

# RIT

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Croatia

# **Report**

**on the Internal  
Periodic Assessment  
of the Quality  
Assurance System**

**Academic Year  
2020 – 2021**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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The implementation of the Internal Periodic Assessment of the Quality Assurance System at RIT Croatia (Audit) is defined by the RIT Croatia Quality Assurance Policy and the RIT Croatia Quality Assurance System Rulebook from 2022. Internal periodic assessment is implemented annually starting with 2022. Based on the abovementioned Policy and Rulebook, the Internal Periodic Assessment of the Quality Assurance System is conducted for the academic year 2020-2021 by the Internal Periodic Assessment Committee consisting of five (5) members independent in their work. The Committee is elected for a period of three (3) years.

The goals of the Internal Periodic Assessment of the Quality Assurance system 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.

### 1.1 The Internal Periodic Assessment Committee

The Dean of RIT Croatia has appointed the individuals in charge for Internal Periodic Assessment of the Quality Assurance System with a Decision on the Internal Periodic Assessment Committee dated July 1st, 2022:

- Ivona Labaš, M.S., Director of Strategic Development, Facilities and ITS, coordinator and member
- Besim Agušaj, Ph.D., Senior Lecturer, 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

In accordance with the Rulebook, the Internal Periodic Assessment Committee has completed the first three phases of 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 Council (QAC) prepares an Action Plan for the Improvement of the Quality Assurance System in the follow-up phase.

## 2. RIT CROATIA GENERAL INFO

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

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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 an international campus of a prominent American university, RIT Croatia is one of the two higher education institutions in Croatia whose students 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: Service Management (Dubrovnik), International Business (Zagreb), Information Technology/Web and Mobile Computing (Dubrovnik and Zagreb) and New Media Design (Zagreb, since Fall of 2022). 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 Service 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 a 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 Dean. Both 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 & International Student Office, Finance Department, Recruitment & Enrollment Department, Human Resources Department, and Director of Strategic Development, ITS & Facilities.

The academic side consists of six areas and academic services. Area heads, as well as the Academic Service manager, along with members of the Senior Leadership team, make up RIT Croatia's Quality Assurance Council. 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 as well as fitness centers on both campuses.

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's reputation has been recognized by many leading university guides, industries and internationally acclaimed publications. For example, U.S. News & World Report puts RIT in the top 50 most innovative higher education institutions in 2021, placing Saunders College of Business undergraduate studies at 67th place in the competition of more than 500 national study programs. Also, RIT is among the top 100 national universities focused on scientific research in the US.

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**

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### **RIT Croatia, Strategic Plan (2016 – 2022) COMMITTED TO GREATNESS**

In 2015, RIT Croatia adopted its Strategic Plan for the period 2016–2022. In this period, the strategic focus of RIT Croatia is on excellence, as exemplified in its vision, mission statement, seven greatness indicators, and in the series of objectives within each indicator.

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 in May and October. Since its adoption, the Strategic Plan has undergone two revisions in 2017 and 2019, and the preparation of a new Strategic Plan for the period after 2022 is currently underway. The Strategic Plan is accessible on the institution's website.

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## **Our Vision**

Committed to personal excellence, RIT Croatia will be the university of first choice in south Central Europe for globally minded students who wish to receive an American education and excel in their careers.

## **Our Mission**

Directed towards future, committed to integrity, academic excellence as well as personal and professional development. Our mission is therefore:

- Builds diverse learning communities that transcend geographical boundaries.
  - Creates bonds between students, alumni, faculty and industry.
  - Fosters innovation, creativity, and an entrepreneurial spirit.
  - Promotes a rich research portfolio through global campus collaboration and international partnerships.
- 

## **Greatness Indicator 1**

RIT Croatia will deliver high quality and relevant career-focused degree programs that capitalize upon technology, art, and design; industry will increasingly recognize the value of its graduates. Objectives:

- Introduce new programs and enhance existing programs, with curricular and co-curricular offerings, to meet market demands, student interest and employability.
- Utilize advisory boards to provide curriculum feedback and assessment for market relevance and student interest.

## **Greatness Indicator 2**

RIT Croatia will be committed to academic excellence. Objectives:

- Attract and retain strong faculty and staff.
- Create a peer mentor program which will promote academic excellence and enhance positive interaction among students.
- Support experiential learning by field learning, development of an entrepreneurial center, and collaboration with alumni-led businesses.

- Explore certificate training courses to develop specific skill sets.
- Develop greater financial assistance to allow academically strong students to succeed regardless of their ability to pay.

### **Greatness Indicator 3**

RIT Croatia will best utilize technology to expand learning opportunities. Objectives:

- Invest in new technologies and facilitate their integration in all areas of the university to enable knowledge sharing and accessibility.
- Enhance online resources and opportunities to create additional learning platforms for students, faculty and staff.

### **Greatness Indicator 4**

RIT Croatia will be recognized for interdisciplinary research and faculty – student – industry research collaboration. Objectives:

- Promote and initiate collaborative research projects among faculty and students in the RIT global campuses.
- Explore and secure European and US grant funding opportunities.
- Pursue projects that foster innovation and initiate industry and local community partnering.

### **Greatness Indicator 5**

RIT Croatia will prepare graduates for careers in a global environment by offering more international education experiences. Objectives:

- Develop strategies to increase the number of international students studying at RIT Croatia.
- Develop opportunities, along with funding assistance, through which students can participate in:
  - \* RIT Global Scholars study abroad programs,
  - \* Erasmus, and other study abroad and student exchange programs,
  - \* international experiential learning,
  - \* graduate degree programs at the Rochester campus,
  - \* global classes, team projects and course assignments,
  - \* international clubs, associations, forums, conferences and symposiums.

### **Greatness Indicator 6**

RIT Croatia will create a culture of professional development, the transfer of best practices, and the enhancement of diversity. Objectives:

- Develop a comprehensive professional development plan for all faculty and staff.
- Increase the number of faculty and staff exchanges with RIT campuses, and with other institutions.
- Increase the diversity of students, faculty and staff.

## Greatness Indicator 7

RIT Croatia will be the university with the best value proposition in Croatia and the immediate region. Objectives:

- Complete an extensive ROI study to better position RIT Croatia in the market.
- Attain Croatian university status.
- Develop 'RIT for Life' programs to support alumni with career and personal development, networking, and life-long learning, and increase the opportunities for their engagement with RIT students and programs.

For assistance in monitoring and execution of the strategic plan, the action plan was developed with defined and measurable key success indicators, deadlines and responsible persons.

In addition to the Strategic Plan of the institution, RIT Croatia has also adopted the strategic program of scientific research for the period 2020–2024. For each of the eight research topics, there are developed action plans, and annual reports are envisaged for each of the topics, and for the Strategic Program as a whole.

## 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 System at RIT Croatia**

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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 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. RIT prides itself in its commitment to quality assurance and this has been reflected in its current ranking of 105 out of 443, in the category of Best National Universities, as determined by the most prominent US university ranking entity, US News and World Report. RIT Croatia successfully participated in RIT’s 5-year AACSB reaccreditation in 2020 and RIT’s 8-year MSCHE reaccreditation in 2017.

Quality assurance is embedded in all teaching, research and professional activities conducted by RIT Croatia, as well as in RIT Croatia’s Strategic Plan – Committed To Greatness (2016–2022). 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, Rulebook on Election to Educational Titles and Work of Instructors, and the Strategic Plan. Academic and overall RIT Croatia quality is reviewed semi-annually by the Board of Trustees.

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 Science and Higher Education and the

ESG. The highest institutional management, the Senior Leadership team, handles quality assurance, primarily from the strategic perspective. The Senior Leadership team meets once every three weeks. The team consists of the president and dean, associate dean, head of the Finance Department, director of Strategic Development, Facilities and IT Services, head of the Careers Services, Alumni Relations, Exchange Programs and International Students Department, head of the Human Resources Department, head of the Marketing and Communications Department, and head of the Admissions Department. On the other hand, the Quality Assurance Council, that handles quality assurance from an operational perspective, meets once monthly and it is composed of the Senior Leadership team members, the Degree Programs chair, the General Education & Research chair, and the Academic Affairs Department manager. The Quality Assurance Council was, until February 2022, known as Administrative Council. Its responsibilities remained the same and were formalized to reflect the Council's responsibility for quality assurance from the operational perspective.

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 and long-term adjuncts are members of the Academic Senate. Next to the faculty, 15% of all members of the Academic Senate are student representatives. Since all 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. 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 Academic Honesty Policy 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, greatness indicators and objectives of the Strategic Plan – Committed to Greatness (2016–2022) are quality oriented in nature. Through the achievement of the 22 objectives of 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 sessions in May and October. Since its adoption, the Strategic Plan has undergone two revisions in 2017 and 2019, and the preparation of a new Strategic Plan for the period after 2022 is currently underway.

### 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 1st, 2022. The newly named Quality Assurance Council is composed of the Senior

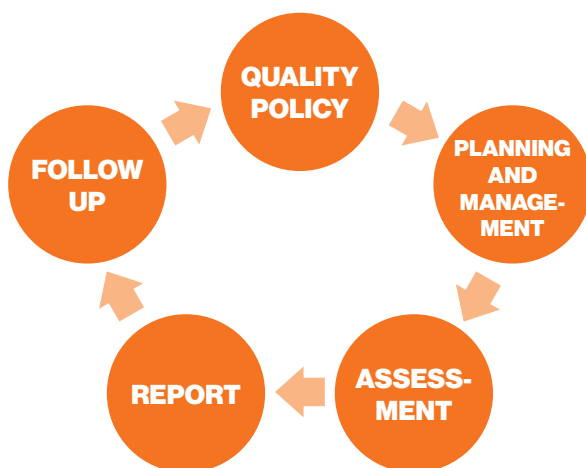
Leadership team members, the Degree Programs chair, the General Education & Research chair, and the Academic Affairs Department manager.

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 15th 2022.

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:



Once the above mentioned processes were completed, the Dean appointed the **Internal periodic assessment committee (IPAC)** on July 1st, 2022. The Committee consists of five (5) members and is elected for a period of three (3) years. The Committee began its work in July 2022.

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

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

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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**

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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 1st, 2022 as follows:

- Ivona Labaš, M.S., Director of Strategic Development, Facilities and ITS, coordinator and member
- Besim Agušaj, Ph.D., Senior Lecturer, member
- Evelina Mišćin, 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**

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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**

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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**

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In accordance with the Rulebook, the Internal Periodic Assessment Committee has completed the first three phases of the academic year 2020-2021 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 Council (QAC) prepares an Action Plan for the Improvement of the Quality Assurance System in the follow-up phase.

The next Gantt chart illustrates the timeline of the entire project and its tasks.

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	July 4 – July 24			July 25 – August 7		August 8 – August 28				August 9 – September 2						September 3 – September 20				
<b>Phase 1: Planning</b>																				
Developing the plan of activities																				
Review of the rulebook																				
Review of the report examples																				
Meetings by elements 1–12 determining the documentation needs																				
Mapping documents and elements in one master table																				
Publishing the plan of activities																				
Determining the requests for the responsible persons																				
Sending informations about the process to all employees																				
<b>Phase 2: Data collection</b>																				
Submission of the required documentation and data																				
Contacting responsible persons																				
Check list of the submitted documents																				
Uploading the documents on Google drive																				
Interviews																				
Meetings by elements 1–12																				
Writing drafts of reports by elements																				
Composing the questions for the additional interviews																				
Determining the dates for interviews																				
Conducting the interviews																				
<b>Phase 3: Assessment and reporting</b>																				
Assessment																				
Finalizing assessment reports by elements																				
Report																				
Writing report draft (common areas)																				
Consolidating final report – English version																				
Review of the final report																				
Consolidating final report – Croatian version																				
Report submitted to Academic Senate for review and approval																				
<b>Phase 4: Follow-up</b>																				
Action plan																				
Action plan created (QAC)																				
Action plan submitted to Academic Senate for approval																				
Action plan published																				



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)	July 5th, 2022	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee, Associate Dean
Review of the report examples	July 11th, 2022	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee
Plan of activities & Gantt	July 11th, 2022	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee
Elements 1–4, determining documentation needs	July 12th, 2022	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee
Elements 5–9, determining documentation needs	July 13th, 2022	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee
Elements 10–12, determining documentation needs	July 15th, 2022	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee
Finalizing the documentation needs and determining requests for individual departments	July 19th, 2022	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee
Initial review of collected documentation	August 3rd, 2022	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee
Status meeting, Elements 1–12	August 8th, 2022	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee
Status meeting, Elements 1–12	August 22nd, 2022	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee
Finalizing list of questions for the additional interviews	August 25th, 2022	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee
Interview with Dean and Associate Dean	August 29th, 2022	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee, Dean, Associate Dean
Interview with Faculty representatives	August 29th, 2022.	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee, Faculty representatives
Interview with Student Government	August 29th, 2022	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee, Student Government representatives
Interview with Ombudsperson and the Academic Affairs and Student Services Manager	August 31st, 2022	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee, Ombudsperson, Academic Affairs and Student Services Manager
Interview with Finance Manager	September 2nd, 2022	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee, Finance Manager
Interview with HR Manager	September 2nd, 2022	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee, HR Manager
Finalizing assessment reports by elements	September 7th, 2022	Internal Periodic Assessment Committee
Review of the final report	September 23rd, 2022	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 in the below table, grouped by the twelve elements of assessment.

No.	Item / Document	Elements											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	Mission & Vision process outline for 2020-2021	x											
2	Strategic Plan process outline for 2020-2021	x											
3	Mission, Vision, Goals/strategic plan – Plan of activities	x											
4	Quality assurance in higher education committee – Structure, charges, plan of activities and outcomes/reports	x											x
5	Effective Teaching Committee – Structure, charges, plan of activities and outcomes/reports	x											
6	Research and Scholarship Committee – Structure, charges, plan of activities and outcomes/reports	x											
7	Faculty Affairs Committee Structure, charges, plan of activities and outcomes/reports	x											
8	Student Affairs Committee – Structure, charges, plan of activities and outcomes/reports	x	x										
9	Academic Policy Committee – Structure, charges, plan of activities and outcomes/reports	x											
10	Curriculum Committee – Structure, charges, plan of activities and outcomes/reports	x											
11	RIT Croatia Faculty and Staff Code of Ethics		x										
12	RIT Croatia Nondiscrimination Statement		x										

No.	Item / Document	Elements											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	RIT Croatia Core Values		x										
14	Internal rulebooks and documents related to discrimination and harassment (Faculty and Staff)		x										
15	Internal rulebooks and documents related to discrimination and harassment (Students)		x										
16	Student Handbook 2020-2021		x			x	x				x		
17	Student Academic Honesty Policy 2020-2021		x										
18	Ombudsperson – statistics for 2020-2021		x										
19	Finance/Tuition documents for 2020-2021		x										
20	Admissions – financial aid & scholarship statistics for 2020-2021		x										
21	Decision on Appointment of the Person Authorized to Receive and Deal with Complaints Related to the Protection of Employees' Dignity		x										
22	Faculty Handbook 2020-2021		x										
23	Intellectual Property Policy 2020-2021		x										
24	Conflict of Interest and Commitment Policy 2020-2021		x										
25	Conflict of Interest and Commitment document samples 2020-2021		x										
26	Performance appraisal documents for 2020-2021 samples		x										
27	Rulebook on Election to Educational Titles and Work of Instructors		x				x						

No.	Item / Document	Elements											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
28	Election and reelection to titles – available documentation		x										
29	Employee Rulebook		x										
30	Rulebook on Internal Whistleblowing Procedure		x										
31	Statute in effect 2020-2021			x									
32	Organizational Chart 2020-2021			x									
33	RIT Croatia Quality Assurance Policy			x									
34	RIT Croatia QAS Rulebook			x									
35	RIT Croatia Internal Audit Rulebook			x									
36	Sample Course Syllabi 2020-2021					x							
37	Institutional grading guidelines					x							
38	Flipped classroom project documentation					x							
39	Admission criteria for all points of entry 2020-2021						x						
40	Public tender – Admission process 2020-2021						x						
41	Admission exams samples 2020-2021						x						
42	Admission letters/communication sample 2020-2021						x						
43	Student transfer process						x						
44	Transfer documentation samples 2020-2021						x						
45	IAPs – sample 2020-2021						x						
46	Advising process documentation						x						

No.	Item / Document	Elements											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
47	Academic action letters samples from 2020-2021						x						
48	Award letters statistics						x						
49	Certification process						x						
50	Statute in effect 2020-2021						x						
51	RIT student progression, retention						x						
52	COOP handbook 2020-2021						x						
53	COOP documentation/ forms/registration 2020-2021						x						
54	COOP documentation/forms/ registratio n 2020-2021 samples						x						
55	Student mobility procedures for SA and Erasmus 2020-2021						x						
56	Student mobility stats for SA and Erasmus 2020-2021						x						
57	ERASMUS Mobility Rulebook						x	x					
58	Peer observations process description							x					
59	Peer observations sample 2020-2021							x					
60	Conference funding process description							x					
61	Continued Education process description							x					
62	Criteria for awarding faculty							x					
63	IT and Library infrastructure details								x				
64	Erasmus exchange stats 2020-2021								x				
65	RIT Croatia Disability Policy								x				

No.	Item / Document	Elements											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
66	Academic and faculty advising process descriptions								x				
67	Erasmus approval guidelines/ evaluation criteria								x				
68	Erasmus sample documentation 2020-2021								x				
69	RIT Erasmus Outgoing Student Handbook								x				
70	Erasmus policy statement								x				
71	Student government and student clubs financial support details for 2020-2021								x				
72	Student population profile 2020-2021									x			
73	Student progression, success and drop-out rates – statistics 2020-2021									x			
74	Student satisfaction survey for 2020-2021									x		x	
75	Student satisfaction survey – outcomes/changes as a result of the survey									x			
76	Learning resources and student support available – Lab resources (software list)									x		x	
77	Learning resources and student support available – Library resources, books and other materials used for classes									x		x	
78	Learning resources and student support available – Psychological help stats for 2020-2021									x		x	
79	Learning resources and student support available – Academic accommodations stats for 2020-2021									x		x	

No.	Item / Document	Elements											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
80	Ombudsperson JDQ									x		x	
81	Academic advising JDQ									x		x	
82	Career advising plan for 2020-2021									x		x	
83	Breakdown of students seeking career advising in 2020-2021 per program per year level									x		x	
84	Coop stats for 2020-2021									x		x	
85	Brochures 2020-2021										x		
86	Program outlines 2020-2021										x		
87	Newsletters samples from 2020-2021										x		
88	Advisory board structure & members											x	
89	Advisory board meeting minutes from June 2021											x	
90	Performance Indicators – Graduation and retention rates per program 2020-2021										x	x	
91	Student evaluation and Faculty performance appraisal samples 2020-2021							x		x		x	
92	Faculty Plan of Work samples 2020-2021							x					
93	Documentation on any statistics of questionnaires for alumni 2020-2021											x	
94	Documentation on any statistics of questionnaires for employers 2020-2021											x	

No.	Item / Document	Elements											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
95	Placement opportunities in 2020-2021					x							
96	NMD elaborate					x							
97	Decision on starting NMD program					x							
98	Market research and analysis for NMD program – any documentation available					x							
99	Procedure for creating new study programs					x							
100	JDQ Marketing and Communications Manager										x		
101	Communication activities 2020-2021 – summary										x		
102	Web content per program										x		
103	Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn accounts – statistics and data available										x		

### 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 description, evaluation/development phase, and recommendations for each of the 12 Elements of Assessment.



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

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### 4.1. Mission and goals (MSCHE 1)

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(Includes standards and guidelines from the “*Standards of the Middle States Commission for Higher Education (MSCHE)*”)

#### **Standard**

The institution’s mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution’s stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.

#### **Guidelines**

An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:

- Clearly defined mission and goals that are developed through appropriate collaborative participation by all who facilitate or are otherwise responsible for institutional development and improvement.
- Clearly defined mission and goals that address external as well as internal contexts and constituencies.
- Clearly defined mission and goals that are approved and supported by the governing body.
- Clearly defined mission and goals that guide faculty, administration, staff, and governing structures in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, program and curricular development, and the definition of institutional and educational outcomes.
- Clearly defined mission and goals that include support of scholarly inquiry and creative activity, at levels and of the type appropriate to the institution.
- Clearly defined mission and goals that are publicized and widely known by the institution’s internal stakeholders.
- Clearly defined mission and goals that are periodically evaluated.
- Institutional goals are realistic, appropriate to higher education, and consistent with mission.
- Goals that focus on student learning and related outcomes and on institutional improvement; are supported by administrative, educational, and student support programs and services; and are consistent with institutional mission.
- Periodic assessment of mission and goals to ensure that they are relevant and achievable.

#### **4.1.1. Strengths**

- Mission and goals are developed collaboratively and include feedback from all stakeholders.
- Mission and goals address external and internal constituencies.
- Mission and goals include feedback, support and approval by the governing body.
- Mission and goals are created in a way that they clearly support and provide guidance for planning, research and development activities.
- Mission and goals are publicized broadly.
- Mission and goals are periodically evaluated and updated to ensure they provide proper support for the institution’s development.
- Goals are realistic, clear and consistent with mission. Goals are fully supported by administrative, educational and student support programs and services.

#### 4.1.2. Situation description

RIT Croatia's mission clearly defines its purpose within the context of higher education, its stakeholders, and what they intend to accomplish. Stated goals are clearly linked to the mission and specify how RIT Croatia intends to fulfill its mission. This information has been sent to all relevant stakeholders as well as being widely available on the web.

The "Committed to Greatness" strategic plan has been developed through a collaborative process with stakeholders that are involved in institutional development. The strategic plan clearly outlines the organization's mission and vision along with supporting "Greatness Indicators" that each have their own set of objectives that further outline how RIT Croatia will achieve its mission and goals.

RIT Croatia has charged a number of committees composed of faculty, staff, and students to assist in achieving its mission and goals and who have their own yearly objectives to assist with the advancement of completing the strategic plan and ultimately improving the work of the institution.

The strategic plan, including the mission and goals, is reviewed and updated on a regular basis to include contextual and environmental changes affecting the operations and ultimately the advancement of RIT Croatia. Documentation of these changes and revisions are essential in order to track progress and update stakeholders. Currently, there are no processes in place that formalize periodic assessment. Therefore, it is necessary to create a standard for annual reporting of all periodic assessment activities.

#### 4.1.3. Recommendations

- Develop a formal documentation process for periodic assessment of mission and goals (detailed report submitted by the dean on an annual basis).

#### 4.1.4. Evaluation

- Develop a formal documentation process for periodic assessment of mission and goals (detailed report submitted by the dean on an annual basis).

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. Ethics and Integrity (MSCHE 2)

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(Includes standards and guidelines from the “*Standards of the Middle States Commission for Higher Education (MSCHE)*”)

### Standard

Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

### Guidelines

The institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:

- A commitment to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights.
- A climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives.
- A grievance policy that is documented and disseminated to address complaints or grievances raised by students, faculty, or staff. The institution’s policies and procedures are fair and impartial, and assure that grievances are addressed promptly, appropriately, and equitably.
- The avoidance of conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict in all activities and among all constituents.
- Fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation of employees.
- Honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions materials and practices, as well as in internal communications.
- As appropriate to its mission, services or programs in place:
  - \* to promote affordability and accessibility;
  - \* to enable students to understand funding sources and options, value received for cost, and methods to make informed decisions about incurring debt.
- Compliance with all applicable reporting policies, regulations, and requirements to include reporting regarding:
  - \* the full disclosure of information on institution-wide assessments, graduation, retention, certification and licensure or licensing board pass rates;
  - \* substantive changes affecting institutional mission, goals, programs, operations, sites, and other material issues which must be disclosed in a timely and accurate fashion;
  - \* periodic assessment of ethics and integrity as evidenced in institutional policies, processes, practices, and the manner in which these are implemented.

#### 4.2.1. Strengths

- Changes affecting institutional mission, goals, programs, operations, sites, and other material issues which must be disclosed in a timely and accurate fashion are shared internally.
- Regulatory compliance documents and materials are regularly updated and published on the institution’s website.
- Institution’s policies, activities, staff and faculty support an inclusive campus community.

- RIT Croatia fosters a climate of respect among students, faculty and staff through well-established policies and procedures.
- The institution is dedicated to diversity as evidenced by its fair and impartial hiring practices, visible in all staff, faculty and student hiring.
- Faculty is encouraged to cultivate inclusive pedagogies, and deliver creative solutions in classroom setting.
- Fair, impartial policies addressing complaints/grievances for all members of college's community are in place, ensuring that grievances are addressed promptly and appropriately.
- Student complaints or concerns are resolved formally at the Ombudsperson's level.
- RIT Croatia is committed to avoiding any conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts in all its activities – all employees are asked to read and sign (on an annual basis) an affidavit related to conflict of interest. All potential conflicts require a proper management plan.
- RIT Croatia nurtures a culture of open and transparent communications, both internal and external.
- RIT Croatia communicates funding sources and options with students on a regular basis. Students are aware of all scholarship and financial aid options and individual consultations are encouraged.
- RIT Croatia promotes affordability and accessibility through marketing campaigns, individual interviews with potential students and constant reminders for current students. RIT Croatia's Finance office has an open door policy and is available for individual consultations on a daily basis.
- College has developed multiple communication channels (weekly internal Newsletter, an extensive website, social media accounts, student, faculty and staff email system etc.) where key developments and information is shared.

#### **4.2.2. Situation description**

RIT Croatia complies with national and college policies intended at ensuring highest level of ethical standards, including those pertaining to hiring, diversity and non-discrimination. We found clear evidence that RIT Croatia supports activities to promote inclusion among students, staff, and faculty. Expectations with regards to ethical behavior and integrity are regularly communicated. Faculty and staff demonstrate strong commitment to advance equity and inclusion. Furthermore, RIT Croatia follows existing regulations and guidelines related to accessibility. A multitude of examples were showcased of how inclusiveness is a top priority for all stakeholders involved. RIT Croatia offers a number of paths and opportunities to promote affordability and financial access however these efforts should continue and improve.

#### **4.2.3. Recommendations**

- Develop a report that would do a follow up on whether students' concerns were resolved.
- Create a clear documentation process for periodic assessment of ethics and integrity.
- Expand current Conflict of interest policy with guidelines for handling uncovered conflicts.

#### **4.2.4. Evaluation**

- Develop a formal documentation process for periodic assessment of mission and goals (detailed report submitted by the dean on an annual basis).

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. Governance, leadership and policy for quality assurance (ESG 1.1, MSCHE 6, MSCHE 7)

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

#### Standard

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves.

The institution should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.

#### Guidelines

The institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:

- Institution has a clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision making.
- Institution's financial planning and budgeting process is aligned with mission and goals.
- Institution has well-defined decision-making processes and clear assignment of responsibility and accountability.
- Quality assurance policy has a formal status and is publicly available.
- Quality assurance policy supports:
  - \* the organization of the quality assurance system;
  - \* departments, schools, faculties and other organizational units as well as those of institutional leadership, individual staff members and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance;
  - \* academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud;
  - \* guarding against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff;
  - \* the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance.

### 4.3.1. Strengths

- Institution's organizational structure shows a clear governance structure that allows for accountability for decision making.
- Institution's financial planning and budgeting process is organized and clearly defined.
- Decision-making processes are transparent. There is a clear assignment of responsibility and accountability, especially in the fiscal sectors.
- Quality assurance policy is formalized and publically available. It supports all stakeholders and various topics such as academic integrity, intolerance of discrimination, etc.

### 4.3.2. Situation description

The RIT Croatia organizational structure is very clear and transparent. The organigram is posted on [https://www.croatia.rit.edu/uploads/RIT%20Croatia%20Organizational Structure.pdf](https://www.croatia.rit.edu/uploads/RIT%20Croatia%20Organizational%20Structure.pdf) and describes all the functions and responsibilities.

The current senior leadership is posted on <https://www.croatia.rit.edu/senior-leadership/>, and QA Council on <https://www.croatia.rit.edu/quality-assurance-council/#ritcroatia>. The processes are transparent and the management is updating all employees about the changes during the faculty and staff meetings on a regular basis. The process of voting on relevant documents is transparent and clear.

### 4.3.3. Recommendations

- Create infographics for the quality assurance process.
- Develop workshops for employees to raise their awareness of the process importance.
- Determine more precise metrics of the process, for example development phases described in detail per every individual Element.

### 4.3.4. 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.

#### 4.4. Design and approval of programs (ESG 1.2)

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(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.

##### **4.4.1. Strengths**

- In order to maintain continuity of quality and encourage innovation, programs are regularly monitored and, if necessary, revised or introduced.
- There is a regular and strong connection with the parent institution in Rochester, where new knowledge and needs for introducing new programs and revising existing ones are actively exchanged.
- Before the introduction of new (and revision of existing) programs, their compliance with the strategic plan of RIT Croatia is tested.
- The revision of existing programs or introduction of new programs is carried out according to clearly defined steps: determination of market needs for new knowledge (programs), whether the revision or new program meets the defined curriculum changes criteria, consultation with the parent institution in Rochester about the existence of suitable courses or programs that will be offered, new program proposal is sent to RIT Rochester.
- Each member of the Senate can make a proposal to revise or introduce a new program.
- The last introduced programs were International Business and IT in 2011.
- In June 2021, the Elaborate on the introduction of the new study program of the undergraduate professional study New Media Design was prepared.
- During 2020/2021 AY a revision of the curriculum of the HTM program was carried out.

#### 4.4.2. Situation description

RIT Croatia develops and creates its study programs in cooperation and close collaboration with all relevant stakeholders. Given the geographical diversity of the student population, the process of defining the curriculum incorporates the needs of both, Croatian and global labor market.

Creation and approval procedures are clearly defined. Adequate criteria have been established for the revision of existing study programs and the proposal of new ones.

In June 2021, the Curriculum committee adopted the proposal to launch a new undergraduate professional study program – New Media Design. In a two-year period, the program went through stages that included the idea, initial plan, structure and program content, i.e. the associated courses. Upon documentation evaluation, it is visible that the program had well-defined market needs. Likewise, the plans for the personnel and physical resources for the successful development of the program were elaborated in detail.

#### 4.4.3. Recommendations

- Analyze needs for new degree programs and evaluate existing programs in regular cycles – every 2-4 years (frequency/cycles are program specific).
- Formalize procedure for degree programs revision.
- Create a digital repository of all revised, newly created programs and courses.
- Revise all courses in all programs as related to learning outcomes to determine clear and direct connection between course content and ECTS points.
- Align degree programs' learning outcomes with individual courses' learning outcomes.

#### 4.4.4. Evaluation

- Develop a formal documentation process for periodic assessment of mission and goals (detailed report submitted by the dean on an annual basis).

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.



#### **4.5. Student-centered learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3, MSCHE 3, MSCHE 5)**

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

##### **Standard**

The institution should ensure that the programs are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach. The institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all levels, and are consistent with higher education expectations. Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study.

##### **Guidelines – student-centered learning and teaching**

- respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths
- considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate
- flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods
- regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods
- encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher
- promotes mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship
- has appropriate procedures for dealing with students’ complaints
- learning experiences characterised by rigor and coherence at all levels

##### **Guidelines – assessment**

- Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field
- The criteria for and method of assessment as well as criteria for marking are published in advance
- The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process
- Where possible, assessment is carried out by more than one examiner
- The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances
- Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures
- Assessment of student learning shows that students have accomplished educational goals
- A formal procedure for student appeals is in place

##### **4.5.1. Strengths**

- RIT Croatia, as a global campus of RIT Rochester (USA), in its approach to learning and teaching has clearly and unambiguously placed students in the focus of all its activities.
- Interactivity in teaching is a norm that is actively applied and nurtured in the best practice of American student-oriented teaching.
- Technological and progressive pedagogic solutions are regularly used in the classes, the aim of which is to facilitate the mastering of complex concepts (content).

- Adjustments in teaching for students with special needs have been worked out and are regularly applied.
- Experiential learning (through projects, simulations) is an integral part of the teaching/academic curriculum.
- Students are actively encouraged to be independent in their work, as well as to search for subfields that are closest to their academic or career interests.
- Through various events organized with the aim of establishing better connections between students and academic staff, mutual respect and professionalism are visible.
- Training of academic staff in the domain of student evaluation exists and is organized on an ad hoc basis (as needed).
- Evaluation criteria and methods are transparent and consistent throughout all courses.
- Syllabi are regularly updated and contain detailed information that helps students better understand and organize their academic duties.
- Through the myCourses and Starfish system, students receive regular and real-time feedback on their current academic status and success (throughout the semester).
- From discussions with students, the conclusion is that the time and schedule for professor office hours are respected, if necessary outside the regular office hours.
- The times of colloquiums, exams, and tests are communicated with students in a transparent manner already at the very beginning of the semester.
- In certain courses (Hospitality and Tourism Management, Web and Mobile Computing) as part of the curriculum and evaluation, external partners from the industry are also included, who, through their engagement, test theoretical concepts and objectify the evaluation of student works/projects.
- The Ombudsman helps students in understanding a procedure for initiating an appeal related to their academic success.

#### **4.5.2. Situation description**

RIT Croatia puts students at the center of activities. This can be seen by the interactivity in classes, the use of technological and methodological solutions that help students master the content more easily. Students are encouraged to work independently. For students with special needs, classes are adjusted accordingly. The number of students in the classroom is adequate and meets the standard. Academic staff is continuously educated in the domain of student evaluation.

Assessment criteria are transparent and students receive feedback on their performance via MyCourses and Starfish. The consultation time is respected, but if necessary, students can contact the professor outside the consultation time. At the beginning of the semester, students are also informed about the time of colloquiums from individual courses. In some courses, there is an external evaluation of student works/projects. In case of complaints about their academic performance, students can always contact the Ombudsperson.

#### **4.5.3. Recommendations**

- Implement the honors program (as support for advanced students).
- Work on training of adjunct faculty on a standardized approach to teaching and evaluating students that are in line with the expectations of RIT Croatia.
- Systematically organize the training of academic staff related to evaluation.

#### 4.5.4. 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.

#### 4.6. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4, MSCHE 4)

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

##### Standard

Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.

##### Guidelines

- Admission processes/criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner
- Induction to the institution and the program is provided.
- Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression.
- Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students’ progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.
- Accurate and comprehensive information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment, and refunds.
- Appropriate recognition procedures rely on:
  - \* Institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.
  - \* Cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC center with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country.

#### 4.6.1. Strengths

- RIT Croatia has clear and transparent admissions criteria for all programs that fall into four categories depending on where the student is coming from and how they are applying.
- RIT Croatia has a clear and transparent procedure for transfer students and those transferring in courses from other higher education institutions which are clearly outlined in the “Rulebook On The Enrollment Criteria for Students Transferring from Other Higher Educational Institutions to RIT Croatia” as well as in the “Transfer Procedure” as defined by the Academic Affairs Department and RIT Rochester.
- Recognition of higher education qualifications are fair and in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and done in cooperation with the national quality assurance agencies as well as ENIC/NARIC.
- All students receive the RIT Croatia Student Handbook which clearly defines all university policies and procedures as they relate to policies on academic honesty, grading, disabilities, and student conduct.
- Student progress is tracked and monitored throughout their studies on the Student Information System (SIS) platform where students can clearly track their progress at any point in their studies by viewing their Academic Advisement Report which outlines all course requirements they need to complete within their program including their cooperative education requirements.
- Every RIT Croatia student is additionally assigned an Academic Advisor that tracks their progression within their degree program and ensure that they are taking the right courses and getting additional academic support in order to promote their progression. Support tools include students having regular meetings with their academic advisors, free tutoring services in courses, Writing Lab for English and a support course to assist with study habits. In addition to this, students are assigned a Peer Mentor to help them better integrate and support them in their first year of studies as well as a Faculty Advisor to assist them with study habits and career planning.
- Institutional Research does a yearly evaluation of RIT Croatia’s graduation and persistence rates providing a clear picture of student success.
- Cooperative education is a mandatory part of all undergraduate degree programs at RIT Croatia and is based on program learning outcomes to ensure that students are able to successfully enter the labor market prepared. Evaluations are done on each coop experience from both the student and employer allowing for adequate feedback on how successful the student was in meeting program outcomes as well as receiving feedback for improvement of the program itself. Cooperative education requirements are clearly defined and policies are outlined in the Cooperative Education Handbook.
- Student mobility is offered to students from their second year of studies onwards. RIT Croatia is an active participant in the Erasmus program as well as has its own global campuses in Rochester, Dubai, Kosovo, and China allowing students to study abroad easily. Numerous information sessions are held throughout the year to provide students with sufficient information on the various institutions and associated costs.
- Upon graduation, students receive two diplomas, one Croatian and one American diploma as well as two transcripts including one with their Croatian grades and allocated ECTS points and one with their official American grades. Students also receive a diploma supplement in both Croatian and English which allow for easy recognition of their diploma. This document includes program learning outcomes, graduation requirements, grading, ECTS points awarded, list of all courses, credits, as well as information on cooperative education and student mobility if applicable.

- Teaching staff regularly and fully informs students about the course learning outcomes as well as the assessment method for each subject; each student can monitor her/his academic progress via the myCourses system.

#### 4.6.2. Situation description

RIT Croatia has clearly defined admission requirements that should be better defined online which is ultimately the main information resource for students looking to apply. RIT Croatia has a clear transfer recognition policy in place that is transparent and in line with local quality assurance agencies, RIT, and ENIC/NARIC.

RIT Croatia has a clearly developed system in place to track and evaluate student progression in all phases of their studies. RIT Croatia provides students with an elaborate amount of support from both faculty, staff, and students to promote student integration and progression throughout their studies. All programs are designed to help students meet their learning outcomes and enhance their experience through cooperative education and student mobility. Documentation provided upon graduation allows students to easily continue their studies locally or globally with dual diplomas awarded as well as receiving a bilingual diploma supplement outlining their requirements.

#### 4.6.3. Recommendations

- Better define admission requirements on the web as there is no clear area for applicants to access this information easily especially if they are an international student.
- Implement stronger analysis of students that leave RIT Croatia and their reasoning on an annual basis in order to identify areas of improvement for the overall institution.
- Introduce annual cooperative education focus group (or other formal tool/method) that will include student representatives from all programs and conduct a co-op feedback session where strength and weaknesses of the program are discussed

#### 4.6.4. 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.

## 4.7. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

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(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.

### 4.7.1. Strengths

- Every academic year, employees draw up their work plan for the current academic year, which is approved by the dean (staff and direct reports) or associate dean (faculty). At the end of the academic year, employees submit a report on achieved and unachieved results from the specified work plan. They discuss these results with their supervisors (faculty discusses with their respective degrees program chair or general education chair and area heads discuss with the associate dean. Supervisors then evaluate them and make recommendations for further improvements
- Employees are encouraged to self-educate, based on a work plan that they create themselves and that is approved by the dean. Employees are encouraged to participate in conferences, and everything is regulated by the Regulations on Conferences and Research.
- Employees are encouraged to move, both to institutions within the global RIT and to institutions within the Erasmus program. There is no regulation on mobility, but there are structured documents required for the procedure.
- Elections for scientific, teaching and scientific-teaching professions are carried out in accordance with the regulations. Although elections for scientific positions are not mandatory for colleges and polytechnics according to Croatian law, the institution encourages its employees to apply for these positions.
- Peer observations are conducted in which employees evaluate colleagues and give recommendations for improving the teaching process.

- The institution rewards its employees in several categories.
- Every semester, student surveys are conducted, which are then attached to the report on the results from the work plan, and are discussed with the area head. Student surveys are designed by RIT Global University from Rochester, and each teacher can supplement the survey with their own specific questions.
- Before the start of the academic year, RIT Croatia organizes Faculty and Staff Days, during which employees socialize formally and informally. This year, the event was organized online due to the pandemic.
- The organizational chart of the institution is available on the web.

#### 4.7.2. Situation description

RIT Croatia has well-developed procedures and accompanying documents in the processes of managing the work of teaching staff. Since the institution is small, some processes are not fully formalized because the institution concluded that flexibility would be lost in this way. Transparency is ensured through meetings of the teaching staff that are held regularly and are listed in the academic calendar. Currently, there are no formal regulations on employment. Recruitment is carried out on the basis of recommendations, and most often long-term external associates are hired who are also hired on the basis of recommendations. The person who conducts this informal procedure is the associate dean in cooperation with RIT from Rochester. All engagements must be approved by a relevant program chair at RIT.

Also, RIT Croatia does not have a formally set employment position description (systematization). Even though most universities have set these processes, following a thorough legal assessment, RIT Croatia has concluded there is no need for such formalization at the moment. The institution grew on an informal structure and it is working well for now. Systematization would result in loss of flexibility.

#### 4.7.3. Recommendations

- Create a document that describes employment processes in detail and contributes to the overall transparency of the process.
- Include recommendations for improvement as well as praises in the peer observation documents.

#### 4.7.4. 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.

#### 4.8. Planning, learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6, MSCHE 6)

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

##### **Standard**

The institution’s planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

The institution should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

##### **Guidelines**

- institution provides a range of resources to assist student learning (physical resources such as libraries, study facilities and IT infrastructure to human support in the form of tutors, mentors, counselors and other advisers)
- support services are of particular importance in facilitating the mobility of students within and across higher education systems
- the needs of a diverse student population (such as international students as well as students with disabilities) are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources and student support
- support activities are fit for purpose, are accessible, and students are informed about the services available to them
- support services and administrative staff are qualified and they have opportunities to develop their competences
- clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement processes that provide for constituent participation, and incorporate the use of assessment results
- comprehensive planning for facilities, infrastructure, and technology that includes consideration of sustainability and deferred maintenance and is linked to the institution’s strategic and financial planning processes

##### **4.8.1. Strengths**

- Campuses in Zagreb and Dubrovnik have their own libraries. The libraries are relatively small in terms of space, but they are extremely rich in content. The RIT Wallace digital library is one of the most powerful tools available to students and academic staff in their professional and scientific development.
- Before the beginning of each semester, the academic staff sends their requests for the acquisition of professional and scientific literature for the needs of teaching activities of students and teaching staff. The book fund is continuously increasing.
- Computers are available to students for writing papers, projects, checking e-mail, etc. in specially designated classrooms (including the “quiet lab”, a quiet classroom equipped with computers, where conversations are not allowed so that students can fully focus on their work).



- The system of academic support for students is multi-layered and complement each other adequately: academic advisors, peer mentors, tutoring, mentoring system for diploma theses (Hospitality and Tourism Management), Writing Lab to provide help to students in writing essays.
- Classrooms as well as all other rooms on both campuses are pleasant to stay in. The high level of functionality of the rooms where lectures are held is noticeable. IT equipment is upgraded and changed every 3 to 4 years.
- Plans for further acquisition and development of physical and technological resources are regularly updated
- Students have at their disposal support to facilitate mobility through the office of Career and Study Abroad Services. In addition to Erasmus mobility, students can also choose an internal study mobility system at seven different RIT locations (Rochester, Zagreb, Dubrovnik, Priština, Dubai, Weihai, Beijing).
- Special attention is given to disabled students. All the necessary prerequisites for their quality education are communicated in advance with the academic staff, and all adjustments (wheelchair access, PC equipment) are made in order for these students to be productive in their activities.
- On both campuses, RIT Croatia regularly hosts students who come from the parent institution in Rochester, and who come from the program for deaf people. For these students, there are translators who help these students in their class participation.
- International students (from Rochester and Erasmus students) are provided with support. There is also an Erasmus coordinator whom students can turn to in case of problems and questions. One student also takes care of these students and their free time. There is also a culture class where students learn about Croatian culture by visiting museums, exhibitions, theaters and other cultural events in the city of Zagreb.
- One of the essential elements of support for students is accommodation. Thus, the campus in Dubrovnik secured 150 places for RIT Croatia students in the newly opened Dubrovnik student dormitory.
- Teaching processes in 2020/21 were hampered due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite all the challenges, the academic year was successful. All conditions are ensured for the smooth running of classes in all programs while adhering to the highest standards of protection.
- Support services and administrative staff are qualified and have the opportunity to develop their competences.

#### **4.8.2. Situation description**

After evaluating all relevant and available documentation, talking to students, faculty and staff, we can conclude that there are exceptionally favorable conditions and resources available to students at RIT Croatia. What should be emphasized is that student learning support is not the result of ad hoc solutions, but rather carefully planned, continuous activities with significant investments aimed at raising the quality of student support. It is also worth mentioning that support in many segments is individualized or adjusted to individual student needs. Likewise, the opening of a new student dormitory in Dubrovnik greatly helped to solve one of the chronic problems that students had for years with accommodation in Dubrovnik.

#### **4.8.3. Recommendations**

- Introduce a regular evaluation of student satisfaction through surveys concerning support for Erasmus and study abroad experiences.

- Refresh and re-equip common (social) spaces where students currently stay (lobby, reception, library, gym, etc.).

#### 4.8.4. 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.

#### 4.9. Information management (ESG 1.7)

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

##### Standard

The institution should ensure that it collects, analyzes and uses relevant information for the effective management of its programs and other activities.

##### Guidelines

Reliable data is crucial for informed decision-making and for knowing what is working well and what needs attention. Effective processes to collect and analyze information about study programmes and other activities feed into the internal quality assurance system.

The following information of interest is collected:

- Key performance indicators
- Profile of the student population
- Student progression, success and drop-out rates
- Students' satisfaction with their programs
- Learning resources and student support available
- Career paths of graduates.

##### 4.9.1. Strengths

- RIT Croatia uses the Student Information System (SIS) database which is updated in real

time and contains information on the student profile, grades, student progression, withdrawal, and graduation. This is the official faculty/staff/student platform used at RIT Croatia.

This database can automatically generate a wide range of reports on RIT Croatia students to track their academic profile and progress. SIS is continuously upgraded per the needs of the college.

- RIT Croatia uses an internal database as well that is updated regularly and includes in-depth information on the enrollment process and documentation, student profile, grades, financial information, and alumni data. The main difference between SIS and RIT Croatia's internal database is that it is predominantly used for the purpose of issuing official documentation for the Croatian diploma, for tuition collection, as well as to analyze alumni data.
- RIT Croatia conducts a Student Satisfaction Survey each spring to all students in order to evaluate, assess student satisfaction to ultimately improve the student experience at RIT Croatia. This information is then brought to the Quality Assurance Council to evaluate and subsequently create action items to address areas of concern. RIT Croatia also conducts end of semester surveys for each class a student is registered for in order to gain feedback on each course and faculty member. Feedback from these surveys are then addressed through performance appraisals and the Teaching Effectiveness Committee is charged with improving the classroom experience. Freshmen students as well as students taking a course being taught by faculty for the first time also receive a short survey in week 5 of their courses to see if any immediate improvements can be made to the course to improve quality and the overall student experience.
- RIT Croatia develops and updates a document annually entitled "RIT Croatia Success Indicators" which is available on their website and provides a snapshot of enrolled students, persistence rates, graduation rates, and employment rates after graduation. This information is extracted from SIS and the internal database.
- Student profile analysis is extracted from the internal database as this information is predominantly populated during the enrollment process. The database does have the capacity to extract this information and provide a picture of who the student is, where they come from and where they currently reside.
- RIT Croatia's website contains information that is continuously updated including the link to RIT Library which contains access for faculty/staff/students to thousands of books and numerous databases. The website provides students with information on free tutoring hours available in courses that have shown to be most challenging as well as information on the Writing Lab where students receive support in English writing.
- RIT Croatia Career Services office has their own spreadsheet which they use as their main sources of information to collect information on alumni employment and career progression and this document is continuously updated throughout the year.

#### **4.9.2. Situation description**

RIT Croatia has a solid system in place for accumulating, extracting, and analyzing information on their students and alumni. RIT Croatia uses this data and further analyzes it to define future activities and identify areas of change to improve the overall student experience and quality of the institution.

RIT Croatia provides its students with use of a database (SIS) that is modern, functional, and easily accessible for use. Students are able to retrieve real time information on their transcripts and academic progress within their study programs.

The internal database, while useful, is limited in its functionality and it is necessary to improve the functionality of the internal database to be able to readily extract well populated reports on the student profile that are easy to analyze.

### 4.9.3. Recommendations

- Improve the capacity and functionality of the internal database for the purpose of extracting reports on the student profile and alumni employment. The database also cannot store history of current students' academic standing. This should be upgraded.
- Create an area on the web for student support where students can find all information together under one link as a Support Center.

### 4.9.4. 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.

## 4.10. Public information (ESG 1.8)

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

### Standard

The institution should publish information about its activities, including programs, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and readily accessible.

### Guidelines

- Information on institutions' activities is useful for prospective and current students as well as for graduates, other stakeholders, and the public.
- Therefore, institutions provide information about their activities, including the programs they offer and the selection criteria for them, the intended learning outcomes of these programs, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students as well as graduate employment information.

#### 4.10.1. Strengths

- RIT Croatia's web page is the central location of all relevant and important documentation

regarding its strategic plan, programs and program brochures, admissions, program outlines and outcomes, staff and faculty contact information, success indicators, finance information/ scholarships/financial aid, handbooks and policies, academic calendar and class/exam schedule, student mobility, coop/career services, as well as student support.

The website is regularly updated to ensure its accuracy and availability of information to the public.

- An internal shared drive is also used to share information to internal stakeholders such as course syllabi and learning outcomes per course.
- Admission campaigns are advertised using the web site as well as, using social media platforms (Instagram and Facebook) and online news portals. Radio, newspapers, and television are occasionally used as well.
- All communication activities are done based on a communications plan issued annually to define marketing activities and method of advertisement.
- RIT Croatia regularly participates in various student education fairs as well as conducts high school visits to introduce its programs to potential students.
- Brochures are created and updated annually to include information about RIT Croatia's programs, benefits of studying at RIT Croatia and learning outcomes. Brochures are bilingual.
- RIT Croatia issues a newsletter to its stakeholders called the Reporter in the fall and spring semester, which talks about RIT Croatia's activities, student and faculty stories as well as interesting on campus news.
- RIT Croatia issues a newsletter monthly to parents of current students to inform them about important activities, dates, and events on campus as well as to share student/faculty/ alumni stories.
- RIT Croatia faculty and staff receive a weekly newsletter in which they are informed about internal activities as well as news stories about faculty, staff, students, and alumni.
- RIT Croatia publishes its success indicators on their website annually to inform stakeholders of student enrollment numbers, student progression, graduation, and employment rates.
- RIT Croatia addresses data privacy policies in the student and faculty handbooks and obtains consent through forms available in the handbooks.

#### **4.10.2. Situation description**

RIT Croatia posts up to date information on the web page about its programs and activities which are available to the public. Information is predominantly in English with some content posted in Croatian. Website layout is functional and easy to use.

RIT Croatia also uses brochures, newsletters, high school visits and education fairs to ensure students are aware of the available programs of studies, their benefits and outcomes. RIT Croatia uses multiple media outlets to attract student enrollment and should ensure annually they review the relevance and return given relevance of the outlet.

#### **4.10.3. Recommendations**

- Include course descriptions on the website to create added value for current students as well as those that are considering Erasmus/mobility programs at RIT Croatia.
- Handbooks are listed as PDFs and would be easier to navigate if they were web based and you were able to click on topics of interest. Documents should be uploaded in a different format.
- Create a repository for faculty, staff and senate meeting minutes on RIT Croatia's internal shared drive rather than continue sharing via email.

- The website could use more information to promote student life on campus and activities that go on for students.
- Include students in focus groups or other relevant tools to get first-hand suggestions on how to improve the enrolment process.

#### 4.10.4. 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.

#### 4.11. On-going monitoring and periodic review of programs (ESG 1.9)

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

##### Standard

The institution should monitor and periodically review its programs to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the program. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

##### Guidelines

- Regular monitoring, review and revision of study programs aim to ensure that the provision remains appropriate and to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

They include the evaluation of:

- \* The content of the program in the light of the latest research in the given discipline thus ensuring that the program is up to date;
- \* The changing needs of society;
- \* The students’ workload, progression and completion;
- \* The effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students;
- \* The student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the program;
- \* The learning environment and support services and their fitness for purpose for the program.
- Programs are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders.

The information collected is analyzed and the program is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date. Revised program specifications are published.

#### 4.11.1. Strengths

- In order to maintain continuity of quality and encourage innovation, programs are regularly monitored and, if necessary, revised.
- There is a regular and strong connection with the parent institution in Rochester, where new knowledge and needs for revising existing programs are actively exchanged.
- The revision of existing programs is carried out according to clearly defined steps: determination of market needs, whether the revision or new program meets the defined curriculum changes criteria, consultation with the parent institution in Rochester about the existence of suitable courses or programs that will be offered, new program proposal is sent to RIT Rochester.
- The revisions of existing programs include feedback from all relevant stakeholders, including alumni, advisory boards, and corporate partners to ensure the relevancy of the programs in the market.
- Each member of the Senate can make a proposal to revise an existing degree program.
- During 2020/2021 AY a revision of the curriculum of the Service Management program was carried out.

#### 4.11.2. Situation description

RIT Croatia regularly monitors and revises its programs with the aim of ensuring the achievement of goals and meeting the needs of students. The programs are changed in accordance with the latest scientific research, which contributes to their up-to-dateness, and the changing needs of society. Students also influence program changes, so their suggestions regarding expectations and satisfaction with a specific program are taken into account. All revisions of the existing programs include feedback from alumni, program specific advisory boards, and corporate partners to ensure the relevancy of the programs in the labor market.

#### 4.11.3. Recommendations

- Elements 4 and 11 are interrelated. Review current Internal Periodic Assessment of the QAS Rulebook to potentially merge Elements 4 and 11.

#### 4.11.4. 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.

## 4.12. Cyclical external assurance (ESG 1.10)

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

### Standard

Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

### Guidelines

External quality assurance in its various forms can verify the effectiveness of institutions’ internal quality assurance, act as a catalyst for improvement and offer the institution new perspectives. It will also provide information to assure the institution and the public of the quality of the institution’s activities.

Institutions participate in cyclical external quality assurance that takes account, where relevant, of the requirements of the legislative framework in which they operate. Therefore, depending on the framework, this external quality assurance may take different forms and focus at different organizational levels (such as program, faculty or institution).

Quality assurance is a continuous process that does not end with the external feedback or report or its follow-up process within the institution. Therefore, institutions ensure that the progress made since the last external quality assurance activity is taken into consideration when preparing for the next one.

#### 4.12.1. Strengths

- RIT Croatia underwent an external quality assurance procedure in accordance with ESG in 2019.
- Recommendations for improvement were obtained and the Administrative Council created an Action Plan for a three year period. The purpose of the Action Plan was to implement the recommendations of the Ministry of Education and Science and work on further improvement of work at the institution.
- Although a formal QAS was put in place in 2022, quality assurance is embedded in all teaching, research and professional activities conducted by RIT Croatia, as well as in RIT Croatia’s Strategic Plan – Committed To Greatness (2016–2022).
- 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, Rulebook on Election to Educational Titles and Work of Instructors, and the Strategic Plan.

#### 4.12.2. Situation description

The re-accreditation of higher education institutions is a mandatory procedure of external evaluation of the quality of all higher education institutions that is carried out in five-year cycles. RIT Croatia regularly undergoes the re-accreditation process for all degree programs. The aim of the re-accreditation



procedure is to assess whether the higher education institution meets the minimal requirements (academic threshold) and to evaluate the quality of the higher education institution against defined quality standards, and to recommend further improvements. The last re-accreditation process for RIT Croatia happened in 2019, where all degree programs were assessed. Following the completion of the process, RIT Croatia has created a detailed 3 year action plan based on the recommendations received from the Ministry of Science and Education in the re-accreditation process.

Since then, RIT Croatia has developed a formal Quality Assurance system and will undergo an external quality review (Audit) by the Agency for Science and Higher Education in November 2022.

#### 4.12.3. Recommendations

- Quality Assurance Council continuously assesses quality and suggests improvements where needed regardless of the Internal Audit timeline. This process should be documented and shared with the Internal Audit Committee.

#### 4.12.4. 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.

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

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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 overall Quality Assurance System at RIT Croatia is in a developed phase. Considering the fact that several elements of the assessment were determined to be in the 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:

STANDARD	PHASE
4.1. Mission and goals (MSCHE 1)	Advanced Phase
4.2. Ethics and Integrity (MSCHE 2)	Developed Phase
4.3. Governance, leadership and policy for quality assurance (ESG 1.1, MSCHE 6, MSCHE 7)	Developed Phase
4.4. Design and approval of programs (ESG 1.2)	Developed Phase
4.5. Student-centered learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3, MSCHE 3, MSCHE 5)	Advanced Phase
4.6. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4, MSCHE 4)	Advanced Phase
4.7. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)	Developed Phase
4.8. Planning, learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6, MSCHE 6)	Developed Phase
4.9. Information management (ESG 1.7)	Developed Phase
4.10. Public information (ESG 1.8)	Developed to Advanced Phase
4.11. On-going monitoring and periodic review of programs (ESG 1.9)	Developed Phase
4.12. Cyclical external assurance (ESG 1.10)	Developed Phase