

# Summary report on the audit procedure at the International School for Social and Business Studies in Celje

Following the request in January 2014, AQ Austria conducted an audit procedure at the International School for Social and Business Studies in Celje, Slovenia. In accordance with the "Guideline for the Audit of Higher Education Institutions' Quality Management Systems" adopted by the Board of AQ Austria in June 2013, AQ Austria publishes the following summary report.

## 1 Short information on the application for accreditation

| Information about the institution                            |  |
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| <b>Institution (applicant)</b>                               | International School for Social and Business Studies (ISSBS) |
| <b>Location of the institution</b>                           | Celje (Slovenia)   |
| Information about the study programmes                       |  |
| <b>Number of study programmes offered at the institution</b> | 6  |
| <b>Number of students at the institution</b>                 | 582  |

## 2 Short information on the audit procedure

In January 2014, AQ Austria was engaged to carry out an audit procedure concerning the quality management system at the International School for Social and Business Studies (ISSBS).

At its meeting on 28 January 2014, the Board of AQ Austria passed the recommendation of the peer panel for the review.

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

The first site visit at ISSBS took place in Celje from 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> June 2014, the second one on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014. Both site visits were attended by all reviewers and two coordinators from AQ Austria.

The Board of AQ Austria took the accreditation decision in its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015.

## 3 Subject matter of the application

In the audit procedure, the organisation and implementation of the internal quality management system were evaluated at the International School for Social and Business Studies by a peer-review process.

## 4 Summarizing results from the assessments of the reviewers

### Standard 1

ISSBS has defined strategic goals, a mission and a vision which are built around the key task "internationalisation in education and research".

The international visibility of ISSBS is rather weak and the reviewers gained the impression that the term "internationalisation" is more of a label but not implemented in practice at ISSBS.

The expert panel remarked positively on the benefits to the institution of acting locally and being rooted in the region. These aspects were found to be supported by several quality management instruments but this regional mission is not articulated in the strategic goals at the moment.

The operational planning and delivery on the level of study and teaching are in place at the programme level, but the corresponding strategic planning is either missing or was not communicated to the reviewers in a sufficiently explicit way.

The same applies to a comprehensive strategy (including an implementation plan) for the institution's internationalisation activities. The measures which have been achieved up to now appear to be single isolated activities. The embedding of these in a long-term strategic plan was not apparent to the expert panel.

## Standard 2

The mission of ISSBS focuses on academic and international excellence which is not fully reflected in the daily practice of the institution. This discrepancy has not yet been questioned - either by the management team or the faculty. As a consequence thereof, the measures implemented do not correspond to the key features and objectives as stated by the institution.

In terms of the operational reality, single measures for quality management are in place but these are not cross-linked to a common quality management system.

In addition, the measures taken are ad hoc, rather than being consequences drawn from a long-term strategic planning. The expert panel could find little evidence to indicate whether the institution has established operational middle- and long-term strategies yet.

The institution is currently fully operational but a formal quality management system supporting its activities in line with the objectives of the institution is not present. The current management approach is mainly based on personal commitment and informal agreements.

## Standard 3

The quality of teaching and research as well as the quality of organisation and services are steadily monitored - to some extent in a structured, to some extent in an informal way. Since ISSBS is a relatively small institution, the processes do not need to be formalised in full detail, but proper documentation is required for the systematic evaluation and the continuous improvement of the institution.

Standardised, quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods are applied in particular in the area of learning and teaching and these involve all internal stakeholders.

ISSBS has a well-defined meeting structure for the on-going communication between the different management bodies and other internal stakeholders. However, these information processes are not documented in full detail and appear to be rather ad hoc processes.

The existence of a coherent concept and subsequent approach about regarding the connections between the different quality management tools and procedures was not evident

for the reviewers. A comprehensive plan hardly exists concerning the ways in which data is used from the results obtained and what consequences are drawn from the knowledge gained.

#### Standard 4

Management, students and teaching staff feel that they are part of, and supported by, the current quality approach at ISSBS.

The expert panel identified a well embedded quality culture within the institution. The small size of the institution and the inclusive and open environment favoured the building of trust between the stakeholders. Positive and productive communication between internal stakeholders is evident.

The involvement of external stakeholders within the various quality management instruments in place is currently rather less well developed, and will be an area of operation for future attention.

At the level of teaching, quality is assured by putting an emphasis on the *European Standards and Guidelines* and Bologna principles. The institution showed effective processes in place to support the implementation of these principles and, as a consequence, the enhancement of its quality culture for learning and teaching.

## 5 Certification decision and statements of grounds

At its 25<sup>th</sup> meeting on 03 February 2015, the Board of AQ Austria decided that the quality management system implemented at the International School for Social and Business Studies in Celje Slovenia [does not meet the standards](#) of the "Guideline for the Audit of Higher Education Institutions' Quality Management Systems" adopted by the Board of AQ Austria in June 2013.

Pursuant to this document, the Board of AQ Austria denies the certification of the internal quality management system.

Reasons for denial are founded on

- The quality management instruments implemented at ISSBS support the actual practice but are not linked to the strategic goals, the mission and the vision stated by institution (standard 1).
- There is no formal and common quality management system in place. The existing quality assurance measures are not in line with the present strategic goals, the mission and the vision of the institution at the moment (standard 2).