

## Comments on the Audit Report of ISSBS

After the review of the AQ Audit Report of ISSBS, we have found that it is possible to detect **deviations in the findings of the panel of experts from the conditions perceived by ISSBS**. The gap between the AQ report and actual situation is especially evident in the areas covered by Standard 1 and partly also Standards 2 and 3.

The reason for such a situation might be due to certain documents or parts of these **documents being overlooked by the panel**, or that certain **documents were not presented to the panel of experts** (i.e. they were mentioned in the self-evaluation reports but were not wholly communicated to the panel as they are written in Slovenian).

When writing the answers we had some **difficulties to differentiate between the conclusions and recommendations in Standards 1, 2 and 3**. Namely, they largely overlap, and it is not very clear what the differences between the concepts used in the Standards are. Besides, we perceive **major contradictions between the conclusions in the Accreditation Report of ISSBS on one side and the Audit Report of ISSBS on the other**. It is not clear why the assessments of the study programmes, their management, their quality assurance, and other programme related support activities are so different from the assessment of the institution.

In the following sections we (i) **shortly present the conclusions and recommendations of the panel** and (ii) **explain our opinion about these findings**. Both our documents (Comments on the Audit Report of ISSBS and Comments on the Accreditation Report of ISSBS) are closely related and they overlap because the conclusions and recommendations written by the panel are all pretty much identical. In the sections in the Comments on the Audit Report of ISSBS we follow the sequence of the standards.

# 1 Standard 1 - comments

*Standard 1. The higher education institution has defined objectives and pursues a strategy which is systematically supported by management tools.*

## 1.1 Conclusions and recommendations of the panel

*Standard 1 is not met.*

*The panel stated the following recommendations:*

- *Revision of the strategy.*
- *Take advantage of the strong connections to regional economy*
- *Opening up new target markets*
- *Strengthening of academic excellence and internationalisation*

## 1.2 Opinion of ISSBS

We believe that **ISSBS strategy is relatively clearly defined and based on a set of objectives** which are logically linked to current circumstances in the environment and to ISSBS's vision and mission statement. We believe that ISSBS has **clearly defined long-term and short-term objectives** stated in both the *ISSBS Medium term development strategy* and *Annual Plan of Work*. They cover all major activity areas of ISSBS – study & learning, research & development, national & international cooperation, staff, and funding & infrastructure. Important parts of the strategic and short-term planning of ISSBS are also the quality of teaching, internationalisation and social responsibility. In our opinion, ISSBS has formed an **appropriate enough set of management tools**, which allow for short term operations and long term development.

We agree with the opinion of the panel of experts that the **mission statement and vision are written using high-sounding words**, however it is worth noting that such statements set borders, inspire and motivate (Eadie, 1995; Greengarten-Jackson et al., 1996), and do not only serve as a description of institution's core operations and their long term plan. At the same time, we believe that the panel of experts understood the phrase “internationally oriented education and research” too literally. **ISSBS remains a regionally integrated higher education institution**, which wants to, within the extent the law provides for and the abilities of domestic students, step by step, **add certain international measures** to its study programmes. Simultaneously, in a longer timeframe, as a relatively small higher education institution, **establish itself in the international environment** – either through the implementation of individual study programmes for foreign markets or the inclusion in international research and development projects in addition to conferences –publicity activities.

The strategy which ISSBS pursues is **supported by a system of management tools** by which ISSBS tries to implement the quality loop (1-planning – 2-implementation – 3-monitoring – 4-acting). We agree with the findings of the panel of experts, that **in certain examples the fourth stage of the loop is missing – components of acting, or the phase is not documented**, which leads to the quality of the loop not being concluded, or the situation arises that, for example different interpretations of the same situations are made by student and school. This is also partly a consequence of being a small institution and the informal relationships which govern it. Due to the conditions in the Accreditation Report of ISSBS, ISSBS will **until the beginning of the 2015/2016 academic year set about optimising the current management tool system and adding tools which will allow the quality loop to be closed.**

A wider outline of the integration strategy, short term planning, short term and long term goals and their realisation are given in Points 1.2.1 in the *Comments to the Accreditation Report*. Additional viewpoints with regards to the systematic use of management tools for realising strategic directions in addition for assuring quality are outlined in Point 3.2.1 in *Comments to the Accreditation Report*.

Due to the realisation of strategic goals, directing towards assuring internationally oriented education and research, written in *ISSBS Medium term Development Strategy*, ISSBS intends to, in the 2014/2015 academic year in addition to 2015/2016, **tender and preferably implement the 1<sup>st</sup> study programme in a foreign language**. In 2013/2014, ISSBS, in co-operation with their Israeli partner, set about promotion, in addition to the registration – enrolment procedure; however the programme in 2014/2015, due to too few candidates was not implemented. In this period, ISSBS has learnt a lot in the area of potential internationalisation of study programmes, and has therefore also changed some procedures and regulations related to education and teaching.

The target market which ISSBS has assessed as perspective is mainly **Africa and the South Balkans**. This is a strategic direction, which is not explicitly documented anywhere; in the last year, it has been expressed and measured through other activities of ISSBS (e.g. conference activities, research-development activities). ISSBS, **within a project** which has been in progress from 2013, implements analysis of new potential markets. Within this project, ISSBS has carried out **wider research, which it uses to check the intentions of individuals to study abroad** (a sample of around 2,000 units from Eastern and Southern Europe, Southeast Asia and Africa). Lessons gained from our research will be used in ISSBS marketing activities.

Below we will give additional clarifications on the actual notes of the panel of experts from the Audit Report of ISSBS, which were possibly from the side of the panel overlooked and which fall into the framework of this Standard. They are collected from different sections of the report, however due to their content, we have addressed them in Standard 1:

a) *In Paragraph 9 of Section 4.1, Paragraph 1 of Section 4.2, Paragraph 2 and 3 in Section 4.4, Paragraph 1 of 4.6 as well as Paragraph 3 of the Quality Assurance sub-section, the members of the panel state that:*

- *“A comprehensive strategy with an implementation plan for internationalisation activities – including student and staff mobility, international research co-operations or setting up international summer schools– is missing.”*
- *“For the three central keywords of the mission and vision “internationalisation”, “international academic excellence” and “social responsibility”, ISSBS has no elaborated plan with short, middle and long term goals and milestones.”*
- *“[...] tools to evaluate the quality within the institution [...] are not incorporated in any continuous system/process and they do not support the strategic goals defined by the institution.”*
- *[...] there are no specific aims, objectives, instruments, resources and actions proving and justifying the institution to perceive itself as international.”*
- *“The institution has not implemented measures to evaluate the key features stated in the mission and the strategy like internationalisation, academic excellence or corporate social responsibility commitment [...]”*
- *“[...] the action plan for concrete measures resulting from evaluations is missing.”*

- “a proper documentation is required for a systematic evaluation and a continuous improvement of the institution and its study programmes.”
- “The tools are not used for matching the quality assurance with the overall institutions’ performance and its general aim expressed in the institutions mission and vision.”

**Key documents**, which govern the aforementioned areas, are the ISSBS Medium-Term Development Strategy as well as the Annual Plan of Work and Annual Report. These documents are based on the Self-Evaluation Reports.

The ISSBS Medium-Term Development Strategy (see Section 1.3.2 of the Audit Self-documentation report) **contains the medium-term objectives, indicators, timeframes and measures for ensuring the objectives are reached** (Annex 2). It is in accordance with the long-term directions outlined in the vision, therefore also contains **objectives connected to social responsibility, quality of education** as well as **internationalisation**.

In accordance with the *ISSBS Medium-Term Development Strategy*, ISSBS prepares other **reports all publicly available** at [ISSBS website](#). ISSBS writes the [Annual Plan of Work](#) (*slov. Letni program dela*) on a yearly basis, with short-term annual objectives, concrete measures, indicators as well as target values outlined in detail. At the end of the year, the [Annual Report](#) (*slov. Letno poročilo*) **monitors the implementation of the Annual Plan of Work** (i.e. operative plan) and simultaneously **the realisation of the ISSBS Medium-Term Development Strategy**. *The Annual Plan of Work* is based on the findings of the [Self-Evaluation Reports](#).

In addition to the **statements of vision, mission and values**, other important **managerial tools** are also the *ISSBS Medium-Term Development Strategy*, *Annual Plan of Work*, *Annual Report* as well as *Self-Evaluation Reports*. These tools, in addition to others, allow for quality assurance, realisation of vision and mission as well as strategic and operational objectives, and through this, also the enhancement of institution’s general performance (in the case when the performance is valued as the achievement of plans and goals).

Besides the managerial tools described in the previous paragraphs, ISSBS uses also other tools such as **individual and group meetings, performance appraisals, focus groups** etc. used for delivery of planning, communication, decision making, implementation, monitoring and acting in the events of deviations from the plan. All the tools have already been described in *Programme Accreditation Report of ISSBS* and *Audit Self-documentation Report ISSBS*.

The *ISSBS Medium-Term Development Strategy* and the *Annual Plan of Work* (as well as through the system of short-term and long-term monitoring and reporting) also contain an element for directing and monitoring **the areas of internationalisation** as well as **academic excellence**. Besides internationalisation and academic excellence issues the objectives, indicators and measures also cover the following areas:

- student mobility,
- teacher mobility,
- hosting foreign professors,
- implementing international development-research projects,
- summer school implementation – from the perspective of students, teachers and a number of their countries.

- b) *In Paragraph 6 of Section 4.3, the members of the panel state that: “[...] ISSBS has to put more emphasis on this topic and define a clear strategy with milestones on how to fulfil it, e.g. by producing more publications in top journal publications (JCR).”*

In key strategic and operational documentation, the aforementioned point a., also states the **objectives, measures, indicators and their current planned value of publication in scientific literature** (scientific papers, scientific monographs, conference papers, publication in top journals (JCR) with impact factors etc.).

- c) *In Paragraph 7 of Section 4.3, the members of the panel state: “In order to see if the intentions of ISSBS with regard to the conference are fulfilled, the quality circle needs to be implemented: what are the goals of this conference, how did the conference work, how was it organised, how did the participants perceive the conference and what does ISSBS conclude for the organisation of the next conference. This questions are asked informally and discussed within the faculty, but a documentation of it and especially what measures have been take in order to enhance the conference is missing.”*

The **conference activities of ISSBS (e.g. MakeLearn) are planned and monitored through strategic and operative documents** (*ISSBS Medium-Term Development Strategy, Annual Plan of Work, Annual Report*). These documents accurately outline the number of participants, articles, participating countries etc. All publications and their quality are documented (peer-review reports), and all the procedures related to the publications and conference are supported by the IT system for the MakeLearn conference. Once the conference is finished, we measure participant satisfaction using another IT tool (<http://mfdps.1ka.si>). The final report on the implementation of the MakeLearn conference can be found in the Annual Report. The MakeLearn conference is planned 3 years in advance. In 2014, it was organised in Portorož, Slovenia, we have already publicly released that in 2015 it will be in Bari, Italy, in 2016 in Timisoara, Romania, for 2017 arrangements were made with the University of Pannonia from Hungary. 2 years in advance, the ISSBS team (conference director, conference chair, programme chair, head of organising board) carefully check locations and available hotels.

- d) *In Paragraph 8 of the Quality Assurance of Learning sub-section in Section 4.3, the members of the panel state: “For the involvement of students in research, objectives (e.g. involvement of students in research projects, organisation of international scientific conferences, and increase of research activities) are clearly formulated. These are, however, not accompanied by key figures or target values (e.g. academic excellence, internationalisation).”*

**Planning and monitoring student inclusion in research is carried out through strategic and operational documentation** (*ISSBS Medium-term Development Strategy, Annual Plan of Work, Annual Report*). In these documents the number of students included in research or conference activities, number of completed papers, which are a part of research projects etc., are accurately outlined.

## 2 Standard 2 - comments

*The quality management system supports the higher education institution in achieving its objectives..*

### 2.1 Conclusions and recommendations

*Standard 2 is not met.*

*The panel stated the following recommendations:*

- *Consolidation of quality management instruments.*
- *Revision of student evaluation*

### 2.2 Opinion of ISSBS

ISSBS has an established quality assurance system in place, which **has certain inadequacies**, but however still **allows for satisfactory quality of operations and implementation of the quality loop**.

As we wrote in Point 1.1.1, in addition to Point 3.2.1 of the *Programme Accreditation Report of ISSBS*, it **occasionally happens that the quality loop is not concluded**. The reason being either **appropriate procedures are not documented**, or for the **absence of appropriate procedures**. As we wrote in Point 3.3.1 in the *Programme Accreditation Report of ISSBS*, in the next six months we are, due to this, going to perform an in-depth analysis of the current managerial tools, intended planning, monitoring, evaluating and measuring in the field of educational activities in addition to approaching **optimisation of these tools** as well as **implementation or documentation of these tools, which are currently absent** (it mainly concerns tools, intended for **acting in the fields in which changes need to be implemented in the educational and/or quality assurance processes**).

In the next six months we plan to **finish the system of learning outcomes and/or competences** so that we would be able to meet our strategic goals connected with quality of education, in which we will take into account **feedback from the labour market** (through employers and ISSBS graduates - alumni). As we wrote in Point 1.2.2 of the *Programme Accreditation Report of ISSBS*, we have already set about this task. In Point 3.3.2 of the *Programme Accreditation Report of ISSBS*, we also stated that we will, until the beginning of the 2015/2016 academic year, **design instruments for measuring learning outcomes and/or competences reached** by students. Measuring will also be **included in regular student surveys** (subject satisfaction surveys in addition to study workload).

Below we will give additional clarifications on the actual notes of the panel of experts from the *ISSBS Audit Self-documentation Report*, which were possibly from the side of the panel overlooked and which fall into the framework of this standard. They are collected from different sections of the report, however due to their content addressed them in Standard 2:

- a) *In Paragraph 2 of Section 4.2, as well as in the reports in Sections 4.4 and 4.6, the members of the panel state that:*
- *“ISSBS’ “handbook for quality” summarises the existing quality measures but it is too generic to be used as a guideline in daily practise. Besides, a proper documentation on the actions (phase 4 of the quality management cycle – “Act”) is missing which underlines the observation that the quality loops are not closed.”*

- “Besides, a quality handbook shall be generated which includes clear performance indicators, timelines and responsibilities, etc.”
- “For a professional quality management system there should be a documentation (usually a quality management handbook), where measurable quality targets are documented as well as the management, teaching, research, human resource, support and external communication processes.”

At ISSBS exists a kind of a **basic handbook for quality - Rules on Quality, attached to these rules is also the Plan of implementation of Quality Assurance Processes** (see Point 3 of the *Rules on Quality*). Documents define areas and procedures as well as monitoring terms for assessing and assuring quality in addition to levels of responsibility (internal and external stakeholders) for ensuring quality.

*Rules on Quality* and the *Plan of implementation of Quality Assurance Processes* are managed and updated on an annual basis by the Committee for Quality and Evaluation, and confirmed by the ISSBS Senate. The Committee also manages the implementation of the aforementioned Plan as well as any findings and potential problems which arise from the implementation activities of the plan in addition to measures. These measures are forwarded to the ISSBS Senate by the Committee and are included in the *Annual Plan of Work* for the following academic year.

At ISSBS, the **sub-processes used for different day-to-day procedures are already defined and in most cases also appropriately documented** (see also *Comments of Accreditation Report of ISSBS*, Section 3.2.1). These documents, together with the *Rules on Quality* and *Plan of implementation of Quality Assurance Processes*, should be considered as a part of the *Quality handbook*. Other ISSBS’s rules and regulations, which are extensively explained in previous AQ reports, should be added to the handbook as well. In accordance with the panel’s recommendations in section 3.1 and our opinion in section 3.2 we **plan to collect all the aforementioned documents and publish the ISSBS’s Quality handbook**.

### 3 Standard 3 - comments

*The quality management system uses evaluation procedures, monitoring and information systems as integral components.*

#### 3.1 Conclusions and recommendations

*Standard 3 is partially met.*

*The panel stated the following recommendations:*

- *Revision and documentation of (sub-) processes.*
- *Generation of a Quality handbook for daily use.*
- *Rules on the role of a mentor in terms of Master thesis completion.*
- *Recognition of academic achievements and degrees.*
- *Complaints procedure.*
- *Plagiarism assessment and rules on representation*

#### 3.2 Opinion of ISSBS

In its Acts, ISSBS has a relatively **detailed outline of the evaluation procedures, monitoring and support**, which is enabled by different **IT systems** used by ISSBS (Novis, Data Warehouse, Ika, Detector of similar text etc.) in addition to different **departmental procedures and those between Offices**. The components, i.e. procedures and IT systems, are logically connected, but they are still being updated and improved. Inadequacies are highlighted due to procedures which are **not always documented in their entirety**, in addition to **disconnection of individual components** which are managed **mostly by hand (absence of automation)**.

The panel of experts in the *Programme Accreditation Report of ISSBS* in Paragraph 4 of Section 2.3.1, find that despite the fact that the current tools for quality assurance operate well, some processes and practices are not documented in their entirety. As we already answered in the *Comments on the Accreditation Report of ISSBS*, section 3.2.1, **ISSBS has recorded quite a lot of procedures for how the many sub-processes should be carried out**, which remained elusive from the panel of experts. As an example we mentioned the implementation process for the technical suitability check of master theses. It is a document which is generated by the Student Office in co-operation with the management of the faculty. As we already stated in Point 2.2 we will, **by the end of the 2014/2015, finish the ISSBS Quality Handbook and in it include all the sub-processes of ISSBS.**

**The role of the supervisor (mentor) is outlined in accordance with general practice in Slovenia and legislation. The Regulations of Graduating from the First Cycle (Article 15) and/or Second Cycle (Article 12), outline the role of the supervisor, that they lead and guide students and are responsible for retaining, and as required, filing documentation on the supervising (mentoring) procedure (communication and numbering the draft of thesis – thesis proposal).** In the regulations, the expectations with regards to the content and structure of a Master's thesis or diploma thesis, in addition to defence and evaluation thereof, are described accurately. Contact hours for producing a Master's thesis and/or diploma thesis is not foreseen in Slovene legislation. Nevertheless, we are going to check the master thesis and diploma thesis procedures, analyse contact hours and their allocation among the courses, and make revision of the programme and master/diploma thesis procedures if possible. **The subject of**

**mentorship and good practice within the field, procedures etc., are regularly addressed at academic meetings and other gatherings of teachers.**

**Recognition of academic achievements and degrees** are outlined in detail in: (i) **Regulations of Procedures and Criteria for Recognition of Knowledge and Skills** in addition to (ii) **Regulations of Acknowledging Foreign Education**. Both were passed by the ISSBS Senate at their meeting in 2012. The ISSBS Statute also defines the committee who addresses these issues: (i) **Committee of Recognition of Knowledge and Skills (CRKS)** in addition to (ii) **Committee for Recognition and Evaluation of Qualification (CREQ)**.

The tasks and responsibilities of the Committee of Recognition of Knowledge and Skills are mainly:

- handling student forms and propose decisions on acknowledgement of knowledge and abilities, reached before enrolment (formal and informal forms of education) and proposes an individual curriculum for completing the study programme to the Dean for decision,
- handling questions related to enrolment at ISSBS under the Criteria for transferring between study programmes and defines a bridging programme in the case of enrolment in another field of study in addition to defining timeframes for completing studies for students enrolled under the Criteria for transferring between study programmes,
- handles the student form for continuing study for more than two years,
- handling student forms and propose decisions on Recognition of Knowledge and Skills, gained during studies, to the Dean for decision.

The tasks and responsibilities of the Committee for Recognition and Evaluation of Qualification are mainly:

- handling forms and propose decisions on education acknowledgement for the purpose of furthering education in accordance with the Recognition and Evaluation of Education Act (REEA) and with the ISSBS Regulations of Acknowledging Foreign Education,
- handles requests and submits a proposal for an opinion on the equivalent professional and scientific title to the Dean in accordance with the Recognition and Evaluation of Education Act (REEA) and with the ISSBS Regulations of Acknowledging Foreign Education.

**The complaint management system at ISSBS is formalised in detail.** Student complaints are permitted and regulated for all procedures, outlined in existing rules & regulations (e.g. graduating, evaluating, mobility, disciplinary responsibility, recognition of knowledge and skills, lifelong learning etc.). Potential reasons for complaint and the complaint procedures are outlined in detail for all possible procedures. For example, in the case of recognition of knowledge and skills, a student can file a complaint against the decision of the relevant committee (first stage) to the Senate of the ISSBS (second stage) which is defined in the ISSBS Statute. In the **first stage the students' complaints should usually be filed to relevant committee or the Dean**, but **in the second stage they should be filed to the ISSBS Senate**.

**Checking for similar text and plagiarism is outlined in Article 14 of the *Regulations of Graduating Second-Cycle Study Programmes*** (as well as the first and third cycles). Under this article, the similarity of text and any potential violations of authorship at the submission of Master's thesis are checked. Internal instructions for the check of technical suitability (see Article 15 of the Regulations), stipulate that these checks are carried out by the Student Office, and in the case that 30% or more of the text is found to be copied, notify the supervisor (mentor) (Annex 1). Further procedures are managed by the

supervisor (mentor) and are carried out in accordance with Article 13 of the *Regulations of Disciplinary Responsibility*. We have a plan to lower the limit of 30% in the future.

**All supervisors (mentors) have access to the software** which checks for similarity of text at any time and can therefore perform checks at any point during mentorship. ISSBS teachers are regularly notified about information on this subject (via email every 2 to 3 weeks). At the beginning of the academic year 2014/2015 we introduced **plagiarism checking also in the Moodle e-classrooms** (all the papers and essays submitted by the students in the e-classroom are automatically checked for similarity and plagiarism).

Students would be harshly **disciplined in the case of plagiarism in final work** (master theses, diploma theses) **and papers in individual courses**, in accordance with Article 7 of the *Regulations of Disciplinary Responsibility*. Article 9 and 10 of these Regulations provide for suspension or exclusion. **A written request to begin disciplinary proceedings can be given by a teacher or other employee at the school** (e.g., Student Office). The entire process and potential complaints of the student are outlined in the *Regulations of Disciplinary Responsibility of a Student* (Articles 14 to 18).

## 4 Standard 4

*The quality management system is based on the quality approach of the higher education institution and provides for the systematic involvement of various interest groups.*

### 4.1 Conclusions and recommendations

*Standard 4 is partially met.*

*The panel stated the following recommendations:*

- *Involvement of all stakeholders.*
- *Involvement of business and stakeholders in quality assurance.*
- *Increase of networking events.*

### 4.2 Opinion of ISSBS

In Standard 4 of the *Programme Accreditation Report of ISSBS* the panel of experts recommended some activities that might be implemented at ISSBS in the future. **We fully agree with the recommendations and we are going to put additional effort into realising them.**

Some of the recommendations are already being implemented. For example, in the current academic year 2014/2015 we are going to organise a **joint summer school with EMUNI University and Marie Curie Skłodowska University from Lublin**. The co-operation relates to provision of infrastructure (accommodation, lecture rooms, equipment, etc.), provision of students and teachers. The summer school will be organised in Portorož, at the Adriatic coast in June 2015.

External stakeholders (employers, alumni) will be included by ISSBS in the quality assurance processes with the implementation of an **annual survey of satisfaction with studies and mentor, employment in addition to competence gaps** – in the competences gained at ISSBS, in addition to competences which their employer and/or job position expects from them. We will continue to hold our annual **gathering with employers and/or company human resource departments**, whose purpose is to consolidate connections between ISSBS and the local business environment. To close the quality loop, we are planning to carry out **research amongst employers** every 3<sup>rd</sup> academic year, **whose aim will be to check the relevance of competences and learning outcomes of all study programmes**.

In 2015, we are also planning to **establish Corporate Advisory Board**. It will contain 6 representatives of key economic and non-economic entities in the region – 2 representatives of large companies, 2 representatives from small to medium companies in addition to 2 from the public sector.

Below we will give additional clarifications on the actual notes of the panel of experts from the ISSBS Audit Report, which were possibly from the side of the panel overlooked and which fall into the framework of this standard. They are collected from different sections of the report, however due to their content addressed them in Standard 4

- a) *In Paragraph 1 of the Corporate and Local Economy Engagement sub-section in Section 4.3, the members of the panel state: “The Institution has a long tradition of interacting with the local business community. Nevertheless, these relationships are neither documented nor continuously*

*underlined nor promoted in the form of educational programmes, internship schemes, short workshops, seminars or advisory boards.”*

In the *Audit Self-documentation report* (section 6.1.2, Part A) it is written that only in 2012/2013 did ISSBS gain an additional 19 new agreements of co-operation and contracts of co-operation with companies and other organisations for professional internships. These allow for co-operation in different areas:

- Professional internships (*Audit Self-documentation report*, section 6.1.2, Part A).
- Registration and implementation of research-development projects (*Audit Self-documentation report*, section 5.1, Part A).
- Implementation and organisation of seminars and workshops etc. (*Audit Self-documentation report*, section 6.3, Part A).

Since its establishment, ISSBS has been included in several projects and events, within this type of arrangement (e.g. seminars, short workshops, hosting organisations at ISSBS due to internal training and council etc.). All of these events have been documented: e.g. in the reports for the Administrative Board, Annual Report, in the ISSBS website archive.

In 2013/2014 academic year, ISSBS had 37 contracts signed for the implementation of professional internships.

ISSBS also plans these kinds of events (goals, measures, indicators, target numbers) which are recorded in the *ISSBS Medium-Term Development Strategy* and the *Annual Plan of Work*.

## 5 Other remarks

Below we will give additional clarifications on the actual notes of the panel of experts from the ISSBS Audit Report, which were possibly from the side of the panel overlooked and which fall into the framework of these standards. They are collected from different sections of the report, however due to their content we could not address them in any of the standards:

- a) *In Paragraph 6 of the Quality Assurance of Learning sub-section in Section 4.3, the members of the panel state: “The library is an exception: the size and the content do not reflect the state-of-the-art literature used in comparable, internationally recognised institutions. ISSBS stated the co-operation with the local library – the expert panel could not judge the quality of the literature offered there.”*

As is already written in the Feedback on Report Accreditation, the ISSBS library, in addition to books, allows for distance access to electronic databases, thus a large amount of books and articles. This allows for access to ProQuest, Emerald as well as SpringerLink.

As was already mentioned, Celje Library (<http://www.ce.sik.si/en/>), with whom ISSBS has a signed contract of support, allows access to literature and additional electronic databases (e.g. EBSCO)

- b) *In Paragraph 6 of the Staff/Faculty Management sub-section in Section 4.3., the members of the panel state: “Research activities are not supported by an incentive system and are mainly oriented on money/projects acquisition, not on creating scientific output. Such an approach is not bad per se, but the institution presents itself differently as it states “academic excellence” in its mission.”*

In Section 8.3 of the *ISSBS Audit Self-documentation report*, the teacher and/or researcher reward system is clarified in detail. The *Regulations of Working Hours* provides the foundations of the rewarding system, among which there is also research performance. Research performance is not evaluated by the number of projects received or their monetary value, but by the number and quality of publications. ISSBS personnel, can use up to 500 hours of their annual working obligations (ca. 1,800 hours) to carry out publication of scientific articles, contributions at scientific conferences, scientific monograph or contributions to scientific monographs etc. Publication in journals, which are ranked in JCR, can accumulate up to 300 hours, publication in other journals/monographs, up to 200 hours. The scoring, which serves as the calculation of working hours, is based on the methodology of the National Research Agency and the SICRIS system.