

Comments on the Accreditation Report of ISSBS - BCS and KM study programmes

1 Standard 1: Study programme and programme management

1.1 Conditions and recommendations for BCS and KM study programmes

Condition 1. The BCS and KM study programme have to be re-designed to be in better alignment with the institution's strategy and mission with respect to two aspects, namely internationalisation and social responsibility. This can be achieved for example by incorporating international recognised literature, lectures taught in English, explicit engagement with the issue of social responsibility, etc.

Condition 2. Learning outcomes of BCS and KM programmes must be revised and specified in terms of particular qualifications, skills and competences, which students acquire by the completion of a specific course. Relevant job profiles must be considered. Further information for prospective future students and the job profiles must be added in a clear and specified way.

Condition 3. The title of the KM study programme must be revised in order to be consistent to the described learning outcomes and qualification objectives of the offered programme.

1.2 Opinion of ISSBS on the conditions and recommendations

1.2.1 Comments on Condition 1

Implementation of the KM and BSC study programmes is, from the standpoint of international dimension and social responsibility, for the majority already in sync with the vision and mission statement of ISSBS; objectives and their monitoring are in the medium term (for a period of 5 years), documented in the *ISSBS Medium term Development Strategy*, in the short term (for a period of one year) in the *Annual Plan of Work*.

The highlighted “international dimension” in the mission statement and vision of ISSBS does not mean the overall transition into implementing all current study programmes abroad in a foreign language with exclusively foreign literature and/or only for foreign students etc., but rather establishing certain conditions between national and international orientation. In the *ISSBS Medium term Development Strategy*¹ and *Annual Plan of Work*, the objectives connected with international orientation are outlined. More specifically, it concerns:

- planning several course implementations in a foreign language,
- planning a defined number of implementations of study programmes in a foreign language,
- reaching a certain number of incoming and outgoing students, teachers and staff,
- a certain number of foreign participants and teachers at the international summer school etc.

In the *ISSBS Medium term Development Strategy* and *Annual Plan of Work*, we are also planning to reach objectives connected with social responsibility. In this instance we are planning e.g.:

- inclusion of professionals from the fields of volunteering and social entrepreneurship in the implementation of study programmes,
- number of courses with social responsibility content,
- students included in volunteering activities,
- number of organised events connected with social responsibility,
- implementation of campaigns for society and the environment etc.

¹ The objectives the following areas are outlined therein: educational activities, research, social responsibility, institution operations.

ISSBS is already meeting the majority of the aforementioned objectives. With regards to internationalisation, it is worth highlighting that the amount of internationalisation is largely limited by national legislation, under which the teaching language must be Slovene (see Article 8 of the *Higher Education Act*) in addition to the material and financial capabilities of schools and current local infrastructure. Within the BSC and KM programmes we are already implementing many activities, which are foreseen by the *ISSBS Medium term Development Strategy* and *Annual Plan of Work*, we highlight the following (which are connected to the criteria from Standard 1):

- introduction of foreign literature,
- hosting foreign professors,
- implementing courses in a foreign language (only on the BSC programme),
- implementing the course Social Responsibility and Volunteering (only on the BSC programme),
- including BSC and KM students in volunteering organisations (e.g. Simbioza project - <http://www.simbioza.eu/giba/en/2014/>).
- implementing types of courses with social responsibility content into the KM programme.

Hereinafter, we respond to the specific comments, written by the panel of experts, connected with condition 1 within Standard 1:

In Paragraph 3 of Section 2.1.1, the members of the panel state: “qualification objectives do not contain any international perspective; the literature used for both programmes is not contemporary and only Slovene translation of standard literature is used.”

Compulsory literature in all courses of the BCS and KM programmes is in Slovene, which is in line with the legislation that states the language of teaching must be Slovene. The BCS study programme has some elective courses in English (see paragraph below). In the majority of cases, it is not a translation of foreign literature, but rather original work by Slovene professionals, which in some courses concerns books which were written by authors within the framework of their research work and were issued in the ISSBS Academic Press. The majority of literature is not from the year 2014 or 2013, but still represent the latest books in Slovenia; in addition they contain enough new and, for the discipline, relevant knowledge. In compulsory courses, foreign literature is given as recommended (non-compulsory) literature (e.g. Multimedia and Design in Business (BCS)). The situation is somewhat different in elective courses, which are more specific – compulsory literature is more frequently foreign, in foreign language, and the year of publication is more recent (e.g. Economic Diplomacy (KM)).

In Paragraph 1 of Section 2.1.2., members of the panel state: “However, the expert panel could not identify profound evidence on how the BCS programme contributes to fostering the process of internationalisation within the institution.”

As mentioned, the BCS and KM study programmes contribute to the internationalisation process with the use of foreign literature (see previous point), through hosting foreign professors (see Section 2.2.1 in the *Programme Accreditation Report on ISSBS*) as well as partly (programme BCS) with the implementation of elective courses in English, but only in the cases when there are Erasmus students in the classroom as well (see e.g. Section 1.1.b in *Programme Accreditation Report on ISSBS*). In the case when there are only Slovene students, we are not allowed to deliver the courses in foreign language (see Article 8 of the *Higher Education Act*).

1.2.2 Comments on Condition 2

As we already noted, in Autumn 2014 we set about amending the competences and learning outcomes, we admit there were inadequacies in this field. We planned the following activities:

- make a clearer distinction between the learning outcomes and competences at the programme level,
- upgrade the Tuning specific competences and add the ones specific to ISSBS,
- make adjustments related to the allocation of learning outcomes among general and specific competences,
- more carefully consider the Dublin descriptors and Bloom’s taxonomy,

- make a clearer distinction between the learning outcomes of the first- and second-cycle programmes.

Until now, we have been carrying out research that graded the general competences reached between employed graduates and a student in their final year of the KM study programme in addition to documenting differences between competences reached and those required by job positions. We also carried out an analysis of the current planned learning outcomes of the courses on the BSC and KM programmes. We are also planning until October 2015 to:

- analyse the difference between the competences gained and those demanded by job positions for employed graduates of the BSC programme.
- analyse the expectations of employers with regards to competences, which an ISSBS graduate should have.
- debate the current competences which the BSC and KM study programmes give graduates, in addition to gaps between competences that employers and employed ISSBS graduates expect and those they actually receive during their studies.
- define appropriate competences in addition to level of their achievement (learning outcomes), and their integration into the curricula implementation as well as the entire BSC and KM study programmes.

By July 2015, on the basis of the aforementioned activities, we will have finished a job profile for BSC graduates, which will also be suitably communicated to potential ISSBS students (via the website, brochure, information days etc.). The updated competences and learning outcomes will be written in the curricula by the beginning of the 2015/2016 academic year and only then be confirmed at the meeting of the ISSBS Senate. In the 2015/2016 academic year, we will also monitor this in the regular student satisfaction with courses and workload surveys.

Hereinafter, we respond to the specific comments, written by the panel of experts, connected with Condition 2 within Standard 1:

In Paragraph 3 of Section 2.1.2, the members of the panel state: “A precise description of target group and the job profile is missing [...] Information on employability (in terms of sustainability, positioning, needs of the job market) is missing.”

This content was already stated and explained in the text Key Information on BCS Study programme in Section 1.6 “Occupational profile” of graduates of the BCS programme, and in Section 3.3 of the Audit self-documentation report. We would like to stress out that the “job profile” already exists, but needs to be upgraded especially in the direction of sustainability and job positioning with stronger links with job market needs. The latter will be achieved through the above explained process of refinement of competences and learning outcomes.

1.2.3 Comments on Condition 3

We completely agree that the title of the KM study programme is not in complete accordance with the described learning outcomes and qualification objectives. Changing the programme title is not an option, as it requires a major change to the study programme, which is incredibly demanding and long term, in addition to presenting the danger of losing the public funding of this programme.

ISSBS is prepared to change the KM study programme as suggested in the point 1.3.3.

1.3 Activities of ISSBS to fulfil the conditions for BCS and KM study programmes

By the beginning of the 2015/2016 academic year we intend, in accordance with given conditions of the BSC and KM programmes, to realise the changes which do not require the consent of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (SQAA). In the case that it is required to address SQAA and their consent, we will realise these procedures to the phase of ISSBS Senate consent, by the

end of the 2014/2015 academic year. In 2015/2016, we will send the proposed changes to the SQAA to be addressed. This means that these types of change will be made in the 2016/2017 academic year.

1.3.1 Fulfilment of Condition 1

- 1) Increase the amount of new foreign recommended literature in all course implementations on the BSC and KM programmes.
- 2) We will tender at least three elective courses on the BSC programme in English (for our students and Erasmus students).
- 3) Encourage the participation of our BSC students in the international summer school. In the 2015/2016 academic year, within the summer school, we will implement 2 courses which students from the BSC programme can choose as electives. Courses will be co-implemented by foreign professors.
- 4) We will accredit 3 elective courses in the BSC programme and three elective courses in the KM programme in the field of social responsibility (e.g. sustainable urbanism, environmental protection, green entrepreneurship).
- 5) We will tender themes for diploma theses and master's theses in the field of social responsibility and encourage students to choose them.
- 6) Even more systematically, we will continue with the inclusion of students in campaigns for social and environmental advantage (e.g. Simbioza)
- 7) Continue with the implementation of the course Social Responsibility and Volunteering on the BSC programme and encourage students to participate in it.

1.3.2 Fulfilment of Condition 2

- 1) Surveying graduates and final year students of the BSC programme for analysing competences gained and the gap between gained and required competences.
- 2) Surveying employers and focus groups with the analysis of expectations of employers with regards to competences, which an ISSBS graduate should have in addition to identifying necessary changes to the curricula.
- 3) Define and upgrade competences and their level of achievement (learning outcomes) in workshops with the course implementers at ISSBS.
- 4) Upgrading curricula for course implementation of the BSC and KM study programmes and confirming them at the meeting of the ISSBS Senate.
- 5) Upgrading competences and learning outcomes at the level of the study programme.²
- 6) Finishing job profiles for graduates of BSC and KM (with an international comparison) in addition to updating the message for potential ISSBS students on the ISSBS website, brochure, information days etc.
- 7) Inclusion of competence checking and/or learning outcomes in regular student surveys at ISSBS.

1.3.3 Fulfilment of Condition 3

We cannot accept the re-naming of the KM study programme.

We suggest that the KM study programme has two study directions¹: (i) knowledge-oriented management, (ii) organisational knowledge management. The first represents the current programme, upgraded with some elective courses; the second will be directed to wider content of organisational knowledge management. In both directions, electives would be added, focused on organisational knowledge management, information-communication systems and analysis of semantic and social networks, so achieving learning outcomes and qualification objectives, which would closer connect with the name of the study programme.

² Need for address and consent of SQAA.

2 Standard 2: Staff

2.1 Conditions and recommendations for BCS and KM study programmes

Standard 2 is met without conditions.

Recommendation. *Emphasise the possibilities of teaching staff's mobility in the human resource development measures. A further internationalisation of the current teaching staff will help to improve the study programmes in a more internationally orientated manner.*

2.2 Opinion of ISSBS

We agree with the findings of the panel of experts. We understand the advantages that international mobility gives to ISSBS personnel. Due to this, ISSBS in future years will encourage their mobility within Erasmus mobility, mobility within research-development projects, visiting our own and foreign conferences in addition to hosting lectures. It is predicted that in realising these activities, there will be a connection with the reward system. In reaching these objectives, we will also try to organise additional networking activities (e.g. organisation of summer schools with foreign partners in co-operation with foreign partners of higher education institutions, something which we set about in the 2014/2015 academic year).

3 Standard 3: Quality assurance

3.1 Conditions and recommendations for BCS and KM study programmes

Condition 1. *A concept must be designed where it is shown how the different quality assurance instruments which are in place are connected with each other. The closing of quality loops for the topic “study & teaching” must be documented.*

Condition 2: *A long-term concept for the continuous improvement of the study programme must be designed. The focus should be on how to involve all groups of stakeholder, also alumni, the local businesses and future employees.*

Recommendation. *ISSBS might consider implementing a Programme Advisory Board where all stakeholders have the right to and should express their opinion on this certain study programme and give input for potential improvement measures.*

3.2 Opinion of ISSBS

3.2.1 Comments on condition 1

ISSBS use a number of instruments to assure quality. The instruments and procedures for their use are outlined in the *Rules on quality*, supplemented by other documents with rules and regulations (of student assessment, of graduation etc.) and records of other procedures (see Paragraph 4 and 5 of this chapter). In the quality loop (1-planning – 2-implementation – 3-monitoring – 4-acting), the components of planning, implementing and monitoring are relatively well concluded, in certain instances the measures component is absent and/or this phase is not documented, but is mostly implemented informally.

As was mentioned in the *Audit Self documentation report of ISSBS*, on the basis of the annual *Self-evaluation report*, ISSBS as a rule records measures for improvement of the situation in all fields where negative deviations were identified. In addition to this, after every examination period, with the analysis of statistical data and surveys, monitors the performance of students and graduations, on the basis of the data the Dean’s cabinet decide on potential measures (e.g. discussions with teachers, consultations, additional examination dates).

Hereinafter, we respond to the specific comments, written by the panel of experts, connected with Condition 1 within Standard 3:

In Paragraph 1 of Section 2.3.1, the members of the panel state: “The document “Rules on Quality” describes the internal quality assurance procedures used by the institution. It provides a general overview but is formulated too generic to be used as a manual in daily practice.”

The *Rules on quality* outline the procedures and instruments for operative systems of quality assurance. An appendix of this “handbook” is also the *Plan of Implementation of Quality Assurance Processes*, in which the procedures, more specifically, daily practises, implementation periods and contents are described in more detail. The annual time plan for series of surveys - students, graduates, teachers, staff as well as other stakeholders (e.g. recruiters), focus groups and statistical analysis of students’ performance data are outlined as well. Detailed internal quality assurance procedures are additionally supported by the *Annual Plan of Work*, which is accessible on ISSBS’s webpage (in Slovenian language, [link](#)) and outlines the operational activities of ISSBS. In addition, as explained in the following paragraph, ISSBS has recorded key quality related procedures for how the many sub-processes should be carried out. The “handbooks” for each of the activities (educational, study, research) are developed, used and when needed also upgraded in the ISSBS’s offices. In addition, the *Rules on quality*, *Plan for Implementation of Quality Assurance Processes*, *Annual Plan of Work* and procedures defined, documented and implemented by ISSBS’s offices, other documents with rules and regulations might also play a role in the *Quality handbook*.

In Paragraph 4 of Section 2.3.1, the members of the panel state: "The expert panel is convinced that the existing tools for quality assurance work well and enhance the quality of the study programmes on the programme level even though some of the procedures and good practices are not fully documented."

It may have remained elusive from the members of the panel; however ISSBS has recorded procedures for how the many sub-processes should be carried out. As an example we are attaching the implementation process for the technical suitability check of final work, which is very clear (see Annex 1). In this procedure we state who and when the check of the similarity of final theses is carried out. It is a document which is generated by the Education unit in co-operation with the management of the faculty.

3.2.2 Comments on Condition 2

ISSBS currently implements relatively limited activities in connection with external stakeholders for the purpose of quality assurance. In the *ISSBS Medium term Development Strategy* and short term *ISSBS Annual Plan of Work* also follow the objectives connected with external stakeholders. It is worth to note two objectives: defined number of discussions with key stakeholders (e.g. employers and graduates) in addition to surveying them regularly.

ISSBS currently implements regular surveying of graduates, in which it asks the graduates about satisfaction with studies, supervisors (mentors) of Master's thesis, employability in addition to competences gained. At the beginning of the 2014/2015 academic year, we are also implemented a survey in which we asked graduates about the gap between competences gained during their ISSBS studies and competences demanded of them by their job position and/or employer. Besides this, ISSBS holds a regular gathering with HR departments of companies, in which students carry out their apprenticeship, tries to stay in contact with mentors from professional practice. In the 2014/2015 academic year we intend to connect and improve the aforementioned activities in a comprehensive system with continuous improvement of the study programmes at ISSBS. We will also follow the recommendation on establishing a Programme Advisory Board.

3.3 Activities of ISSBS to fulfil the conditions for BCS and KM study programmes

By the beginning of the 2015/2016 academic year we intend, in accordance with given conditions of the BSC and KM programmes, to realise the changes which do not require the consent of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (SQAA). In the case that it is required to address SQAA and their consent, we will realise these procedures to the phase of ISSBS Senate consent, by the end of the 2014/2015 academic year. In 2015/2016, we will send the proposed changes to the SQAA to be addressed. This means that these types of change will be made in the 2016/2017 academic year.

3.3.1 Condition 1

By the beginning of the 2015/2016 academic year, we intend to have realised the following activities in accordance with Condition 1 of the BSC and KM programmes:

- We will analyse in detail the current use of managerial tools with the purpose of optimisation of tools for monitoring and evaluation of educational activities.
- Define, formalise and establish tools required for measures/acting in fields on which we observed deviations from what was expected or problems.
- Collect all current documents, which outline procedures and processes at ISSBS, and highlight them as in Point 3.2.1 is explained (e.g. Rules on Quality, Plan of Implementation of Quality Assurance Processes, »handbooks« of relevant procedures related to education & teaching), in addition to updates in i.e. *Quality handbook*.

3.3.2 Condition 2

- Define tools and instruments for the inclusion of external stakeholders (alumni, employers) in developing study programmes and assuring their quality.
- Formalise the implementation of analysis of gaps between competences a student can gain at ISSBS and competences which an employer needs. Research and data handling will be carried out once every three academic years. We will also include teachers in the analysis and along with them check the components of the study programme (competences and learning outcomes, learning content, method of teaching, method of student assessment, literature). On the basis of the findings we will plan changes to the study programmes.
- Establish and implement instruments for measuring learning outcomes and/or competences reached by students and/or graduates in addition to inclusion of other external stakeholders in the quality assurance system and development or upgrade of study programme.

3.3.3 Condition 3

- Design the Programme Advisory Board.

4 Standard 4: Funding and infrastructure

4.1 Conditions and recommendations for BCS and KM study programmes

Standard 4 is met without conditions.

Recommendation. *In times of decreasing funding sources from governmental bodies, ISSBS should try to explore opportunities for diversification of its funding, e.g. from business partners, business sponsors, fundraising, additional educational offers (short courses, organisation of more summer schools...). Aspirations and additional money should be invested for the further development of the quality management system.*

4.2 Opinion of ISSBS

We completely agree with the findings of the panel of experts. In previous years, ISSBS has already set about trying to diversify financing by organising seminars; summer schools etc., and understands the meaning of additional financing for assuring their activities and their quality.

This is why in future years ISSBS will even more systematically set about connecting with foreign partners and searching for opportunities in the fields of seminar and conference activities. As already mentioned, we will also set about reaching this objective with additional networking activities (e.g. organisation of summer schools in co-operation with foreign partners of foreign higher education institutions).

5 Standard 5: Research and development

5.1 Conditions and recommendations for BCS and KM study programmes

Standard 5 is met without conditions.

5.2 Opinion of ISSBS

We completely agree with the findings of the panel of experts. ISSBS in future years will continue with research measures in addition to connection with publicity, conference and educational activities.

6 Standard 6: National and international co-operation

6.1 Conditions and recommendations for BCS and KM study programmes

Standard 5 is met without conditions.

Recommendations.

- ISSBS should continue strengthening the connections with the external partners in the region by increasing the number of internships and organising joint summer schools.
- The good practice of inviting guest lectures shall continue.
- For improving its network, ISSBS should try to become member of an international organisation focused on knowledge management and general management (e.g. CEEMAN, EFMD) and attend crucial conferences in this field of science (e.g. EURAM Pan-European conference).
- ISSBS should enhance the recruitment of international students by promoting international summer schools. The first summer school was done in 2010 supported by the EU and the Slovene Ministry of Higher Education. Afterwards, the financial support was reduced and ISSBS had to provide the required funds which caused the reduction of participants and as a consequence thereof, the visibility of this event.

6.2 Opinion of ISSBS

We completely agree with the findings of the panel of experts. ISSBS in future years will continue with the proposed direction of activities.

7 Other remarks by the panel and the opinion of ISSBS

In Paragraph 3 of Section 2.1.2, the members of the panel state: “Strong focus on ethical issues is stated in the specific learning outcomes which is not reflected in the corresponding lectures.”

A short analysis of the courses shows that different ethical issues might be recognised in the courses presented in the table below. The focus on ethical issues are reflected in the learning outcomes of the specific courses and also in the contents of the courses’ syllabuses. Because the ethical content more or less concerns the implicit knowledge that the students learn simultaneously to the explicitly expressed course contents, it can sometimes be difficult to be identified.

Course	Learning outcomes and related topics
Introduction to Business Law	Awareness of ethical and moral aspects when using legal acts
Fundamentals of Management	The awareness of the philosophical and ethical aspects and dimensions of management
Economics	The awareness of the ethical aspects of management
Crisis Management	Respect for ethical principles and the ability to critically evaluate business situations
State Culture	The ability of awareness on the ethical aspects of social development and governance
E-Business	Awareness of the ethical aspects of e-business
Banking and insurance	Awareness of ethical aspects of banking and insurance
Management Accounting	Understanding the role and responsibilities of people producing management accounting reports as a basis for business decision-making
Living in the EU: United in Diversity	Learning about diversity of activities in the EU

In Paragraph 4 of Section 2.1.2, the members of the panel state: “A specific content for solving management problems is missing (e.g. introduction lectures for business administration, basic overview on all functional areas of a company, fundamentals of accounting).”

The course, Fundamentals of Management in the first year of the BCS study programme gives a complete overview of the area of Management and Theory of organisations. It is usually implemented in the first trimester.

In Paragraph 1 of Section 2.1.3, the members of the panel state: “The usage of literature is not transparently documented since the syllabus of the programme does not contain the same literature as used for the e-classroom (Moodle).”

In Moodle, the students can mostly find additional, online accessible literature which is recommended, but it is not compulsory. In the course syllabus this literature is usually not mentioned by the name/title/author but rather more generally, e.g. choice of recent articles from national and international literature (e.g. Crisis Management) and e-material in Moodle (eg. Business Informatics). This kind of literature might be changed each year, but the compulsory literature is more stable. In all the Moodle e-classrooms the students can find course syllabus or/and detailed instructions how to study. These instructions always contain the list of prescribed literature.

In Paragraph 3 of Section 2.4.1, the members of the panel state: “the institution will have to work on better equipment and increase the state-of-the-art literature in the future.”

At this point we want to add that ISSBS has available access to the following electronic databases with distance access: SpringerLink, Emerald and ProQuest.

Other activities to enhance the BCS programme implementation:

- At the workshops with the course implementers, organised for the purpose of finishing competences and learning outcomes, we will especially focus on explicit records of ethical content in the curriculums of individual courses.
- In the period until the 2016/2017 academic year, we will to an extent change the sequence of implementation of certain courses. Courses which give students foundation knowledge of management and business will be put in the first year of the study programme (e.g. course Economy and Accounting). Besides this, in the direction of giving comprehensive knowledge of management and business, additionally improve the course Basics of Management.
- Already in the 2015/2016 academic year, we will continue with the completing the e-classroom (unified appearance, standardised methodology of work in the e-classroom of individual courses, co-ordination with curricula, implementation of checking the similarity of text which students submit to the e-classroom – already implemented).
- By the beginning of the 2016/2017 academic year we will collect current records of all procedures at ISSBS and update regulations connected with the implementation of educational activities.
- We will continue to widen the number of book units in libraries and within our ability widen the number of electronic bases.