



Agentur für
Qualitätssicherung
und Akkreditierung
Austria

Report Accreditation International School for Social and Business Studies (ISSBS)

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1 General Information

The International School for Business and Social Studies (ISSBS) has mandated AQ Austria with the accreditation of the bachelor programme "Business in Contemporary Society" (BCS) and the master programme "Knowledge Management" (KM).

Both study programmes are assessed in one report, but include different statements and assessments for each study program.

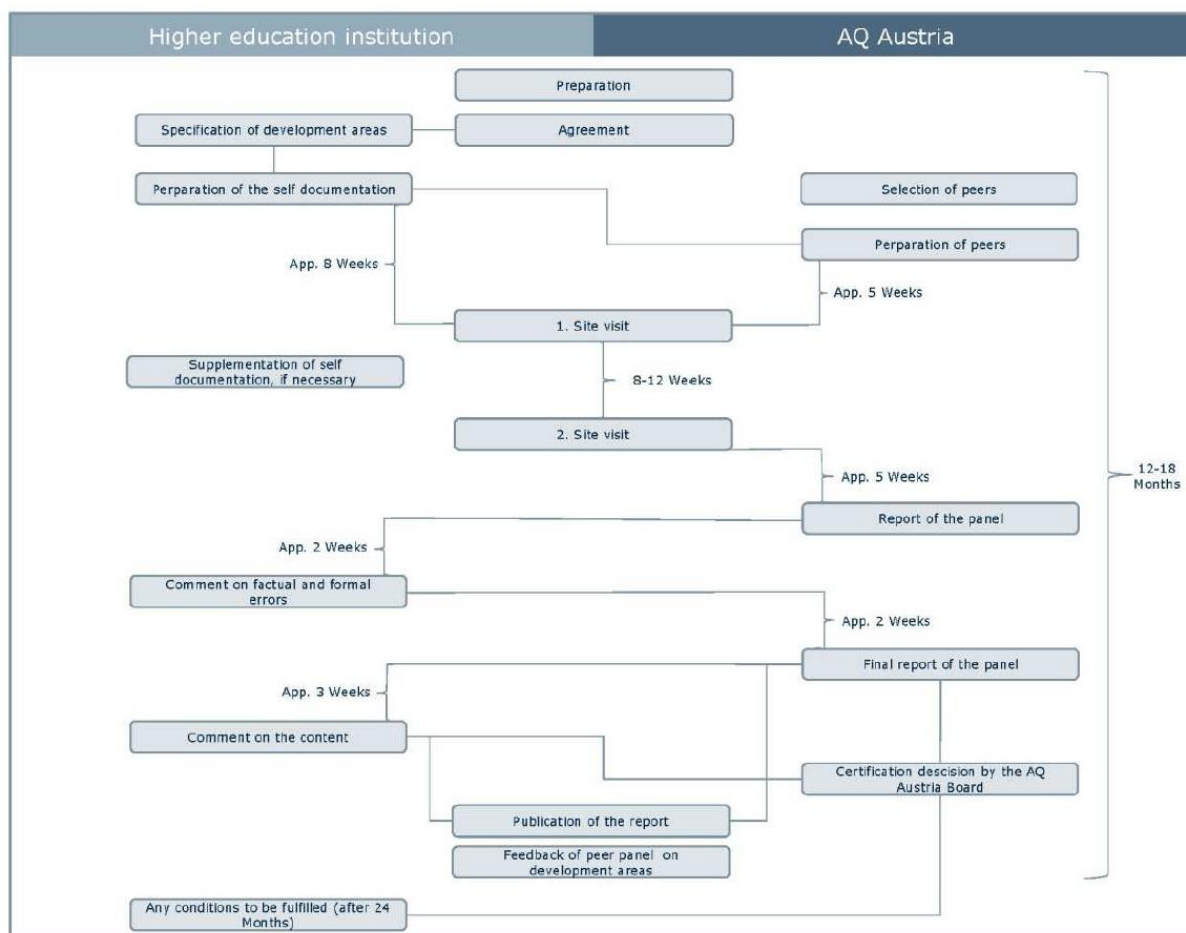
1.1 Basic principles of the procedure

AQ Austria is the Austrian agency for quality assurance and accreditation in higher education. The agency is operating in Austria and other countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It is committed to serving the common good and is based on the values of the European Higher Education Area, in particular the autonomy and diversity of higher education institutions and independent quality assurance.

By granting international accreditation to a study programme, AQ Austria confirms compliance of the study programme with European quality standards. These standards are derived from the principles laid down in the Bologna Process and the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG).

| | |
|------------|---|
| Standard 1 | Study programme and programme management |
| Standard 2 | Staff |
| Standard 3 | Quality assurance |
| Standard 4 | Funding and infrastructure |
| Standard 5 | Research and development and appreciation of the arts |
| Standard 6 | National and international co-operations |

The accreditation pursues the principles of peer review and follows the procedural steps:



The report of the expert panel and the higher education institution's statement constitute the basis for the accreditation decision, which is taken by the 14-members-board of AQ Austria. There are three options for the decision:

Accreditation without conditions

The quality requirements are met. Any recommendations given on the basis of expert's opinion are supposed to help the higher education institution to continuously develop the study programme. The agency grants the accreditation for a period of six years.

Accreditation with conditions

Deficiencies have been detected which are likely to be corrected within nine months. The higher education institution proves that the conditions have been met, and this will be verified by AQ Austria.

Denial of accreditation

Serious deficiencies have been detected which are not likely to be corrected within nine months.



If the accreditation decision is positive, AQ Austria will issue a certificate to the higher education institution.

1.2 Profile and concept of the study programmes and brief description of the International School for Social and Business Studies

The International School for Social and Business Studies (ISSBS) was founded in 2006. It has been established in Celje as an independent, private higher education institution. It develops and implements curricula in the fields of economics, business and administrative sciences at all three levels of studies (bachelor, masters and doctoral studies). All six study programmes were developed in accordance with the Bologna guidelines and accredited in Slovenia by the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

The professionally oriented study programme 'Business in Contemporary Society' (BCS) gives students the ability to cope with modern and global challenges. Graduates of the programme are qualified for demanding jobs which require economic as well as business knowledge and other skills important for understanding business environment and the management of business processes. Graduates are trained primarily to identify, define and analytically solve business problems and challenges. The study programme consists of 180 ECTS and belongs to ISCED: 34 - business and administration. It finishes with the title Diplomirani ekonomist (VS), equivalent to a bachelor degree.

The study programme "Knowledge Management" (KM) integrates theory and practice of knowledge creation, knowledge management and knowledge application. It places knowledge in its social, economic, technological and research-developmental environment. It deals with the role, factors, technologies, creation, management and application of knowledge as an important performance factor of people, companies and other organisations. It consists of 120 ECTS and finishes with the title Magister managementa, equivalent to a master degree.

ISSBS mandated AQ Austria with the accreditation of the programmes mentioned above in January 2014.

The timeline of the procedure was the following:

| Procedural step | Date |
|--|--|
| Preparatory workshop at ISSBS (presentation of the standards and procedural guidelines, specification of the timeline) | 26 February 2014 |
| Delivery of self-evaluation reports by ISSBS | 04 August 2014 Revised documents: 29 August 2014 |
| Decision on panel members by the Board of AQ Austria | 28 January 2014 |
| Preparatory skype meeting of the expert panel | 02 June 2014 |
| Site visit to ISSBS (Accreditation) | 16 – 17 October 2014 |
| Draft report of the expert panel | 05 December 2014 |
| Formal statement by ISSBS | 15 December 2014 |



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|---|------------------|
| Final report of the expert panel | 22 December 2014 |
| Statement on the final report by ISSBS | 13 January 2015 |
| Accreditation decision by the Board of AQ Austria | 03 February 2015 |

Members of the Panel

| Name | Institution | Role |
|--|---|--|
| Prof. Dr. habil. Elisabeth Fröhlich | Cologne Business School, Germany | Peer from academia |
| Prof. Grzegorz Mazurek, Ph.D | Kozminski University, Poland | Peer from academia, head of the expert panel |
| Mag. Petra Wimmer, MAS | Danube University Krems, Austria | Peer from academia |
| Liliya Ivanova | University of National and World Economy, Bulgaria | Student expert panel member |

AQ Austria Co-ordinators

Dr. Elisabeth Froschauer-Neuhauser & Dr. Annina Müller Strassnig

2 Assessment results

The International School for Social and Business Studies (ISSBS) provided a comprehensive self-report of both study programmes and study management. Additional documents were supplied in due time during the preparatory phase of the evaluation process.

AQ Austria was assigned with an audit procedure besides the accreditation procedure described here. The first site visit solely focussed on the audit, whereas the second site visit was dedicated to the accreditation procedure. During the site visits the expert panel had the opportunity to get answers in open-minded, face-to-face discussions with university managers, academic and administrative staff members, students, alumni and representatives from local businesses. Well-organised and effective meetings contributed significantly to the work of the expert panel.

ISSBS offers six study programmes at all three Bologna cycles where the two study programmes under review here are the most prominent ones at the institution. In 2013/14, 582 students were enrolled at ISSBS, 246 of them in the bachelor programme "Business in Contemporary Society" and 205 students in the master programme "Knowledge Management". The study programmes were reaccredited in 2013 by the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (SQAA); BCS with decision no. 6033-29/2014/2 and KM with decision no. 6033-460/2013/4.

2.1 Standard 1: Study programme and programme management

- *The study programme is aligned with the objectives of the institution and is logically connected with its strategies and goals.*
- *The qualification objectives of the study programme (learning outcomes of the study programme) have been clearly defined and meet the technical, scientific and professional requirements and are in accordance with the respective levels of the qualification framework of the European Higher Education Area.*
- *The contents, structure and scope of and teaching methods applied to the curriculum and the modules meet the technical, scientific and professional requirements and are suited to achieve the intended learning outcomes.*
- *The application of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is appropriate and plausible. It meets the recommendations of the European Commission*
- *The study programme is structured consistently with regard to formulated qualification objectives.*
- *The students' workload required for the study programme is devised in a way so as to allow them to reach the aspired qualification objectives in the study period specified.*
- *The examination methods are suitable to assess whether the defined learning outcomes have been achieved.*
- *Issuance of a diploma supplement is guaranteed.*
- *Admission requirements for the study programme are clearly defined, meet the statutory requirements and contribute to achieving the educational goals of the study programme. Recognition rules for external achievements pursuant to the Lisbon*

Recognition Convention and achievements outside of higher education institutions have been defined.

- *If e-learning, blended learning and distance learning are part of the programme, suitable didactic, technical, organisational and financial preconditions have been created to ensure the achievement of the study programme's qualification objectives.*
- *Placements form an educationally relevant part of the curriculum. The job profile, the selection, support and assessment of placements contribute to achieving the study programme's qualification objectives.*

2.1.1 General statements

According to its vision, ISSBS aims to be "internationally recognised for its academic excellence and social responsibility". Following this vision, ISSBS developed several strategic goals which were adopted by the Senate of ISSBS in April 2014 as a part of the ISSBS Development Strategy 2014-2018. These goals are **education excellence, research excellence, social responsibility, operational excellence**.

According to ISSBS, **education excellence** is related to the development and implementation of high-quality and internationally oriented study programmes in order to increase the employability of graduates.

From the current perspective, both programmes are only partly in line with the objectives, strategies and goals of ISSBS, when it comes to academic excellence and improvement of the employability of the students **through excellent internationally oriented education**. The 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. This was explained by the missing ambition of students to read English literature. With regard to ISSBS endeavour to be "international", this argument is rather weak.

The teaching staff shows high commitment and expertise which was reflected in the interviews and also the teachers' CVs. It is fully devoted to ISSBS' activities, loyal and works with the strive for further development. The staff is also very much "student - centred" – the student is in the focus which was also clearly recognisable during the talks with the students. They appreciate the open and inclusive environment that their teachers create during classes. Besides the orientation on students, the faculty tries also to develop their scientific profile.

General learning outcomes have been defined by ISSBS in the process of the initial accreditation by the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, referring to the recommendations of the national legislative framework.

Learning outcomes at the individual course levels are defined and checked each academic year by the course coordinator and other teachers involved in its delivery. Learning outcomes and the corresponding competencies at the course level are included in the corresponding teaching plans. All course-related changes are discussed and approved by the Senate of ISSBS at the beginning of each academic year, while any changes on the programme level must be approved by the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

For both programmes, the learning outcomes are defined in a general way, focusing on the broad fields of management, international business and economics. There is no systematic analysis of the needs of the occupational field carried out or at least it is not documented.

The European Credit Transfer System was fully implemented and meets the recommendations of the European Commission.

Still, the expert panel questions the plausibility of mainly using 9 ECTS blocks for single courses. As an example: the course "Fundamentals of Marketing" in the first study year is worth 9 ECTS, meaning 80 contact hours (30 hours teaching and 50 hours exercises) and 145 hours of individual work. The course contains only very basic marketing topics and it is questionable how 50 hours of exercises can be filled with the proposed content. By reducing the number of ECTS points aligned to the different courses, ISSBS would gain more flexibility and additional lectures could be introduced (see chapter 2.1.2).

The examination methods are suitable to assess whether the defined learning outcomes have been achieved. The issuance of a diploma supplement is guaranteed. The admission requirements to both programmes are clearly defined, meet the statutory requirements and contribute to achieving the educational goals of both study programmes. A very detailed and transparent admission process is documented and supported by the Slovenian legislation.

ISSBS strives to reach **research excellence** by encouragement of research and its international dimension.

As far as the **operational excellence** is concerned, it aligns with the objectives of the institution. It is connected with its strategies and goals of ISSBS and offers a supportive infrastructure to ensure adequate learning conditions for its students.

2.1.2 Statements about the BCS programme

Both, alumni and employers met during the site visits were convinced of the added value which the study programme "Business in Contemporary Society" (BCS) provides to graduates in terms of competitive advantages on the local job market. However, the expert panel could not identify profound evidence on how the BCS programme contributes to fostering the processes of internationalisation within the institution. The focus of the study programme is locally embedded and tries to provide a rather practical education that aims to respond to the needs of the local job market. As a consequence thereof, ISSBS attracts rather students from the region than international ones.

During the BCS study programme, students' involvement in research activities is limited since the programme is more practically oriented. Some students are involved in small scale applied research projects which are carried out in co-operations with local companies. The team considers the overall level and scope of research activities to be adequate for a bachelor level study programme.

The learning outcomes stated in the accreditation report and the syllabi are described very broadly. They do not focus on a specific profile the students should achieve during their studies. A precise description of the target group and the job profile is missing. It has to be clear for what kind of position graduates are qualified – top/middle management, type of industry, etc. Information on employability (in terms of sustainability, positioning, needs of the job market) is missing. This is an important point since employability is a major target of a bachelor programme. A strong focus on ethical issues is stated in the specific learning outcomes which is not reflected in the corresponding lectures.

The given curriculum does not support the achievement of the stated learning outcome to a full extent. 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). ISSBS should rethink the strong focus on economics, which does not necessarily need to be part of a business related bachelor programme.

Blended learning is used only to a minor percentage in the BCS study programme. A very detailed survival package is offered for students and teachers to avoid any kind of technical problems when using e-learning tools.

Internships are an educationally relevant part of the curriculum. Based on prior feedback from partner companies and students, the time for internships was increased to 12 weeks (6 weeks mandatory, 6 weeks elective).

ISSBS also organises a gathering of recruiters and internship mentors from companies in the Savinja region once a year to get their feedback.

Based on the received report, the panel considers that the foreseen workload is adequate in terms of reaching the aspired qualification objectives. This impression was also confirmed during the meetings with student, staff and university management.

Apart from introducing some elective courses (e.g. Living in the EU: United in Diversity; Social Responsibility and Volunteering), the expert panel could not identify sufficient evidence for ISSBS' efforts towards fostering the **social responsibility** and community learning in the scope of the BCS study programme. Furthermore, reviewers think that ISSBS should establish and foster the current connections with the local businesses in this field more actively.

2.1.3 Statements about the KM programme

As stated before, the master programme in Knowledge Management (KM) is only partly in line with the objectives, strategies and goals of ISSBS, when it comes to academic excellence and improvement of the employability of the students through excellent internationally oriented education. The standard literature for Knowledge Management is missing, the literature used is mostly not up to date and there are only two internationally well-known and established authors cited in the core field of Knowledge Management (Ikujiro Nonaka and Jay Liebowitz). 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).

ISSBS stated that the goals of the KM programme are consistent with the requirements of the occupational fields and organisations for which the programme educates (R&D departments of businesses and consultancies, national and international NGOs, advisory services, government agencies and offices, education institutions). This cannot be confirmed since the learning outcomes are formulated in a general way, focusing on the broad fields of management, international business, economics, law and education – even without mentioning the field of knowledge management (p 8, Report on ISSBS Study Programmes, Appendix 8). Besides, no systematic analysis of the needs of the occupational field has been carried out or documented (surveys, round tables and discussions with local employers are planned).

As stated above, the qualification objectives of the KM master programme are formulated in an unspecific way and only partially cover the “classical” tasks of knowledge management like strategic knowledge management, knowledge controlling, knowledge identification, knowledge acquisition, knowledge development, knowledge transfer, knowledge sharing, knowledge storage and knowledge use. The term “knowledge organisation” is prominently used by ISSBS without being defined in more detail.

The content of the KM master programme covers a broad field of management, international business, economics, law and education topics. There is only one compulsory course dealing with the core contents of knowledge management (“Knowledge Management Systems”), accompanied with a series of electives in the field of organisational learning and education. Teaching staff and students stated that the perspective of knowledge management is applied within every single course but this is not reflected in the corresponding syllabi (neither in the description of the course and the learning outcomes nor in the used literature).

Taking these observations together, the question arises if “Knowledge Management” is the correct title for this master programme because it does not reflect the actual content of the course. Changing the title to e.g. “Knowledge-oriented management” would stress the overall management focus which is enriched by a knowledge management perspective.

The workload of the KM program is appropriate for a master programme. Again, most of the lectures have 9 ECTS with a high amount of self-study time included.

With regard to the teaching methods, it is recommended to establish a systematic e-learning strategy for the KM master programme. Currently, teaching staff can decide individually if and to which extent e-learning is used in the lecture or tutorial. A common strategy on e-learning would standardise the workload in the classroom and at home for different courses and as a consequence thereof, increases transparency.

The expert panel is aware of the fact that many of the KM students work besides their studies. Thus, the recommendation of the incorporation of an internship on this level is not practicable. Still, the increase and strengthening of the collaboration with local business practitioners, e.g. by guest lectures and company visits, followed by business projects to solve during classes is strongly recommended by the expert panel.

The expert panel could identify some evidence for ISSBS’ efforts for social responsibility and community learning in the scope of the KM study programme, for example in the second-year elective courses “Global Education and Sustainable Development”, “Quality Aging in Knowledge Society” and “Identity between Nationality and Multiculturalism”. But since social responsibility is an element of the vision of ISSBS the expert panel recommends introducing further study courses in this field.

2.1.4 Assessment of the BCS programme

Standard 1 is **partially met** connected with the following conditions:

Condition 1: The BCS study programme has 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 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.

2.1.5 Assessments of the KM programme

Standard 1 is **partially met** connected with the following conditions:

Condition 1: The KM study programme has 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 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 future students and the job profiles must be added in a clear and specified way.

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

2.2 Standard 2: Staff

- *A sufficient number of scientific or artistic teaching and research staff is available for the study programme, which are scientifically qualified, have adequate vocational experience and are qualified in terms of their teaching methods.*
- *The composition of the faculty meets the requirements of a profound scientific and artistic education and ensures adequate student support.*
- *Teaching and research staff have access to human resource development and further education measures.*

2.2.1 General statements

A sufficient number of teaching and research staff is available. The teaching staff at ISSBS consist only of habilitated academics with a track record of research activities and publications, since this is determined by Slovenian legislation.

In 2013/2014, the teaching staff included 30 national staff members and 4 visiting professors resulting in a staff-student ratio of 1:12. The teaching staff of ISSBS are scientifically qualified, have adequate vocational experience and are qualified in terms of teaching methods. The teaching staff support a profound scientific education and ensure adequate student support together with the administrative staff. ISSBS's main focus lies on quality teaching and a personal approach to the students. During the introduction lectures, lecturers inform students about methods of cooperation, support and communication. In addition, student counselling and guidance is provided by the Student Office, the tutoring system and the teaching staff during contact hours. The Associated Dean plays a major role in the student support. He is responsible for maintaining the communication between students and teaching staff and gets feedback from both groups through various surveys and face-to-face contact. Due to the size of the institution, the communication is still on a very informal but practicable level.

Considering the size of the school, the human resource development possibilities are appropriate. The Associate Dean carries out annual appraisal meetings with the course coordinators and teaching staff. The major target of those meetings is to identify further training measures to develop the qualification level of the lecturers. Workshops are organised by the management of ISSBS as required. Besides, staff are encouraged to participate in research projects and Erasmus+ measures.

2.2.2 Statements about the BCS programme

There are no specific comments about this study programme.

2.2.3 Statements about the KM programme

There are no specific comments about this study programme.

2.2.4 Assessment of the BCS programme

Standard 2 is **met**.

2.2.5 Assessments of the KM programme

Standard 2 is **met**.

For further development, the expert panel wants to forward the following **recommendation**, applicable to both study programmes:

- 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.

2.3 Standard 3: Quality assurance

- *The study programme is supported by the institution's quality management system.*
- *The study programme is part of a regular quality assurance and enhancement process which takes into account the curriculum, the study conditions and the programme organisation, and which involves all relevant groups as well as external experts.*
- *The participation of students in reflections on the study programme, the study conditions and the programme organisation has been institutionalised.*

2.3.1 General statements

ISSBS has successfully introduced some instruments (e.g. questionnaires for course evaluation, focus groups with students, feedback rounds with teachers and regular exchange with business) as part of the internal quality assurance system that contributes to enhance and monitor the quality of both study programmes. 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 expert panel saw a balanced involvement of all internal stakeholders within the internal quality assurance system that supports the functioning of both study programmes. This involvement is enhanced by a sufficient number of communication channels that ensure the transparency of the processes. In particular, at the end of each trimester, students complete surveys, which serve as tools for monitoring students' workload and the quality of education in the specific study course. There is an additional survey at the end of the year where students' satisfaction is monitored. Teachers are evaluated on the one hand by students' surveys, on the other hand by preparing a self-evaluation. This is done annually and serves, together with students' assessment results, as basis for the annual appraisal interviews with the Dean of ISSBS. The results of all surveys are used for the preparation of reports (e.g. annual report, work programme, etc.) which are freely available on the website (only in Slovene). The senate can use the outcome of these surveys to modify and improve the existing study programmes. Standardised surveys and discussion with local business groups are planned but not implemented yet.

ISSBS also monitors enrolment indicators (e.g. number of students, previous education etc.), the progress of students during their studies (progression between years of study, progression by course, and length of study) and organises focus groups and round tables on different topics.

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. Nevertheless, these instruments have not formed a common quality management system on the institutional level yet. Several

quality loops are not closed which is underlined by the fact that measures were taken but the evaluation of their effectiveness has not been done or not documented yet. A coherent and subsequent concept on how the different quality assurance procedures are linked with each other was not evident for the expert panel.

2.3.2 Statements about the BCS study programme

There are no specific comments to this study programme.

2.3.3 Statements about the KM programme

The expert panel wants to give an example from the KM study programme where quality loops are not fully closed yet: management, teaching staff and students were asked about the evaluation of the course content and which adaptations were based on this outcome. The answers from management and teaching staff focused on organisational adaptations (e.g. prolongation of the course "Research Methodology in Social Sciences" from 1 to 2 trimesters, prolongation of the master thesis process from 3 to 6 months). Only the students gave an example which was connected with the course content of the KM study programme: a lecture/tutorial in which basics of mathematics and statistics were taught was changed after students' feedback by shifting the focus stronger to statistics. The dynamic and rapid adjustments based on informal communication may be perceived positively, but for the creation of a strategic approach to the further development of the study programme, the formulation of processes and parameters of quality assurance are required.

2.3.4 Assessment of the BCS programme

Standard 3 is **partially met** connected with the following conditions:

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.

2.3.5 Assessments of the KM programme

Standard 3 is **partially met** connected with the following conditions:

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.

For further development, the expert panel wants to forward the following **recommendation**, applicable to both study programmes:

- 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.

2.4 Standard 4: Funding and infrastructure

- *Transparent documentation of the funding of the study programme is available*
- *Adequate rooms and technical facilities required for the study programme are available*

2.4.1 General statements

The institution could demonstrate that transparent funding mechanisms are in place which is also reflected in the existing documentation on finance.

Funding of full-time studies is provided for the period of accreditation by the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in accordance with the national legislation and agreement with the state. This funding can be used for teaching and related scientific, research, professional, library, information and organisational activities. Thus, full-time studies are free of charge for Slovenian students. The management clarified that the amount of funding is determined in accordance with a Decree published in the Official Gazette of Slovenia and is dependent on the allocation of the State budget.

Part-time studies are subject to tuition fees. The amount of tuition fees is adopted by the management board at its main meeting in June and is published on the website and within the electronic information system Novis.

ISSBS prepares an annual work programme, a financial plan for the implementation of study programmes, as well as an annual financial report. All reports are reviewed and adopted by the ISSBS Management Board. All of the above mentioned documents are issued to the various stakeholders and published on the ISSBS website (only in Slovene).

The expert panel is convinced that the available facilities are adequate and support the education process, with one exception: the equipment of the library does not support the aim of ISSBS to offer internationally recognisable study programmes (see also statements on standard 1). The connection to the local library is well perceived. Nevertheless, the institution will have to work on better equipment and increase the state-of-the-art literature in the future.

2.4.2 Statements about the BCS programme

There are no specific comments to this study programme.

2.4.3 Statements about the KM programme

There are no specific comments to this study programme.

2.4.4 Assessment of the BCS programme

Standard 4 is **met**.

2.4.5 Assessments of the KM programme

Standard 4 is **met**.

For further development, the expert panel wants to forward the following **recommendation**, applicable to both study programmes:

- 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.

2.5 Standard 5: Research and development

- *The objectives and perspectives for research and development defined for the study programme are consistent with the strategic orientation of the institution.*
- *The scientific and/or artistic staff is involved in the institution's research activities and/or activities regarding the development. The interaction between research and teaching is ensured.*
- *To the extent required by the type of study programme, students will be integrated into research projects and/or projects regarding the development.*
- *The (planned) organisational and structural framework conditions are sufficient and suitable to implement the scheduled research activities and/or activities regarding the development.*



2.5.1 General statements

The targets and perspectives for research and development defined for both study programmes are consistent with the strategic orientation of the institution. This is shown by the efforts of ISSBS to invite visiting professors, to establish co-operations with other universities in the field of teaching and research and to organise the international conference "Make Learn".

The interaction between research and teaching staff is ensured. There is an incentive system established at ISSBS to promote the participation in research projects and the research staff have a fair say to which extent they want to focus on teaching or research. The respective percentage is discussed in the annual appraisal meetings with the Dean.

Students have the possibility to participate in research projects based on availability. They are encouraged to take part and present their work at the "Make Learn" conference as well as at the student's conferences. Teaching staff are supportive in publishing research articles by and with students.

The organisational and structural framework conditions are suitable to implement the scheduled research activities, e.g. through the support in publication activities, research support and financial resources.

2.5.2 Statements about the BCS programme

As stated before, research excellence does not play a major role in the context of a bachelor programme. The BCS study programme is a professional programme, which aims to enhance the students ability to "gather and interpret relevant data to form judgments that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues". This objective meets the standards of a bachelor programme and is supported by several courses offered by ISSBS – e.g. Business Mathematics and Statistics, Fundamentals of Economics, Learning Skills, Business Case Studies.

2.5.3 Statements about the KM programme

There are no specific comments to this study programme.

2.5.4 Assessment of the BCS programme

Standard 5 is **met**.

2.5.5 Assessments of the KM programme

Standard 5 is **met**.

2.6 Standard 6: National and international co-operations

- *In line with the study programme's profile, national and/or international co-operation projects with higher education institutions or institutions outside the higher education sector have been established.*
- *The co-operation projects encourage and support the advancement of the study programme and the mobility of students and staff.*

2.6.1 General statements

National and international co-operation projects within and outside of the higher education sector have been established. ISSBS sustains good co-operations with the external stakeholders from the region.

It is regular practice to invite people from local businesses to deliver guest lectures ("Guests from practice"). Besides, foreign professors from international universities are invited, with which ISSBS has signed a long-term bilateral agreement.

By the end of 2012/2013, ISSBS had signed 26 bilateral mobility agreements with foreign higher education institutions for the purpose of student, teacher and staff mobility, particularly in the framework of the Erasmus Lifelong Learning Programme. This action is well supported for both, incoming and outgoing students, by the administrative support at ISSBS. Still, the participation in student mobility is low. For incomings, the explanation is that Slovenia is not an attractive country for Erasmus students. For outgoings, the major obstacles are financial issues and the job loss since many of the students work part time besides their studies.

2.6.2 Statements about the BCS programme

There are no specific comments about this study programme.

2.6.3 Statements about the KM programme

The introduction of an elective internship on the master level would be positive although the expert panel understood that this possibility would only be used by a minor group of KM students since many of them are working along their studies.

2.6.4 Assessment of the BCS programme

Standard 6 is **met**.

2.6.5 Assessments of the KM programme

Standard 6 is **met**.

For further development, the expert panel wants to forward the following **recommendations**, applicable to both study programmes:

- 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.

Cologne Business School as well as Kozminski University¹ are part of a summer school which currently takes place in Varazdin, Croatia. Ten European Universities co-operate and send their lecturers to discuss the topic of "Internationalisation in a European Context".



Such summer schools are mainly funded by the EU if Eastern and Western European partners co-operate. ISSBS should try to find partner universities in Western or Northern European countries – the topics chosen by ISSBS in the past (last year's topic "Entrepreneurship" as well as this year's topic "Innovation & Business –

¹ These institutions are cited since two members of the expert panel are affiliated with them.



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sustainable development of urban tourism”) would both fit perfectly into the major research areas supported by “Horizon 2020”.

ISSBS students will increase their international competencies, improve English skills, co-operate with students, professors and lecturers from different European countries and in addition, will earn additional credits. ISSBS shall develop offers which support their students to experience foreign countries and places. A summer school is a perfect opportunity to increase the willingness of students to spend some time abroad and become more competitive on the European job market.

3 Summary of Results

3.1 Final assessment

Summary statements on the programmes and compliances to each standard (scale: not met – partially met - met).

If a standard has been assessed as “partially met” this means that deficiencies were detected that will lead to *conditions*. If accreditation is granted subject to conditions, their fulfilment must be documented in writing within nine months. Accreditation will be denied if at least one standard has been assessed as “not met”.

Recommendations are weaker than conditions. They do not necessarily need to be fulfilled for a standard to be fully met.

3.1.1 Business in Contemporary Society, BCS (bachelor)

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Standard 1 – Study programme and programme management | partially met |
| Standard 2 – Staff | met |
| Standard 3 – Quality Assurance | partially met |
| Standard 4 – Funding and Infrastructure | met |
| Standard 5 – Research and development and appreciation of the arts | met |
| Standard 6 – National and international co-operations | met |

Conditions

Condition 1: The BCS study programme has 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 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 students and the job profiles must be added in a clear and specified way.

Condition 3: A concept must be designed where it is shown how the different QA instruments which are in place are connected with each other. The closing of quality loops for the topic “study & teaching” must be documented.

Condition 4: 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.

3.1.2 Knowledge Management, KM (master)

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Standard 1 – Study programme and programme management | partially met |
| Standard 2 – Staff | met |
| Standard 3 – Quality Assurance | partially met |
| Standard 4 – Funding and Infrastructure | met |
| Standard 5 – Research and development and appreciation of the arts | met |
| Standard 6 – National and international co-operations | met |

Conditions

Condition 1: The KM study programme has 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 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 students and the job profiles must be added in a clear and specified way.

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

Condition 4: 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 5: 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.

3.2 Recommendations of the expert panel

Applicable for both study programmes:

Recommendation 1: 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.

Recommendation 2: Implement 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.

Recommendation 3: 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.

Recommendation 4: ISSBS should continue strengthening the connections with the external partners in the region by increasing the number of internships and organising joint summer schools.

Recommendation 5: The good practice of inviting guest lectures shall continue.

Recommendation 6: 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).

Recommendation 7: 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.

Cologne Business School as well as Kozminski University² are part of a summer school which currently takes place in Varazdin, Croatia. Ten European Universities co-operate and send their lecturers to discuss the topic of 'Internationalisation in a European Context'.



Such summer schools are mainly funded by the EU if Eastern and Western European partners co-operate. ISSBS should try to find partner universities in Western or Northern European countries – the topics chosen by ISSBS in the past (last year's topic "Entrepreneurship" as well as this year's topic "Innovation & Business – sustainable development of urban tourism") would both fit perfectly into the major research areas supported by "Horizon 2020".

ISSBS students will increase their international competencies, improve English skills, co-operate with students, professors and lecturers from different European countries and in addition, will earn additional credits. ISSBS shall develop offers which support their students to experience foreign countries and places. A summer school is a perfect opportunity to increase the willingness of students to spend some time abroad and become more competitive on the European job market.

² These institutions are cited since two members of the expert panel are affiliated with them.

4 Appendix

4.1 Agenda Site Visit

Date: 16. – 17.10.2014

Place: International School for Social and Business Studies, Celje, Slovenia

Expert panel:

| Name | Institution |
|---|--|
| Prof. Dr. habil. Elisabeth Fröhlich President | Cologne Business School, Germany |
| Prof. Grzegorz Mazurek, Ph.D. Vice-Rector for International Relations | Kozminski University, Poland |
| Mag. Petra Wimmer, MAS Course director | Danube University Krems, Austria |
| Liliya Ivanova Student representative | University of National and World Economy, Bulgaria |

AQ Austria:

| Name | Function |
|---|----------------------------|
| Dr. Elisabeth Froschauer-Neuhauser | Project manager AQ Austria |
| Dr. Annina Müller Strassnig | Support AQ Austria |

| 16.10.2014 | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Time | Topic | Participants |
| Accreditation of Study Programmes | | |
| 11:30 – 12:30 | Preparation for Accreditation of Study Programmes | Panel and AQ Austria |
| 12:30 – 13:15 | Break/Lunch | |
| 13:15 – 14:00 | Organisation and management of the study programmes: development of | Heads of the study programmes Students office Head of KM Programme – Dr. Valerij |

| | | |
|---------------|--|--|
| | the study programmes, etc. | Dermol Head of BCS Programme – Dr. Drago Dubrovski |
| 14:00 - 14:45 | Organisation of the study programme: student support, student involvement, quality assurance, exams, etc | Representatives of the study office & QM Dr. Nada Trunk Širca, Committee for Quality and Evaluation Mia Kočevar, Office for Study Vesna Skrbinjek, Education Unit |
| 14:45 – 15:00 | Break / Reflexion | |
| 15:00 – 15:30 | Reading of Documents (Course syllabuses, Examples of Exams and Master Thesis, BCS & KM) | Panel and AQ Austria |
| 15:30 - 16:15 | Research and teaching in BSC & KM <i>Focus on Teaching</i> | Mag. Rado Pezdir, HE Teacher Dr. Suzana Košir, HE Teacher Dr. Dušan Lesjak, HE Teacher |
| 16:15 – 17:00 | Research and teaching in BSC & KM <i>Focus on Research</i> | Research MakeLearn: Dr. Valerij Dermol, Associate Dean Marko Smrkolj, International Office Research iHRM: Dr. Katarina Babnik, Researcher Dr. Kristijan Breznik, Researcher |
| 17:15 – 17:30 | Break / Reflexion | |
| 17:30- 18:00 | Feedback on employability & support of ISSBS after graduation | Alumnis of BCS and KM students BCS: Jasmina Janžekovič Vesna Klopčič KM: Leon Lešnik Lilijana Skončnik |
| 18:00 – 18:30 | Wrap-Up Day 2 (Programme accreditation) | Panel and AQ Austria |
| Dinner | | |

| 17.10.2014 Site-Visit 2 | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Time | Topic | Participants |
| 08:15 – 09:00 | Preparation | Panel and AQ Austria |
| 09:00 – 09:30 | Relevance of the study programmes on employability & national co-operations | Employers of ISSBS alumni: Milena Pirnat Bahun, Gorenje, d.d. Natalija Piliš, Intereuropa, d.d. Klemen Žibret, Steklarna Rogaška, d.d. Vesna Reich, Cetus, d.d. |
| 09:35 – 09:55 | Organisation of the study programme, student support, student involvement, quality assurance, exams, etc. | Students BCS: Klavdija Vrečar, 1st year student Mersad Hairlahović, 2nd year student Alma Brkić, writing the final thesis |



| | | |
|---------------|---|--|
| 10:00 – 10:20 | Organisation of the study programme, student support, student involvement, quality assurance, exams, etc. | Students KM: Manca Kragelj Tomi Pesjak |
| 10:20 – 10:30 | Break / Reflexion | |
| 10:30 – 11:00 | Mobility of students, teachers, staff | International Office Representatives of Incomings & Outgoings Dr. Valerij Dermol, ECTS Coordinator Marko Smrkolj, International Office Dr. Drago Dubrovski, Outgoing Exchange Professor in the Erasmus Programme |
| 11:00 – 12:00 | Preparation of the final meeting | Panel and AQ Austria |
| 12:00 – 12:30 | Final meeting and clarification of open questions (if needed) | Management of ISSBS Dr. Srečko Natek, Dean Mag. Anja Lesjak, Director Dr. Valerij Dermol, Associate Dean Dr. Nada Trunk Širca, Consultant Dr. Dušan Lesjak, Consultant Vesna Skrbinjek, Education Unit |
| 12:30 – 13:15 | Lunch | |
| 13:15 – 15:00 | Wrap-Up Draft of report | Panel and AQ Austria |
| 15:00 | End of Site-Visit 2 Pick-up from ISSBS (experts going by plane) | |

4.2 Guideline “International Accreditation for Bachelor, Master and PhD programmes”