

Report on the Internal Periodic Assessment of the Quality  
Assurance System  
Academic Year 2023-2024

## 1. RIT QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

RIT Croatia has established a robust framework for maintaining and enhancing the quality of education and services it provides. The commitment to the highest quality is reflected in the comprehensive collection of quality assurance documentation and procedures. Central to this framework is the Quality Assurance Policy, which outlines the institution's quality assurance objectives and commitment to excellence. This policy ensures that all academic and administrative processes align with RIT Croatia's mission and objectives, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

Additionally, RIT Croatia Quality Assurance System Rulebook serves as a detailed guide for implementing quality assurance measures across various areas. It provides clear guidelines and standards that must be adhered to, ensuring consistency and accountability throughout the institution. This rulebook is an invaluable resource for staff and faculty, enabling them to understand their roles and responsibilities in upholding the RIT Croatia's quality standards.

RIT Croatia also employs Internal Periodic Assessment of the Quality Assurance System (Audit) Rulebook, which focuses on determining the level of development of the quality assurance system relative to the quality assurance areas, based on the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the Standards of the Middle States Commission for Higher Education (MSCHE), as well as on determining the efficiency of the entire RIT Croatia quality assurance system. This rulebook facilitates yearly audits and reviews (general or themed assessment), enabling RIT Croatia to identify areas for improvement and implement corrective actions promptly. Through these rigorous internal assessments, RIT Croatia maintains high standards and adapts to the evolving needs of students and stakeholders.

RIT Croatia regularly reviews and updates quality assurance documentation and procedures, to ensure that improvements are continuously made and implemented. The last review and update of quality assurance documentation was implemented in January 2024.

Overall, RIT Croatia's quality assurance documentation and procedures demonstrate its unwavering dedication to providing a high-quality educational experience. By adhering to these policies and rulebooks, the institution ensures that it not only meets but exceeds the expectations of students, faculty, and the wider community.

## 2. RIT CROATIA GENERAL INFO

### 2.1. Organization and brief history of RIT Croatia

RIT Croatia, formerly known as the American College of Management and Technology (ACMT) was established in Croatia in 1997 as a result of cooperation between a prominent American university, Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia, who at that time initiated the establishment of private higher education institutions. The Ministry's initiative to bring a prominent American university such as RIT to Croatia had a goal to offer American style higher education in Croatia and enrich opportunities for students in Croatia.

As RIT Croatia is an international campus of a prominent American university, students of RIT Croatia are awarded dual degrees upon completion of an undergraduate program, an internationally recognized American degree issued by the Rochester Institute of Technology, and a Croatian degree issued by RIT Croatia.

Today, RIT Croatia offers programs of study at two campuses, in Dubrovnik and Zagreb. RIT Croatia offers the following undergraduate programs: Hospitality and Tourism Management (Dubrovnik), Global Business Management/International Business (Zagreb), Information Technology/Web and Mobile Computing (Dubrovnik and Zagreb) and New Media Design (Zagreb). In addition, as part of RIT Croatia's life-long learning initiatives, there is an opportunity for students to earn the Master of Science degrees from Rochester Institute of Technology, at RIT Croatia's Zagreb campus: Master of Science program in Organizational Leadership and Innovation and Master of Science in Information Technology and Analytics.

Additionally, RIT Croatia is a scientific-research institution, listed within the National Scientific Organizations Registry for the fields of social sciences, humanities, natural and technical sciences since December, 2020.

RIT Croatia was established in 1997, and RIT Croatia Alumni Community today has more than 2,500 active members. For a number of years, the community's achievements have been viewed as an example of good practice by higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia. The Alumni Community is an influential network which connects all generations of former students in order to establish their permanent and mutual cooperation, and to help preserve the spirit of RIT Croatia.

Considering that RIT Croatia operates as an international campus of the parent institution, all operations are overseen by the Rochester Institute of Technology. As a founder, RIT fully coordinates the work of RIT Croatia through a separate organizational unit in charge of all international campuses of the university. All of the activities of RIT Croatia are overseen by the Board of Governors. The Board is made of experts representing both American and Croatian business and academia. The Board meets twice a year to review the college's financial performance, as well as its strategic goals.

RIT Croatia is led by the President & Dean and the Associate Deans. All are members of the Senior Leadership team which, in addition to them, consists of managers of the Marketing and Communications Department, Career Services, Alumni Relations, Study Abroad & International Student Department,

Finance & Accounting Department, Human Resources Department, Director of Recruitment & Enrollment Department, and Director of Strategic Development, ITS & Facilities.

The academic side consists of six areas and academic services. All full-time faculty and longtime adjunct faculty are members of the Academic Senate, together with student representatives. In addition to them, student ombudsmen are in charge of student related matters. Academic resources include libraries on both campuses as well as RIT's Wallace Online Library. Students also have at their disposal fully equipped computer labs.

At RIT Croatia a special attention is paid to the relevance of materials and learning methods, hence Advisory Boards have been formed for each study program. Advisory Board members are professionals from successful Croatian and international companies and their knowledge of industry, trends and novelties is vital for the continuous quality control of each study program. This model has been working successfully at RIT for years, where advisory boards meet three to four times a year to inform RIT about the latest business needs and trends.

## **Rochester Institute of Technology – RIT**

RIT is a private, non-profit university with more than 19,000 full-time and part-time students in undergraduate, graduate and doctoral study programs. It is one of the largest private universities in the United States with more than 135,000 alumni around the world. RIT offers more than 200 different study programs in arts and design, business, engineering, mathematics, criminal law, photography, environmental protection, hospitality and service management, computer science, information technology, bioinformatics and many other fields at eleven colleges.

RIT undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate study programs are offered at eleven colleges:

- College of Art and Design
- Saunders College of Business
- Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences
- Kate Gleason College of Engineering
- College of Engineering Technology
- College of Health Sciences and Technology
- College of Liberal Arts
- National Technical Institute for the Deaf
- College of Science
- Golisano Institute for Sustainability
- School of Individualized Study

## **2.2. RIT Croatia Vision, Mission and Strategy**

### **RIT Croatia, Strategic Plan (2023 – 2027)**

#### **FUTURE READY**

In 2022, RIT Croatia adopted its Strategic Plan for the period 2023 – 2027. In order to successfully prepare students for the future, this strategic plan rests on four key pillars: the right people, top-quality

programs, enhanced research, and top-quality standards. The holistic approach to the college experience nurtured at RIT Croatia relies on contemporary study programs delivered in a highly stimulating environment and complemented with intriguing research.

## **Vision and Mission**

Through future ready education and research excellence, we add value to society. We inspire a growth mindset, preparing individuals to become leaders, lifelong learners and responsible global citizens.

The Strategic Plan centers around four areas with specific goals for each:

### **People**

1. Increase internationalization of student body
2. Improve student retention rate
3. Increase student satisfaction
4. Attract & retain strong faculty & staff
5. Increase international faculty & industry adjuncts
6. Increase alumni engagement

### **Programs**

1. Attain university status
2. Launch new undergraduate & graduate degree programs
3. Establish a lifelong learning program
4. Increase experiential learning opportunities

### **Research**

1. Increase research output
2. Enhance research quality

### **Standards**

1. Attain advanced phase of quality assurance system

Achieving the set goals unfolds through the organizational units of RIT Croatia, and each is required to report on achievements to the institutional leadership. Information on the status of goals of the Strategic Plan are shared with the institution as a whole at least once per year during the annual planning cycle. The dean also informs the Board of Governors of the status of goals in the Strategic Plan at its regular sessions. The Strategic Plan is accessible on the institution's website.

## **Rochester Institute of Technology – RIT Strategic Plan 2018.–2025.**

Since RIT Croatia forms an integral part of RIT, the activities of RIT Croatia contribute to the achievement of the RIT Strategic Plan. In autumn 2015, RIT developed a new 10-year strategic plan. The university is proud of the scope of engagement in that process, which included the active participation of students and faculty in Rochester and at the international campuses – with the participation of alumni, employees, business partners, retirees and friends of the university. Since the original plan encompassed a 10-year period, in 2018 the plan was comprehensively revised so as to ensure continuous progress.

## Vision & Mission

At Rochester Institute of Technology, we shape the future and improve the world through creativity and innovation. As an engaged, intellectually curious, and socially conscious community, we leverage the power of technology, the arts, and design for the greater good. Recognizing that the most successful strategic plans cover a limited range of areas, the focus of the revised plan has been placed on the following dimensions:

1. **People** – to realize our ambitious strategic vision, we must extend and intensify our call for imaginative, innovative, and collaborative people—for students, faculty, and staff who are eager to learn, practice, and teach transformative innovation.
2. **Programs** – development of academic programs at all degree levels that are the first of their kind and that capitalize upon core strengths in technology, art, and design; extension of experiential learning opportunities that encourage students to pursue additional interests: expansion in the number and range of doctoral programs offered; strengthening administrative practices and policies.
3. **Places** – Innovative scholarship and education will require a different kind of campus—one with flexible spaces that foster and stimulate creativity, discovery, and collaboration. RIT campus will be transformed into a place where anything is possible.
4. **Partnerships** – RIT has a long history of successful partnerships. We will remain committed to our local community, and search for promising new partners at the national and global levels. International partners will increasingly provide enriching experiences for our students and faculty and will become a source of talented undergraduate and graduate students.

Each of the four dimensions contains a group of strategic goals that have been called “success factors”. Achieving these strategic goals will significantly influence both RIT and higher education as a whole. Each success factor includes a number of specific goals that depict RIT’s strategic path for the next decade. The annual achievement report also includes the activities of RIT Croatia.

## 2.3. Quality Assurance Bodies at RIT Croatia

By being a global campus of the American university, Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), which is chartered by the Legislature of the State of New York and accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), as well as a fully accredited Croatian institution of higher education, RIT Croatia's internal system of quality assurance is designed to meet the requirements of both countries. To remain compliant with the accreditation in both countries, the higher standard of two accreditation bodies is applied. In the case of the undergraduate study program in Global Business Management/International Business, which also has professional accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, also known as AACSB, the AACSB standards are applied if they exceed those of the accreditation bodies in the United States and Croatia.

Quality assurance is embedded in all teaching, research and professional activities conducted by RIT Croatia, as well as in RIT Croatia’s Strategic Plan – Future Ready (2023–2027). Adherence to RIT Croatia's

internal quality standards, and RIT's feedback and monitoring mechanisms, is the backbone of RIT Croatia's organizational culture of excellence and commitment to continuous improvement. Academic quality-related policies, procedures and expectations are communicated to students and the staff primarily via the Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, and the Strategic Plan. Academic and overall RIT Croatia quality is reviewed annually by the Board of Governors.

The entire RIT Croatia leadership is responsible for and entrusted with the implementation and monitoring of the quality assurance system (ESG 1.1). The key objective of the quality assurance system is to ensure that RIT Croatia operates according to the highest higher education quality standards, in alignment with the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science and the ESG.

## **Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors is the body that oversees the work of RIT Croatia and manages its strategic affairs and objectives. It is composed of representatives of the American and Croatian education system and economy. The Board usually meets twice per year and operates in accordance with the Rules of procedure of the Board of Governors of RIT Croatia.

## **Academic Senate**

RIT Croatia's Academic Senate is a body that facilitates faculty participation in the shared governance system. The role of the Academic Senate is to propose and approve new academic policies and procedures, as well as changes to existing policies and procedures, with the aim of providing the formal framework for monitoring and continuously improving the quality of study programs. Also, the Academic Senate approves curriculum changes in existing and of the new study programs. All full-time faculty are members of the Academic Senate. Adjunct faculty is also represented in the Academic Senate. Next to the faculty, 15% of all members of the Academic Senate are student representatives. In addition, staff members also have representatives in the Academic Senate. Since the members of the Academic Senate participate in the work of the standing committees of the Academic Senate, the student representatives are also represented in the membership of each committee. The Academic Senate of RIT Croatia has six standing committees:

1. Effective Teaching Committee is responsible for continuous monitoring of teaching pedagogy and the mechanisms used in the evaluation of all courses. The Committee is authorized to make recommendations to the RIT Croatia governing bodies and provide guidance to faculty on improving conditions and teaching methods with an emphasis on creativity, innovation and new technologies.
2. Research and Scholarship Committee is responsible for monitoring all research activities affecting RIT Croatia as a whole. Key activities include organizing research seminars, developing procedures for financing faculty professional development and research activities. This Committee also collects data on individual or group research projects and publications, produces annual research achievement reports, and ensures compliance of procedures with national requirements, as well as with RIT's ethical principles.
3. Faculty Affairs Committee is responsible for policy recommendations concerning faculty professional conduct and grievance processes as well as compensation and workloads. This Committee reviews all policies and procedures concerning the extended part-time and adjunct faculty of the college

and keeps abreast of changes to the national tenure and promotion policies and the Act on Science and Higher Education.

4. Student Affairs Committee develops a set of recommendations to the Senate in order to provide more clarity as to expectations for student academic conduct, collegiality, and civility. This Committee also makes recommendations for the work of Student Government and activities to improve student life. It is particularly involved in issues of honor, i.e. academic dishonesty and student misconduct.

5. Academic Policy Committee is the academic policy committee of the Senate. The key activity is ensuring that key academic policies and procedures are aligned and in effect. The committee is also tasked with reviewing existing and developing and proposing new academic policies and procedures, with the aim of ensuring the quality of academic activity of RIT Croatia. This Committee also serves as a liaison with governing bodies and key stakeholder groups of RIT Croatia.

6. Curriculum Committee studies curricular proposals from an RIT Croatia perspective, maintains appropriate inter-college relationships with regards to curriculum, assures that existing undergraduate and graduate curricula are periodically reviewed, and makes proposals to the Academic Senate for curriculum approval or discontinuance (ESG 1.1).

Quality assurance in teaching is sustained through various forms of assessment and via feedback instruments. Some of the key ways in which this is achieved are the assessment of student learning outcomes, course evaluations, and student engagement and satisfaction surveys. Course management systems and tools such as MyCourses and Turnitin support teaching quality and student performance.

### **Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)**

Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) is the body responsible for quality assurance system management and quality improvements in all areas of RIT Croatia operational activity. The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) meets at least four times a year, and is composed of the following members: Dean, Associate Dean for Academic Programs, Associate Dean for Research and General Education, Quality Assurance Office Coordinator, President of the RIT Croatia Alumni Community, Faculty representative, Staff representative and Student representative. The Quality Assurance Office is an organizational unit established within the Accreditation, Legal and Quality Assurance Department, for the purpose of implementing the internal quality assurance system.

### **Internal Periodic Assessment Committee (IPAC)**

Internal Periodic Assessment Committee (IPAC) is the body responsible for conducting the annual Internal periodic assessment of the quality assurance system (Audit). IPAC structure and its responsibilities are defined by the RIT Croatia Internal Periodic Assessment of the Quality Assurance System (Audit) Rulebook.

### **Quality Assurance Office**

Quality Assurance Office is an organizational unit established within the Accreditation, Legal and Quality Assurance Department of RIT Croatia, for the purpose of implementing the internal quality assurance system. Quality Assurance Office provides administrative and professional support to the Quality Assurance Committee and to the Internal Periodic Assessment Committee and it administratively



supports internal assessment procedures and external accreditation procedures. The responsibilities of the Quality Assurance Office are defined by the RIT Croatia Quality Assurance System Rulebook.

## **Assessment**

Assessment of student learning outcomes is an ongoing process at RIT Croatia. RIT's Office of Educational Effectiveness Assessment (EEA) works with the academic leadership team at RIT Croatia to ensure that program student learning outcomes and general education student learning outcomes are assessed on a regular basis. Learning outcomes assessment is carried out annually and RIT Croatia is benchmarked against the main RIT campus and other RIT global campuses.

Each semester all students have an opportunity to evaluate all of their courses and the faculty instructing the course. Following completion of the course, students evaluate them and results of these anonymous evaluations are accessible to the faculty, the appropriate faculty area heads, and the associate dean. Areas of concern are addressed immediately. For new courses, or a course instructed by a faculty member for the first time, an early course evaluation is administered in the fifth week. Class teaching observations are carried out by the faculty area heads and associate dean on a regular basis, and faculty peer observations are also encouraged to share best practices.

The RIT Croatia Student Satisfaction Survey is administered annually, following which the results are analyzed and areas of concern addressed. For example, in the student satisfaction survey that was administered in spring 2018, it was observed that student satisfaction levels regarding the quality of teaching and instruction on Zagreb campus was lower than that on Dubrovnik campus, 60% satisfied versus 70%. Since Dubrovnik campus has a higher percentage of full-time faculty versus adjunct faculty, when compared with Zagreb, resources are being allocated for the hiring of two additional full-time faculty in the Information Technologies – WMC study programs, 1 additional in mathematics, and 1 additional in general business. Aside from the official course evaluations and RIT Croatia surveys, students have plenty of opportunities to address course content and general concerns through the faculty members' mandatory office hours, or via the semi-annual 'Coffee With The Deans', where the dean and associate dean host an open forum for student feedback on all aspects of their RIT Croatia experience. Throughout the academic year, students can also at any time reach out to a faculty member, academic advisor, associate dean, dean, or ombudsperson.

The MyCourses course administration system is accessible to all students, and its use is a requirement for all faculty instructing at RIT Croatia. Students can track their academic performance in a given course throughout the term, and faculty members can also use it to post and link reading materials. The Starfish system, which is used in conjunction with MyCourses, allows the faculty member to send 'early alerts' to students who are falling behind in the course, as well as 'kudos' to those who are performing well. Academic advisors are included in the process and can follow up with students if needed.

Academic integrity is a key component of learning at RIT Croatia and RIT Croatia's Rulebook on disciplinary responsibility of students details the expectations and standards that students must adhere to, and the consequences if they do not. Faculty utilize the Turnitin system to check submitted assignments, papers, and projects for plagiarism, and confirm that students are completing their own work.

With all undergraduate study programs delivered by RIT Croatia having a mandatory cooperative education as a part of the study program requirement, regular contact with industry and future employers of RIT Croatia graduates is maintained. The requirement of documented employer and student feedback, following cooperative education, is key in the assessment of curricular strengths and weaknesses. A very active and engaged alumni body and alumni association also ensures feedback on industry future trends and needed curriculum adjustments. Alumni and other industry partners are regularly on campus for presentations and workshops.

At RIT Croatia a special attention is paid to the relevance of materials and learning methods, hence Advisory Boards have been formed for each study program. Advisory Board members are professionals from successful Croatian and international companies and their knowledge of industry, trends and novelties is vital for the continuous quality control of each study program. This model has been working successfully at RIT for years, where advisory boards meet three to four times a year to inform RIT about the latest business needs and trends. All aspects and goals of the Strategic Plan – Future ready (2023–2027) are quality oriented in nature. Through the achievement of the 13 goals set in the Strategic Plan, the quality of all areas of RIT Croatia will be enhanced. Achieving the set goals unfolds through the organizational units of RIT Croatia, and each is required to report on achievements to the institutional leadership. Information on the status of goals of the Strategic Plan are shared with the institution as a whole at least once per year during the annual planning cycle. The dean also informs the Board of Governors of the status of goals in the Strategic Plan at its regular semi-annual sessions.

### 2.3.1. Quality Assurance System development

The aim of the quality assurance and improvement system is to build an institutional mechanism to systematically define, monitor and evaluate all quality assurance elements, and to execute activities, initiatives and development programs with the permanent goal of improving the quality of all elements of operations at RIT Croatia. This system encompasses participants from all structures of RIT Croatia (administrative staff, faculty, and students), and external participants with whom RIT Croatia maintains ongoing cooperation and collects feedback that is then applied in quality improvement activities. It also ensures that RIT Croatia operates according to the highest higher education quality standards, in alignment with the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education and the ESG. Because of this, there was a need to further formalize an already existing system and align it with national and European guidelines.

First step in this process was to form a **Quality Assurance Council**. Since RIT Croatia's Administrative Council had a primary responsibility for quality assurance from an operational perspective, it was a logical decision to rename this body into Quality Assurance Council. This change happened on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. The newly named Quality Assurance Council is composed of the Senior Leadership team members, the Degree Programs chair, the General Education & Research chair, and the Academic Affairs Department manager.

The second step in the formalization process required RIT Croatia to develop three (3) documents that will formalize the Quality Assurance System and provide a backbone for Internal Periodic Assessment of that system. RIT Croatia's *Quality Assurance Policy*, *Quality Assurance System Rulebook*, and *Internal*

*Periodic Assessment of the Quality Assurance System Rulebook*, were developed during April and May 2022. The documents were reviewed and approved by the Academic Senate on June 15<sup>th</sup> 2022.

A new iteration of the above mentioned documents was approved and put in effect on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024 as a result of recommendations from The External Periodic Assessment of the Quality Assurance System at RIT Croatia. This resulted in significant process changes and introduction of Quality Assurance Committee as well as a new organizational unit – Quality Assurance Office, established within the Accreditation, Legal and Quality Assurance Department, for the purpose of implementing the internal quality assurance system.

RIT Croatia's **Quality Assurance Policy** formalizes institutional mechanisms for systematic definition, implementation, assurance, evaluation, improvement and quality management, in accordance with the highest quality standards in higher education, based on the Law on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education, the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), as well as the standards of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE).

The **Quality Assurance System Rulebook** defines the purpose, scope, structure and responsibilities of the Quality Assurance System (QAS) bodies within the Quality Assurance System (QAS) at RIT Croatia. It regulates the areas of evaluation and improving quality, as well as organization and actions related to the system of higher education quality at RIT Croatia.

The **Internal Periodic Assessment of the Quality Assurance System (Audit) Rulebook** defines how the internal audit is conducted at the institution level, in order to determine the efficiency of the quality assurance system relative to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the Standards of the Middle States Commission for Higher Education (MSCHE).

The internal periodic assessment of the RIT Croatia quality assurance system (Audit) is carried out once a year based on the following PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) model:



### **3. INTERNAL PERIODIC ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS**

#### **3.1. Internal Periodic Assessment – Goals**

The internal periodic assessment of the RIT Croatia quality assurance system (Audit) is conducted at the institution level, in order to determine the efficiency of the quality assurance system relative to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the Standards of the Middle States Commission for Higher Education (MSCHE).

The goals of the internal periodic assessment of the quality assurance system (Audit) are:

- a) Determining the level of development of the quality assurance system relative to the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the Standards of the Middle States Commission for Higher Education (MSCHE).
- b) Determining the efficiency of the entire RIT Croatia quality assurance system.

#### **3.2. Internal Periodic Assessment Committee**

The Dean of RIT Croatia has appointed the persons in charge for Internal Periodic Assessment of the Quality Assurance System with a Decision on the Internal Periodic Assessment Committee dated July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 as follows:

- Ivona Labaš, M.S., Director of Strategic Development, Facilities and ITS, coordinator and member
- Besim Agušaj, Ph.D., College Professor, member
- Evelina Miščin, Ph.D., College Professor with Tenure, member
- Kristina Šorić, Ph.D., College Professor with Tenure, member
- Marija Šušak Mišetić, M.S., Academic Affairs and Student Services Manager, member

#### **3.3. Internal Periodic Assessment - Areas of Assessment**

Determining the level of development of the quality assurance system relative to the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the Standards of the Middle States Commission for Higher Education (MSCHE), and the efficiency of the entire RIT Croatia quality assurance system is completed through assessment of the quality assurance areas. The areas are the following:

1. Mission and goals
2. Ethics and integrity
3. Governance, leadership and policy for quality assurance

4. Design and approval of programs
5. Student-centered learning, teaching and assessment
6. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
7. Teaching staff
8. Planning, learning resources and student support
9. Information management
10. Public information
11. On-going monitoring and periodic review of programs
12. Cyclical external quality assurance

In the process of internal periodic assessment of the quality assurance system (Audit), each area of evaluation can be found in one of four (4) development phases: preparatory, initial, developed and advanced.

#### **I. preparatory phase**

The quality assurance system is being prepared (documentation under construction, internal arrangements completed).

#### **II. initial phase**

The quality assurance system is in place, but not in function (basic QAS documents prepared).

#### **III. developed phase**

The quality assurance system is operational, internal assessment (Audit) has been completed and the system is being further developed based on the internal assessment (Audit) results.

#### **IV. advanced phase**

The quality assurance system is continuously improved based on the results of the internal and external assessments.

### **3.4. Internal Periodic Assessment - Process**

Internal periodic assessment of the quality assurance system (Audit) is conducted by the Internal periodic assessment committee (IPAC).

Internal periodic assessment of the quality assurance system (Audit) consists of four (4) steps described in detail in RIT Croatia's Internal periodic Assessment of the Quality Assurance System Rulebook:

1. Planning - the first step of the internal periodic assessment of the quality assurance system in which the Committee develops the assessment activities and prepares the plan for data, documentation and feedback collection.
2. Data, documentation and feedback collection – collection of data and documentation needed from all organizational units at RIT Croatia and interviews with representatives of organizational units of RIT Croatia and external stakeholders (need based).
3. Assessment and reporting – preparation of the initial report based on information collected.
4. Follow-up – based on the conclusions and recommendations from the initial report, the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) prepares an action plan for the improvement of the quality assurance system and follows through all the implementation steps.

### 3.5. Internal Periodic Assessment – Plan and Activities

In accordance with the Rulebook, the Internal Periodic Assessment Committee has completed the first three phases of the academic year 2023-2024 audit, namely: planning; data, documentation and feedback collection; assessment and reporting. The Audit report will be submitted to the RIT Croatia Academic Senate for comment and approval. The final step of the Audit is follow-up. After the Academic Senate approves the report, the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) prepares an Action Plan for the Improvement of the Quality Assurance System in the follow-up phase.

Since a comprehensive Internal Periodic Assessment of the Quality Assurance System was completed in 2022, the IPAC has decided for a more focused approach for the 2023-2024 assessment period. There were two Elements that the IPAC focused on:

*4. Design and approval of programs*

*7. Teaching staff*

The Audit Committee met regularly to discuss the ongoing process and plan for future steps. Below is a list of meeting held in the entire process:

Meeting topic	Date	Attendees
Review of the audit documentation (rulebook, policy)	May 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2024	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee, Associate Dean
Plan of activities	May 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee
Elements 4/7, determining documentation needs	May 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2024	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee
Finalizing the documentation needs and determining requests for individual departments	June 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee

Initial review of collected documentation	June 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2024	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee
Status meeting, Element 4	June 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee
Status meeting, Element 7	July 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee
Finalizing list of questions for the additional interviews	July 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee
Interview with faculty representatives (Element 4)	July 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee, faculty representatives (Peric, Mutka, Poljicak, Guszak, Condic-Jurkic, Markovic, Patekar, Vejzagic)
Interview with area heads, and associate deans) representatives (Element 7)	July 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee, Faculty and Staff representatives (Condic-Jurkic, Peric, Mutka, Poljicak, Markovic, Patekar, Zvono)
Interview with faculty representatives (Element 7)	July 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee, Faculty representatives (Dolic, Tolic, Vidovic, Kuznin, Miscin, Cukteras, Friganovic)
Additional Interview with HR manager (Element 7)	August 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee, Jelena Zvono
Finalizing assessment reports by elements	September 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee
Review of the final report	October 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee

### 3.6. Documentation and materials

The Internal Periodic Assessment of the Quality Assurance System is based on available documentation provided by all RIT Croatia's organizational units as well as on follow up interviews conducted with relevant stakeholders. All documents that were reviewed in the process, as well as all interview topics are listed below:

- Strategic Plan Future Ready 2022-2027
- RIT Croatia Faculty and Staff Code of Ethics
- RIT Croatia Nondiscrimination Statement
- RIT Croatia Core Values
- Internal rulebooks and documents related to discrimination and harassment (Faculty and Staff)
- Internal rulebooks and documents related to discrimination and harassment (Students)
- Student Handbook 2023-2024



- Faculty Handbook 2023-2024
- Performance appraisal completed examples
- Faculty peer observation completed examples
- Rulebook on election to educational titles and work of instructors
- Rulebook on disciplinary responsibility of students
- All documents related to last reaccreditation process
- Graduation and persistence rates
- RIT Croatia Student Success Indicators
- Employee Rulebook
- Rulebook on Internal Whistleblowing Procedure
- Statute in effect 2023-2024
- RIT Croatia Quality Assurance Policy
- RIT Croatia QAS Rulebook
- RIT Croatia Internal Audit Rulebook
- Student satisfaction surveys

### **3.7. Internal Periodic Assessment – Report**

The draft report on the Internal Assessment of the Quality Assurance System of RIT Croatia was prepared by the Audit Coordinator, Ivona Labaš. The draft report consisted of: Introduction, RIT Croatia general info, the procedure for performing internal audit and the results of internal audit.

On the basis of draft reports, information obtained in interviews with stakeholders and analyzed documentation on the RIT Croatia's internal Google Drive, the Internal Assessment Committee has produced a "Report on the Internal Assessment of the Quality Assurance System and Recommendations for Improvement". This report consists of four parts:

1. Introduction
2. RIT Croatia General Info
3. Internal Periodic Assessment of the Quality Assurance System
4. Internal Periodic Assessment of the Quality Assurance System - Results

Chapter 4 contains strengths, situation observation and description, evaluation/development phase, and recommendations for each of the Elements of Assessment that was completed in this audit process.

## **4. INTERNAL PERIODIC ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM – RESULTS**

### **4.1. Design and approval of programs (ESG 1.2)**

*(Includes standards and guidelines from the “Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)”)*

#### **Standard**

The institution should have processes for the design and approval of their programs. The programs should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a program should be clearly specified and communicated and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

#### **Guidelines**

Educational programs:

- are designed with overall program objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy;
- and have explicit intended learning outcomes;
- are designed by involving students and other stakeholders in the work;
- benefit from external expertise and reference points;
- reflect the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (cf. Scope and Concepts);
- are designed so that they enable smooth student progression;
- define the expected student workload, e.g. in ECTS;
- include well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate;
- are subject to a formal institutional approval process.

#### **4.1.1. Situation observation and description**

- The 2020-2021 internal periodic assessment of the quality assurance system at RIT Croatia was a detailed, multi-step process that included a review of processes for designing, approving, and ensuring compliance of new academic programs. The process is complex, working concurrently with RIT’s main campus in Rochester, and adhering to both Croatian and international academic standards including AZVO, AACSB, and Middle States.
- RIT Croatia’s program approval process involves several critical stages that run parallel in both Croatia and Rochester. The process begins with the creation of an exploratory committee at RIT Rochester. This committee is tasked with evaluating the feasibility and necessity of launching a new program at a global location, such as RIT Croatia. The committee is composed of members from the relevant college at RIT, the global office director, and faculty and staff from RIT Croatia. If the committee concludes that the program is viable, the proposal is then reviewed by the Provost, who gives the final approval for the program to proceed.

- Simultaneously, a local process is undertaken at RIT Croatia, which involves a rigorous self-analysis of the proposed program. This self-analysis is essential to ensure that the program meets all Croatian legal and academic requirements, as outlined by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (AZVO). This phase includes detailed evaluations of whether the institution has adequate resources for program delivery, including faculty, facilities, and support services. The self-analysis process typically takes around 2.5 months, although this timeline is flexible due to the lack of a formalized timeframe.
- When starting approval for the New Media Design (NMD) program, the process was lengthy, taking almost five years from concept to final approval, largely due to complications arising from changes in Croatian legal frameworks and the initial lack of clear procedures on the Croatian side.
- To ensure that new programs are both high quality and relevant to current industry needs, RIT Croatia adheres to various standards and accreditation requirements. These include AZVO standards for Croatian higher education institutions, RIT's Middle States Accreditation standards, and international accreditation standards, such as those from AACSB for business-related programs.
- The curriculum committee at RIT Croatia reviews new program proposals to ensure they align with these standards. For instance, the self-analysis phase includes cross-referencing potential programs with local and regional industry trends, contacting industry stakeholders through advisory boards and contacts, as well as global academic standards. This analysis helps to ensure that programs are not only academically rigorous but also meet the demands of the job market, enhancing the employability of graduates.
- In terms of adding, updating or revising curriculum, this is done through the curriculum committee at RIT which we participate in for each program, we also review all program courses by updating the Table 1 document, which is the program delivery plan, on an annual basis. Information is also regularly gathered through advisor, student, and faculty feedback. Student evaluations occur at the end of each course giving students the opportunity to speak on their experiences and the rigor of courses. This can be seen in the recent adjustments to the programming sequence within the NMD program. Feedback from students and faculty indicated that the sequence originally adopted from the Web and Mobile Computing program in Rochester was too challenging and not suited for NMD students. As a result, the sequence was revised to better meet local needs while still maintaining alignment with the original core requirements of the program in Rochester.
- Compliance with academic, legal, and ministry requirements is a key focus for RIT Croatia. The institution has implemented several mechanisms to ensure ongoing compliance, including regular monitoring of legal changes, participation in regular internal and external audits, and the development of detailed academic policies outlines in various rulebooks and handbooks. For example, RIT Croatia is registered with the eSavjetovanje platform, which allows the institution to stay updated on amendments to laws and guidelines. This proactive approach ensures that RIT Croatia can comment on proposed changes before they are implemented, allowing for smoother transitions when new regulations come into effect. One example of a compliance measure resulting from recent accreditation reports is the enhancement of student support services. The latest accreditation report rated RIT Croatia's student support at the highest level, highlighting services such as academic advising, mental health support, and tutoring. To maintain this standard, the institution continues to monitor and update these services based on feedback and new guidelines.
- Student feedback, while not a formal part of the initial program design process, is considered in the later stages, particularly during the approval of minor programs. There is debate about the extent to which students should be involved in program design versus updates and revisions.

However, the general consensus is that while student feedback is important, it should be incorporated carefully and selectively, especially in areas where students have sufficient expertise or experience to contribute meaningfully.

- The process of approving new programs, such as the NMD program, has highlighted several challenges, particularly the need for clearer procedures and better documentation. The NMD approval process was significantly delayed due to complications related to the application for university status and subsequent legal changes in Croatia. These challenges emphasized the importance of having well-defined, written protocols to guide the approval process.
- RIT Croatia closely monitors changes in Croatian law and updates institutional policies accordingly. For example, the introduction of new rulebooks, such as the Rulebook on Lifelong Learning and the Rules of Procedure of the Academic Senate, has been a direct response to changes in legislation.
- Academic Affairs actively participates in both internal and external audits which are used to identify areas for improvement and to ensure that RIT Croatia remains aligned with accreditation standards. For example, a recent audit recommended that the institution improve its tracking of ECTS point allocations and clarify the relationship between learning outcomes (LOs) and program learning outcomes (PLOs). In response, RIT Croatia has implemented a more rigorous process for defining and tracking LOs and PLOs, ensuring they are aligned and clearly outlined in program delivery plans and course syllabi.
- RIT Croatia has a solid but evolving process in place for program design, approval, and compliance. While the institution has made significant strides in aligning its programs with both local and global standards, some challenges remain, particularly in the areas of process documentation and communication. By addressing these challenges and implementing the suggested improvements, RIT Croatia can continue to enhance the quality and relevance of its academic programs, ensuring ongoing compliance with accreditation standards and meeting the needs of its students and the industry.

#### 4.1.2. Recommendations

- Create a detailed and consolidated guidelines that outlines every step of the new program approval process. This should include timelines, responsibilities, required documentation, and procedures to ensure clarity and consistency across all stakeholders.
- Offer workshops and/or training sessions for faculty and staff involved in the program approval process to ensure they are familiar with all procedures, standards, and requirements.
- Encourage greater teamwork and shared responsibility among faculty and staff involved in program development such as joint task forces can help distribute the workload more evenly and prevent reliance on a few individuals.
- Explore the option of a digital system that allows for real-time tracking of curriculum changes, approvals, and communication that ensures all affected stakeholders are notified. This system should be accessible to all relevant faculty and administrative staff to ensure transparency and up-to-date information. This can be done through Google Drive. The benefit of this approach will ensure improved compliance.
- Consider a structured approach to involving students in the early stages of program design, particularly for feedback on content relevance and industry trends.

- Formalize the process of incorporating industry trends into program design by setting up regular consultations with industry stakeholders and consider conducting market analyses. This would ensure that programs remain relevant and aligned with job market demands.
- Consider implementing an annual evaluation process for all programs, including new ones, to assess their ongoing success beyond reviewing courses delivered within the program. This evaluation could involve reviewing enrollment numbers, student feedback, academic outcomes/success, and job placement rates for new grads.

## 4.1.3. Evaluation

I. PREPARATORY PHASE	II. INITIAL PHASE	III. DEVELOPED PHASE	IV. ADVANCED PHASE
The quality assurance system is being prepared (documentation under construction, internal arrangements completed)	The quality assurance system is in place, but not in function (basic QAS documents prepared)	The quality assurance system is operational, internal assessment (Audit) has been completed and the system is being further developed based on the internal assessment (Audit) results	The quality assurance system is continuously improved based on the results of the internal and external assessments.

## 4.2. Element 7 - Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

*(Includes standards and guidelines from the “Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)”)*

### Standard

The institution should assure itself of the competence of its teachers. It should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

### Guidelines

The teacher’s role is essential in creating a high quality student experience and enabling the acquisition of knowledge, competences and skills. The diversifying student population and stronger focus on learning outcomes require student-centered learning and teaching and the role of the teacher is, therefore, also changing (cf. Standard 1.3).

Higher education institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their staff and for providing them with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work efficiently. Such an environment:

- sets up and follows clear, transparent and fair processes for staff recruitment and conditions of employment that recognize the importance of teaching;
- offers opportunities for and promotes the professional development of teaching staff;
- encourages scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research;
- encourages innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies.

### 4.2.1. Situation observation and description

- Recruitment at the institution is conducted in a formal and informal manner, with a strong emphasis on personal recommendations. This approach is often used to identify and bring in potential candidates, allowing for a more personalized selection process that leverages existing relationships and networks.
- When it comes to long-term external associates, the hiring process frequently follows this same pattern of being based on recommendations. These associates are typically referred by trusted members of the academic or professional community, ensuring a level of reliability and familiarity before they join the team.
- The recruitment process is overseen by the Associate Dean, who collaborates closely with colleagues from RIT Rochester. This partnership ensures that the selection process aligns with the institution's broader goals and standards. Additionally, all engagements must receive final approval from the relevant program chair at RIT. This ensures that the chosen candidates meet the specific needs and expectations of the academic programs they will be supporting, further reinforcing the institution's commitment to maintaining high-quality staff and associates.
- The onboarding process for new hires includes several important elements designed to familiarize them with the institution. This typically begins with an introduction to key personnel, giving new

staff members the chance to meet and connect with leadership, colleagues, and support staff across different departments. Additionally, training is provided on teaching resources, curriculum standards, and the use of various technology tools that are essential for day-to-day operations. However, this onboarding process is not overseen or driven by a single dedicated person, which can lead to inconsistencies in the experiences of new hires. Without a centralized approach, some new employees may receive more comprehensive guidance and support, while others might experience gaps in the process.

- To address some of these challenges, new hires are often paired with a mentor for additional support during their initial weeks. These mentors serve as a point of contact for questions and guidance, helping to ease the transition into the organization. Regular check-ins and feedback sessions are also scheduled to monitor progress and address any concerns, further aiding in the new hire's integration into the institution's culture and practices.
- RIT Croatia maintains transparency through regular teaching staff meetings, which are scheduled in the academic calendar. These meetings ensure open communication and provide a platform for discussing important issues. However, due to the small size of the institution, certain processes are not fully formalized in order to maintain flexibility.
- The institution actively promotes opportunities for professional development. Workshops are regularly offered on relevant topics such as preventing AI-related cheating, creating effective grading rubrics, and implementing CLO-based (Course Learning Outcomes) grading. Faculty members are encouraged to engage in scholarly activities, which helps strengthen the connection between education and research. In addition, participation in international programs like Erasmus+ is encouraged to foster cross-cultural academic exchange. This provides faculty with opportunities to broaden their teaching perspectives and collaborate with European universities. Faculty can apply for Erasmus+ grants, allowing them to participate in teaching or training mobility programs, enhancing their skills and introducing innovative practices at RIT Croatia.
- The annual performance appraisal process at RIT Croatia evaluates faculty members across three key areas: teaching, research, and service. Feedback is provided through a combination of direct conversations and written communication, conducted by Associate Deans. These appraisals include discussions of student evaluations and the development of individual plans for further professional growth. This process ensures that faculty members receive clear, constructive feedback to help them improve and set goals for the future.
- Regular peer observations are conducted to enhance teaching practices. These observations help identify individual strengths and areas for improvement in teaching methods. There is an ongoing dialogue about how to make the peer observation process even more effective, with suggestions such as randomizing the observations and incorporating cross-program reviews. These efforts aim to make the feedback process more objective and beneficial for faculty members.
- Collaboration between teaching staff from the Zagreb and Dubrovnik campuses is generally positive, particularly within the Web and Mobile Computing (WMC) program. There are continuous efforts to improve collaboration across all programs, though the level of engagement varies by program and individual participation. Strengthening inter-campus collaboration remains an institutional goal, as it can lead to greater innovation and shared resources.
- RIT Croatia encourages faculty to collaborate with colleagues from other RIT global campuses, offering opportunities such as the Global Grants program. These initiatives motivate faculty to engage in joint research projects and develop global perspectives. Some faculty members are already involved in collaborative research efforts with colleagues from other RIT campuses, which enhances the academic environment at RIT Croatia.

- Feedback from student evaluations and peer observations is actively used to refine teaching methods and course content. Faculty are provided with various professional development opportunities to support continuous improvement in their teaching practices. This ongoing commitment to feedback and development helps ensure that the educational experience at RIT Croatia remains dynamic and responsive to both student needs and the evolving academic landscape.

#### 4.2.2. Recommendations

- Ensure job vacancies and descriptions are posted both internally and externally to attract a diverse pool of qualified candidates. This will promote inclusivity and transparency in the hiring process.
- Involve faculty and area heads in the recruitment process as needed to ensure that candidates are well-aligned with the institution's needs and culture, fostering better team integration.
- Organize joint onboarding workshops to introduce new full time hires to institutional rules, procedures, and resources, reducing the need for repetitive one-on-one meetings. Additionally, consider developing video materials to cover essential onboarding topics, creating an internal library for convenient reference. The video material can be especially useful to adjunct hires who are not as available as our full time faculty are. Provide new hires with checklists and infographics that summarize key steps and procedures to ensure a smooth and comprehensive onboarding experience.
- Consider creating a personalized digital welcome kit, including videos, campus maps, and resources, to help new faculty feel welcomed and informed. Include a comprehensive FAQ list to address common questions and streamline the onboarding process.
- Clearly define and communicate the criteria for rewards and compensations to ensure fairness and transparency. Provide specific examples of how rewards are tied to faculty achievements to make the process more understandable and equitable.
- Continuously remind and encourage employees to use available online learning platforms (LinkedIn learning and similar) to encourage continuous learning and skill enhancement among faculty.
- Explore long term potentials of VR training labs to offer immersive training experiences that simulate classroom scenarios, helping both new and existing faculty members.
- Continue promoting a framework for measuring teaching and research contributions, rewarding strong research efforts with either compensation or reduced teaching loads. Encourage use of RIT digital library and its resources to help faculty focus their research in alignment with RIT Croatia's goals.
- Explore potentials of a broader range of metrics for performance appraisals, including factors such as the number of students per professor, exams per professor, grade items per course, and participation in academic activities. This will provide a more comprehensive evaluation of faculty performance.
- Develop a more sophisticated peer observation questionnaire to focus on what reviewers learn from observing their colleagues, promoting mutual growth and knowledge-sharing.
- Facilitate short-term professor exchanges between campuses to strengthen collaboration and share best practices across the institution.
- Establish additional informal communication opportunities, such as "Coffee with the Dean," to build trust and loyalty among employees. Encourage leadership to prioritize open communication as a key strategy for fostering a supportive and collaborative environment.



## 4.2.3. Evaluation

I. PREPARATORY PHASE	II. INITIAL PHASE	III. DEVELOPED PHASE	IV. ADVANCED PHASE
The quality assurance system is being prepared (documentation under construction, internal arrangements completed)	The quality assurance system is in place, but not in function (basic QAS documents prepared)	The quality assurance system is operational, internal assessment (Audit) has been completed and the system is being further developed based on the internal assessment (Audit) results	The quality assurance system is continuously improved based on the results of the internal and external assessments.

## 4.3. Conclusion on the efficiency of the quality assurance system of RIT Croatia

After analyzing submitted documentation, information available on RIT Croatia's website, and the information collected through interviews during the first three phases of the Internal Periodic Assessment, the Internal Periodic Assessment Committee concluded that the assessed portions of the Quality Assurance System at RIT Croatia are in an Advanced Phase. It is the Committee's strong belief that the overall institution's quality will be significantly improved when all the activities in the follow-up phase have been completed.

Below is a chart summarizing the phase RIT Croatia has achieved for each aforementioned areas of the internal periodic assessment of the quality assurance system for the academic year 2023-2024:

STANDARD	PHASE
4.1. Element 4 - Design and approval of programs (ESG 1.2)	Advanced Phase
4.2. Element 7 - Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)	Advanced Phase