with the needs of society, the labor market and students. In accordance with the 2019 re-accreditation recommendations, the University has implemented a reform of the institutional system for the revision of study programs, which has further strengthened the quality, relevance and adaptability of the educational offer. The planning and audit processes are based on the multi-layered participation of internal and external stakeholders, including heads of study, lecturers, students, guest lecturers, representatives of the business sector and professional associations. The development of new programs and the revision of existing programs are subject to verification by the Management Board and final approval at the Senate level. The procedures for the development of new programs and the revision of existing programs are regulated by institutional regulations.

Since the academic year 2021/2022, the University has clearly defined internal methodological frameworks for the planning and launch of new and for the revision of existing study programs (Source: [Regulations on the Procedure for the Introduction, Development, Improvement and Revision of Study Programs](#)). By implementing coordinated and systematically documented activities defined in the Action Plan, the University has demonstrated a high level of institutional reflection, capacity and responsibility in shaping educational policies, fully aligned with ESG standards and quality principles.

In accordance with its mission and strategic commitments, the University systematically works on improving the quality and development of the study programs with the aim of strengthening the university component of studies as well as increasing the recognition and relevance of the educational possibilities at the university. In this context, the process of transforming three graduate professional studies into graduate university studies began.

One of the key steps in the process of initial accreditation of new study programs is to obtain the opinion of the Croatian Employment Service (HZZ) on the justification for their launch in relation to the needs of the labour market. In doing so, the University has initiated the following procedures:

- A request has been prepared for the Agency for Science and Higher Education to initiate the initial accreditation of the study that transforms the existing professional graduate

study of *Business Communications Management* into the university study of *Digital Communications and Promotion* ([Source: Application for initial accreditation of the study](#)).

- A positive opinion of the CES was obtained on the justification for launching a new graduate university study in the field of arts, which is created by the transformation of the professional graduate study of *Film and Television Directing and Production* ([Source: Opinion on the Harmonization of Art Studies for the Needs of the Labor Market](#)).
- A positive opinion of the CES was also obtained on the justification for launching a new graduate university study in the field of technical sciences, which is created by the transformation of the professional graduate study of *IT Management* ([Source: Opinion on the Harmonization of Technical Studies for the Needs of the Labor Market](#)).

These steps confirm the alignment of the planned development activities of the University with the needs of the labor market and with the national guidelines for the improvement of the higher education system.

**2.2.2. Key indicators for monitoring the quality of studies are defined, methods of collecting and analyzing the necessary information that result in reports with proposals for improving the program. In order to create an effective environment for learning and student support, student workload, progression, pass and completion are evaluated; the effectiveness of student evaluation procedures; students' expectations, needs, and satisfaction with the programs, as well as the learning environment and the expediency of program support services.**

In order to ensure a stimulating and effective learning environment, the study program systematically monitors the progress, passing and completion of students. The obtained data represent a key basis for planning and implementing measures aimed at improving the teaching process and student support system. The analysis of passing by year is carried out once a semester, using data collected through the internal Eduneta system. The processing and interpretation of these data enables the monitoring of relevant study quality indicators and the timely identification of deviations or illogicalities. The reports are regularly submitted to the heads, who take appropriate measures to continuously improve the teaching process and the quality of the student experience ([Source: Performance Report 24-25 Minutes](#)).

Quality monitoring is based on the analysis of a number of indicators such as student surveys ([Source: Results and report of the student survey 24-25](#)) and graduate exit surveys ([Source: Example of an exit survey](#)) and these are used to make suggestions for improvement. This way of collecting feedback includes the criteria of transparency, objectivity and consistency, and the [results are analyzed](#) and used as a basis for improving the quality of studying.

**2.2.3. Changes to study programs have been recorded and current versions of study programs have been published.**

The initiative to propose minor changes to the study program, such as the introduction of a new course, can be initiated at the micro level by the course holder themselves. In accordance with the

Regulations on the Procedure for the Improvement and Revision of Study Programs, the proposal is sent to the Head of Studies. After obtaining the opinion of the Management Board, such minor changes are adopted by the Senate at the proposal of the Rector, through the acceptance of a new study plan ([Source: Introduction of a new course – procedure, minutes](#)). Regardless of the method used, feedback received from students, lectures and, where possible, external stakeholders is a key element in the process of reviewing and reviewing the program. ([Source: Review of alumni competencies – example of confirmation](#)). All changes to study programs and implementation plans are recorded in the official documentation of the institution, and new versions of the program are published on the website of the University in a timely manner.

#### **2.2.4. The content of study programs enables the acquisition of the anticipated learning outcomes.**

The preparation of study programs pays special attention to the connection of teaching content with basic and modern skills and with the needs of the profession. General and generic competences are grouped into courses that enable their systematic acquisition, while competences relevant to the development of the profession are linked to specific courses and defined learning outcomes. The hierarchy of learning outcomes represents the basis for the vertical alignment of goals in the planning of study programs. At the initial level, the general outcomes according to the national qualifications frameworks are taken into account, then specific outcomes for individual areas that are important for the outcomes of the study program are specified, and finally the outcomes of individual courses and teaching units themselves. The content of study programs is designed to enable the achievement of the envisaged learning outcomes at all levels, which ensures consistency between the planned objectives, teaching activities and expected competencies of students. For example, the undergraduate university study of the Internet of Things (IoT) is designed as a multidisciplinary technical program that evenly encompasses the fields of mathematics, physics, electrical engineering and computer science, with the simultaneous development of technical literacy in Croatian and English. Similarly, the study of Film, Television and Multimedia Design (FTMO) is conceived as an interdisciplinary program that integrates film and filmmaking knowledge and skills (directing, dramaturgy, editing, production, recording, sound design) with new media practices (computer animation, web design, multimedia design, computer games, transmedia storytelling) and design content. In this way, the contents of study programs confirm and enable the acquisition of anticipated learning outcomes in an interdisciplinary context.

**2.2.5. The content of the study programs is in the light of the latest scientific/artistic and professional research in the given discipline, which ensures the modernity of the programs, their compliance with the changed needs of society and the needs and expectations of students.**

When proposing amendments, the latest scientific knowledge and skills based on it shall be taken into account, strategic documents and national and regional needs of the professional sector. In the process of developing new study programs, the University starts from an analysis of the justification for launching them, taking into account the relevant social and economic needs (Source: [Regulations on the Procedure for Introducing, Developing, Improving and Revising Study Programs](#)), the available resource capacities of the University and the support of the real sector, primarily the Economic Council, which is currently in the establishment phase and whose first session is planned for December 2025, which is in accordance with the Multiannual Action Plan prepared according to the recommendations of the last external evaluation. (Source: [List of members of the Economic Council](#))

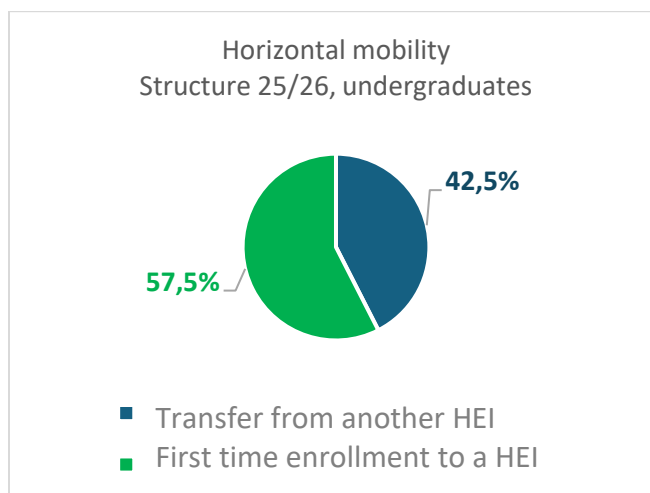
**2.2.6. The content of the study programs enables the acquisition and improvement of digital skills of students where applicable.**

Digital competencies are integrated into all study programs, especially through courses related to ICT, multimedia and communications, online business and digital marketing. The analysis of the content of study programs shows that programs systematically develop students' digital skills, in accordance with the profile of each study. In undergraduate programs, learning outcomes emphasize the use of modern office tools, development of software solutions, knowledge of algorithms and data analysis. At the graduate level, the digital component is deepened through learning outcomes focused on designing complex information systems, using digital communication tools, social network and data analysis, reporting and business process management with the support of modern ICT solutions.

**2.2.7. The content of study programs ensures horizontal and vertical mobility of students in the national and European education area.**

Through a modular structure and compliance with the qualification frameworks, the study programs enable students to transition between related studies, both within the University and from other higher education institutions. The implementation of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) ensures comparability and recognition of competences, which encourages mobility at the national and European level (Source: [Example of continuing to study abroad](#)).

Horizontal student mobility is realized through the possibility for students from other higher education institutions, either domestic or foreign, to transfer and enroll in study programs at the University.



In the academic year 2025/26, as many as 153 transfer students from other faculties were enrolled in undergraduate studies at the University, which makes 42.5% of all newly enrolled students (a total of 360 students enrolled). This clearly indicates that horizontal mobility at the University is extremely active. According to unofficial data (from interviews with transfer students), the reason for the transfer is very often disappointment with their experiences at the previous faculty or study.

In accordance with the institutional general rules and the number of ECTS credits passed, the methods and procedures for determining differential exams are determined, i.e. the method of recognizing previous formal learning at the level of the overall outcome of the study program, with the aim of completing the previously started study ([Source: Example of the transition procedure](#)). In the case of transferees from a foreign higher education institution, in addition to the above-mentioned documents, the application must be accompanied by the original and a certified translation of the document showing that it is an accredited higher education institution. Requirements and verifications of foreign qualifications can be additionally confirmed through the National Office for ENIC/NARIC, in order to evaluate foreign higher education qualifications and determine the comparability of institutions ([Source: Verification of accreditation of institutions and programs](#)).

The University does not have exact indicators for vertical mobility, but based on assessments based on personal contacts, it is estimated that approximately one third of the University's undergraduate students continue their studies at the graduate level at another higher education institution. A significant number of them continue their studies outside Croatia, primarily in EU countries.

#### **2.2.8. The compliance of ECTS credits with the actual student workload is ensured.**

The university carries out checks on compliance between the nominal number of ECTS credits and the actual student workload, relying on feedback from lecturers. Audits were carried out on individual studies, in accordance with the plan of activities and recommendations of the committee from the previous assessment. The changes, as previously described in detail in

standard 2.1.4, included improvements in content, teaching methodology and evaluation systems. Special emphasis was placed on the refinement of the model of ECTS credit distribution, through a detailed analysis of compulsory and elective courses. ([Source: Example of a program review procedure](#)). This ensures greater transparency in the relationship between student workload, learning outcomes and academic progression. The expediency of the audit process and the adopted guidelines for awarding ECTS credits within the course and study program is to ensure a consistent, transparent and fair evaluation of student work through ECTS credits, based on the actual workload and achieved learning outcomes ([Source: Guidelines for determining ECTS credits](#)).

The guidelines allow lecturers to accurately estimate how much time a student needs for different forms of teaching, preparation and assessment, thus ensuring a balanced study program and comparability of studies within the European Education Area. In order to align ECTS credits with the actual student workload, flexible methods are applied that reflect consistency in the context of higher education quality and standards. The application of the reverse design process in the design of the study programs Internet of Things (IoT) and Film, Television and Multimedia Design (FTMO) represents a logical choice for achieving balance, fair distribution of the workload and high quality and competitiveness of study programs. In this model of reverse logic, the course is first assigned an ECTS value, and then the corresponding student workload is distributed to the planned obligations with the aim of achieving the predicted learning outcomes and competencies of the course. ECTS credits are divided into active participation of students in classes, activities during classes, midterms and preparation for the final exam. In this way, the distribution of ECTS credits follows the appropriate matrix of student workload and teaching methods to ensure the achievement of the expected learning outcomes. The distribution of ECTS credits is aligned with the actual student workload and supports the development of an interdisciplinary platform of knowledge and skills, enabling students to continue their education at the graduate level.

Furthermore, in order to encourage student engagement, a bylaw has been adopted that ensures a transparent, fair and academically relevant system of recognition of students' extracurricular activities such as participation in associations, projects, cultural, sports, scientific and socially useful activities ([Source: Regulation on the Recognition and Awarding of ECTS Credits for Extracurricular Activities](#)). The purpose of this Regulations is to enable extracurricular activities to be officially recognized through ECTS credits, since such experiences and achievements of students are undoubtedly part of the development of additional competencies, social responsibility and overall academic progress.

The most important indicator of the effectiveness and verification of the compliance of the defined ECTS value with the actual student engagement is [the performance of students](#), which confirms the adequacy of the structure and workload of the curriculum.

### **2.3. Student internships are an integral part of study programs, where applicable.**

#### **2.3.1. Student internships enable the acquisition of practical skills in accordance with the intended learning outcomes, where applicable.**

Student practice/internship as a compulsory course at the University enables students to apply the learned theoretical knowledge in real working conditions and is carried out according to [the Regulations on Professional Practice](#). Through practical work during student internships, students develop skills relevant to their future profession and the internship allows them to get acquainted with the work processes and organizational structure of individual companies. Learning through practice is focused on achieving specific learning outcomes envisaged by the study program. Students are assigned tasks related to learning outcomes and their work is monitored, evaluated and retrospectively evaluated ([Source: Report on completed professional practice](#)).

#### **2.3.2. Student internships are carried out in a systematic and responsible manner.**

The University has a Practice Office, which plays a key role in ensuring quality professional practice for students. It provides them with support in finding and implementing internships and performs all accompanying administrative and organizational tasks related to the implementation of internships. Also, the Office actively monitors the entire process of performing internships through continuous communication with practitioners, to whom it provides support and counseling during all phases of cooperation. Advertisements for available internships are regularly published through student portals and on the [University website](#), while students have the opportunity to find internships on their own through direct communication with employers.

#### **2.3.3. Professional practice is part of the study programs and is organised outside the higher education institution in cooperation with the economy, where applicable.**

In accordance with the orientation and tradition of educating professionals for the needs of the labor market, as well as in accordance with its vision and mission, the University is launching a series of initiatives for stronger cooperation between the academic and economic sectors united in the concept [of #EducationmeetsBusiness](#). It is an innovative platform that combines various activities, all with the purpose of encouraging the didactic and educational model of "learning by doing". The "*Partner Company*" project is one of the activities of this unique concept that combines theoretical knowledge and practical work on real business challenges of some of the most successful companies operating in Croatia. The project is implemented at graduate studies, and students within the project, with the support of two mentors, academic and business, develop concrete solutions for current or anticipated business challenges faced by companies that are members of the project. The project is divided into three segments that students go through, in order to ensure high quality standards: theoretical teaching, introduction to the project task and work on the project in cooperation with an academic and business mentor, and

the development of solutions ([Source: Partner companies - Teched - task 1](#) and [Partner companies - Teched - task 2](#)).

In undergraduate study programs, internships are carried out in the last semesters, where the scope and number of ECTS credits obtained through internships varies depending on the study program. For example, the study of Tourism includes a longer and more intensive form of practice, in accordance with the specifics of the profession. Before starting the internship, students undergo counseling on market trends and required skills, which makes it easier for them to plan their professional path. The number of ECTS credits obtained through internships at undergraduate studies as well as the required internship hours vary depending on the study and can be seen in the table below.

**Table: Overview of ECTS credits acquired through internships and hourly rates in undergraduate study programs.**

STUDY PROGRAM	NAME OF THE COLLEGE	ECTS	NUMBER OF HOURS
Entrepreneurship economics	Professional practice	5	160
Tourism - Tourism and Hotel Management	Professional practice	24	480
Film, television and multimedia design	Professional practice	5	120
Transmedia dramaturgy	Professional practice	5	160
Cyber Communications and Network Science	Professional practice	5	160
Public Relations and Media Studies	Professional practice	5	120
Journalism	Mandatory media practice	8	120
Internet of Things (IoT)	Professional practice	5	160
Business Informatics	Professional practice	5	160
Technical Management	Professional practice	7	160

In graduate study programs, internships are also carried out in the last semester, emphasizing the importance of gaining concrete experience before entering the labor market. With this, students complete their studies ready for faster and safer integration into the professional environment. The number of ECTS credits obtained through internships at graduate studies as well as the required internship schedule can be seen in the table below.

**Table: Overview of ECTS credits acquired through internships and hourly rates in graduate studies**

STUDY PROGRAM	NAME OF THE COLLEGE	ECTS	NUMBER OF HOURS
IT Management	Student internship	5	160
Film and Television Directing and Production	Student internship	5	160
Sustainable Tourism Development Management	Student internship	5	160

Entrepreneurial Management	Student internship	5	160
Accounting and Finance	Student internship	5	160
Human Resources Management	Student internship	5	160
Business Communications Management	Student internship	5	160

**2.3.4. The higher education institution provides support to internship supervisors and organizations where students perform student internships through orientation and/or training programs to mentor students in the student internship program.**

Communication with mentors takes place through meetings, telephone conversations, e-mails or video calls. The Head of the Practice Office systematically records the mentors' comments and transmits them to the Vice-Rector for Studies and the Heads of Studies. In addition, a survey of practitioners is carried out ([Questionnaire for Practitioners](#)), which provides an additional feedback mechanism.

**2.3.5. Processes for monitoring and improving the quality of student internships are clearly defined, continuously implemented and involve internal and external stakeholders.**

In order for the internship to meet its goals, before it begins, the Head of the Internship Office introduces and informs the mentors about the goals of the student internship and the learning outcomes that students need to achieve ([Source: Work Instruction – Internship](#)). Student internship begins with obtaining the consent of the organization that accepts the student for internship ([Source: Consent for student internship](#)) and ends with an internship report that each student is required to make upon completion of the internship ([Source: Internship Report](#)). Upon submission of the report, the Office for Undergraduate Internships verifies the completeness and compliance of the documentation with the requirements of the internship and makes a decision on the fulfillment of the mandatory conditions. At the graduate level, the heads analyze the report and invite the student for an interview to determine the extent to which the planned learning outcomes have been achieved.

**2.3.6. The information collected and analyzed is used to promote good practice and initiate the actions needed for improvement.**

The University systematically collects feedback from students and mentors ([Example: Student review of the internship performed](#)). By analyzing the collected data, examples of good practice in mentoring and organization of practice are identified, which are then disseminated and promoted among other organizations and mentors with the aim of raising quality. The internship report also includes students' review of the knowledge and skills acquired during their studies, which helped them in performing the internship. In doing so, students conduct a self-assessment of the compliance of their own knowledge and skills with the needs of the labor market, which gives a valuable insight into the relevance and applicability of the study program. The internship evaluation system is continuously improved based on feedback from students and mentors, thus promoting a culture of quality and continuous improvement. The information obtained is also used for further adaptation of study programs to the needs of the labor market.

## **2.4. Quality assurance of lifelong learning programs is part of the internal quality assurance system of a higher education institution. This ensures that these programs are up-to-date and aligned with current societal needs.**

### **2.4.1. The Mission Statement and the Strategic Planning Process are the starting point for the development of lifelong learning programs that are aligned with them**

The development and implementation of lifelong learning programs at the University is based on the institution's mission, which emphasizes academic excellence and socially responsible entrepreneurial action as the foundation for the development of key competencies, including expertise, entrepreneurship and business skills, through interactive learning, engagement and student satisfaction. Programs are designed in such a way that they systematically respond to the real needs of individuals, the community and the economy, thus ensuring their relevance and societal benefit.

### **2.4.2. The internal quality assurance system of a higher education institution also includes processes for quality assurance of lifelong learning programs**

The University's quality assurance system integrates lifelong learning as an integral part of the institutional educational approach. The quality of the program is systematically monitored through defined processes and indicators: participant satisfaction, number of enrolled and completed participants, market relevance of content and cooperation with external stakeholders.

### **2.4.3. Processes for the development of new and continuous improvement of existing lifelong learning programs are clearly defined and involve internal and external stakeholders**

The University continuously develops and implements formal and informal lifelong learning programs, aligned with current economic and social needs ([Source: List of Lifelong Learning Programs](#)). For this purpose, the [Regulations on the Development of Lifelong Learning Programs](#) were adopted, which prescribe the procedures for proposing, implementing, and evaluating lifelong learning programs at the University.

In the period from 2020 to 2025, Lifelong Learning activities at the University have been further intensified, especially in the field of tourism. In accordance with this, 267 people attended the program for tour guides, of which 194 successfully passed the exam. After changing the regulations and transferring competencies to the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Croatia, the University has developed an informal program "*Preparation for the professional exam for business managers*", which has enrolled 191 participants since 2020.

Within the framework of the new five-year development plan, the University plans to maintain a high level of quality and flexibility in the implementation of lifelong learning. The plan is to organize exams for tour guides two to four times a year, and preparatory courses for branch managers every two to three months. In addition, it envisages the development of new programs

in cooperation with the Croatian chamber of commerce, employers, as well as with professional associations.

In accordance with national adult education policies, since 2022, the University has significantly expanded its offer of lifelong learning programs in partnership with the Croatian Employment Service (HZZ). Through the adult education voucher system, the University carries out eleven formal adult education programs that include the following areas:

- Online Marketing & Branding
- Bookkeeper
- Project Management Assistant
- Object-oriented programming
- Waste management
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Client Operating Systems
- Mobile Programming
- Management of IoT systems
- Programming in the Python programming language
- Mobile Robot Control

All programs are structured as formal forms of adult education, with clearly defined learning outcomes, professional holders, evaluation methods and the issuance of public documents ([Source: Example of the Communication and Cultural Diversity in Tourism program](#)). Emphasis is placed on the acquisition of practical and market-applicable knowledge. From 2022 to mid-2025, 2,321 participants enrolled in these programs, of which 1,920 successfully completed their education. The greatest interest was recorded in the program "*Internet Marketing and Branding*" (1,243 enrolled, 964 completed), followed by "*Accountant*" (462 enrolled, 385 completed) and "*Project Management Assistant*" (356 enrolled, 337 completed). These results confirm the relevance of the educational offer and the University's ability to respond to the dynamic needs of the labor market.

In addition to formal programs, the University is actively developing non-formal educational contents of lifelong learning. In 2025, the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy of the Republic of Croatia approved the implementation of six informal programs focused on tourism, digital transformation and valorization of cultural heritage:

- Implementation of the concept of smart tourism
- Tourism Product Development Management
- Communication and Cultural Diversity in Tourism
- Creating content for digital communication channels
- Organization and implementation of events in tourism
- Creative tourism and storytelling

#### **2.4.4. Key indicators for monitoring the quality of the implementation of the lifelong learning program, methods of collecting and analysing the necessary information resulting in reports with proposals for improving the program have been defined.**

The University continuously monitors the quality of lifelong learning programs. As part of the system, feedback is collected and analyzed through evaluation questionnaires, interviews and expert opinions from practice, and the results are regularly incorporated into reports and recommendations for program improvement ([Source: Example survey](#)).

#### **2.4.5. Lifelong learning programs are aligned with current economic and social needs**

These programs are designed to respond to the sector's need for professionals who understand digital technologies, sustainable practices and intercultural communication. The focus of these programs is on the development of specific competencies of individuals so that they can then contribute to, and strengthen, the competitiveness of Croatian tourism and local communities in that very competitive market.

A list of all lifelong learning programs as well as all details about them are available on the official website of the University at the link [Lifelong Learning Programs](#).

By implementing these activities, the University confirms its commitment to the principles of accessibility, flexibility and relevance of lifelong learning. Through systematic cooperation with state institutions, the labor market, experts from practice and students, the University actively contributes to the development of lifelong learning in the Republic of Croatia and the promotion of a society based on knowledge, innovation and responsibility, which is in line with the mission of the University.

### **3. Student-centered learning and teaching – the teaching process and support**

### **3.1. Learning and teaching are student-centered and ensure that all intended learning outcomes are achieved**

#### **3.1.1. Study programs and the way they are delivered are designed to encourage motivation, self-reflection and engagement of students in the learning process.**

The University's study programs are structured so that, from the very beginning of its educational activities, the student is placed at the center of the teaching process. The student is approached as an individual who does not participate in classes passively, but is motivated and actively engaged in shaping their own learning process. Educational content is designed to encourage curiosity, creativity and self-confidence in work by gradually building up by semesters and levels of study. For many years, the University has been nurturing student-centered interactive teaching, and it is through the methodical diversity of teaching techniques in small groups that student motivation and engagement are further encouraged. Such an approach to teaching is designed with the aim of fostering the development of student motivation, encouraging self-awareness and perception of one's own achievements through direct communication with teachers. Special emphasis is placed on project tasks and presentations that encourage interactive and exploratory learning, the development of logical thinking and student self-reflection. Students are primarily enabled through exercises and practical tasks, but also, for example, through the selection of elective courses, to independently plan and choose their educational interests.

In accordance with the recommendations implemented during the 2019 re-accreditation process, the University has additionally focused its activities on strengthening student support, with an emphasis on the development of independent planning and organization of learning. For this purpose, workshops have been introduced within the Student Counseling Center to empower students in the field of individual learning, which is described in more detail in Chapter [3.4](#). In addition, the heads of study programs actively participate in the role of tutors, with a special emphasis on providing support to first-year students in the process of adapting to the academic system ([Source: Presentation from the meeting of tutors-mentors with students](#)).

As part of the systematically provided support in the learning process, in order to preserve the quality of studying and in the final stages of the educational process, workshops dedicated to the preparation and preparation of final theses are regularly organized once a month for undergraduate students, within which students are motivated to make their own contribution to the preparation of papers. ([Source: Workshop for final work](#)). Independent selection of topics for final and graduate theses encourages motivation for the development of personal interests and engagement, which encourages and directs their professional development ([Source: List of approved topics for the final thesis](#)).

### **3.1.2. The higher education institution encourages different ways of teaching and the flexible use of different pedagogical methods in accordance with the envisaged learning outcomes.**

The pedagogical approaches applied in teaching are diverse and carefully aligned with the nature of the subject, the level of study, the learning outcomes and the competences that are being developed. Interactive teaching in small groups represents the basic methodological principle of the University, as it enables the active involvement of students in all forms of teaching and all phases of the learning process. The course performance plans have also been adapted to this approach with the aim of putting the student at the center of teaching. Learning outcomes, defined by the syllabus, are elaborated in detail through teaching units and teaching methods, while the methods of their verification are clearly defined and stated in the performance plans. Lecturers direct their teaching methods towards the prescribed learning outcomes and continuously plan and improve course performance plans ([Source: Examples of course performance plans](#)).

In addition to traditional forms of teaching, such as lectures, seminars, laboratory exercises and field teaching, modern approaches such as problem-oriented teaching, mentored research projects, project-based learning, case studies, teamwork, and collaborative and experiential learning are also being developed. Lecturers have autonomy in the choice of teaching methods, with the obligation to link them to clearly defined learning outcomes, which allows them to be monitored and measurably achieved.

The connection of study content with current challenges of business and social practice further ensures the relevance of study programs. Tasks in which students collaborate with economic operators to solve specific challenges are particularly emphasized. Methods such as independent research tasks, reflective essays and projects in a real work context are incorporated into the teaching process, thus further ensuring the achievement of planned learning outcomes and increasing the quality of the educational process ([Examples: Evaluation of student exam tasks and exam examples 1](#)).

### **3.1.3. The use of various pedagogical methods and techniques encourages interactive and exploratory learning, problem solving, and creative and critical thinking.**

The course content and the design of teaching activities are focused on the development of cognitive skills, including self-evaluation and responsibility for one's own learning. Special importance is placed on project tasks and presentations that encourage interactive and exploratory learning, as well as critical thinking and student interpretation. The focus of the educational process is the development of cognitive abilities of analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application of knowledge in new and emerging circumstances. Emphasis is placed on exploratory learning, and students are encouraged to actively collect, analyze and interpret information, with the aim of developing the ability to draw informed conclusions and create new solutions. In this way, critical thinking is systematically developed, which is recognized as a key competence for lifelong learning and professional development ([Source: Exam Examples 2](#)).

#### **3.1.4. Different ways of teaching, pedagogical methods and techniques of working with students are regularly evaluated and adapted in accordance with the results of evaluation.**

The University systematically monitors the quality and efficiency of various forms of teaching through several mechanisms, including student surveys, feedback during and after courses, and student evaluations. Forms of teaching, pedagogical methods and techniques of working with students are regularly evaluated and adapted to the results of the conducted analyses. Feedback is collected in a structured way through student surveys ([Source: Presentation of the student survey report](#)), but also through informal consultations at the level of course holders and semester meetings with the heads and the Vice-Rector for Studies. Within such educational consultations, lecturers are provided with examples of good practice, which ultimately results in more thoughtful and effective pedagogical approaches ([Source: Minutes of the meeting with teachers](#)).

#### **3.1.5. Lecturers regularly carry out processes of reflection on their own teaching practice in order to continuously improve the educational process.**

Lecturers actively participate in the process of reflection and improvement of their own teaching practice, encouraging professional openness to changes and the application of new pedagogical approaches, especially those based on the results of research in education and examples of good practice. The results of self-evaluations are discussed at semester meetings of lecturers with the heads of studies, the Vice-Rector and the Rector. This systematic approach to the evaluation and improvement of the teaching process enables the dynamic development of teaching practice in accordance with the feedback and established quality standards ([Source: Various examples of course evaluation](#)).

Institutional and continuous evaluation of teaching practice and methods used in teaching is an integral part of the annual cycle of quality assurance of teaching at the University. Lecturers, in addition to student surveys, are also evaluated through internal observations of teaching and feedback from mentors-evaluators. Special attention is paid to new teachers and practitioners, whose teaching is continuously monitored. Based on the results of the evaluation, reports are prepared and submitted to teachers, course leaders and heads of study as feedback ([Source: Teaching Observation Report](#)). The reviews resulting from such evaluation are used to formulate recommendations, including additional training, harmonization of teaching methods, improvement of teaching methodology, or thematic workshops.

In the quality assurance process, feedback from regular meetings with spokespersons of all student groups is also used as a continuous mechanism. The voice and opinion of students is an important feedback in the collection and analysis of the teaching process, and they also serve as a space for possible improvements. ([Source: Minutes of meetings with spokespersons](#)).

### **3.1.6. Teaching methods are adapted to a diverse student population (non-traditional student population, part-time students, older students, underrepresented\* and vulnerable groups\*, etc.).**

The university promotes inclusive access to education and ensures equal access for all students. Part-time and middle-aged students have been adapted through evening hours and a reduced number of compulsory hours of regular classes. With the aim of achieving learning outcomes, part-time students are enabled to upgrade the student workload by means of independent and research tasks that are clarified, discussed and evaluated during classes.

Students with disabilities and other disabilities are provided with an individualized approach to studying through the adaptation of teaching methods, materials, consultations and exams. This includes students with motor, visual or hearing impairments, chronic and mental illnesses, learning disabilities and other health conditions that affect their studies. Exams and study spaces are adapted to the needs of students with documented difficulties, and the decision on the status of vulnerable students is delivered to the student and the head of study and lecturers are informed about it ([Source: Regulations on the Study of Vulnerable and Underrepresented Groups](#)).

### **3.1.7. A higher education institution ensures the use of advanced technologies with the aim of modernizing teaching and achieving the envisaged learning outcomes.**

The University continuously invests in IT, multimedia and audiovisual equipment, as well as in digital tools that support modern teaching. All classrooms are equipped with new IT, audio and video equipment and a stable internet connection. Special IT classrooms contain licensed software tools adapted to the needs of individual study programs, which is described in more detail in Chapter 4.4 of this document.

## **3.2. Assessment and assessment shall be objective and consistent and shall ensure that all intended learning outcomes are achieved**

### **3.2.1. The criteria and methods of evaluation and evaluation are clear and published before the start of individual courses. Students are familiar with them.**

The criteria and methods of assessment at the University are an integral part of the teaching documentation and are clearly defined in the syllabus of all courses. The syllabus is available to students through a personal user profile in the Eduneta system, and they are published at the beginning of each semester. Lecturers are obliged to explain in detail the content of the syllabus at the introductory lecture, including the tasks and obligations of students and all the criteria that make up the final grade in each course. The syllabus clearly states the methods of evaluation and evaluation, the weighted shares of individual elements in the final evaluation, as well as the specific criteria for the evaluation of individual forms of work (e.g. essays, project tasks, teamwork, presentations).

### **3.2.2. The criteria and methods of evaluation and assessment are aligned with the teaching methods used and the anticipated learning outcomes. They are carried out consistently and objectively. Mechanisms are in place to ensure the objectivity and reliability of evaluation and evaluation.**

Assessment is aligned with pedagogical approaches and planned learning outcomes at the level of each course. Course implementation plans, in which all teaching units are clearly listed, systematically link learning outcomes with teaching methods and appropriate methods of assessment. In this way, consistency and coherence between the planned objectives, teaching activities and methods of testing knowledge are ensured. Courses that use problem-oriented teaching evaluate students through team projects, case studies, simulations, and other forms of practical application, thus encouraging exploratory and experiential learning.

Objectivity and fairness in evaluation are achieved by combining different evaluation methods. As part of the written exams, different types of tasks are applied, and the corresponding learning outcomes are clearly highlighted with individual tasks. Students are evaluated according to clearly defined criteria, among which the ability to draw well-founded conclusions, analytical thinking and the creation of innovative solutions are particularly appreciated. Lecturers are obliged to transparently communicate all assessment criteria and further clarify them through written instructions and detailed guidelines for individual tasks ([Source: Examples of instructions for additional tasks of the final assessment](#)).

Internal regulations define the mechanisms and standards of evaluation and the rules of conduct in exams. In study programs with a larger number of groups, exams are conducted simultaneously, with the use of uniform exam materials, which further guarantees equality of conditions for all students. In addition to the published syllabus, students are also introduced to the assessment criteria through the card of each course within the Eduneta system. [Course cards](#) allow students to have a continuous insight into the grades achieved by individual elements,

whereby the scoring and weighting criteria are transparently displayed. The system further ensures that the final grade cannot be recorded without a certificate from the student. In order to ensure greater consistency and improve processes, internal analyses of assessment methods, managed by course holders, are carried out in individual courses. In this way, the objectivity and uniformity of the evaluation criteria for the entire generation of students is additionally guaranteed, regardless of which lecturer participated in the teaching. ([Source: Work Instruction](#)).

### **3.2.3. Everyone who evaluates students has support in the development of their knowledge and skills related to assessment and assessment methods.**

All teachers and associates involved in student evaluation have systematic support in the development of their competencies related to assessment methods. University lecturers continuously improve their professional skills by participating in workshops within the VERN' Academy, including those dedicated to evaluation and testing. Workshops on learning outcomes and assessment methods are organised, covering ways to align assessment methods with learning outcomes, evaluating the quality of exam questions, and avoiding typical errors in assessment and assessment. These trainings significantly contribute to the professionalization of teaching practice and the improvement of the quality of the assessment process ([Source: MD workshop Exams and Assessment](#)).

### **3.2.4. Evaluation allows students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes.**

The assessment system is designed to include different assessment methods, including written examinations, oral presentations, practical tasks and other forms of assessment. The diversity of elements participating in the final assessment enables students to demonstrate all aspects of the acquisition of the envisaged knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies through various tasks and activities ([Source: Examples of evaluation of separate assessment criteria](#)).

### **3.2.5. Students receive feedback on the results of the assessment and, if necessary, advice and/or support in the learning process based on them.**

Students are provided with an insight into the results of evaluation and evaluated works, and feedback is most often exchanged through internal communication channels. Lecturers are obliged to provide students with access to written exams after each exam period and provide an explanation of the results achieved.

For the purpose of advisory support to students in learning, continuous communication and consultations with lecturers throughout the semester are encouraged at the University. Consultation dates are published at the beginning of the semester, but lecturers are also available to students as needed, in accordance with the agreement. Additional support to students is provided by demonstrators, students engaged in courses that require continuous work, rehearsal or additional clarification of teaching content. Exercises and repetitions of the material are regularly carried out ([Source: Decision on Demonstrators](#)). Students are also provided with

professional support from psychology experts, who advise them on effective learning and time management strategies.

**3.2.6. The process of continuous evaluation and monitoring of student achievement enables the identification of students with difficulties in regularly overcoming academic obligations and the provision of timely support and learning assistance.**

The process of continuous evaluation and monitoring of student achievements enables the timely identification of students who have obstacles in the regular performance of academic obligations. Reports from the Eduneta system enable heads of study to gain insight into the passing rate and distribution of grades by courses, as well as the progress of individual students. Based on this data, for example on the success in midterms or deviations from the orderly dynamics of progression through the study, students are directed to additional consultations with course leaders or invited to individual meetings with heads. In this way, it is possible to identify risks early and provide timely and targeted learning support during the semester. The university collects and analyses data on pass rates and grades at the generation level, as well as on the number of courses passed per student. The qualitative dimension of the analysis is achieved through structured conversations between students and heads, who also have an advisory role as tutors.

**3.2.7. There is a formally defined appeal procedure that students are familiar with in a timely manner and is consistently implemented.**

Objective and consistent evaluation is ensured through internal procedures, among which the appeal procedure is particularly important. It is formally prescribed [by the Study Regulations](#), and students are introduced to it at the beginning of their studies. The procedure is transparent and unambiguous and is carried out by the University Secretariat. Upon receipt of the appeal, a committee is formed that allows the student to formally clarify the grade or the conditions of the assessment, and upon completion of the procedure, the student is issued an official decision ([Source: Example of a decision on the appeal against the grade](#)).

**3.2.8. Evaluation procedures take into account the specific circumstances of study for individual groups of students (adaptation of examination procedures, for example, for students with disabilities), while ensuring the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.**

Assessment procedures also take into account the specific study circumstances of certain groups of students, while preserving academic standards and achieving the planned learning outcomes. Students with confirmed disabilities (e.g. dyslexia, dysgraphia, hearing impairment, ADHD) are provided with individualized adjustments to the assessment and assessment procedures based on a formal request and documented need. Such adjustments include, but are not limited to, extended time for writing exams, graphical adaptation of test materials to better understand the content, the possibility of taking the exam in a calmer environment or with the support of another person. All adjustments are carried out with strict adherence to the principle of equality

among students, while ensuring that students in adapted conditions achieve the intended learning outcomes in the same way as their colleagues ([Source: Example of a test technology adaptation solution](#)).

**3.2.9. A higher education institution has an established system of evaluation and evaluation that provides information on progress through study and completion of studies at the individual and group level, which is the basis for making decisions on study management.**

The University systematically collects data on pass rates and grades in one generation, as well as on the number of courses passed per student. This data is analysed in parallel with previous generations, and the information is used to improve course performance at the study level, identify challenges in terms of teaching staff, and for the professional development of lecturers. Qualitative analysis as a support to students in advancing through their studies is addressed through structured conversations with heads and their advisory role as tutors. Data are regularly generated from the Eduneta system, through reports on passing rates, grades by courses and progress of individual students, and the results of these analyses are used for quick identification of risks and activation of institutional support ([Source: Undergraduate Performance Report at the end of the September deadlines](#)).

**3.2.10. Where possible, the higher education institution shall carry out the evaluation of the**

Evaluation of assessment (revision of exam questions, supervision and evaluation of novice teachers) is also carried out from time to time, which further ensures the level of quality of teaching, consistency and fairness. In order to ensure greater consistency, an internal analysis of the assessment methods managed by the course holder was carried out in individual courses. This guarantees the objectivity and uniqueness of the evaluation criteria for the entire generation of students, regardless of which lecturer conducted the classes. For the purpose of transparency, it is possible that students' written tests are sometimes corrected by co-professional lecturers who did not teach them, whereby the higher education institution also conducts self-evaluation of assessment. Student feedback, as well as insights from internal audit evaluation reports, confirm the positive effect of the quality measures implemented.

The recommendations of the Expert Committee from the previous re-accreditation procedure were a valuable guideline for further improvement of the practice of evaluation and evaluation at the University. The highlighted need for a clearer alignment of testing methods with learning outcomes has been fully implemented. Internal workshops for teachers on evaluation and testing methods were organized. For the purpose of additional transparency, in certain courses, written exams are occasionally corrected by lecturers who did not directly conduct classes, which implements a form of self-evaluation of assessment. Student feedback, as well as findings from internal audit evaluation reports, confirm the positive effects of the implemented measures and the continuous progress in the field of quality of evaluation and evaluation. In addition to didactic and teaching methods workshops, the University occasionally organizes trainings focused on innovative teaching and testing methods. Special emphasis is placed on approaches that develop

key competencies such as creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking in students ([Source: Design thinking workshop for lecturers](#)).

### **3.3. The conditions for enrolment and advancement of students, recognition and certification are clear, publicly disclosed and consistently applied**

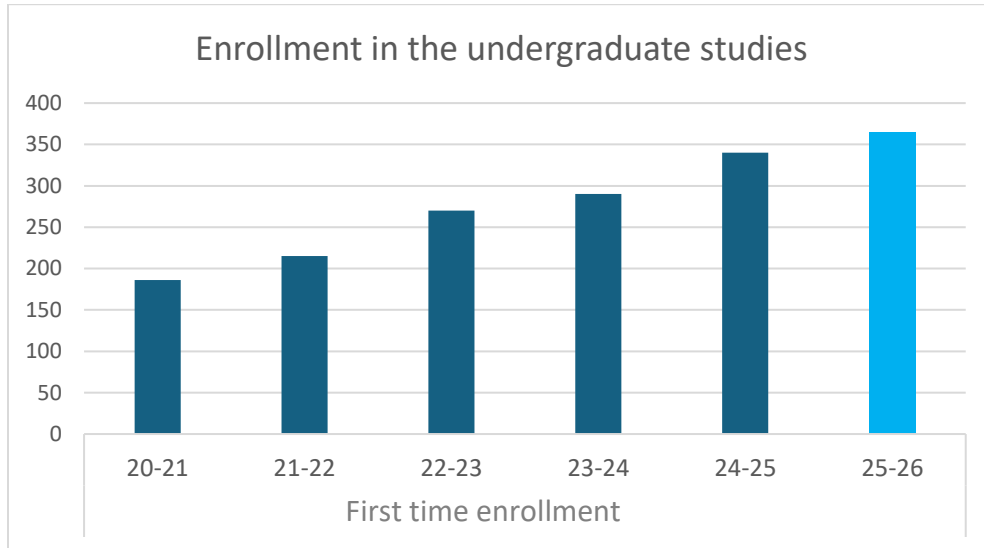
#### **3.3.1. A higher education institution consistently implements pre-established and published regulations that cover all stages of study.**

The University consistently implements pre-established and published regulations that cover all phases of study, thus ensuring transparency and clarity of students' rights and obligations (Source: [Study Regulations](#)). The regulations are available on the University's website, as well as through the personal Eduneta portal, where students can access the relevant regulations and other documents related to all stages of study from enrollment to completion. Through authorized access to their own Eduneta portal, all students can view general acts that regulate the course of study at different levels. For each academic year, [the complete curriculum](#) and [academic calendar](#) for the current academic year and other relevant information are published on the official website of the University.

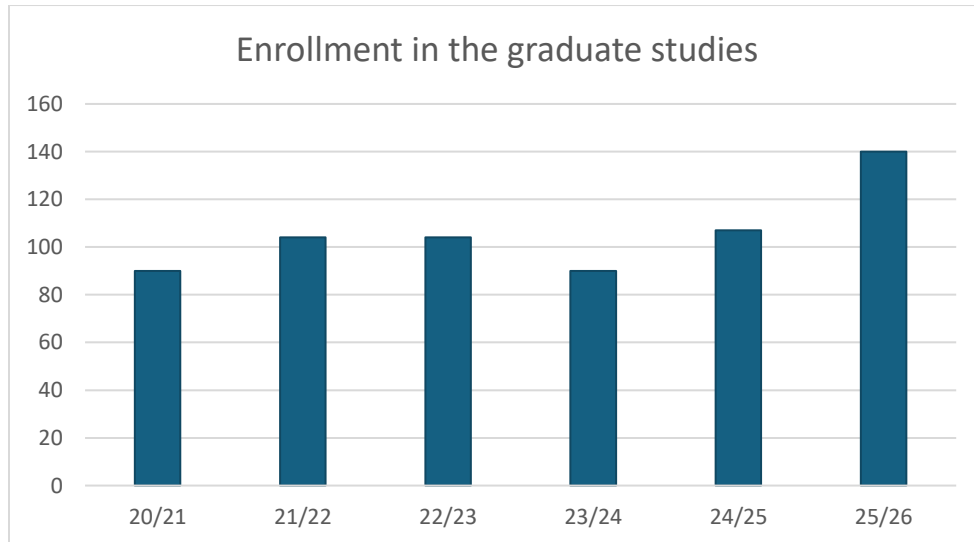
#### **3.3.2. The enrolment policy shall be in line with the national legislative framework, mission and strategy of the higher education institution and shall take into account the capacities of the higher education institution and the context in which the higher education institution operates.**

The enrolment policy of the University is fully aligned with the national legislative framework, mission and strategy of the higher education institution. When determining the conditions and quotas for enrolment, the University carefully takes into account its staff, material and infrastructural capacities, as well as the context in which it operates, including the needs of the labour market at the national, local and international levels. Enrolment competitions and related rules clearly define the criteria for enrolment in study programs, and all information is publicly available on the [official website of the University](#) and through the state graduation system *Postani student* "[Become a student](#)" (NISpVU).

Given the high employability of students of all studies, the University has so far had no need to reduce enrollment quotas due to the circumstances on the labor market, so enrollment quotas are primarily defined in accordance with its own capacities and the interest of potential students.



The chart shows the movement of the University's total undergraduate enrollment over the past six years. There is an obvious increase in interest in undergraduate studies, which, along with high employability, is encouraging and indicates that the University is on the right track with its enrollment policy and the offer of study programs and an individualized approach to students during their studies.



The graph shows the movement of total enrollment in graduate studies over the past six years. The movement of enrollment in graduate studies is in direct correlation with enrolment in undergraduate studies, with a delay of three to four years, which is the duration of undergraduate studies. Thus, the increase in graduate studies, which was more pronounced in the academic year 25/26, is associated with the beginning of a significant increase in enrollment in undergraduate studies in the academic year 22/23. This trend is expected to continue as more and more generations from undergraduate studies (23/24, 24/25, 25/26) will complete their studies.

**3.3.3. The enrollment policy and strategy of attracting students is sensitive to the needs and difficulties of students from vulnerable and underrepresented groups and promotes inclusivity.**

The University's enrollment policy and student recruitment strategy are implemented with high sensitivity to the needs and difficulties of students from vulnerable and underrepresented groups. In accordance with the standard, the University has adopted the Regulations on the Study Program of Students of Underrepresented and Vulnerable Groups, which clearly define the rights, obligations, and support measures throughout the study process ([Source: Regulations on the Study of Students of Vulnerable and Underrepresented Groups](#)).

**3.3.4. Criteria and procedures for the selection and enrollment of students prevent discrimination and bias. They are made public, consistently applied and substantiated for revision.**

The university ensures that the criteria and procedures for the selection and admission of students prevent discrimination and bias. All criteria, including conditions, ranking and evaluation methods, are publicly published on the official website of the [University](#), thus ensuring equal availability of information to all applicants. Enrolment procedures are based on objective and standardized criteria, including a combination of points obtained at the State graduation exam (Matura), high school grade point average and entrance exam results, which are the same for all candidates in [undergraduate study programs](#). Special entrance exams for certain study programs, such as the undergraduate study program *Film, Television and Multimedia Design*, are designed to recognize specific talents, and all stages of evaluation are strictly defined and transparently published in detail. [Enrolment in graduate studies](#) is granted to candidates who have completed undergraduate studies in which they have obtained at least 180 ECTS credits with an average success rate of 3.00. The criteria and procedures for the selection and enrolment of students are continuously revised in accordance with the recommendations of the Rectors' Assembly, the Agency for Science and Higher Education and the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth of the Republic of Croatia, ensuring their consistent application and compliance with the standards. In addition, the University provides the possibility of additional information to candidates through personal consultations, telephone conversations or organized meetings, thus further promoting transparency, fairness and equal access to all candidates.

**3.3.5. The criteria and procedures for the selection and enrolment of students ensure the selection of candidates with appropriate prior knowledge, in accordance with the requirements of the study program.**

The University consistently implements standardized enrollment procedures in the *"Become a Student"* system, ensuring that the selection criteria and procedures allow the selection of candidates with appropriate prior knowledge, aligned with the requirements of the study programs. The entrance exam for undergraduate studies includes an introspective questionnaire,

a test of cognitive abilities and an interview. The tests are standardized, the results are weighted and published under codes, and the condition for enrollment is to pass the state graduation exam. The entrance exam allows candidates to [have their tuition fee reduced](#). For the study of *Film, Television and Multimedia Design*, an additional selection exam (essay and interview in front of a committee) is conducted.

Graduate professional studies require a completed undergraduate study with at least 180 ECTS credits, and the conditions for enrolment and continuation of studies are consistently applied. Even when enrolling in graduate studies, candidates can achieve a reduction in tuition fees depending on the success of their studies at the undergraduate level. The conditions for obtaining an "academic scholarship" are transparently published on the University's website.

**3.3.6. A higher education institution has adequate procedures in place for the fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, based on: the compliance of recognition practices at the higher education institution with the principles of the Lisbon Convention on Recognition, cooperation with other higher education institutions, quality assurance agencies and national ENIC/NARIC offices**

The University has in place accountable and transparent procedures for the recognition of higher education qualifications, prior learning, and non-formal and informal education, in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and relevant national legislation. Recognition is based on a detailed comparison of teaching content and student workload, which enables precise determination of recognized exams and possible additional obligations of the student ([Source: Regulations on the Recognition of Prior Non-Formal and Informal Learning](#)).

**3.3.7. The higher education institution monitors and analyses the progress of students in the study and ensures the continuity of studies and graduation of students.**

The university monitors and analyzes the progress of students to ensure continuity of studies and increase the percentage of advancement throughout the study. Monitoring is based on data on exam passes, ECTS credits earned, and average grades, with a special focus on students who are less successful or at risk of dropping out. Reports on student pass rates are made regularly and submitted to the heads for the purpose of detecting deviations and enabling reactions in a timely manner. Until now, the reports were prepared twice a year, and from academic year 2025/26, it is planned to introduce three monitoring cycles (November, April, September/October), which will provide an even more precise insight into the course of a study program. This approach ensures proactive action by the head of study, continuous support for students, and continuous improvement of the quality of study programs.

[The Regulations on Student award](#) regulate the forms of encouraging student excellence, including the reduction of tuition fees for undergraduate and graduate students (Izvor: [Decision on the conditions for reducing tuition fees for undergraduate](#) and [graduate studies](#)), as well as

the awarding of the Rector's Awards for Excellence in Undergraduate and Graduate Studies, for Socially Useful Work, for a Student Project and the Special Rector's Award.

**3.3.8. Mechanisms have been established that enable the timely identification of students with difficulties in regularly overcoming academic obligations. Timely and continuous support and learning assistance is provided for them.**

Through its [Regulations on the Study of Students of Underrepresented and Vulnerable Groups](#), the University establishes clear mechanisms to ensure the timely identification of students with difficulties in regularly overcoming academic obligations and the provision of continuous support and learning assistance. The Regulations define groups of students who need special support. The identification itself is based on formal and transparent procedures. Students acquire the status on the basis of an application with appropriate documentation, and the decision is made by the Rector at the proposal of the Secretariat. Such a system guarantees institutional control, legal certainty, and equal treatment for all students. For students with mobility difficulties, the University provides architectural accessibility or provides assistance, thus removing physical barriers to studying.

For students with mobility difficulties, the University provides full accessibility to its premises. All main entrances and accesses to the facilities are adapted for people with disabilities, including access from the public road to the yard, elevator, and sanitary facilities adapted for people with disabilities. In this way, unhindered movement and stay in all parts of the building is enabled, which contributes to the creation of an inclusive and stimulating academic environment. In addition to organizational support, the Regulations also provide for a psychosocial component. If a student believes that a right has been denied, they can contact the head of study. Finally, the provisions on the protection of personal data guarantee the confidentiality and security of the information collected, which is a key prerequisite for trust between students and the institution. All of the above shows that the University systematically builds and develops inclusive policies that enable timely recognition of students in difficulties and provides continuous support during their education.

**3.3.9. A higher education institution provides conditions for student mobility in a national and international context.**

The University systematically recognizes and develops student mobility as a key element in ensuring and improving the quality of higher education, professional development of students and strengthening inter-institutional cooperation, in accordance with the standard that a higher education institution provides conditions for student mobility in the national and international context. International mobility is especially intensified through long-term participation in the Erasmus+ program and cooperation with numerous foreign higher education institutions, thus enabling students to gain valuable experience in different academic and cultural environments. Currently, the University has signed cooperation agreements with 55 universities around the

world, which shows its commitment to the development of international cooperation within the Erasmus+ program ([Source: List of partner institutions](#)). In addition to the international dimension, the University also develops institutional prerequisites for encouraging student mobility within the national framework, strengthening cooperation with Croatian higher education institutions and providing students with additional opportunities for academic development, knowledge exchange and access to various teaching resources. More detailed information on student mobility can be found in Chapter 3.5.

**3.3.10. A higher education institution issues a diploma and a supplementary certificate of study (free of charge, in Croatian and English) in accordance with the relevant regulations).**

The University issues diplomas and supplementary documents according to the currently valid Regulations on the Form and Content of Certificates, Diplomas and Supplementary Documents on Studies (Official Gazette 74/2023). Diplomas and supplementary documents are issued in printed form within 45 days, and in digital form within 30 days from the date of completion of studies. They are issued free of charge in Croatian, English, and Latin script (Source: [University Diploma](#), [Supplementary Document](#)). The data are stored in the Digital Diploma Register in accordance with the regulations governing the content and use of information systems in higher education.

### **3.4. A higher education institution provides sufficient and easily accessible resources to support students.**

#### **3.4.1. A higher education institution provides support to students in their learning and advancement and provides the necessary counselling to ensure an optimal study experience (e.g. tutors, mentors and other counsellors, as well as student services and other appropriate services for student career guidance, psychological counselling, legal counselling, support for students from vulnerable and underrepresented groups, support for students involved in international mobility programs, library services, etc.) at institutional level**

One of the key elements of quality assurance in higher education is to ensure that students have access to various forms of support and that they are aware of them in a timely and clear manner. In order to systematically take care of the quality of the student experience, in 2020 the University established [the Counselling Centre for students](#) (Source: [Decision on the establishment of the Counselling Centre](#)), which has since been a key component of institutional support during their studies. The counseling center combines various forms of professional assistance, from psychological and career support, through counseling in the field of time management and the development of emotional intelligence, to coping with stressful situations. The main purpose of the Counseling Center is to empower students in overcoming obstacles that may arise during their studies, but also to encourage their personal and professional development with the aim of realizing their full potential.

#### **3.4.2. Students are introduced to the different forms of support available to them.**

Support is carried out in in-person and online form, and a special value is the possibility of individual counseling, which is used by about 40 students per year. Two psychologists from the University were hired in the counseling center, doc. Ph.D. Maja Kolega and Silvana Fratrić Kunac, prof. and licensed coach with international EMCC accreditation Nataša Jeličić, thus ensuring a high level of professional standards and quality of service. In the work of the Counseling Center, the basic principle is confidentiality, which is extremely important for creating a safe space for students.

#### **3.4.3. The higher education institution provides support to students for the acquisition and development of digital skills.**

Since its establishment, the Counseling Center has organized [a series of workshops and lectures with external experts](#) from practice, thus further enriching the student experience and [deepening the connection of the University with the labor market](#) and society as a whole. Examples of workshops and lectures include topics such as preparing for online job interviews, emotional literacy, career development, and social impacts on students' mental health. The participation of guests from various sectors, from psychologists and communication coaches to media professionals, demonstrates the University's openness to dialogue between the academic and professional worlds.

**3.4.4. Student support is tailored to a diverse student population (part-time students, older students, students from abroad, students from underrepresented and vulnerable groups, students with certain difficulties in mastering the material and going through the study, etc.).**

A particularly valuable step forward in institutional support for students was achieved through the launch of *the Student Wellbeing program*. This program was launched in response to the challenges of the post-pandemic period and represents the first systematically developed model of academic wellbeing in Croatia, focused exclusively on the student population. *The Student Wellbeing program* is implemented in the form of [thematic workshops and lectures](#), and is also designed in cooperation with the students themselves, who have the opportunity to propose topics and areas of interest. In this way, student participation is strengthened and the relevance of the program in relation to their needs is ensured.

**3.4.5. A higher education institution systematically monitors the various needs of students, especially students from vulnerable and underrepresented groups, ensures study conditions and adapts the ways of teaching and testing knowledge and skills in accordance with their individual needs**

In the context of the development of career competencies, during the academic year 2020/2021, the University introduced the elective course *Career Design*, which is carried out in the undergraduate professional studies of Economics of Entrepreneurship and Public Relations and Media Studies ([Source: Silabus of the Career Design course](#)). The course is inspired by well-known programs from Stanford University and is based on *design thinking* methodology and experiential learning.

Students are informed about the available forms of support on several levels. At the beginning of the study, through the system of mentoring-tutoring for freshmen, students receive structured information on all key rules, processes and support services. In addition, regular group spokesperson meetings with heads, prorectors, and the rector allow for a two-way communication, which means that students receive information about support and actively participate in shaping it through feedback. Also, students are regularly and transparently informed about the available forms of support through official digital channels, bulletin boards, the Eduneta system and direct communication. Feedback is collected through student surveys, focus groups and by way of informal channels, which enables constant monitoring of their perception and needs and directs the continuous improvement of the support system. Based on the data obtained, appropriate solutions and measures are adopted that significantly facilitate the inclusion of students and contribute to their successful academic advancement

During their studies, students are provided with the possibility of support such as workshops for writing final papers, instructions for writing seminar papers and informative workshops on professional practice. Transparency is ensured by publishing the dates of the workshops on the website. The availability of teaching literature and textbooks, as well as the continuous

improvement of library services, further emphasize the University's concern for academic support to students.

In the field of professional development and employability, students are informed about projects such as *#EducationMeetsBusiness and Build Your Career*, where the connection between studies and the labor market is strengthened through workshops, cooperation with employers and practical tasks. At the same time, promotional activities for Erasmus and other international programs clearly point students to opportunities for mobility and the development of international experiences.

#### **3.4.6. A higher education institution shall employ an adequate number of qualified and dedicated professional, administrative and technical staff.**

The University employs an adequate number of qualified and dedicated professional, administrative and technical staff ([analytical annex Table 4.1.](#)), taking into account the needs of organizational units, quality standards and the long-term sustainability of the institution. Although as a private higher education institution it is not legally obliged to announce public tenders for employment, the University in practice implements procedures that ensure transparency, objectivity and quality in the selection of candidates. One of the important sources of quality staff is the selection of excellent students of the University who have proven academic excellence during their studies, participated in projects and events organized by the University or were engaged as demonstrators in courses taught at the University. In the last five years, with this approach, many students of Business Informatics, IT Management and Internet of Things study programs have been employed as junior developers and assistants in the IT Support and Logistics Department, while students of Public Relations as well as Entrepreneurship Economics are employed in the Department of Projects and Public Procurement and in the Communications Department. In this way, a network of professional and dedicated staff who understand the organizational culture and values of the University is continuously developing.

The transparent approach is also confirmed by the example from 2024, when the recruitment of two administrative positions, the secretary of the University and the librarian of the University, was carried out. The tenders were published through the publicly available MojPosao.net portal, which ensured the openness of the process. For both positions, a multi-stage selection of candidates was carried out, including testing of communication skills, professional knowledge and the ability to act appropriately in various situations, and the final selection was based on an objective evaluation of the results and individual interviews.

### **3.5. The University provides favorable conditions and support to students involved in international mobility programs**

#### **3.5.1. Domestic students are informed about the possibilities of attending part of their studies abroad.**

International student mobility at the University is a strategically important activity that systematically enables students to realize part of the study program or professional practice abroad. Mobility is regulated by the Erasmus+ Regulations and is an integral part of the institutional policy of internationalization ([Source: Erasmus Program Regulations](#)). The information packs for prospective students clearly highlight the possibilities of participating in international exchange programs, in particular within the Erasmus+ program.

During [the Orientation Day](#), newly enrolled students are presented with the benefits and advantages of inclusion in the Erasmus+ program, while throughout the academic year they are regularly informed about the conditions, deadlines and procedures. Activities to inform and promote international mobility also involve university staff, both teaching and non-teaching, who are encouraged to mobility through public calls and internal tenders.

#### **3.5.2. Through various promotions and information of students, as well as a regulated and flexible way of recognizing ECTS credits acquired during mobility periods, the higher education institution encourages students to participate in outgoing mobility programs.**

The Erasmus+ coordinator, who operates within the International Relations Office ([Source: Decision on the appointment of Erasmus+ coordinators](#)), is responsible for the implementation of the Erasmus+ program at the University. The Office regularly announces tenders for student mobility ([Source: Call for Student Mobility](#)), about which students are informed through the website and the Eduneta intranet system. In addition, information days are organized, and students are provided with individual or group counseling on all aspects of mobility.

#### **3.5.3. The higher education institution provides support to students in the application and implementation of the exchange program.**

During the application for mobility, the Erasmus+ coordinator provides students with comprehensive support, ensuring access to all relevant information about study or internship opportunities abroad. In addition to informing, the coordinator actively assists students in the implementation of administrative procedures, which significantly facilitates the process of applying and preparing for mobility. After completing the selection, students continue to receive institutional support that includes a number of activities aimed at the successful and safe implementation of mobility.

The support includes nomination to a partner institution, assistance in filling out the application documentation and assistance in drafting a Learning Agreement with an emphasis on maximum recognition of courses upon return ([Source: Learning Agreement](#)). Additionally, the coordinator checks complete documentation and maintains regular communication with foreign partners,

ensuring that all formal requirements are met. Special attention is paid to checking health insurance and ensuring regular payment of financial support, which allows students to work calmly and focused on their studies or professional practice.

In addition, the coordinator provides support in finding professional practice and organizes a number of other activities that enable students to receive full and continuous support during mobility. This support system demonstrates an institutional commitment to quality preparation, safety and academic success of students and at the same time contributes to their motivation and satisfaction with the mobility experience.

#### **3.5.4. A higher education institution ensures the recognition of ECTS credits acquired at another higher education institution.**

Before going on mobility, all students are required to sign a Learning Agreement that defines the courses they will attend, i.e. the content and duration of the internship ([Source: Example of a Learning Agreement](#)). After checking the alignment of the content, the courses with the corresponding ECTS credits are entered into the Agreement, and the content alignment is checked by the Erasmus+ coordinator and the head of the study. The learning agreement is signed by the student, the head of study and an authorized person of the foreign institution. Upon returning from mobility, the International Relations Office conducts a final verification of compliance between the Learning Agreement and the Transcript of Records ([Source: Transcript of Records](#)) and on this basis the procedure for recognition of the obligations made is initiated.

The University encourages international mobility through a series of measures aimed at information, motivation and support. Special emphasis is placed on the "*peer-to-peer*" approach, where former Erasmus students of the University act as ambassadors and mentors, sharing practical experiences and advice. Visually appealing information materials ([Source: Example of an introductory presentation](#)), clear procedures and the availability of support further contribute to the accessibility of the program.

Special attention is paid to disadvantaged students, which ensures the inclusiveness of the program ([Source: Call for Student Mobility](#)). Student satisfaction is monitored through mandatory final reports ([Source: Example of a final report](#)), and feedback is used for continuous improvement of the system.

#### **3.5.5. For foreign students, detailed information about enrolment and study opportunities is available in a foreign language.**

The university ensures that all key information intended for international students is available in English. This allows for clear and transparent access to information on study opportunities. A separate section for "Incoming Students" has been created on the official website of the University. The official website details the application procedures, available study programs, academic calendar, study requirements, as well as practical information related to accommodation, visa regime, health insurance, and cost of living in Zagreb. All relevant forms and documents, including the learning agreement, transcript of grades and other mandatory

application forms, are available in English only. This allows for administrative clarity and legal certainty. Also, complete communication with international students takes place in English, including notifications, emails, orientation materials, and academic instructions, further reaffirming the institution's commitment to creating an accessible and inclusive academic environment for international students.

### **3.5.6. The higher education institution is engaged in actively attracting foreign students in order to implement the mobility period and/or enroll in the study program and acquire a comprehensive qualification.**

In the period from 2020 to 2025 ([analytical annex Table 3.5.](#)), the University recorded a total of 416 incoming students, with a positive growth trend, from 59 students in the academic year 2020/2021 to a peak of 93 incoming students in the academic year 2024/2025. In the last two years, the number of incoming students to the University has stabilized at around 90 per academic year, which confirms the international attractiveness of the program and the University's ability to attract students from different countries. The number of outgoing students shows greater variability, which is partly conditioned by external factors, such as travel restrictions and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also by internal capacities and student interest. Outgoing mobility in the academic year 2020/2021 amounted to a total of 17 students, while in the last two academic years there has been an increase in outgoing students, which indicates a gradual recovery and growth in the interest of University students in outgoing mobility and international experiences. Overall, the mobility analysis shows a positive trend in the internationalization of the University, but also points to areas for further improvement, especially in the context of outbound mobility.

The university actively makes efforts to increase international visibility and attract international students. The promotion of study programs in English, as well as the institutions themselves, is carried out through participation in international educational fairs, bilateral visits to partner institutions, presentation on international online platforms and the organization of events such as International Week. In addition, the University uses social networks and digital campaigns to promote exchange and attract foreign students, with a strong focus on presenting Zagreb as an attractive, culturally rich and safe academic destination.

Within the framework of international cooperation, the University systematically develops and expands the network of partner universities and higher education institutions in Europe and beyond. Inter-institutional Agreements have currently been signed with 55 institutions under the Erasmus+ program. Among them are renowned universities and colleges from Italy, Spain, Germany, Portugal, Poland, Lithuania, Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland, Hungary, Turkey, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Romania ([Source: List of partner institutions](#)). These agreements enable students and teaching staff of the University and partner institutions to be mobile and encourage the development of joint projects, the exchange of knowledge and experience, as well as the improvement of teaching and research processes.

### **3.5.7. A higher education institution provides support to foreign students when applying, integrating and studying at a domestic higher education institution**

The university provides comprehensive support to international students from the moment of application until the end of their mobile period or study. The application process is transparent and fully available in English, and the Erasmus+ coordinator and the International Relations Office are available for individual advice and assistance in filling out the application documentation, drafting the Learning Agreement and organizing the arrival. Upon arrival, foreign students participate in an orientation program that includes familiarization with academic rules, administrative procedures, study obligations, as well as basic information about life in Zagreb. Within the framework of student support, each incoming student has the opportunity to participate in the *Erasmus Buddy* program, where an exchange student is assigned a student of the University who helps to with the navigation of everyday life and the academic environment.

### **3.5.8. Foreign students have the opportunity to follow classes in a foreign (English) language.**

Classes for international students are organized in English, where the courses are adapted to mixed or special groups, which allows full integration into the teaching process without language barriers. Through these activities, the University demonstrates a high level of institutional preparedness and commitment to inclusive higher education.

In addition to student mobility, the University also includes teaching and non-teaching staff in Erasmus+ activities. [Foreign lecturers give lectures](#) and participate in professional training, while administrative staff use the opportunities of professional development and job shadowing. The University continuously implements the mobility of teaching and non-teaching staff within the Erasmus+ program, where the level of participation is recognized and praised by the National Agency for its stable annual indicators. In some years, due to the increased interest of students in mobility, part of the funds foreseen for staff mobility is redirected to further support student mobility. This approach has proven to be extremely effective in maintaining a balance between the needs of employees and students and in achieving the maximum impact of the program. ([Source: Erasmus+ Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff List](#)).

### **3.5.9. Learning the Croatian language for foreign students is enabled at the institutional level.**

For the purpose of quality integration of foreign students, additional activities related to getting to know Croatian culture and society are organized. Classes are conducted exclusively in English, in mixed or special groups. Students are informed about the possibility of learning the Croatian language at Croaticum and such courses are available at <https://croaticum.ffzg.unizg.hr/>.

**3.5.10. A higher education institution collects and analyses feedback on the satisfaction of students involved in outgoing and incoming mobility programs with the quality of support provided by the higher education institution and actively informs students and other stakeholders about the implemented interventions and improvements.**

Administrative and academic communication with foreign students takes place in English, thus ensuring transparency and inclusiveness. Among the exchange students, a high level of satisfaction with teaching, mentoring, field work, equal inclusion in academic life and additional activities was expressed.

Monitoring the quality of mobility at the University is based on the structured collection and analysis of student feedback. All outgoing and incoming students are required to complete a final report assessing the quality of institutional support, satisfaction with academic content, communication, infrastructure, and additional facilities. The collected information is systematically analyzed within the Office for International Cooperation and represents the basis for improving the system. The institution regularly carries out improvement activities, such as expanding the offer of courses in English, introducing additional administrative support, strengthening mentoring and promoting student initiatives for intercultural exchange.

In addition to continuous participation in the Erasmus+ program, the University develops institutional events aimed at strengthening international competencies and exchanging good practices. Accordingly, the International Week, which will be held in May 2026, is designed as a three-day international professional development program for employees of partner higher education institutions ([Source: International Staff Week Program](#)). The program includes a number of activities that ensure a comprehensive approach to internationalization, and special attention will be paid to professional lectures and workshops that enable the development of key professional skills in the context of global education. In the academic year 2025/26, the University begins the implementation of the Blended Intensive Program (BiP), which represents an important step in strengthening international cooperation and innovative approaches to learning. The program is implemented in partnership with the Accademia delle Arti e Nuove Tecnologie from Rome and is integrated within the Erasmus+ mobility framework ([Source: BIP Program Contract](#)). The BiP program is based on a blended learning model that includes online collaborative work and interdisciplinary workshops, physical mobility of students and lecturers in the form of intensive field teaching, and project-oriented learning focused on the development of concrete solutions and innovations.

During 2025, cooperation with Wakayama University from Japan was formalized ([Source: Inter Institutional Agreement](#)) and relations with institutions from Turkey, the USA, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and other countries were established ([Source: Istanbul Gelisim Universitesi Agreement](#)).

In addition to this international cooperation, the University has been actively developing international cooperation with partner institutions in Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia, in the last seven years. This cooperation also resulted in the signing of several Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between the University and the partner institutions of Lampung University

and Warmadewa University, which created a solid institutional foundation for further projects ([Source: Memorandum of Understanding](#)). As part of this cooperation, seven summer schools were held in Croatia and Indonesia, which significantly contributed to the strengthening of scientific research and educational activities of the University. Through this program, the exchange of teachers and students within international mobilities is continuously encouraged, [joint research projects and publications](#) are developed, and active participation in [international scientific conferences is fostered](#).

In addition, the cooperation of the University within the framework of the Scientific-Educational Partnership and the *Belt and Road China-Europe Cooperation and Development Center*, established in partnership with Beijing Art and Media Vocational College, represents an important form of institutional internationalization and strengthening of research capacities ([Source: Beijing Art and Media Vocational College Agreement](#)). The Centre, established in October 2025 as a non-profit and project-oriented platform, is focused on the implementation of bilateral activities that include academic exchange of teachers and students, the organization of joint conferences, cultural and artistic programs, and the encouragement of interdisciplinary research. Through these initiatives, the University demonstrates the ability to systematically develop international cooperation, connect research and educational activities, and build lasting academic and institutional ties between Southeast Asia and Southeast Europe.

## **4. Teaching capacities and infrastructure of higher education institutions**

#### 4.1. A higher education institution provides adequate teaching capacities.

**4.1.1. A higher education institution has an appropriate number of full-time lecturers employed in a full-time scientific-teaching or artistic-teaching position (for a university or constituent unit) or employed in a full-time teaching position (for a polytechnic) with an appropriate number of lecturers selected in the field in which the study is carried out (university 21 lecturers, of which at least three in the field; faculty or art academy seven lecturers, of which at least three are in the field; Polytechnic has seven lecturers, at least three of whom are in the field).**

In the academic year 2024/25 the University employs a total of 68 lecturers, of which: 30 in scientific-teaching positions, 10 in art-teaching and 28 in teaching positions, and one assistant. In addition, 100 external associates are involved in teaching, of which 26 were elected to title titles according to the criteria of scientific-teaching and artistic-teaching positions, 43 to title titles according to the criteria of teaching positions and 26 external teaching associates (assistants, expert associates and lecturers who were elected to the title at another higher education institution as adjunct lecturers). ([Analytical annex Table 4.1](#), [Example: Decision on the election to the titular assistant professor](#)).

All full-time lecturers and external associates have at least completed graduate studies, and most of them hold master's or doctoral degrees in science and arts. The University currently employs 40 doctors of science and one doctor of arts, while 33 external associates with PhDs are also involved in teaching. Furthermore, four full-time employees and 14 external associates have masters of science, while 24 full-time lecturers and 53 external associates have completed graduate studies.

The University offers ten (10) undergraduate study programs, of which seven (7) are professional and three (3) are university studies.

Of the seven professional undergraduate studies:

- two are in the scientific field of social sciences, the field of economics (Entrepreneurship Economics, Tourism – tourism and hotel management)
- two are in the scientific field of social sciences, the field of communication science (Journalism, Public Relations and Media Studies)
- one is in the scientific field of social sciences, the field of information science (Business Informatics)
- one is in the interdisciplinary scientific field (Technical Management)
- one is in the interdisciplinary artistic field (Film, Television and Multimedia Design)

Of the three undergraduate university studies:

- one is in the scientific field of social sciences, the field of communication sciences (Cyber Communications and Network Science)
- one is in the interdisciplinary artistic field (Transmedia Dramaturgy)

- one is in the scientific field of technical sciences, the field of electrical engineering (Internet of Things)

Also, the University carries out seven (7) graduate professional study programs, of which are:

- five in the scientific field of social sciences, the field of economics (Entrepreneurial Management, Business Communications Management, Accounting and Finance, Sustainable Tourism Development Management, Human Resources Management)
- one in the scientific field of social sciences, the field of information science (IT management)
- one in the interdisciplinary artistic field (Film and Television Direction and Production)

All of these studies are taught by lecturers who have relevant choices for positions in the relevant scientific/artistic fields/fields.

Out of a total of 68 full-time lecturers ([analytical annex Table 4.3.](#)) employed in scientific-teaching, artistic-teaching and teaching positions, their engagement in studies is as follows:

- University undergraduate study of Internet of Things – 6 lecturers employed in scientific and teaching positions in the scientific field of electrical engineering
- University Undergraduate Study of Transmedia Dramaturgy – 9 lecturers employed in artistic and teaching positions in the interdisciplinary field of art
- University Undergraduate Study of Cyber Communications and Network Science – 6 lecturers employed in scientific and teaching positions in the scientific field of communication science
- Professional undergraduate studies (Entrepreneurship Economics, Tourism) and graduate studies (Entrepreneurial Management, Business Communications Management, Accounting and Finance, Sustainable Tourism Development Management, Human Resources Management) – 12 lecturers employed in scientific-teaching and teaching positions in the scientific field of economics
- Professional undergraduate studies (Journalism, Public Relations and Media Studies) – 6 lecturers employed in scientific-teaching and teaching positions in the scientific field of communication science
- Professional undergraduate study (Film, Television and Multimedia Design) and graduate study (Film and Television Directing and Production) – 9 lecturers employed in artistic-teaching and teaching positions in the interdisciplinary artistic field
- Professional undergraduate study (Business Informatics) and graduate study (IT management) – 7 lecturers employed in scientific-teaching and teaching positions in the scientific field of information science
- Professional undergraduate study (Technical Management) – 8 lecturers employed in scientific-teaching and teaching positions in the interdisciplinary scientific field

In [the analytical appendix in Table 1d](#) , it is evident that the University performs its studies in six different scientific and artistic fields, and the figures are presented according to the number of lecturers engaged in the whole number, and not according to the criterion of cumulative employment, since it is not possible to express the number of engaged lecturers in the said table by a decimal number. ([Source: Fields in which VU operates and number of teachers in the field](#))

**4.1.2. In philological studies, a maximum of half of the teachers may be elected to the teaching position of lecturer, senior lecturer and advisor lecturer.**

The university does not conduct studies in the field of philology.

**4.1.3. The ratio of the total number of enrolled students and full-time lecturers to title teachers shall not exceed 30:1 (when calculating the ratio, the share of working time of lecturers employed part-time is added to the full-time work of one lecturer).**

At the University, the required ratio is 18.58 ([Analytical contribution to self-analysis: Table 1b](#)). This ratio is extremely favorable for teaching because it allows for an individualized approach to students, which is also one of the fundamental principles of the University from the very beginning. The teaching process is based on an approach in which the student is the center of attention.

**4.1.4. The total annual teaching load of all lecturers does not exceed 20% of the total annual teaching load (in the case of a public higher education institution).**

VERN is a Private Founder University, so this criterion **does not apply**.

**4.1.5. The total annual teaching load of an individual lecturer does not exceed 20% of the total annual teaching load.**

Following [the opinion of the Ministry of Science and Education](#), employees of private higher education institutions can work up to 900 hours in class, which the employer can completely redirect to contact teaching hours. All employees of the University have fully met this criterion.

**4.1.6. The workload of teachers ensures an even distribution of teaching obligations, scientific/artistic work, professional and personal development, and administrative obligations.**

Lecturers' working hours are aligned with the [Decision on the Distribution of Lecturers' Working Hours](#), according to which an even distribution of teaching obligations, scientific or artistic work, professional and personal development and administrative obligations is ensured.

The usual workload for lecturers in scientific-teaching titles is: 45% of working time in teaching, 45% of working time in scientific/artistic work, and 10% of working time for institutional contribution and administrative tasks.

For lecturers in teaching positions, the usual workload is 55% of working time in teaching, 35% of working time in research and professional work, and 10% of working time for institutional contribution and administrative work.

In doing so, it should be taken into account that individual lecturers, in addition to teaching and professional and scientific/artistic contribution, have additional obligations, i.e. functions (e.g. heads of studies, etc.). In such cases, the teaching and professional, i.e. scientific/artistic workload is proportionally reduced, and the percentage of institutional contribution is increased.

Data on the teaching and professional, i.e. scientific/artistic workload of lecturers can be found in [Table 4.2. An analytical approach to self-analysis.](#)

**4.1.7. All lecturers, including external associates, are qualified for the courses they teach, have relevant work experience and include the latest trends and knowledge from the labor market in the teaching process.**

The University carries out ten undergraduate and seven graduate study programs, in the scientific and interdisciplinary fields of social and technical sciences and the arts. In all study programs, teaching is carried out by lecturers who have appropriate job titles in relevant scientific and artistic fields, which ensures the quality of performance and compliance with academic standards ([Source: Decision of the Ministry of Defence on Selection to the Position](#)). The University regularly conducts elections and re-elections of lecturers to higher positions, in accordance with applicable regulations and deadlines, both for full-time employees and for external associates. In this way, continuous verification of the necessary competencies for the performance of teaching and research activities is ensured.

In the process of planning classes, the University takes into account the appropriate number and qualifications of lecturers who participate in the implementation of study programs. All full-time lecturers were elected to scientific-teaching, artistic-teaching or teaching positions, while external associates were selected as title lecturers, in accordance with the criteria for these positions.

The University conducts elections and re-elections to scientific-teaching and artistic-teaching positions, according to the conditions of the Rectors' Assembly, and in the last five academic years, the following dynamics of election and re-election have been carried out:

In total, in the period of five academic years (2020/21–2024/25), the following were carried out:

- 67 elections or re-elections to teaching positions and titles according to the criteria of the teaching position ([Source: Decision on Election to the Teaching Title](#)),
- 28 elections or re-elections to scientific-teaching positions and titles according to the criteria of a scientific-teaching position ([Source: Decision of the Ministry of Defence on the election to the title of associate professor](#)),
- 13 elections or re-elections to artistic-teaching positions and titles according to the criteria of the artistic-teaching position.

## **4.2. The recruitment, promotion and re-election of lecturers are based on objective and transparent procedures that include the evaluation of excellence.**

### **4.2.1. The higher education institution has developed and regularly updates its staff recruitment policy and plan to ensure adequate teaching capacity. The entire process of attracting, applying selection methods, selection and recruitment, as well as the development and promotion of teaching staff is based on professional, objective and transparent procedures and criteria that promote excellence and are consistently applied**

As a private institution of higher education, the University is not legally obliged to announce tenders in public media. The process of selecting new lecturers and employees is carried out in three ways: by publishing the vacancy notice on the University website, through recommendations from employees or external associates, and through the permanently open [competition "I want a job at VERN"](#) on the University website, where candidates can submit an application and attach a CV. Candidates who meet the relevant requirements are invited for an interview and an additional selection procedure.

As a rule, employment is usually preceded by at least one semester of teaching as an external associate. This is done so that the professional services of the University can assess the candidate's potentials in real teaching circumstances, and before the actual employment.

In the period from 2020 to 2025, a total of six hundred and thirty-three (633) candidates interested in working at the University applied through an open competition, of which four hundred and seventeen (417) expressed interest in teaching engagement, which confirms the recognition of the University in the academic and professional labor market. ([Example of a list of candidates](#))

### **4.2.2. The procedures for the recruitment of lecturers arise from the goals of the development of the higher education institution and are harmonized with positive legal regulations and internal acts.**

In previous practice, the employment of lecturers at the University took place primarily after many years of external cooperation. This approach has proven to be extremely useful because it allows the University to assess over a longer period of time whether a potential candidate fulfills his/her teaching obligations and how he/she is evaluated by students in this process. In this way, the risk of employment is reduced and a higher level of teaching quality is ensured.

According to the needs of a particular study program for a specific profile of lecturers, the head of the study contacts the Human Resources Department, which has a database of all received applications. The initial selection of candidates is carried out according to the scientific or artistic field and field of the candidate and on the basis of their CVs, which are then forwarded to the Head of Studies for the final decision. In agreement with the Vice-Rector for Education, the Heads of Studies submit to the Human Resources Department a list of selected candidates who, in the

status of external associates, will participate in teaching at the University. After that, the Human Resources Department sends each candidate an official e-mail with a list of the necessary documentation and data for the preparation of the Copyright Work Agreement for teaching. Mandatory documentation includes: curriculum vitae, diploma, decision on election to the title of scientific-teaching, artistic-teaching or teaching title (or election to a position) and a copy of the identity card. Candidates are also required to submit information about their residential address, Personal Identification Number (PIN/OIB), International Bank Account Number (IBAN) giro or current account, bank name and a copy of their tax card. Upon receipt of the documentation, the Human Resources Department forwards part of the data to the IT Support Office, and part to the Accounting Office. The IT Support Office enrolls the new lecturer in the Eduneta system and assigns him a username and password to access [the teacher's portal \(Nastaweb\)](#), through which classes are entered and where the Copyright Work Agreement for teaching is automatically generated at the beginning of each semester. Lecturers who are involved in teaching for the first time are recommended to contact the IT Support Office to arrange a short workshop on the use of the Eduneta system and the Nastaweb portal, as well as on the handling of teaching equipment in classrooms.

#### **4.2.3. When selecting, appointing and evaluating lecturers, their previous activities (teaching activity, research activity, feedback from students, etc.) are considered.**

Candidates for higher titles are obliged, among other conditions, to meet the requirements related to the publication of scientific and professional papers, participation in international scientific conferences and the fulfilment of other criteria prescribed by national and institutional acts. The University actively supports its lecturers in scientific research work by financing participation in international conferences and through support for the publication of teaching and scientific publications (scripts, manuals, textbooks).

#### **4.2.4. A higher education institution has appropriate methods of selecting the best candidates for each position and, in addition to the prescribed national minimum requirements for a particular position, it has prescribed competitive criteria to select excellence.**

The procedures and conditions for promotion to higher teaching titles are regulated by the provisions of the Rectors' Council of the Republic of Croatia and the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (ZVOZD). The University fully complies with legal provisions, by-laws and internal rules in the procedure of election to higher titles, which includes the decision of the Senate, the formation of expert committees, the preparation of reports, obtaining the opinion of the competent parent committee and the final decision of the Senate on the election to a certain scientific-teaching or artistic-teaching position ([Source: Procedure for the selection of teachers - documentation](#)). Also, the University has defined the entire procedure of election and re-election to scientific-teaching, artistic-teaching and teaching positions at the University ([Source: Work instruction for the implementation of elections and re-elections to scientific-teaching, artistic-teaching and teaching positions](#)). The purpose of this Work Instruction is to determine the manner in which the activities of conducting elections and re-elections to scientific-teaching, artistic-teaching and teaching positions at the University are carried out.

At the end of 2024, the University identified the need to strengthen administrative support and two positions were opened, University Secretary and University Librarian. The vacancies were published through the MojPosao.net portal, which ensured transparency and wide availability of the recruitment process. The large response to the tenders confirmed the recognition of the University as a desirable employer. 143 applications were received for the position of secretary, while 36 candidates applied for the position of librarian. After the initial selection, candidates who have met all formal requirements are included in the further process. The selection process was multi-stage and based on clear criteria of competence and expertise. The candidates took a test of verbal abilities, communication skills and a professional situational test. The next phase included individual interviews during which special attention was paid to professional motivation, the ability to work in a team and compliance with the values of the University. Based on the overall procedure, the University Management decides on the final selection and employment of candidates, which ensures the continuous quality of administrative support and the development of institutional capacities.

**4.2.5. Procedures for the promotion of lecturers to higher titles are based on the evaluation and rewarding of excellence and take into account important achievements (e.g. international contribution to the discipline, prestigious publications, significant scientific discoveries, successfully completed projects, successfully secured additional funding, mentorships, supervision of final and graduate theses, script, textbooks, popular lectures, etc.).**

The University has prescribed procedures for the promotion of lecturers to higher titles based on rewarding excellence, according to which all important and relevant achievements of lecturers are taken into account. (Source: [Regulations on Rewarding of Employees](#), [Regulations on Scientific and Professional Training and Training](#), [Regulations on Grants for Scientific, Teaching, and Professional Training](#)). Procedures for promotion to higher titles are based on objective and transparent criteria that include scientific excellence, teaching efficiency, and contribution to the academic community.

**4.2.6. Indicators of excellence include scientific/artistic, teaching, and professional work and contribution to the development of the higher education institution. Additional criteria for the promotion of teachers to higher titles reflect the strategic objectives of the higher education institution.**

As described in 4.2.5, the indicators of excellence include scientific, artistic, teaching, and professional work and contribution to the development of the higher education institution, and additional criteria for promotion to higher titles are aligned with the strategic goals of the University that encourage excellence, international recognition, and sustainable development of the academic community.

**4.2.7. Additional criteria for the promotion of lecturers to higher titles reflect the strategic objectives of the higher education institution.**

The University does not introduce additional conditions for election to higher titles.

### **4.3. A higher education institution provides support to lecturers in their professional development.**

#### **4.3.1. The higher education institution has a lecturer development plan with defined performance indicators. On an annual basis, it determines the priorities of lecturers' professional development. The criteria for promotion and rewarding excellence are clear, transparent and consistently implemented.**

The University has a lecturer development plan with defined performance indicators and sets priorities for the professional development of lecturers on an annual basis, which are clear, transparent and consistently implemented, and are based on [the Regulations on Scientific and Professional Training](#) and [the Regulations on Grants for Scientific, Teaching and Professional Training](#).

All employees in scientific teaching, teaching, associate and professional titles are entitled to support for scientific, teaching and professional development in accordance with their personal plan. The annual plan of scientific, teaching or professional development is defined by each teacher with the Human Resources Office and the Vice-Rector responsible for science, and approved by the Rector, all in accordance with the Decision on the Distribution of Working Time.

Scientific training includes the adoption of new research procedures, techniques and methodological approaches, training for work in scientific experiments and the use of devices and computer programs used for scientific research purposes, work on improving techniques for the dissemination of scientific results, and all other activities aimed at raising the quality of scientific work and publishing the results of scientific research. Scientific training is carried out through continuing education, study trips, congresses, symposia, conferences, conferences and other forms of training.

Professional development is carried out for the purpose of continuous improvement of the expertise of employees related to their workplace, and is carried out through professional lectures, meetings, courses, seminars, workshops, study trips, counseling, continuing education and other forms of professional development.

Training is carried out in order to acquire the necessary, as well as new knowledge and skills for independent performance of tasks, and is carried out through courses, continuing education, seminars and workshops and other forms of training.

Employees are obliged to undergo scientific and professional training and training for the tasks they perform in order to improve the activities of the University. External associates are obliged to scientifically and professionally improve and train themselves in order to transfer knowledge to students, and to acquire methodological and didactic skills necessary in the teaching process.

#### **4.3.2. The higher education institution has clearly defined how it provides support to lecturers in their professional and career development. Higher education institutions encourage the transfer of knowledge within the organization.**

The University has defined mechanisms of systematic support to lecturers in their professional development and career advancement. This support is based on the University's strategic commitment to continuously invest in human resources as the most important resource and key factor in the quality of the higher education process. Special emphasis is placed on encouraging the transfer of knowledge within the institution and on creating conditions for the continuous improvement of teaching competencies at the organizational level. The University continuously develops and strengthens the digital skills of lecturers, in accordance with the needs of the modern educational environment, with special attention paid to the development of competencies necessary for the application of new technologies and innovative teaching methods.

#### **4.3.3. The higher education institution encourages and provides the opportunity to improve the competences of lecturers at the institutional level.**

Lecturers and external associates are provided with comprehensive support through the VERN' Academy, which is a central place for internal education and professional development. The Academy functions as the nucleus for the development of academic, professional, scientific research and didactic and methodological competencies of University lecturers. Its role is of strategic importance as it enables systematic and coordinated investment in teaching competences. One of the key activities of the VERN' Academy is the organization of didactic and methodological workshops, designed in accordance with the specific needs of interactive teaching, which is the basic principle of teaching at the University. Attendance at the workshops is mandatory for all lecturers as an integral part of systematic methodological training, and in the academic year 2024/2025, 37 lecturers successfully completed these workshops ([Source: List of workshop participants](#)).

In addition to didactic and methodological content, the InfoScience Corner project was launched within the VERN' Academy and the program of internal professional development of employees, with the aim of organizing workshops that contribute to the development of research capacities and professional and personal competencies of teaching and non-teaching staff. As part of this program, [a workshop on COST Action programs was held](#), in order to familiarize lecturers with the possibilities of applying for COST projects. In addition, all relevant information on the application process for COST Action programs as well as current news related to COST Action programs is regularly [published on the University's website](#). For the purpose of exchanging experiences and professional development, in 2020 the University signed a cooperation agreement with the Croatian Artificial Intelligence Association ([Source: Cooperation Agreement](#)). Systematic support for teachers in professional development is one of the strategic directions of the University. The VERN Academy, as an institutional framework, ensures the continuous development of teaching competencies, increases the quality of the teaching process and creates the foundations for the sustainable development of the University.

#### **4.3.4. Higher education institution provides and encourages the development of lecturers' digital skills**

The higher education institution systematically encourages and develops the digital skills of its lecturers through continuous internal education, technical support and the application of various digital tools that improve the teaching process and communication with students. Lecturers are trained to effectively use digital platforms that support modern teaching methods and interactive student participation.

During the pandemic period, special emphasis was placed on educating lecturers for the use of *online* channels, when tools such as MS Teams, Zoom, Socrativ, Moodle, etc. were actively applied in teaching. These tools enabled the smooth implementation of distance learning and developed lecturers' digital competences, which later became the basis for a more systematic approach to the digitalization of the teaching process.

Lecturers are continuously trained through individual trainings for the use of the internal Eduneta platform, which is used to record classes, publish teaching content and monitor student achievements. Since the classrooms are equipped with IT and multimedia equipment, training on its proper use is also carried out.

By developing and implementing its own new internal digital mobile application [VERN' Nastava](#) and [VERN' Student](#), the University is improving the level of digital integration by providing lecturers with unified access to certain functionalities related to planning (e.g. publication of syllabus), performance (publication of materials) and monitoring of classes (records of student regularity). The new application is designed as a unique communication channel between students and the teaching staff in order to support students and to enable a more efficient communication and organization of studying. By developing an internal digital application, the University creates a modern, interactive and technologically advanced educational environment. [Such trainings](#) enable the continuous development of lecturers' digital competences and encourage innovative forms of communication that are in line with the needs of students.

#### **4.3.5. The higher education institution encourages the improvement of lecturers' competencies based on collected and analyzed feedback on the conducted evaluations of the effectiveness and efficiency of their work (lecturers' self-assessment, peer observation, student surveys, focus groups, etc.).**

The University encourages the improvement of the competencies of its lecturers based on the continuous collection and analysis of feedback on their work. The quality assurance system in the teaching process includes various evaluation mechanisms, from lecturers' self-assessment to student surveys and feedback obtained through focus groups, alumni and employers. Student surveys are conducted at the end of each semester and cover all lecturers and subjects. Lower-rated lecturers receive individual feedback and support for improving their work. Special attention is paid to cases where a lower grade is repeated, whereby the University takes measures to ensure the quality of teaching. At the same time, peer observation of teaching is carried out, within which trained evaluators and mentors monitor the performance, give

feedback and create reports that serve as a basis for the development of missing pedagogical and methodological skills of teachers.

The workshops cover a wide range of topics, including assessment, written exams, distribution of ECTS credits, formulation of learning outcomes, measures to prevent academic dishonesty, case studies and other forms of contemporary didactic practice. They are systematically evaluated and adapted in order to respond to the current needs of lecturers, but also to new challenges in higher education, thus enabling constant improvement of the quality of the teaching process ([Source: Evaluation Form](#)).

Lecturers' self-assessment is carried out through course performance reports, whereby lecturers analyze the achievement of learning outcomes, student engagement and difficulties in teaching and propose their own suggestions for improvement. In addition, feedback is collected through graduate exit surveys, focus groups and regular cooperation with employers, which provides insight into the relevance of teaching content and lecturers' competencies in relation to the needs of the labor market. In this way, the University ensures that all forms of collected feedback, from student surveys and peer observation, through self-assessment to input from external stakeholders, are used as a starting point for the targeted improvement of teaching competencies and the quality of the teaching process.

#### **4.3.6. The higher education institution encourages the participation of lecturers in international mobility programs, collaborative networks, etc.**

Within the Erasmus+ program, an average of up to 4 lecturers per year carry out outgoing mobility to partner institutions. As far as incoming lecturers mobility is concerned, there has been a noticeable increase in the last 5 academic years. Thus, out of only two teaching mobilities realized in the academic year 2020/2021, in the academic year 2024/2025, 31 incoming mobilities of teaching and non-teaching staff were realized. Such an exchange has proven to be extremely useful for improving the teaching process because it brings new pedagogical approaches, examples of good practice and modern teaching methods. Feedback from lecturers after the mobility show how international experiences foster professional development, improve competences in the field of teaching in a foreign language and contribute to the development of intercultural skills. At the same time, incoming mobilities of international lecturers and experts enrich the curriculum of the University, enabling students to have direct contact with international perspectives and strengthen the attractiveness of the University for foreign students.

#### **4.3.7. The higher education institution encourages and supports the participation of lecturers in international and national competitive projects.**

The University encourages the participation of lecturers in international and national competitive projects and provides them with professional and administrative support. For this purpose, *the Office for Projects, Lifelong Learning and Public Procurement has been established at the University*, which provides continuous support in the preparation, application and implementation of project activities.

In the period from May 2023 to August 2025, the University, in cooperation with the Croatian Association of Digital Publishers, implemented the *project Establishment of a new independent verifier*, which is aimed at developing a platform for verifying the accuracy of information in the tourism sector ([Source: Grant Agreement](#)). The aim of the project was to develop an innovative platform that enables systematic verification of information in tourism, which emphasizes the importance of combating disinformation and fake news that can significantly affect the reputation of destinations, the business of the tourism industry and the national economy. In addition, the project aimed to have an educational component by raising awareness of the importance of the accuracy of information in the field of tourism in the Croatian media space. The project is a partnership between the University and the Croatian Association of Digital Publishers (HUDI), bringing together key media stakeholders in the Republic of Croatia ([Source: Partnership Statement](#)). As part of the project, *TurFacto*, the first Croatian independent and non-profit fact-checking service specializing in tourism, was launched. The project was created through the competition "Establishment of Media Fact-Checking" of the Agency for Electronic Media and the Ministry of Culture and Media, and is financed by the European Union through the NextGenerationEU instrument. The role of the University is manifested through scientific and research contribution, academic expertise and methodological foundation of the project. Through an interdisciplinary approach and the involvement of lecturers and experts in the field of tourism and communication, the University ensures the quality of media content analysis, the credibility of fact-checking and the development of educational activities aimed at strengthening media and digital literacy.

At the same time, from April 2023 to April 2025, the project was implemented *Digital transformation of the University for the purpose of strengthening competitiveness* (NPOO. C1.1.2.R3-I3.01.0401), focused on digital improvements and improving the quality of services for students and employees, which is described in more detail in the chapter [1.3](#).

In addition to the implemented projects, the University continuously develops and applies for new initiatives, especially those which lecturers take part in, along with international and national partnerships and in activities that connect students with the business sector through professional practice. The results of several international projects applied in cooperation with foreign universities are expected, which further confirms the University's commitment to the development of the project and research dimension of its activities.

At the national level, the University has applied for a project within the Croatian Science Foundation, focused on the research of electromagnetic characteristics of new materials based on radio frequency technologies ([Source: Croatian Science Foundation project application](#)).

Furthermore, through the application to the competition of the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth, the University focused on improving the employability of students, which further emphasizes the importance of connecting the teaching process with the needs of the labor market and society as a whole ([Source: Application for the project Improving Employability through Professional Practice](#)).

In the field of cooperation with the economy, the partnership of the University with the company Storm Computers d.o.o., which applied for financing by the Ministry of Economy, stands out. The project is focused on the development of advanced measurement infrastructure in the context of the Internet of Things (IoT) and new energy technologies, which opens up space for applied research and strengthening the innovation potential of the University in cooperation with the industry.

On an international level, the University continues to build a partnership network through European Commission projects. As a partner in consortia with institutions from the Czech Republic, North Macedonia and Croatia, the University participates in project applications aimed at empowering young people through non-formal education, developing innovative digital educational tools and strengthening capacities for future educational challenges. Particularly noteworthy is the BACK TO THE FUTURE project, which is dedicated to the development of interactive online educational content (MOOC), combining modern technologies with educational practice and thus improving innovation and the quality of education ([Source: Back to the Future project application](#)).

At the beginning of October 2025, [a workshop for young researchers](#) entitled Early Career Researchers in Interdisciplinary Depolarisation Projects: Opportunities and Challenges within COST Action CA22165 was held, which was attended by about fifteen young scientists from Europe. The workshop was focused on the development of competencies related to scientific publishing and international networking. As the final event of the COST Action Opinion project, an international conference will be held from 24 to 28 October 2026, which will bring together about 90 scientists from Europe and relevant stakeholders from the social and political spheres. The conference is designed as a platform for the transfer of research results into practice, with a special emphasis on the possibility of their implementation in national legislation. As part of the conference, a two-day workshop dedicated to modern digital research methods will be held, which further encourages innovation and methodological excellence in research work.

These examples clearly confirm that the University actively encourages teachers to participate in competitive research and development-educational projects, and that it provides institutional support in the preparation and implementation of project applications. Such practice significantly contributes to the development of scientific and professional excellence of teaching staff, strengthening the international visibility of the University and creating added value for students and the wider community.

#### **4.4. The space, equipment and the entire infrastructure are suitable for the performance of teaching, scientific/artistic and professional activities.**

##### **4.4.1. The higher education institution plans and improves its infrastructural development in accordance with strategic goals.**

The University continuously develops and improves its spatial, technical and information infrastructure in accordance with the strategic goals and needs of teaching, scientific, artistic and professional activities. This systematic approach enables the creation of a quality environment for learning, research and professional work, whereby the University continuously invests in the modernization of space, equipment and digital resources, adapting them to modern educational and research standards.

##### **4.4.2. A higher education institution has at least 1 m<sup>2</sup> of spatial capacity per student.**

Today, the University operates in the modernly equipped VERN' Cube campus, located in the very center of Zagreb ([Source: Space Lease Agreement](#)). Its convenient location, in the center of Zagreb, close to the bus, train, and tram stations, provides easy access to lecturers and students from Zagreb, but also from other parts of Croatia.

The total square footage of the space at the University is approximately 3,125 m<sup>2</sup> at two locations: Palmotićeveva 82/1 and Ulica Kneza Borne 10. More than 1772 m<sup>2</sup> of space is intended for teaching for 1448.5 students (the number of students is standardized in accordance with accreditation standards where a full-time student is counted as one and an outstanding student as half), which provides 1.2 m<sup>2</sup> of space per student (Table 1.c of the analytical annex), which is 20% above the required standard and enables pleasant work and stay of students and lecturers at the University ([Source: Floor plan of the space](#)).

It should be emphasized here that the University organizes classes in three rounds primarily to enable students to rationally use and plan their time. On the other hand, this greatly facilitates space management because in this way the space is used almost evenly throughout the day.

##### **4.4.3. The higher education institution has lecture halls, laboratories, i.e. premises for practical classes, a library, an IT classroom, cabinets for lecturers and offices intended for the work of professional services.**

The University has a total of 33 rooms intended for teaching ([Table 4.5.](#)), which are designed and equipped in accordance with the requirements of modern higher education.

Of this number, 18 rooms are lecture halls, 8 rooms are IT lecture halls and laboratories intended for IT and technical courses, while the remaining spaces are intended for practical teaching and specific forms of educational work, including workplaces and a library.

In addition to the premises intended for teaching, the University also provides adequate premises for the teaching staff, including cabinets and a staff room, which enables quality preparation and implementation of the teaching process.

The work sites, i.e. the spaces intended for practical classes, are the studio, editing, directing and journalistic newsroom.

In accordance with the needs and type of activities, students have at their disposal the offices of professional services and premises intended for student activities, such as project work or the activities of student associations.

**4.4.4. The lecture halls are equipped with seating for students, a chair and equipment for presenting teaching material. The laboratories are equipped with appropriate laboratory equipment intended for conducting research for the university and for conducting practical classes. Lecturers' offices and offices of professional services are equipped with office equipment for the work of the teaching staff and professional services.**

The lecture halls are equipped with seating for students, a chair and modern equipment for presenting teaching material. Their functional and technical equipment provides a quality and stimulating environment for lectures, seminars, practical exercises and research work, with special attention paid to ergonomics, safety and adaptability of the space, which supports the achievement of a high level of academic excellence.

The laboratory is equipped with modern technical equipment that enables the implementation of practical classes and the development of professional competencies of students. The laboratory equipment includes the network part, which includes Cisco routers and switches and other network infrastructure for simulation and configuration of computer networks, and equipment for robotics, which contains electrical tools (signal generator, oscilloscope, prototype equipment), Arduino and Raspberry Pi systems, various robots and 3D printers for prototyping and experimental components. Such technical equipment enables students to apply theoretical knowledge in real working conditions and develop innovative solutions in the field of informatics, robotics and communication technologies.

Lecturers' offices are equipped with computers, printers and photocopiers, as well as appropriate office furniture that provides necessary conditions for the preparation of classes, the implementation of scientific work and communication with students.

The offices of professional services are also equipped with computers, photocopiers and other office equipment necessary for the efficient performance of administrative tasks and providing support to the teaching and scientific process.

The entire area of the University is air-conditioned, which allows you to maintain optimal conditions for work and learning throughout the academic year.

**4.4.5. The higher education institution has a corresponding number of computers available to students and wireless Internet access in all rooms intended for students.**

The higher education institution has an adequate number of computers available to students, as well as wireless Internet access in all rooms in the building.

In order to strengthen the digital competencies of students and teachers, the constant availability of digital knowledge resources is ensured through a network of 284 computers, of which 211 are located in lecture halls, 57 in offices and lecturers' cabinets, while an additional 12 are located in common areas available to all students and staff.

The University is connected to the CARNet network with a connection speed of 1 Gb/s and provides wireless Internet access in all rooms, which encourages digital connectivity and flexibility in teaching.

#### **4.4.6. A higher education institution uses appropriate technologies that support all teaching and scientific needs.**

A higher education institution uses appropriate technologies that support all teaching and scientific needs. The University's IT infrastructure fully supports all key activities, from teaching and research to administrative processes, through the integration of modern digital tools and platforms for learning and data management.

The University uses a number of licensed software solutions that enable high-quality, practice-oriented and interactive teaching. Among the software used at the University are applications for graphic design and multimedia (Adobe Creative Cloud), engineering and technical tools (Autodesk AutoCAD and Inventor, Project), programming and development platforms (Visual Studio, Python, Android Studio), and specialized software for business and analytical applications (OperaPMS, SPSS, PS Imago). These tools allow University students to have hands-on experience and simulate a real-world professional environment ([Source: Adobe Acrobat Account](#)). For example, the OperaPMS software enables undergraduate students of Tourism to simulate hotel operations, and thus directly prepares them for work in the real sector ([Source: Example of an Opera certificate](#)).

Eduneta internal platform is particularly noteworthy, serving as the basis for academic, administrative and business processes. This digital support enables the integration and monitoring of all university activities in one place.

#### **4.4.7. Space, equipment and the entire infrastructure (laboratories, IT service, workplaces, libraries, reading rooms, studios, galleries, multimedia halls, cabinets, storage facilities, etc.) are appropriate for the implementation of study programs and ensure the achievement of the envisaged learning outcomes.**

The space, equipment and overall infrastructure are adequate for the implementation of study programs and ensure the achievement of the envisaged learning outcomes.

The University has five IT lecture rooms equipped with modern computers, two specialized lecture halls with laptops and a laboratory equipped with modern technical equipment that enables students to acquire the necessary competencies in the field of the Internet of Things and electrical engineering.

The University has a Film studio, one of the most valuable resources for practical teaching in the undergraduate studies of Film, Television and Multimedia Design, Journalism and Public Relations, as well as in the graduate study of Film and Television Directing and Production. The studio is equipped with professional cameras, lighting systems, mounting computers, and sound and video recording devices, which allows students to work in real conditions of the audiovisual industry.

Through a multimedia studio, the University provides students with comprehensive preparation for careers in the field of directing, production, editing, lighting and sound design, connecting academic education with practice and the needs of the labor market.

The newsroom is equipped with computers and laptops as part of the project *"Establishment of an independent verifier within the VERN University and strengthening the system and procedures for verifying information in media reactions through the implementation of partnerships with the Croatian Association of Digital Publishers (HUDI)"*, which are available to journalism students, and a website (<https://turfacto.vern.hr/>) has been developed for the needs of the newsroom <https://turfacto.vern.hr/>.

The University Library primarily offers students and lecturers access to pertinent literature and access to databases, and provides a quiet space for individual and group work.

The entire infrastructure of the University fully supports the quality implementation of teaching, scientific and professional activities in accordance with the mission and vision of the institution.

#### **4.4.8. The space, equipment and the entire infrastructure (laboratories, IT service, work sites, etc.) are suitable for the realization of scientific/artistic and professional activities.**

Space, equipment and infrastructure (laboratories, IT service, work sites, etc.) are suitable for the realization of scientific, artistic and professional activities:

- Laboratory equipped with modern technical equipment
- Worksites and specialized spaces (film studio, directing, editing, editorial office)
- Offices and lecturers' offices, with computer and office equipment
- Library and repository with access to scientific databases and literature.

#### **4.5. The library and its equipment and access to additional facilities ensure the availability of literature and library services for the needs of quality studies and quality scientific-teaching/artistic-educational activities.**

##### **4.5.1. The library and its equipment and access to additional facilities ensure the availability of literature and library services for the purposes of conducting study programs and scientific/artistic and professional work (availability of teaching literature and literature for scientific/artistic and professional work, availability of information and communication technology means, access to library materials in printed and/or electronic form).**

The University Library represents one of the key infrastructure components that provides support for all basic functions of the University, primarily including teaching and scientific research and artistic activities. Its functional equipment, spatial capacities and access to additional facilities contribute to the achievement of high standards of study quality and enable the implementation of study programs in accordance with the needs of students and teaching staff. The work of the University Library is regulated by the Library Work Regulations ([Source: Library Work Regulations](#)) and House Rules ([Source: Library House Rules](#)), which clearly define the principles, procedures and standards for the provision of library services. These documents ensure the systematic, transparent and efficient functioning of the library and contribute to the quality of academic and professional support to students and teachers.

In the library area, users have at their disposal six workplaces for individual or group work, as well as five computers with access to the University's Internet network. University teaching and non-teaching staff, as well as students, can use the services of the library, which is open on weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. If necessary, most often during exam periods, the library is open until 6:00 p.m., especially on those days when exams start after 5:00 p.m., in order to be available for students to repeat and prepare for exams. A full-time librarian and two demonstrators are available to users.

##### **4.5.2. The library and its equipment and additional facilities ensure the requirements for quality study in accordance with, among other things, the conditions prescribed by the Standard for Higher Education, University and Research Libraries (Official Gazette 81/22).**

All professors and students of the University have the right to use all the resources of the National and University Library located near the University free of charge. That is why the University Library is primarily intended to support teaching. Thus, the optimal number of copies of teaching literature prescribed by lecturers in their courses is provided for students, with the aim that students do not have to buy textbooks, but borrow them from the University library, and return the borrowed literature after passing the exam.

Particular attention is paid to the availability of relevant literature, including teaching, professional and scientific material, in printed and electronic form. The library fund consists of

3,094 titles of professional literature, 269 textbooks and 12 journals in active subscription, with an emphasis on the fields of economics, communication sciences, management, tourism and informatics. The library's holdings also include final and graduate theses created within the University, which are stored in digital form on the server and in the repository, and physically in the library repository, and are available to users for inspection.

In order to ensure high quality of the study programs and the availability of teaching materials, the University continuously invests in the development and updating of the library fund. Special emphasis is placed on ensuring the availability of compulsory literature for individual courses, whereby it is sought to ensure that the library fund includes at least 20% of the total prescribed compulsory literature for each course ([Source: Representation of compulsory literature in graduate studies](#)). This internship provides equal conditions for all students, especially those who do not have their own access to all the necessary resources. Accordingly, the total number of titles of compulsory teaching literature in the library is 267, while a total of 2,949 copies of compulsory literature are available to students and teachers. The collection of printed journals includes 149 titles ([Source: Table 4.7 of the analytical contribution to self-analysis](#)).

Teachers and students are provided with access to databases necessary for scientific and professional work.

#### **4.5.3. The higher education institution provided teaching literature and literature intended for scientific and professional work.**

In order to continuously improve the quality of the educational and scientific research process, the University has developed a systematic approach to the management and renewal of the library collection, with a special emphasis on the acquisition of contemporary literature. In order to ensure the timely availability of relevant sources of knowledge, the University has established a procedure for the monthly procurement of literature, which is carried out in accordance with the needs of the teaching staff and students and the requirements of study programs ([Source: Proposal for the procurement of library materials](#)). This systematic approach enables a long-term, planned and sustainable refreshment of the library fund, with particular attention to the topicality, relevance and scientific basis of the available sources. In this way, the library fund is continuously renewed and modernized, whereby the University provides the intellectual infrastructure necessary for the quality implementation of study programs and the achievement of scientific excellence ([Source: Literature Acquisition 2025](#)).

#### **4.5.4. Students and lecturers have access to information and communication technology (in the library).**

In the library area, students and teaching staff have access to five computers with access to the Internet and all the necessary software that they can use for work and research during their stay in the library area.

#### **4.5.5. Students and lecturers are provided with access to library materials in printed and/or electronic form. The library and its equipment and additional facilities supports the provision of a high-quality study experience.**

In addition to library materials, University employees and students also have access to online resources, from citation databases to full-text databases, through subscriptions or licenses from the National and University Library (NSK). Access to these resources is achieved through its own e-identity, which enables work on scientific and professional projects in accordance with international standards. In addition to independent searching, students and lecturers can, through a written request, request a search of online databases by the library.

Employees and students of the University have access to a total of one electronic journal and eight bibliographic databases, including the Emerald database, subscribed to by the University's own funds. Through this database, more than 450 journals, 8800 e-books, 1500 case studies and other resources crucial for the development of the teaching and scientific process at the University are available to lecturers and students of the University. Access to this, as well as other databases, is provided through the internal Eduneta portal, and in this way the library supports the process of education and the production of quality scientific and professional papers.

#### **4.5.6. The library and its equipment and additional facilities ensure the requirements of quality scientific-teaching/artistic-educational activities.**

An important part of the overall library fund is the collection of Ante Peterlić, which was posthumously donated to the University Library. The collection includes 529 titles of professional literature in the field of film, literature, art and psychology, as well as various lexicons of European and world filmographies and magazines dedicated to film production. This material can serve as a valuable and useful source of information for students of art faculties, especially the undergraduate study program of *Film, Television and Multimedia Design* and *Transmedia Dramaturgy*, as well as the graduate study of *Film and Television Direction and Production*, and all other interested users.

Also, the University uses the internal Eduneta portal and the newly developed mobile and desktop application to communicate with students, as well as to share teaching materials, instructions and other information and documents. The library has a special place on the portal called E-Library, through which users can search the library catalogue, access the repository and relevant databases, and check the newsletter of newly arrived titles, which is published twice a year.

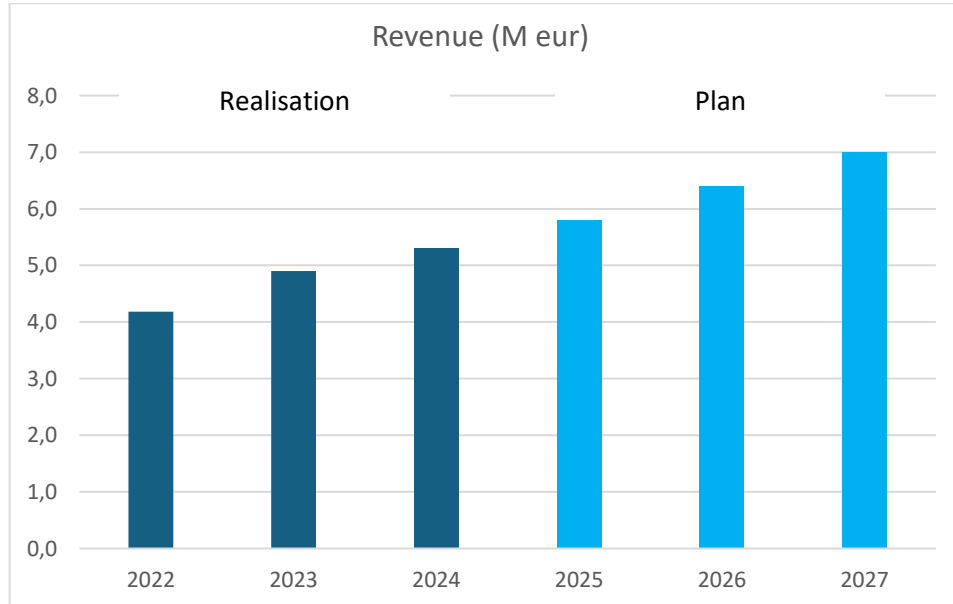
#### 4.6. A higher education institution shall provide the necessary financial resources for the performance of teaching, scientific and professional activities.

VERN University is a privately founded institution.

The vast majority of the University's financial resources are generated on the market, primarily through tuition fees for undergraduate and graduate study and lifelong learning programs. A smaller part of the income is generated through, primarily, dedicated projects (EU funds, professional and scientific projects, etc.).

##### 4.6.1. A higher education institution has a financial plan that contains planned revenues and expenditures for the performance of higher education and professional activities for a three-year period (the financial plan of a university, faculty or an art academy or a polytechnic should also contain planned revenues and expenditures for the performance of scientific, artistic and professional activities).

The University has [a three-year financial plan](#) that contains planned revenues and expenditures for the performance of higher and lifelong learning activities. The three-year plan is made in the form of an income statement because such a form is most suitable for financial institutions. To make it easier to understand the business trend, the past three financial years have been added to the three-year financial plan.



Source: Three-year financial trend

Scientific, professional and artistic activities are further elaborated in a table because these are items that, in addition to being financed from their own funds, are largely dependent on financing that comes from various types of professional, scientific, EU and other procurements. The [table](#)

[of planned revenues and expenditures for the performance of scientific, professional and artistic activities](#) shows only the projects submitted so far, and we hope that in the coming period we will annually apply for new projects, so we will update the financial plan accordingly. It should be emphasized that this table is not related to the salaries of employees, who are paid for teaching, their work in science, as well as for institutional contribution and administrative work from the primary source of income of the University – student tuition fees.

#### 4.6.2. A public higher education institution proves that it has the funds necessary for the implementation of studies by concluding a program agreement, projection of tuition income or other income.

**It is not applicable** to VERN University as its work is not publicly funded.

#### 4.6.3. Financial sustainability and efficiency are visible in all aspects of the work of a higher education institution.

VERN University has very good and steadily growing financial indicators.



**The data on the creditworthiness of VERN University are taken from the credit report from poslovna.hr.**

According to data from the Income statement (RDG), the total operating income of the University has increased since its establishment, from 198 thousand euros in 2020 to 5.27 million euros in 2024. Revenue growth was accompanied by growth in operating expenses, but with a balanced cost structure and a positive operating result.

The key characteristics of the University's operations in the observed period include high current ratio (3.11), a cash ratio of 2.74 and an extremely low degree of indebtedness (0.21). According to the analysis of Poslovna.hr (2025), these indicators place the University in the category of 'Excellent' according to all solvency and liquidity criteria. At the same time, operational efficiency indicators, such as an average collection period of only 11 days and payment of liabilities within 5 days, confirm exceptional orderliness and stability in business relationships. The University has no tax debts, which further confirms the high level of reliability and the responsibility of the management that is leading the very institution.

In qualitative terms, the University achieved a creditworthiness rating of A1: 'Excellent', with extremely positive growth trends: total revenues +7.9%, net surplus revenues +4.2%, assets +10.5%, while reducing the debt equity ratio and increasing liquidity.

The necessary data are provided as a supplement to the Self-analysis in [Table 4.8. An analytic addition](#).

#### **4.6.4. A higher education institution manages financial resources transparently, efficiently and purposefully.**

In accordance with the regulations, the University **transparently** keeps all financial records prescribed by law and submits final reports to the competent institutions at the end of each financial year. Most of these reports are publicly available.

**The efficiency and expediency of** financial management are best shown by the data from the credit report (poslovna.hr) for last year. According to the report, the balance sheet form shows an increase in total assets from EUR 2.72 million in 2022 to EUR 3.56 million in 2024, with a cash increase from EUR 1.05 million to EUR 2.04 million, and capital and reserves from EUR 750 thousand to more than EUR 1 million. These indicators clearly confirm stable growth and a secure financing structure. The University has no long-term liabilities, and all short-term liabilities are regularly settled from current revenues. This in turn generates a high level of sustainability and long-term stability.

#### **4.6.5. Additional sources of funding are used for the development and improvement of higher education institutions.**

The projects through which the University generated additional revenues are listed in paragraph [4.6.6](#) of this chapter.

Most of the projects are aimed at the development and improvement of certain segments of the University.

For example, the Digital Transformation project of VERN University, co-financed both the improvement of its own information system to support the academic and business processes of the University as well as the development of the new mobile applications for students, professors and alumni.

A particularly interesting and useful project for students was developed in cooperation with the Croatian Audiovisual Centre (HAVC) in which films by young authors, student of the University's film program, are co-financed and encouraged.. That is primarily done by way of co-financing student film achievements for the needs of final and graduate theses. So far, the production of several dozen student films has been supported in this way. The uniqueness of this project is the fact that the students themselves do most of the planning and monitoring of the costs of production thus gaining valuable practical knowledge and experience that they will need immediately upon graduation. All of the above can be seen in the attached documents: [Agreement on the co-financing of student films of VERN's undergraduate studies](#), [Agreement on the co-financing of student films of VERN's graduate studies](#), [Submission of scripts with planned budgets](#), [Report on the realization of films for the Croatian Audiovisual Centre](#).

These documents show the entire course of planning and spending of funds on a dedicated project where, both in the planning process and in the reporting process, the students themselves, the main protagonists of the project, are largely involved, of course, with the strong support of all academic and business segments of the University.

#### **4.6.6. Additional sources of financing are provided through domestic and international projects, cooperation with industry, local community, etc.**

In the past period (the past five years), additional sources of income were generated by:

- Public procurement procedures primarily for the provision of intellectual services of education and the development of educational programs - two projects:
  - Croatian Employment Service:
    - Strengthening human and IT capacities, and improving skills for working with vulnerable groups within the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) group 1. Training of counsellors for working with vulnerable groups
    - VERN's role: Training of counsellors for working with vulnerable groups, preparation of teaching materials, maintenance and evaluation of training, services, activities and actions related to the preparation of job analysis of counsellors working with vulnerable groups
    - Partner: Core integra d.o.o. for consulting and services
    - Contract amount: EUR 168,624.33
  - Ministry of Tourism:
    - Services for the development of educational programs in tourism and hospitality in the grant award process under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan - Investment C1.6. R1-I3 – Improvement of the tourism eco system and strengthening the capacity of the system for resilient and sustainable tourism. Development and implementation of an educational program for destination management in accordance with legal regulations in tourism, and the development and implementation of training trainers, including curricula, programs and materials
    - VERN's role: Development and implementation of an educational program for destination management in accordance with legal regulations in tourism and development, and implementation of trainer training, including curricula, programs and materials. The subject of procurement is divided into two phases, of which phase 1 contains the preparation of educational programs, and phase 2 the implementation of educational programs.
    - Partner: Institute for Tourism, Zagreb
    - Contract amount: 60.500,00 EUR EUR
- Through dedicated programs:
  - EU funds – two projects:

- Digital transformation of VERN University for the purpose of strengthening the competitiveness of the NRRP. C1.1.2.R3-I3.01.0401 Digitalization of business,
  - Amount of support: EUR 61,668.32
  - Own funds: €78,486.97
- Establishment of a new independent verifier within the VERN University and strengthening of the system and procedures for verifying information in media reactions through the implementation of a partnership with the Croatian Association of Digital Publishers (reference number: NPOO C1.1.1. R6-I2)
  - Amount of support: 132,538.86
  - Partner: CROATIAN ASSOCIATION OF DIGITAL PUBLISHERS (HUDI)
- Erasmus+ programs – five projects/programs: International exchange of students, lecturers and staff
  - Total amount of support: EUR 580,275.00
- Croatian Audiovisual Centre (HAVC): Co-financing agreement (8 projects):
  - : ..."in order to support and encourage the production of films by young authors..."
  - Total amount: 265.251,26 EUR

In addition to the aforementioned, there are a number of smaller activities in terms of the amount spent that take place through the Market Research Center of the University.

The Project Office was established in December 2023 and, in a relatively short period of time, managed to provide a significant number of very interesting and useful projects that became additional sources of income for the University. From these additional sources of income, they financed targeted activities that improved the potential of the University in a targeted area (e.g. digitalization), The same was also done for projects through public procurement procedures, from which funds were provided to strengthen the financial potential of the University. The projects have the traits of domestic and international cooperation, as well as cooperation with the economy and the local community.

## 5. Scientific/artistic and professional activities

## **5.1. The higher education institution is recognizable for its scientific research and/or artistic achievements in all scientific fields in which its study programs are conducted.**

### **5.1.1. The higher education institution bases its scientific work on original ideas and an original scientific approach.**

The University is developing as a highly interdisciplinary and innovative university focused, among other things, on the fastest growing areas of the European and world economy, such as entrepreneurship, technology, and cultural and creative industries. It is at the junction of entrepreneurship, creativity, technology and science that the University develops its activities and tries to connect theoretical knowledge with practical and project work. Such an approach encourages interdisciplinary thinking and innovation, develops competencies necessary for the modern labor market, and creates a space in which creative ideas are transformed into concrete projects and social values. The University bases its scientific research activities on original ideas and an original scientific approach, connecting scientific reflection with practice. Within this framework, research projects, professional and scientific publications, and conferences are developed. In this way, the University makes a recognizable contribution to the development of Croatian and European science and art, confirming its role as a university that combines academic excellence, creativity, technologies and entrepreneurial practice.

Although it is a relatively young university, which has existed for less than five years and is still in the process of forming its own scientific identity, the University is systematically developing a recognizable scientific and research profile. Its strategic orientation is directed towards being a higher education institution that encourages interdisciplinary, applied and socially relevant research. Such a development process, although encouraging, is necessarily accompanied by challenges characteristic of institutions in the consolidation phase. That is especially the case in terms of investment in scientific activity, development of human resources and the realization of internationally recognizable research projects. These processes require a long-term strategic direction, adequate resources and time, in order for the initiated initiatives to result in measurable outcomes and contribute to the scientific recognition of the University. Founded in 2020, in a period marked by the global COVID-19 pandemic, the University has operated from the very beginning in circumstances that have significantly limited the possibilities of international mobility, cooperation and participation in scientific activities.

In addition to all of the above, the University, as a private institution, did not have access to the projects of the Croatian Science Foundation until 2022, which further limited the possibility of scientific research. Also, until this year, the University competed for competitive scientific projects, but was rejected because it was considered, according to some interpretations, a profit organization, and not a scientific institution. It is still uncertain whether this interpretation has finally been changed.

Despite all of the above, in the first development cycle, the University laid the foundations of institutional infrastructure, teaching capacities and scientific research culture. In parallel, the

University has launched a number of mechanisms and instruments to encourage scientific productivity and professional development of its lecturers. With the adoption of a series of regulations aimed at encouraging and developing the scientific production of the University's lecturers, clear financial and organizational frameworks have been established that enable lecturers to be more actively involved both in research processes and in the international scientific community.

Investments in scientific activity, human resources development and the realization of internationally recognized research projects require strategic direction and additional resources. First of all, such investments require time so that the initiated projects can give the expected results and stimulate the scientific research activity of the University. Nevertheless, the consistent focus on scientific development confirms the ambition of the University to establish itself as a relevant actor in the national and international higher education and research space.

#### **5.1.2. The number and quality of published papers by lecturers of the higher education institution is at its highest level.**

The continuous publication of scientific papers in domestic and international journals confirms the scientific vitality of the University and its systematic efforts to strengthen the quality and visibility of research work. In the last five years, the employees of the University have published 228 papers, including 73 scientific papers in journals, 18 book chapters and 29 author's and editorial books. Of these papers, 35 are indexed in the international databases WoSCC and Scopus, which testifies to the growing international recognition of scientific contributions (Source: [Table 5.1 from the analytical annex](#)). Observed through Google Scholar metrics, the scientific impact of University employees is further confirmed by cumulative citation indicators. Full-time lecturers from the University [have made a total of 14,270 citations](#), of which 5,021 since 2020, with the highest recorded H-index 36 and i10-index 82, respectively 14 and 21 in the last five years. External lecturers of the University [have obtained a total of 11,262 citations](#), of which 7,500 in the period from 2020 to the present, with the highest recorded H-index 35 and i10-index 99, respectively 28 and 84 from 2020 onwards. These indicators confirm the growing presence and recognition of scientific papers of University employees in the national and international context. Scientific cooperation was achieved through 83 papers with domestic and 7 with international partners, while 102 papers are available in open access.

The University recognizes the need to further increase the proportion of papers in journals with a high impact factor and to strengthen international research networks. In this direction, several encouraging acts have been adopted, including [The Regulations on Grants for Scientific, Teaching and Professional Training](#) and [The Regulations on Scientific and Professional Training and Training](#), by which the University seeks to encourage the professional development and scientific excellence of its lectures. The University will continue to continuously monitor indicators of scientific activity and adjust support mechanisms in accordance with its own development goals and international quality standards.

In accordance with this, and in order to further encourage scientific work, professional development and motivation of employees, the University has adopted the Regulations on Employee Remuneration, which systematically recognizes and rewards excellence and significant contribution to scientific, artistic, teaching, and administrative work (Source: [Regulations on Rewarding Employees](#)). The awards are presented during the University Day, which publicly recognizes the work of individuals and teams and further evaluates the contribution of the entire academic community in achieving the University's mission, strengthening its reputation and promoting excellence in all areas of activity.

### **5.1.3. The results of lecturers' research significantly contribute to the development of the scientific field and/or artistic field in which they operate.**

The University encourages the scientific research and artistic work of its lecturers through systematic support, interdisciplinarity and connection with practice. The results of the research confirm that lecturers significantly contribute to the development of the scientific and artistic fields in which they operate, thereby meeting the standard that requires lecturers' research to contribute to the development of their respective fields. The importance and impact of their scientific work is additionally reaffirmed by the citation and scientific recognition indicators from the previous period, according to which the University employees achieve high cumulative citation values and notable H-indices and i10-indices, which confirms the growing presence and relevance of their scientific contribution in the national and international context.

In the field of communication and information sciences, *full professor Mirela Holy, PhD*, has developed a rich research portfolio comprising 29 scientific papers, authored and edited books, and participation in five projects, including membership in the Mission Committee for Climate Change Adaptation and Social Transformation within the *Horizon Europe* program. In electrical engineering, *Mr. Sc. Hrvoje Belani* demonstrates significant achievements through project leadership (one competitive project) and the publication of 16 scientific papers in journals, books, and conference proceedings, as well as three professional papers.

In the field of economics, *associate professor Jadranka Ivanković, PhD* (14 scientific papers in journals, books, and conference proceedings), in communication sciences, *assistant professor Marija Slijepčević, PhD* (10 scientific papers in journals, books, and conference proceedings), and in information sciences, *assistant professor Alen Kišić, PhD* (six scientific papers in journals, books, and conference proceedings and two professional papers) continuously contribute to the advancement of their respective disciplines through scientific publications and professional engagement.

In the interdisciplinary field of art, *associate professor Neven Hitrec, PhD* (four scientific papers in conference proceedings) integrates artistic practice with a research-based approach in his scholarly work, while *full professor Milan Kljajin, PhD* (seven scientific papers in journals, books, and conference proceedings) promotes innovative research methodologies and interdisciplinary cooperation within the broader scientific community.

The University has also been an institutional member of EUPRERA (European Public Relations Education and Research Association) for many years, and the University's lecturers actively participate in its research projects and initiatives.

Overall, the research productivity of the University's lecturers reflects the diversity and scope of scientific activity and contributes to the visibility and development of scientific and artistic fields. The University recognizes the importance of further strengthening research activity, especially through international cooperation and competitive projects, and believes that the implementation of the adopted regulations and measures will further improve research excellence and sustainable development of the University's scientific community.

#### **5.1.4. A higher education institution has a satisfactory number of scientific papers in prestigious primary modes of scientific communication in its field.**

The University continuously encourages its lecturers to publish papers in relevant, peer-reviewed publications of national and international importance. Although it is a young institution that is still positioning itself in the international scientific space, in the last few years there has been a visible increase in the number of publications in journals located in prestigious databases such as WoSCC and Scopus. In the last five years, the employees of the University have published 228 papers, including 73 scientific papers in journals, 18 book chapters and 29 author's and editorial books. Of these papers, 35 are indexed in the international databases WoSCC and Scopus, which is described in more detail in the chapter [5.1.2](#). The University expects that systematic support through [Regulations on Aid for Scientific, Teaching and Professional Training](#), with additional financial instruments for the costs of publishing papers and the adopted Regulations for the Promotion of Scientific Activity described in the chapter [5.1.2](#), will result in a higher number of applications for co-financing of publications in international journals with an impact factor. In the coming period, the University will further encourage authors to publish in high-ranking journals, while simultaneously strengthening the institutional infrastructure for research and academic writing. Also, the University has adopted [Regulations on Institutional Projects](#), which will further encourage not only interdisciplinary networking of studies and lectures, integrating new technologies, but also the development of new modules/courses/studies, which will further enrich the areas in which the study programs are carried out.

#### **5.1.5. The University has a satisfactory number of papers presented at prestigious conferences.**

The participation of the University's lecturers in international scientific conferences shows a continuous commitment to the development of scientific research and integration into the global academic community. Lecturers regularly present the results of their research at international conferences in various fields, thus contributing to the visibility of the University and strengthening its scientific reputation. In the past five academic years, there have been 77 participations of University lecturers at international scientific conferences around the world ([Example: participation of our lectures at a congress in Indonesia](#)), where they presented their papers and research ([Source: List of teachers - scientific conferences](#)).

Full professor Mirela Holy, PhD participated in the scientific conference *The Interdisciplinary Bodies Conference* in London, UK (June 25–27, 2024), while mr. sc. Zrinka Gregov presented at the *9th International Scientific Conference for Doctoral Students* in Eisenstadt, Germany (May 25, 2023). Associate professor Irena Miljković Krečar, PhD and assistant professor Maja Kolega, PhD presented their papers at the *17th Global Conference on Business and Social Sciences* held in Bali in 2025, and assistant professor Marija Slijepčević, PhD and assistant professor Stana Odak Krasić, PhD participated in the *GlobalFact 2025* conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Full professor Ozana Ramljak, PhD presented at the *International Conference on Arts Education and Social Science (ICOAESS 2025)* in Milan, Italy.

In order to facilitate the process of applying for scientific and professional conferences for lecturers, the Training Request Form is available to them within the internal Eduneta system, which enables a simple and transparent way of planning participation ([Source: Training Request Form](#)). The University covers the costs of registration fees and travel through the internal support system, thus actively encouraging the dissemination of research results and networking with foreign partners.

Although there is a significant increase in the participation of lecturers in prestigious international scientific conferences, the University is aware that there is space for improvement. In the future, the University is planning to strengthen institutional support in the preparation and submission of papers and increase the number of joint research with international partners.

#### **5.1.6. The higher education institution is involved in a satisfactory number of competitive projects.**

In order to further consolidate and improve scientific activity, the University strives to develop a project culture and strengthen institutional support mechanisms for lecturers and researchers in applying and implementing scientific projects. Having in mind the fact that the University, until 2022, as a private higher education institution, was limited in its access to the Croatian Science Foundation's tenders, with an unresolved legal status when applying for competitive projects (profit organization or scientific institution), the University has focused its efforts on building internal capacities and encouraging project initiatives within its own resources. As an important step in this direction, the University has adopted [the Regulations on Institutional Projects](#), which further evaluate research aimed at involving students in scientific work, the development of interdisciplinarity, and the transfer of scientific results into teaching. As part of these strategic efforts, the University strives to encourage the development of scientific research and motivate lecturers to apply and participate in institutional projects. With the purpose in mind, a [call for applications for institutional projects has been published](#), which is an important instrument for promoting excellence in research, strengthening cooperation between lectures and students, for which a [form has been prepared](#).

As part of its support for scientific research, the University supports the project *Communicating Intersectional Crises in the Croatian Education System (KIKuHOM)* ([Source: Letter of Intent](#)). The role of the University in this project is manifested in the involvement of lecturers and students,

especially from art and communication studies, in the production and presentation of project contents and in the dissemination of results through open access.

In addition to the implemented projects, the University continuously develops and applies for new initiatives, especially those in which lectures participate in international and national partnerships as well as in activities that connect students with the business sector through professional practice. In the coming period, the results of several international projects submitted in cooperation with foreign universities are expected, which further confirms the University's commitment to the development of the project and research dimension of its activities.

At the national level, the University has applied for a project, part of the Croatian Science Foundation, focused on the research of electromagnetic characteristics of new materials based on radio frequency technologies ([Source: Croatian Science Foundation project application](#)). Furthermore, through the application to the competition of the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth, the University focused on improving the employability of students, which further emphasizes the importance of connecting the teaching process with the needs of the labor market and society as a whole ([Source: Application for the project Improving Employability through Professional Practice](#)).

In 2025, the University showed significant project and research activity [through eight applications for national and international tenders](#), of which two projects are the applicant, and six projects are partner institutions. The submitted projects cover the fields of technical, social sciences and humanities, as well as education, youth and digital security, and the total value of the submitted projects exceeds EUR 3.8 million. The projects were submitted to the tenders of the Croatian Science Foundation, the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth, the Ministry of Economy, the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, and to the European Commission programs such as Erasmus+, Horizon Europe and Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV). Active participation in the preparation and application of projects confirms the growing competences of lecturers and professional services of the University in the field of project activity and contributes to the strengthening of the research culture and international recognition of the University. Of particular importance is the application for the tender for the IRI S3 projects "*Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI 2.0) based on the Internet of Things (IoT) for the observability and controllability of inverter-dominant networks of energy communities – Energy.Comm system*" with significant partners from the economy.

#### **5.1.7. The higher education institution is the organizer of scientific conferences that are nationally and internationally recognizable.**

The organization of scientific conferences is an important tool for fostering scientific exchange and strengthening the international presence. The University biennially organizes [the International Scientific Conference Mediterranean Islands Conference \(MIC-Vis\)](#), in cooperation with the Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar ([Source: VERN Ivo Pilar Institute Agreement](#)). So far, a total of five international scientific conferences MIC-Vis have been held, with the participation

of almost 800 scientists and researchers from all over the world. The conferences resulted in the publication of five international proceedings with almost 400 scientific papers. [The proceeding from the fourth international scientific conference MIC-Vis, 2022](#) was indexed in the Web of Science database, which further confirmed the scientific relevance and quality of the conference, as well as the University's commitment to scientific excellence. With its engagement in the organization of this conference, which is organized under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Croatia and the City of Vis, the University has positioned Vis as [a center from which the Mediterranean is contemplated in a scientific way](#). In addition to the scientific component, a very important component of this conference is that it involves the local community through cooperation with a High School in Vis and thus ensures a socially useful role. Also, through additional contents of the conference, such as [international competitions for the best student photographs on the topic of the Mediterranean](#), the involvement of students from abroad and Croatia in scientific work is encouraged and disseminated to the public through the organization of [international exhibitions of the best student photographs](#) that are an integral part of this international scientific conference.

Another important international scientific conference organized by the University is [Creative Future Insights](#), which has been biennially held on the topic of creative industries for the last five years in cooperation with the Institute of Economics Zagreb ([Source: VERN EIZG Agreement](#)). So far, three editions of this international scientific conference have been held ([the last one in September 2025](#)) and they have brought together more than 200 scientists from all over the world. The conferences resulted in the publication of [an international proceedings](#) (from the first conference) as well as a book of selected papers published by the international publisher [Emerald Publishing](#) (from the second conference). Selected papers from the third conference will also be published by Emerald Publishing, while other papers will be published in the conference proceedings.

These international scientific conferences represent key spaces for the exchange of ideas, presentation of research results and networking of the scientific community, and provide an opportunity to further strengthen the scientific component and international involvement of the University.

#### **5.1.8. Higher education institution lecturers participate in the work of committees and other higher education and science bodies.**

Lecturers from the University are increasingly actively participating in bodies important for the development of science and higher education. It is worth mentioning the election of the long-time rector of the University, full professor with tenure Vlatko Cvrtila, PhD, as [a member of the National Council for Higher Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Croatia](#). Also, the current Rector of the University, full professor with tenure Vedran Mornar, PhD is also [the president of the Croatian Academy of Engineering \(HATZ\)](#), a national academic institution that brings together leading experts and scientists in the field of technical and engineering sciences. He is a member [of the board of Euro-CASE](#), and was also the president of [CAETS](#). These functions further confirm the scientific and professional recognition of the

members of the academic community of the University and their active role in the development of the Croatian and European scientific area. University employees actively participate in international research networks and are members of the steering committees of two COST Action projects: [COST Action – OPINION \(CA 21129\)](#) and [COST Action – Depolarization: Redressing Radical Polarisation \(CA 22165\)](#). Within these projects, they are involved in research focused on the analysis of attitudes and processes of depolarization of the public sphere in the digital media environment. The University strives to support the scientific and professional work of its lecturers and actively participate in the processes of evaluation of scientific contribution at the national level. In this context, as part of the Competition for Submitting Incentives for the Award of [State Awards for Science for 2024](#), the University proposed assistant professor Tamara Kunić, PhD, head of two study programs, the undergraduate study of Cyber Communication and the graduate study of Business Communications Management as a candidate for the annual award for science.

#### **5.1.9. External associates are recognized experts in their field, have relevant scientific or professional papers and relevant work experience.**

External associates of the University are recognized experts in their field, with relevant scientific or professional papers and relevant work experience. Their selection is based on expertise and excellence, which achieves a synergistic effect on the teaching and research process and the connection of the University with practice and the economy.

In the artistic field, Dubravko Merlić stands out, whose television and documentary projects have been recognized as top national achievements and awarded by relevant professional associations, thus contributing to the development of contemporary Croatian audiovisual culture and the artistic identity of the University. For the documentary TV series "Modern Times", he won the Grand Prix of the Croatian Designers Association for the best project as a whole (Croatian Designers Association, 2024), while for the documentary film "The Line of Life" he was awarded the Golden Oil Lamp at the Croatian Film Days in 2023.

In the field of media and communications, Silvija Londero Šimleša, an expert in the field of media, communications and journalism, with extensive experience in editorial and executive management of media projects, stands out. As a long-time director and editor-in-chief of Media servis and a lecturer at the University, she significantly contributes to the professionalization and development of the media sector in Croatia. She has published 10 scientific papers in the field of communication.

In the field of tourism and management, Željko Trezner, author of 31 published papers in the field of tourism, and Ivan Gašpert, an experienced manager in the hotel industry with more than twenty years of experience in managing international hotel operations, actively contribute to the development of students' professional competencies and the strengthening of the University's connection with the tourism sector.

In the field of social sciences, Marija Geiger Zeman, the author of a large number of scientific papers, confirms the high level of scientific excellence of the University's external associates with

her research on the sociology of aging, gender and culture, and participation in international projects.

The diversity and quality of external associates ensures an interdisciplinary approach, improves teaching processes and strengthens the University's connection with the professional, cultural and social environment.

#### **5.1.10. Lecturers of higher education institutions participate in the work of the editorial boards of scientific journals.**

In the last 5 academic years, 16 lecturers from the University have participated in the work of 16 editorial boards of scientific and professional journals, and thus contributed to the development of scientific and professional thought, academic visibility and international recognition of the University ([Source: Editorial Board of Scientific Journals - list of teachers](#)). Their membership in editorial boards includes both domestic and international publications, with some lecturers also engaged in the role of editors-in-chief.

#### **5.1.11. The higher education institution has organized publishing activities and is a publisher of scientific publications that are nationally and internationally significant and recognizable.**

Since its establishment, the University has encouraged the development of publishing, within which [a number of textbooks have been published,](#) which to this day represent relevant literature for various courses. Although this activity was temporarily slowed down during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is currently in the phase of consolidation and revitalization, and the lecturers of the University, in cooperation with renowned Croatian publishers, have prepared the publication of several university textbooks. Despite the challenges, the University's publishing activity already shows significant potential for further development in the direction of a relevant platform for the publication of interdisciplinary and socially useful publications. In this context, the preparation of the textbook *Basics of Law*, which is in the final phase before publication and represents an important step forward in the further development of university publishing activities ([Source: Textbook Basics of Law](#)), is also emphasized.

An important component of the University's publishing activities is the publication of the scientific journal [Contemporary Topics](#). Contemporary Topics is an international scientific journal for social sciences and humanities of a multidisciplinary character. The journal is indexed in the ProQuest database, publishes papers in Croatian and English and is available online free of charge. Also, the journal is published on HRČAK, the central portal that brings together Croatian scientific and professional journals that offer open access to their papers in one place. The data on the downloads of papers published in the journal show the interest of the scientific community in the papers of the journal.

In addition to these publications, the University is also the publisher of five proceedings of the international scientific conference MIC – Vis, of which the proceedings from year 2023 are indexed in the Web of Science database, as well as one proceedings of the international scientific

conference Creative Future Insights, which has been described in more detail in the previous paragraphs of this chapter. All these activities are aimed at the further development of the University's publishing activities and its positioning as an institution that actively contributes to the development of scientific and professional activities through its publishing.

The University recognizes that maintaining and enhancing scientific excellence requires sustained and strategic investment in infrastructure, human resources, and processes. Above all, it requires time for the outcomes of implemented activities and adopted measures to take effect and stimulate measurable growth in scientific output. Accordingly, in the forthcoming period, the University will continue to actively develop and promote scientific and research activities aimed at strengthening the quality, visibility, and impact of its scientific production.

## **5.2. The higher education institution is recognizable for its professional achievements in all fields in which it conducts professional studies.**

### **5.2.1. The quality of published professional papers of higher education lecturers is at the highest level.**

The largest number of professional papers at the highest level are published by full-time lecturers, but also by some external associates. The papers are published in domestic scientific and professional journals, and the largest number of papers have been published in conference proceedings in the Republic of Croatia and abroad. In the period from 2020 to 2024, the lectures of the University published 15 professional papers in journals. Out of these 15 papers, 7 of them came from cooperations with other institutions in the Republic of Croatia, while 4 papers were published in open access. In the same period, University lecturers published 10 chapters in professional books and conference proceedings, of which 3 papers came from cooperation with other institutions in the Republic of Croatia, 1 from international cooperation and 3 papers were published in open access ([Source: Table 5.1 from the analytical part](#)).

### **5.2.2. The results of the lecturers' professional research significantly contribute to the development of the profession.**

Lectures of the University participate as associates in scientific and professional research, and independently initiate research that results in presentations at conferences and publications in proceedings. Part of the research was conducted in collaboration with students, which also resulted in the publication of joint papers by lecturers and students. In the past five-year period, the lecturers of the University have published a total of 107 papers co-authored with students. 27 lecturers participated in such projects, which shows the wide involvement of teaching staff in this practice ([Source: Number of papers co-authored with students](#)). At the same time, this activity strengthens the research component of teaching work and provides students with the opportunity to gain experience of active participation in scientific research and professional projects already during their studies.

### **5.2.3. The University has a satisfactory number of professional papers in prestigious professional journals.**

The professional activity of the University reflects its applied orientation and connection with practice. Lecturers regularly publish professional articles in relevant domestic and international publications, and the number of published papers in highly cited professional journals is constantly increasing. The University encourages such practice through the introduction of incentives for authors of professional papers, as well as through [the launch of its own professional journal \*Business and Communications\*](#). The aim is to strengthen the exchange of professional knowledge between the academic community and the business sector and thus contributing to the development of the profession and the market relevance of study programs ([Source: Table 5.1 from the analytical part](#)).

#### **5.2.4. The University has a satisfactory number of papers presented at prestigious professional conferences and gatherings.**

Lecturers of the University regularly participate in professional conferences in the country and abroad, where they present the results of applied research and examples of good practice. In the observed period, a total of 32 participations in relevant domestic and international professional conferences were recorded ([Source: List of teachers – professional conferences](#)).

Participations cover a wide range of thematic areas, from quality and sustainable development, through media and communications, to psychology, information and communication technologies, entrepreneurship and technical sciences. For example, associate professor Diana Plantić Tadić, PhD participated in the 22nd International Symposium on Quality "*Quality – Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*" (Poreč, 2021), and Ivana Bekić, PhD at the conference "*Building Resilient Society*" (Zagreb, 2021). Assistant professor Marija Slijepčević, PhD and assistant professor Stana Odak Kراسić, PhD presented their work at the conference "*The South EE Media Forum*" (Sarajevo, 2022), while associate professor Irena Miljković Krečar, PhD and assistant professor Maja Kolega, PhD participated in the 31st Annual Conference of Psychologists (Opatija, 2024). Furthermore, assistant professor Petar Kolar, PhD presented at the *MIPRO 2025 conference* (Opatija), and Iva Senegović, PhD at the conference "*The Future of Family Businesses*" (Zagreb, 2024).

The diversity of topics and areas confirms the interdisciplinary character of the professional activities of the University's lecturers and their focus on the application of professional and scientific knowledge in various segments of society and the economy. Institutional support for participation in professional conferences is provided through the internal support system and through a transparent application process within the Eduneta platform.

#### **5.2.5. The higher education institution is involved in a satisfactory number of professional projects.**

The University systematically develops professional projects that connect academic knowledge with the real needs of the economy, the public sector and the community. Projects that have been implemented in the last few years, such as the "*Establishment of a New Independent Information Checker in Tourism (TurFacto)*", the "*Digital Transformation of the University*" and "*Entrepreneurial Limači*", confirm the University's ability to recognize societal needs and develop innovative responses through an interdisciplinary approach.

In the period from May 2023 to August 2025, the University, in cooperation with the Croatian Association of Digital Publishers, implemented the project "*Establishment of a New Independent Verifier*", which was aimed at developing a platform for verifying the accuracy of information in the tourism sector ([Source: Grant Agreement](#)). The aim of the project was to develop an innovative platform that enables systematic verification of information in tourism, which emphasizes the importance of combating disinformation and fake news that can significantly affect the reputation of destinations, the business of the tourism industry and the national economy. In addition, the project aimed to have an educational component by raising awareness

of the importance of the accuracy of information in the field of tourism in the Croatian media space. The project is a partnership between the University and the Croatian Association of Digital Publishers (HUDI), bringing together key media stakeholders in the Republic of Croatia ([Source: Partnership Statement](#)). As part of the project, *TurFacto*, the first Croatian independent and non-profit fact-checking service specializing in tourism, was launched. The project was created through the competition "*Establishment of Media Fact-Checking*" of the Agency for Electronic Media and the Ministry of Culture and Media, and is financed by the European Union through the NextGenerationEU instrument. The role of the University is manifested through scientific and research contribution, academic expertise and methodological foundation of the project. Through an interdisciplinary approach and the involvement of lecturers and experts in the field of tourism and communication, the University ensures the quality of media content analysis, the credibility of fact-checking, and the development of educational activities aimed at strengthening media and digital literacy.

At the same time, from April 2023 to April 2025, the project "*Digital Transformation of the University for the Purpose of Strengthening Competitiveness (NPOO. C1.1.2.R3-I3.01.0401)*", focused on digital improvements and improving the quality of services for students and employees, which is described in more detail in the chapter [1.3](#).

The project "*Entrepreneurial Limači*" is an example of a successful professional project in which the University was actively involved, thus confirming its focus on socially responsible initiatives and the development of entrepreneurial competencies in the community. The program was intended for preschool children and students of lower grades of elementary school and encouraged the development of entrepreneurial and leadership skills through interactive learning. The project was implemented from March 9, 2021 to May 9, 2022, with the financial support of the European Union through the *Efficient Human Resources 2021-2027* program through directly awarded grants.

As part of the professional project "*Strengthening human and IT capacities and improving skills for working with vulnerable groups within the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) – Training of counsellors for working with vulnerable groups*", carried out in the period from 22 November 2022 to 30 June 2023, in cooperation with the Croatian Employment Service, the University participated in the training of counsellors aimed at the integration of unemployed and vulnerable people into the labour market. Through the implementation of specialized workshops and educational programs, the professional and digital competencies of the participants were developed, and at the same time the capacities of lecturers and expert associates of the University in the field of lifelong learning were strengthened. This project highlights the socially responsible role of the University and its contribution to social inclusion and strengthening of community resilience.

The University participated in the project "*Development of Educational Programs in Tourism and Hospitality in the Grant Award Process under the NRRP – Improving the Tourism Ecosystem and Strengthening the Capacity of the System for Resilient and Sustainable Tourism*", which was implemented in the period from September 20, 2024 to July 17, 2025, with the support of the

Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Croatia. The project was aimed at encouraging the digital and green transition of tourism and the development of competencies necessary for modern, sustainable and responsible destination management.

In addition to the implemented projects, the University continuously develops and applies for new initiatives, especially those in which lecturers participate in international and national partnerships and in activities that connect students with the business sector through professional practice. In the coming period, the results of several international projects applied in cooperation with foreign universities are expected, which further confirms the University's commitment to the development of the project and research dimension of its activities.

In the field of cooperation with the economy, the partnership of the University with the company Storm Computers d.o.o., with which the University applied for the IRI S3 project for financing by the Ministry of Economy, stands out. The project is focused on the development of advanced measurement infrastructure in the context of the Internet of Things (IoT) and new energy technologies, which opens up space for applied research and strengthening the innovation potential of the University in cooperation with industry.

At the international level, the University continues to build a partnership network through European Commission projects. As a partner in consortia with institutions from the Czech Republic, North Macedonia and Croatia, the University participates in project applications aimed at empowering young people through non-formal education, developing innovative digital educational tools and strengthening capacities for future educational challenges. Particularly noteworthy is the BACK TO THE FUTURE project, dedicated to the development of interactive online educational content (MOOC), which combines modern technologies with educational practice, and thus improves innovation and quality of education ([Source: Back to the Future project application](#)).

All these examples clearly confirm that the University is increasingly involved in participation in professional projects, and that it provides institutional support in the preparation and implementation of project applications. Such practice significantly contributes to the development of professional excellence of the teaching staff, strengthening the international visibility of the University and creating added value for students and the wider community.

#### **5.2.6. A higher education institution is an organizer of professional conferences that are nationally and internationally recognizable.**

In order to strengthen its social role and promote corporate social responsibility, the University has launched the organization of an international professional conference TeachDays to support primary and secondary school teachers. This initiative is aimed at supporting teachers, a group in society that has been neglected lately, and is crucial for the education of new generations. [The first international professional conference, TeachDays25](#), was held in April 2025 under the patronage of the City of Rovinj and in partnership with the Education and Teacher Training Agency, and was dedicated to the topic of TRUST. The conference was attended by 9 domestic and international lecturers who spoke about trust from different perspectives as part of the

lecturers and panels ([Source: TeachDays25 conference program](#)). The conference was attended by over 60 teachers from all over Croatia ([Source: TeachDays25 participant signature list](#)) who expressed their satisfaction with the conference with their feedback with the expectation that it will continue in the future ([Source: Example of participant feedback](#)). Accordingly, the University has begun preparations for the next conference, the topic of which will be UNDERSTANDING, which will be held in April 2026, also in Rovinj.

#### **5.2.7. Lecturers of higher education institutions participate in the work of editorial boards of professional and popularization journals**

Lecturers from the University contribute to the development of the academic and professional community through participation in the editorial boards of professional domestic and international journals. In the past 5 years, a total of 6 lecturers have participated in the work of 8 domestic and international professional journals. Their engagement confirms the recognizability of professional competencies and connection with current topics in the field of economics, media, communications and technical sciences ([Source: Editorial Board of professional journals](#)).

#### **5.2.8. The higher education institution has an organized publishing activity and is a publisher of professional publications important for the development of the profession.**

The University has an organized publishing activity, which is described in more detail in the chapter [5.1](#). According to the recommendation from the previous external evaluation, and in order to encourage the professional activity of its lecturers, the University made a decision to launch a professional journal ([Source: Decision on the establishment of a professional journal](#)). Professional journal of the University entitled *Business & Communications* will publish professional, transparent and practice-oriented papers in the field of business, communication and other topics with the aim of encouraging professional development and exchange of experiences in the academic and wider professional community. The long-time rector of the University, full professor with tenure Vlatko Cvrtila, PhD., was appointed as an editor-in-chief of the journal. ([Source: Decision on the appointment of the editor-in-chief of the professional journal](#)).

#### **5.2.9. Lecturers of higher education institutions participate in the work of committees and other bodies important for the development of the profession.**

The participation of University lecturers in the work of committees, professional associations and bodies of importance for the development of the profession is an important indicator of their engagement and contribution to the scientific and professional community. In the last five years, a total of 27 lecturers of the University have participated in various committees and bodies, with 76 individual activities recorded ([Source: List of teachers in committees important for the development of the profession](#)). These data confirm that a significant part of the University's lecturers are continuously involved in professional forums outside the institution itself, and thus further connect the teaching process with current developments in science and practice.

Examples of the engagement of University lecturers in various expert committees and institutions testify to the wide range of areas in which they are active. Some lecturers participate in the work of the Board of Directors of the Nikola Tesla Innovation Center, the Croatian Association of Auditors and the Croatian Network of Consultants. Others are active in the field of security and political science through their activities in the Croatian Association of Security Managers, the Forum for Security Studies, the Atlantic Council of Montenegro and the Croatian Political Science Association (full professor with tenure Vlatko Cvrtila, PhD).

The contribution of full professor with tenure Vedran Mornar, PhD, Rector of the University, who is the President of the Croatian Association for Information and Communication Technology, Electronics and Microelectronics (MIPRO) and the President of the Croatian Academy of Engineering (HATZ) is particularly noteworthy. His long-term work in these institutions further confirms the strong connection of the University with the national and international scientific and professional environment in the field of technical and engineering sciences.

A significant contribution is also visible in the artistic field, where the lecturers of the University actively participate in the work of the Croatian Film Directors' Guild (full professor Zrinko Ogresta, PhD), the Program Council of the Croatian Radio and Television (full professor Ozana Ramljak, PhD), the Audiovisual Council of the Croatian Audiovisual Centre (assistant professor Ivan Maloča, PhD), and in the juries and commissions of international film festivals and awards (associate professor Neven Hitrec, PhD).

In the field of innovation and entrepreneurship, the contribution of University lecturers is particularly visible through the activities of the Zagreb Innovation Center (ZICER), **the Startup Factory** project and initiatives such as **the Social Impact Award Croatia** and **EIT Food – Empowering Women in Agrifood**.

Lecturers at the University are also active in communication and literary associations, among which the following few stand out: the Croatian Association for Public Relations (assistant professor Stana Odak Krasić, PhD), European Association for Education and Research in the Field of Public Relations (assistant professor Marija Slijepčević, PhD), the Croatian Writers' Association, and the Croatian Society of Writers for Children and Youth.

This diverse and interdisciplinary activity confirms the strong social engagement of the University's lecturers who, through their professional and scientific activities, contribute to the development of the profession and promote the values of openness, cooperation and connection with the wider academic and social community.

#### **5.2.10. External associates are recognized experts in their field, have appropriate professional papers and relevant work experience.**

The University fosters a distinct diversity and interdisciplinarity in its academic activities, which is clearly reflected in the profile of its external associates. The University has 100 external associates, distinguished experts and professionals from various fields, from artistic and technical fields to social sciences, such as economics, communications and tourism. In the selection of

external associates, their professional competencies are taken into account, enabling external associates who work in the business sector, media and art, and who have extensive professional knowledge and experience, to participate in the implementation of classes.

It is worth mentioning external associates in the field of art who teach art studies and who have a large number of artistic achievements that have been published (Source: [List of artistic achievements of external associates – example](#)). For example, prominent professionals such as Dubravko Merlić, a multi-award-winning producer and author of innovative television formats, Robert Knjaz, director and author of recognizable documentary and entertainment series that uniquely connect culture, sports and social topics, and Rajko Grlić, a multi-award-winning director and screenwriter with extensive international experience, work as external associates at the University.

Nebojša Slijepčević, an external associate and lecturer at the University, who was nominated for an Oscar and won the [Palme d'Or at the 77th International Film Festival at the Cannes Film Festival](#) for his short film "[The Man Who Couldn't Be Silent](#)" stands out in particular. The film won in the official competition program, and it is particularly valuable as this is the first such recognition for Croatian film since the country's independence, which also confirms the international reputation and high level of artistic excellence of the University's external associates. In addition numerous associates of the University in the field of tourism, communications, economics and technical sciences are recognized experts in their respective disciplines. Their cooperation with students contributes to the development and application of practical knowledge and strengthens the connection between theoretical concepts and professional practice.

### **5.3. A higher education institution influences the economy and society as a whole through the scientific and/or artistic work of its teachers.**

#### **5.3.1. A higher education institution has appropriate mechanisms for the dissemination of its activities to society.**

The university disseminates its activities to society and thus confirms its mission as a university oriented to the public good and active cooperation with the wider community. One of the key instruments is the continuous involvement of University lecturers in public debates, popularization of science, and professional interpretations of current social and economic phenomena. In this way, the lecturers achieve transparent communication of their scientific and professional achievements and actively contribute to the shaping of public discourse.

In the period of the last five years, 28 University lecturers have participated in science popularization activities, with a total of 106 documented activities. These activities include various types of lectures, participation in regional and international conferences, professional and scientific guest appearances in electronic and print media, and participation in panels and round tables ([Source: Popularization of Science – list of teachers and activities](#)). Examples from practice show the breadth of reach: some lecturers are regular guests in shows on the Croatian National Radio and Television, others participate in public forums related to the transformation of the IT sector, and some contribute to the understanding of economic and social trends through columns and public appearances. The dissemination of the results of the work of the University lectures takes place through interactive formats that enable direct transfer of knowledge to the economy, the non-governmental sector and the general public.

Also, the University fosters a culture of openness to society and actively encourages the dissemination of scientific, artistic, professional and teaching achievements of its lecturers in society, where public invited lectures play a key role. In the last five years, a total of 73 invited lectures by University employees in the country and abroad have been recorded. Examples of such activities include lectures at international scientific conferences, public forums and guest appearances in cultural institutions, as well as expert presentations in cooperation with professional associations and organizations. It is particularly important to emphasize that these lectures are thematically diverse, from the field of communication and creative industries, through economics and management, to contemporary social issues, which shows the scope of professional expertise of the University's lecturers ([Source: List of invited lectures by teachers](#)). In addition to public lectures, the lecturers also disseminate their knowledge to society through publications in the media, popularization articles, cooperation with the economy and the involvement of students in projects that have a wider social impact. It is through such activities that the University confirms its social responsibility and transparency of activities. The dissemination of scientific and professional achievements, as well as their availability to the general public, enable the University to connect its activities with the economy, the cultural sector and civil society. Also, the University has a Communications Office, whose employees regularly report to the media on scientific and professional activities and other socially useful

activities of the University, and [publish the content on the University website](#), which is described in more detail in the chapter [1.3](#).

The University is especially proud of the [Student Film Festival](#), which is traditionally held at the end of each academic year and where students of the undergraduate study program of *Film, Television and Multimedia Design* and the graduate study of *Film and Television Direction and Production* present their authorial works. In this way, students' work is valued and it enables the presentation of the results of their creativity to the general public. By participating in the Festival, students prepare themselves for professional work in the film and media industry, and their production, creativity, dedication and talent result in a series of documentary, as well as experimental and short feature films. For many students, the Festival is a particularly emotional moment, because they often have the opportunity to see their films shown on the big screen for the first time and experience the reactions of the audience and experts in the profession. The event brings together numerous experts in the field of film and media, as well as actors and collaborators who have often actively participated in the creation of student films. Partners and friends of the University are also invited to the Student Film Festival, which further encourages cooperation and networking of the academic community with the cultural and professional sectors.

### **5.3.2. The higher education institution has developed cooperation with external stakeholders.**

In accordance with the long-standing orientation and tradition of educating professionals focused on the needs of the labor market, and with its vision and mission, the University systematically develops and launches a number of initiatives aimed at strengthening cooperation between the University and external stakeholders. The University has a developed network of cooperation with external stakeholders, which is based on more than 150 formalized business cooperation agreements with companies, institutions, faculties, institutes, civil society organizations and professional associations ([Source: Business Cooperation Agreements with External Stakeholders](#)).

These agreements represent an important instrument for connecting the University with the economic, cultural and social environment, and enable students to gain practical knowledge and experience. Among the partners are companies and institutions such as BAYER d.o.o., Coca-Cola HBC Croatia, A.T. Kearney, Ater d.o.o., Croatian Radio Television, Catholic University of Croatia, Institute for Migration Research, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Croatian Designers Association, Croatian Film Association, Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb, Croatian Association for Artificial Intelligence and many others. This diversity of partners confirms the scope of the sector and the interdisciplinary nature of the cooperation, in line with the University's orientation towards social responsibility and sustainable development. The agreements cover various areas, from professional practice, joint projects and guest lectures to professional workshops, and in this way ensures a two-way exchange of knowledge between the academic and business communities.

Cooperation with external stakeholders is further intensified through the project "*Partner company*", which connects theoretical knowledge with practical work on real business challenges of leading companies in Croatia. The project is implemented at graduate study programs, and students, with the support of two mentors, academic and business, develop concrete solutions for the current or anticipated business challenges of partner companies. This model of cooperation is described in more detail in the chapter [2.3](#).

In line with its orientation towards practice and innovation, the University established the IoT (Internet of Things) laboratory in 2024 with the aim of strengthening students' practical competencies in the field of the Internet of Things, digital technologies and automation. The laboratory enables students of technical study programs to work practically on modern equipment and project development in cooperation with business partners, and is also open to participants of lifelong learning programs, which encourages interdisciplinarity, cooperation and knowledge transfer between the academic community and the economic sector.

Also, the University has developed a successful cooperation with the Croatian Audiovisual Centre (HAVC), which is aimed at encouraging and co-financing the production of films by undergraduate and graduate art students. This cooperation enables students to develop their own projects in real production conditions and connects academic education with practice in the audiovisual sector. In this way, students' creative and professional competencies are strengthened, their artistic visibility is encouraged and they contribute to the achievement of standards of developed cooperation with external stakeholders, which have direct effects on the quality of the educational process and the professional development of students ([Source: HAVC co-financing agreement](#)).

Intensive and systematic cooperation with external stakeholders through various forms of partnerships is in line with the Action Plan for Quality Improvement and testifies to the University's strategic approach to connecting with the environment, and at the same time represents one of the key elements of its quality, recognizability and social responsibility.

### **5.3.3. A higher education institution participates in the design of public policies in the context of the scientific and/or artistic field and field in which it operates.**

The University recognizes its role and responsibility in shaping public policies in the field of scientific and professional activity, and thus confirms its contribution to the development of society and compliance with the standard according to which a higher education institution participates in the design of public policies in the context of the scientific and/or artistic field and field in which it operates. As an integral part of its mission, the University strives to make scientific and professional knowledge publicly available, to communicate it transparently with stakeholders, and to ensure its practical application for the benefit of the community.

In this sense, the University communicates the results of its research and professional activities to decision-makers, and realizes the principle of public responsibility and strengthens the influence of scientific knowledge on the formulation of policies of public interest. An example of

such a practice is the three international scientific conferences *Creative Future Insights*, organized in cooperation with the Zagreb Institute of Economics, whose conclusions and recommendations were consolidated in the form of summaries and resolutions and submitted to the Croatian Parliament (Source: [Resolution on Creative Industries](#)). In this way, a direct link has been established between scientific research results, their social and economic application, and the process of shaping public policies in the field of creative industries.

By awarding the Honorary Doctorate of Science, regulated by [The Regulations on Honorary Doctorates](#), the University recognizes and rewards exceptional individuals who have contributed to the development of the Republic of Croatia and the European Union and the progress of the University through their scientific, professional, cultural or social activities. With this act, the University confirms its role in promoting excellence, scientific and social responsibility and strengthens the connection between the academic community and the economic and social sectors. In the past five-year period, the University has awarded honorary doctorates to [Doris Pack, PhD, a long-time Member of the European Parliament](#) and a prominent promoter of European values in the field of education and culture, and [Mate Granić, PhD a distinguished diplomat and scientist](#), who is recognized for his significant contribution to the promotion of the international reputation of the Republic of Croatia, the development of diplomacy and the cooperation of the academic community with the social and economic sectors.

#### **5.3.4. Higher education institution lecturers are involved in various scientific or governing bodies, national and international.**

Lecturers from the University are involved in the work of scientific or governing bodies, both at the national and international level, thus confirming a high level of academic integration and social relevance. In the last five years, out of a total of 68 lecturers employed at the University, 12 of them have participated in a total of 25 memberships in various scientific or governing bodies. This includes committees, advisory and management bodies that shape scientific policy, higher education standards and professional practice in specific disciplines (Source: [List of teachers – scientific or managing bodies](#)). In this way, the institutional reputation of the University in the national and international higher education space is strengthened.

#### **5.3.5. Higher education institution lecturers participate in national and international reviews of projects, programs and scientific papers.**

One of the important indicators of academic involvement and scientific recognition of University lecturers is their participation in national and international review processes. In the observed five-year period, the lecturers from the University participated in various forms of professional and scientific reviews in reviewing activities, which significantly contributed to the strengthening of the scientific research and professional recognition of the institution. In the observed period, 230 reviews of scientific and professional papers, books and journals were recorded (Source: [List of teachers included in journal and book reviews](#)), as well as 11 reviews of scientific and development projects (Source: [List of teachers included in project reviews](#)). These data clearly indicate the continuous scientific and professional affirmation of the University's lecturers, but

also the active contribution to maintaining the quality and credibility of scientific research work in the wider academic community.

**5.4. Doctoral studies of higher education institutions are aligned with the strategic program of higher education institutions, contemporary scientific/artistic achievements, professional standards and internationally accepted standards of quality doctoral education, where applicable.**

The University has not yet started carrying out doctoral studies.

## **5.5. A higher education institution applies the principles of open science in its activities, processes and acts.**

### **5.5.1. The higher education institution has adopted an open science policy that encourages the application of the principles of open science at the institutional level and the provision of open access to evaluation papers (final and graduate theses and doctoral dissertations), scientific and professional publications, educational content and research data of its employees and students.**

The University has adopted an institutional policy of open science, which actively promotes the application of the principles of openness, accessibility and transparency in the field of scientific, professional and teaching activities (Source: [Open Science Policy of VERN' University](#)). In accordance with European Guidelines and national and international practices, the University systematically encourages the provision of open access to evaluation papers (final and graduate theses), scientific and professional publications, educational content, research software and research data of its lecturers, researchers and students.

### **5.5.2. A higher education institution has its own institutional repository in which it enables its employees and students to store and provide open access to their evaluation papers, scientific and professional publications, educational content and research data.**

As a higher education institution that fosters an entrepreneurial approach to education and science, the University develops a culture of knowledge sharing and strengthens the social responsibility of the academic community. In this context, its own institutional repository has been established, which acts as a digital platform for storing and disseminating scientific and teaching results. The repository provides open access to evaluation papers, scientific and professional articles, author's books, educational materials and research data, which improves the transparency and visibility of the University's academic production, both at the national and international level. In the period of the past five calendar years, the University has stored evaluation papers in the institutional repository, thus ensuring the availability and transparency of the academic production of its students. In this period, a total of 1566 papers were stored, of which 1267 papers (80.9%) are available in open access, which confirms a high level of compliance with open science standards. In applied undergraduate studies, which include the largest number of students, 1012 papers are stored, and as many as 795 papers (78.56%) are publicly available. Particularly noteworthy are applied graduate studies, where an extremely high level of openness has been achieved: out of 530 stored papers, 455 papers (85.85%) are available to the public through the institutional repository of the University. Out of 24 papers stored in university undergraduate studies 17 papers (70.83%) are available in open access. The high percentage of open access papers testifies to the University's institutional commitment to promoting the principles of open access and also reflects the awareness of students and mentors about the importance of knowledge sharing (Source: [Table 5.5. An Analytical Contribution to Self-Analysis](#)).

**5.5.3. A higher education institution encourages and evaluates the application of the principles of open science through various internal processes and/or evaluation processes at the institution.**

Open science at the University is recognized as an integral part of the quality assurance policy and is integrated into various institutional processes: from the evaluation of scientific work and the professional development of teaching staff, to encouraging students to an ethical and responsible approach to scientific research. In accordance with this, students are introduced to the fact that their theses should be available in open access at the workshops for final papers. When submitting their final theses, students sign a statement by which they give their approval for their final thesis to be stored in the publicly accessible institutional repository of the University and in the public online database of papers of the National and University Library in Zagreb, in accordance with the provisions of the Higher Education and Scientific Activity Act, NN no. 119/22, as well as that their work, free of charge, be made publicly available and made available free of charge in open access. This statement is an integral part of the [Work Instruction for the final thesis](#).

**5.5.4. If a higher education institution has an organised publishing activity, the publications (books, journals and other types) that they publish are available in open access.**

Within the framework of organized publishing activities, the University publishes publications, including scientific and professional journals, proceedings and periodicals, which are publicly available through digital channels. The University is the publisher of the scientific and professional journal "[Contemporary Topics](#)", published in open access, while the University repository, in open access, contains individual articles and entire proceedings from the scientific conferences [Mediterranean Islands Conference \(MIC – Vis\)](#) and [Creative Future Insights \(CFI\)](#), which the University organizes together with the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences and the Institute of Economics, Zagreb. The professional journal [Business and Communications](#) will also be in open access. In the last 5 calendar years, a total of 93 papers have been published in conference proceedings, out of which 51 papers are stored in open access in the institutional repository of the University. Also, 16 editorial books were published in the same period, 7 of which are stored in open access in the institutional repository. These data indicate a high degree of awareness of the authors about the importance of the availability of scientific and professional results and the successful implementation of institutional policy of encouraging open science.

## 6. Attachments

Syllabuses of all subjects: <https://reakreditacija.vern.hr/en/Syllabus.pdf>