



schweizerische agentur  
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agence suisse  
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## Evaluation procedure

# CEIBS / EHL Hospitality Executive Master of Business Administration (HEMBA)

Expert Report | 17.02.2023





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## 1 Introduction

This report documents an evaluation carried out by the Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ). The AAQ was commissioned by China Europe International Business School (CEIBS) and École hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL) to conduct an evaluation of its part-time executive programme Hospitality Executive Master of Business Administration (HEMBA) against defined quality standards.

The evaluation was carried out by a group of three international experts, who were instructed by the AAQ. The expert group examined a self-evaluation report, followed by a site visit over 1.5 consecutive days. The group was assisted by one AAQ staff member during the site visit but agreed conclusions independently of the organisation.

In this report, the expert group gives its judgements following the format of the quality standards for evaluation in a systematic way and lastly issues recommendations for improvement.

Evaluations are external quality assurance procedures. They describe and assess the current status of quality assurance measures. They also create a framework for a process of reflection, the aim of which is continuous quality development. The evaluation takes the form of a peer review procedure.

Evaluations review study programmes and institutions against a set of standards. They are carried out on a voluntary basis and do not lead to a formal decision on accreditation by a federal authority.

The evaluation procedures provided by the AAQ comply with internationally recognised practices and principles of quality assurance procedures – especially with part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) – and examine the objectives of applicants in the process. The object of evaluations may be institutions, basic and postgraduate study programmes or other entities in the Swiss higher education sector. The evaluation is voluntary and does not lead to a formal decision by the Swiss Accreditation Council (SAC).

The evaluation procedures are carried out in partnership with all parties and help to improve the quality of the entity to be evaluated and to develop a culture of quality in the relevant institution. The procedures focus on dialogue between stakeholders at every stage. A central element is the on-site visit by designated experts who are appointed as peers. They are selected specifically to match the profile of the entity to be evaluated.

## 2 Presentation of the HEMBA of CEIBS and EHL

China Europe International Business School (CEIBS) and École hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL) commenced their collaboration to establish the Hospitality EMBA programme (HEMBA) in 2018, with the first cohort of HEMBA students graduating in 2019.

### CEIBS

Established by the Chinese government and the European Union in 1994 as a joint venture for management education, CEIBS has campuses across China in Shanghai, Beijing and Shenzhen, as well as in Switzerland (Zurich) and Accra (Ghana). In addition to HEMBA, CEIBS' portfolio includes an MBA, a Finance MBA, an EMBA and a Global MBA, as well as executive education programmes. The institution aims to provide students enrolled on its programmes with "China Depth, Global Breadth".

The self-evaluation report (SER) notes that CEIBS is the first business school in mainland China to have achieved accreditation by EQUIS and AACSB and also highlights the ranking of its MBA and EMBA programmes within the respective Financial Times top 5 lists.

## EHL

EHL Hospitality Business School was established in 1893 by the Swiss Hotel Association (Hôtellerie Suisse) to train future hotel managers and, according to the SER, EHL continues to provide business education as a “leader in hospitality management education” (SER, p. 4). The SER confirms that EHL currently provides six degree programmes in hospitality management, including its renowned Bachelor of Science in International Hospitality Management, and that the institution also plans to expand its offering to include a lifelong learning product line to “better serve the needs of the industry”. In addition to HEMBA, EHL provides a number of other graduate programmes in partnership with international institutions, including an MSc in Wine and Hospitality Management with KEDGE Business School, France, and an MSc in Global Hospitality Business with the University of Houston and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

## HEMBA

Jointly designed and developed by CEIBS and EHL, HEMBA is a unique joint degree programme that capitalises on the expertise and experience of both institutions, combining excellence in Business Administration and in Hospitality Management. HEMBA’s unique selling points include its global teaching locations and its close links to industry, which provide enrolled students with both academic training on campus and practical experience in the field.

The SER (p. 5) notes that the two institutions act in partnership to manage the programme: two co-directors – one from EHL and one from CEIBS – take responsibility for HEMBA’s oversight, and both institutions have allocated responsibility to staff members for the programme’s daily operations. Teaching is split between CEIBS and EHL faculty, with CEIBS faculty members responsible for teaching 60% of HEMBA core modules and EHL, 40%. (SER, p. 6)

Students and alumni of the programme primarily originate from Greater China and this is reflected in the fact that the programme’s language of instruction is Mandarin (with simultaneous interpreting provided if modules are delivered in English). The programme is intended to be delivered over 18 months on the two institutions’ campuses, although border restrictions in response to the Covid-19 pandemic have prevented students from the 2019, 2020 and 2021 cohorts from completing the overseas elements and extended the duration of the programme for these cohorts. (SER, p. 5)

While the core disciplinary focus of HEMBA is the hospitality industry, the programme has also attracted executives whose experience lies in fields other than hospitality, including the pharmaceutical, medical, financial services and real estate industries. The self-evaluation report notes that more than 80% of those enrolled on HEMBA are senior executives who typically have 15 years’ management experience in their fields. (SER, p. 5)

### 3 Evaluation procedure/quality standards

The evaluation procedure follows defined stages. The schedule of the procedure was as follows:

17.11.2020	Application for evaluation of HEMBA by CEIBS/EHL
24.09.2021	Kick-off meeting for the evaluation
30.09.2022	Self-evaluation report of HEMBA
07./08.11.2022	Virtual on-site visit (via zoom)
07.12.2022	Preliminary expert report
08.02.2023	Position statement of HEMBA

- 17.02.2023 Final expert report
- 24.03.2023 Release of the expert report by the AAQ Commission

In cooperation with the AAQ, and according to the AAQ guidelines for evaluation procedures, the HEMBA representatives chose the following standards to be evaluated:

- Quality standards for programme accreditation/HEdA Accreditation Guidelines, p. 13

### 3.1 Expert group

A group of international experts in quality assurance and tourism was nominated by the AAQ:

Peer leader:

- **Dr. Rolf Heusser**  
International QA expert, Former president of the European Consortium of Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA), University of Zurich

Experts:

- **Prof. Dr. Patric Arn**  
Head of Institute Tourism & Leisure; Director of Studies: BSc in Tourism,  
Fachhochschule Graubünden – University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons
- **Dr. Inger Seiferheld**  
Director of Quality and Accreditations, University of Edinburgh Business School

The panel of experts was selected in accordance with the guidelines for AAQ evaluations, which, in turn, are designed to meet ESG standards. The panel was approved by the AAQ Commission. Furthermore, the expert group was chaired by Dr. Rolf Heusser. The expert group received support from Mairéad Boland (Quality and Qualifications Ireland [QQI], secretary) and staff from the AAQ.

### 3.2 Self-evaluation report

HEMBA produced a self-evaluation report (SER) and submitted it to AAQ in September 2022.

Upon request at the on-site visit, the expert peers were also provided promptly with soft copies of:

- the HEMBA Student Handbook
- a document containing an overview of HEMBA's quality assurance processes
- a brochure containing an overview of the HEMBA programme.

### 3.3 On-site visit

The Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ) arranged for the virtual on-site visit to take place 7-8 November 2022.

Over five sessions, the panel met with a range of stakeholders associated with the HEMBA programme:

Session 1: Management meeting / responsible persons for HEMBA

Session 2: Faculty

Session 3: Students/Alumni

Session 4: Discussion with HEMBA programme managers

Session 5: Staff responsible for quality assurance/administration/technical support

The talks were held in an open and friendly atmosphere; the visit followed the programme that had been agreed between CEIBS, EHL and AAQ in advance.

#### **4 Evaluation of the quality standards**

In compliance with the guidelines for AAQ evaluations, CEIBS and EHL wished for an evaluation of the HEMBA according to the HEdA quality standards for programme accreditation to be carried out.

##### **4.1 Quality standards for programme evaluation**

###### **Area 1: Educational objectives**

###### **Standard 1.01**

The study programme shall show clear objectives, clarifying its special features and complying with national and international requirements.
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Provided by CEIBS and EHL, HEMBA is a joint degree programme that capitalises on the expertise and experience of both institutions, combining excellence in Business Administration and in Hospitality Management. The intended duration of the programme is 18 months, with students engaging in learning on CEIBS campuses in Shanghai (opening module and core courses), Singapore, Tokyo, and Hong Kong, and on EHL's campus in Switzerland (mid-term modules and graduation) (SER, p. 5), although border restrictions in response to the Covid-19 pandemic have prevented students from the 2019, 2020 and 2021 cohorts from completing these overseas elements and extended the duration of the programme for these cohorts. (SER, p. 42)

Within the SER, and during the on-site visit, the expert peers were supplied with clear objectives for the programme (see also standard 1.02) and heard very satisfactory descriptions of the programme's unique selling points: The SER sets out that the programme aims to provide participants with "a global view of the hospitality industry...[and to] balance both academic and theoretical professional field studies" (SER, p. 8). Ultimately, those graduating from the programme should have a "solid business analytical foundation via core EMBA modules and EHL's international [expertise] alongside integrated and hands-on industry involvement via the Capstone project". (SER, p. 9) During the on-site visit, the expert peers heard from programme leadership that the programme aims to bring hospitality competences into other industries and the world". (On-site visit, Session 1) Demand for the programme within sectors other than hospitality was confirmed by students during the on-site visit, during which expert peers met executives currently enrolled on the programme from diverse industries including real estate, fashion and the pharmaceutical industries. (On-site visit, Session 3)

An important objective of HEMBA is to provide networking opportunities to participants – not only through engagement with executives from the range of sectors represented within programme cohorts, but also through students' engagement in those modules that are hosted by EHL in Switzerland. During the on-site visit, programme management noted that travel restrictions imposed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic have proven extremely challenging. The partner institutions have opted not to replace these overseas modules with online learning, but have extended the duration of those iterations of the programme affected until such time as travel restrictions have been lifted (On-site visit, session 1). This is also in line with the wishes of enrolled students, who, during the site visit, expressed their desire to engage in on-site

overseas modules and their willingness to wait to complete the programme (On-site visit, session 3). The expert peers understand the decision taken by the partner institutions but, given the uncertainty of the situation, encourage CEIBS and EHL to consider alternative options to facilitate completion of the programme by those students who have been impacted. This matter will be discussed in further detail under Standard 3.01 below.

During the on-site visit, the expert peer group explored the impact of HEMBA student body composition on internationalisation – particularly in light of the “international nature of programme” (SER, p. 8). Representatives of EHL and CEIBS acknowledged that HEMBA participants mainly originate from Greater China, but felt that this does not necessarily pose an issue for ensuring a truly global programme – for example, faculty members highlighted their aims to provide a global perspective to the students within the hospitality industry and detailed the emphasis that they put on content relating to the establishment and development of international brands within China, as well as the international expansion of Chinese companies (On-site visit, session 2). The expert peers note with approval the international curriculum content as well as that content that is tailored to China, and observe that this, as well as the variety of teaching locations and diverse cultural representation among faculty members fulfils both national and international requirements. The peers recognise that the current target participants for the programme are Chinese executives; however, they also note the benefits for all enrolled students of a more diverse cohort of students and encourage CEIBS and EHL to consider promoting the diversification of the student body to ensure that this innovative programme is available to a broader spectrum of participants. The expert peers make a recommendation on this matter below.

Evidence of the fulfilment of international requirements is also provided by professional accreditation: for example the SER confirms that the HEMBA programme is accredited by EQUIS and AACSB and has EPAS recognition (SER, p. 54). AACSB assurance of learning processes are evident in the operation and evaluation of HEMBA and the expert peers affirm the benefits of these processes to the programme. The expert peers note with approval the considerable amount of external benchmarking in which partner institutions engage (SER, p. 9, On-site visit, session 5)

#### *Analysis*

Standard 1.01 is **entirely fulfilled**.

#### **Recommendation:**

The expert peer group recommends that CEIBS and EHL promote the programme to a wider audience and work to diversify HEMBA’s student body to include more international students.

#### **Commendations:**

The expert peer group commends CEIBS and EHL for developing a programme that combines and draws upon each institution’s strengths and areas of excellence.

The expert peer group commends CEIBS and EHL for the global nature of HEMBA teaching locations.

The expert peer group commends CEIBS and EHL for the way in which academic education and practical experiential learning are combined within the HEMBA.

## Standard 1.02

The study programme shall pursue educational objectives corresponding to the mission and strategic planning of the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector.

HEMBA “aims at educating responsible business leaders at every stage of their career, preparing them for leadership roles in the hospitality and other service-oriented industries in and outside of China” (SER, p. 11).

The SER sets out the following learning outcomes for the programme (p. 11):

- Build an awareness of the strategic challenges of hospitality firms operating in the Asian market environment.
- Be able to formulate sound business decisions at both the individual property and corporate level in the hospitality industry.
- Allocate resources effectively to translate the strategies at an operational level in hospitality contexts.
- Develop leadership skills that help to create, manage, and change hospitality teams at the individual and organizational level.
- Communicate effectively with key stakeholders in the hospitality industry.
- Develop cultural sensitivity and critical reflection to solve complex problems, at both an individual and team level.
- Act autonomously and be self-directed in executing professional/entrepreneurial projects.
- Develop a holistic approach to the world of hospitality combining theory and practice.

The SER includes a full list of learning objectives for the programme, mapped to CEIBS’ learning goals (SER, Appendix 1). Six of the seven learning goals are common to all CEIBS programmes, with a seventh – “Each student shall be able to lead and manage service-oriented organisations (Service Excellence)” – unique to HEMBA.

The following programme unique selling points were also strongly emphasised to the expert peers during their meetings with CEIBS and EHL stakeholders (see also Standard 1.01):

- Combining excellence in Business Administration and Hospitality Management.
- Providing participants with a global view of the hospitality industry, balancing both academic and theoretical professional field studies, and bringing hospitality competences into other industries and the world.
- Providing a solid business analytical foundation via core EMBA modules and EHL’s international expertise alongside integrated and hands-on industry involvement via the Capstone project.
- Providing networking opportunities to participants through the diverse industry-types represented among students, the global teaching locations, and the international curriculum content.

The expert peer group is satisfied that all of these aims, objectives, learning outcomes and USPs align with the learning goals of both institutions, which are mapped to each other within the SER (p. 13). The peer group also confirms that the aims, objectives, learning outcomes and



USPs are well aligned with the two institutions' missions (SER, p. 11), which are “to educate global leaders well versed in China Depth, Global Breadth” (CEIBS) and to “bring together academia and hospitality to create the higher education of action-driven individuals and develop insightful thinking together with innovative practices in the international service industry” (EHL).

To ensure that the programme learning outcomes remain sufficiently current and ambitious for a programme of HEMBA's standard and that they continue to be well aligned to both institutions' missions, the expert peers suggest that both institutions regularly review programme learning outcomes (i.e. on an annual basis). Given the global nature of the programme, any such review should consider the formulation of explicitly international and intercultural learning outcomes.

During the site visit, both institutions provided convincing rationales for their engagement in this collaboration and demonstrated conclusively how the HEMBA programme aligns with their individual plans for future development:

- EHL detailed its desire to build on its reputation as a renowned heritage hospitality management institution, to position itself as a business school, and to expand globally. The institution emphasised that, given its reputation as a top business school in Asia and further afield, CEIBS is the ideal partner.
- CEIBS set out its ambitions to meet demand among Chinese executives for graduate education focusing on the service sector (given the predicted growth in that sector) and noted that EHL's reputation in service and hospitality management education is complementary to these ambitions.
- Both institutions remarked upon the match between their values and capabilities. (On-site visit, session 1)

The expert peer group also note with approval the real joint nature of the two institutions' partnership in their development and operation of the programme, observing genuine collaboration and exchange between CEIBS and EHL that is both synergistic and organic, from governance level through programme management to programme delivery. The expert peers were told that the European president of CEIBS sits on EHL's advisory board at institutional level to ensure alignment in both institutions' visions and that the EHL HEMBA Co-director is a member of CEIBS' academic board to ensure that both boards and the institutions' positioning are aligned (On-site visit, session 1). With regard to faculty collaboration, the expert peers heard about the partner institutions' aims to bring faculty from CEIBS and EHL together to conduct research on dedicated service-competence subjects – the programmes co-director have already collaborated on joint research, but the inability of faculty members to travel and meet each other has impeded plans to extend this collaboration more widely, in spite of genuine desire for collaboration and complementarity among faculty members. (On-site visit, session 1)

The expert peer group received assurance from their discussions with students and alumni of HEMBA that the programme is useful and in demand. Students confirmed their satisfaction with the “very carefully crafted” curriculum design and the value of overseas visits; they perceived the benefit in the joint venture, noting “the classic experience of service industry with 100 years of heritage from EHL, with a focus on the particular characteristics of the Chinese service industry.” (On-site visit, session 3)

Standard 1.02 is **entirely fulfilled**.

## Area 2: Conception

### Standard 2.01

The content of the study programme and the methods applied shall allow students to attain their learning objectives.

The SER contains a diagrammatic overview of HEMBA's design, which details the four main components that comprise the programme (SER, p. 20):

- **General business management courses**, which aim to support programme participants to build a strong foundation in core business areas and analytical skills.
- **Hospitality and service excellence courses**, which emphasise the latest developments in the functional areas which are geared towards building on strategic thinking skills. Through these courses, participants learn to integrate knowledge across functions to diagnose and solve complex business problems in order to understand the unique challenges of operating a service-related business in China's transitional economic environment and challenges faced when operating overseas.
- **Leadership development courses**, which are designed to enhance the leadership capabilities of participants.
- **Electives** allow participants to extend their knowledge in various areas that are relevant to their respective companies and related to their personal interests.



Fig. 1: HEMBA programme design

The SER also contains a matrix that maps core courses to programme learning outcomes and learning objectives (see standard 1.02), which shows that each of the learning objectives is covered by at least one core course.

During the on-site visit, programme management told the expert peers that learning assurance processes are important for HEMBA and its curriculum – these processes help the institutions to

determine that all learning objectives have been met. The SER (p. 24) provides details of how data for the processes are collected and analysed:

1. *Learning objectives (LOs) are mapped to corresponding core courses.*
2. *For each of the courses selected, the course outline [is] scrutinized to select the best assessment tool- i.e. final exam, quiz, case assignment, group project etc. In some cases, [student feedback is also used for this purpose].*
3. *The grade sheet of every core course [is] obtained from the programme offices to extract the marks for each assessment tool. Raw scores [are] used for this purpose as the school follows a policy of normal distribution of letter grades.*
4. *For each LO, at least two courses and assessment tools [are] used, and averaged to measure the extent to which the LO [has been] achieved. These [are] then averaged for each [l]earning goal (LG) as well.*

The SER confirms that the associate dean (AD) presents the data and analysis to the Learning Assurance Committee (LAC), which evaluate them, identifies areas of weakness and makes suggestions. Where between 5% and 10% of students have achieved scores of 50% for a particular LG, this is considered critical level, and the courses, LGs and any related LOs are further scrutinised. If the proportion of students scoring less than 50% is greater than a critical level (>10%), the courses and learning goals are flagged and discussed to identify where improvements can be made. The AD also meets with the AD of programmes to highlight any issues identified with regard to learning assurance. Corrective measures are agreed on “through consultation”. Any LGs and LOs highlighted during this process are evaluated in future rounds of evaluation to check if actions taken have produced results.

The expert peers note that the programme is very labour-market oriented. During the on-site visit (session 1), programme management detailed the close relationships that CEIBS and EHL have established with industry partners, including through the Service Excellence Leadership Lab (SER, p. 30). This industry input, as well as students’ accounts of applying learning effectively within their own organisations (On-site visit, session 3), gives the peer group confidence that the programme content curriculum allows students to maintain the learning objectives.

The expert peers also note the range of didactic methods employed in the delivery of the programme, including – as detailed above – industry input through the Service Excellence Leadership Lab and its case studies; company visits; simulations and so on. During the on-site visit (session 2), faculty members also provided an overview of the considerations that they keep in mind when preparing for and teaching on HEMBA – for example, ensuring that content contains the correct balance of theory and practice, anticipating questions that students – who, they stressed, are senior executives and experienced leaders – may have, as well as ensuring that courses give students insight into cutting edge research and how the industry is developing. Faculty emphasised the value of both institutions’ contributions to programme content in ensuring that learning objectives can be met by students, noting CEIBS’ expertise in general management and EHL’s in hospitality, as well as the ‘China Depth’ supplied by CEIBS and the ‘Global breadth’ and international dimension delivered by both CEIBS and EHL (On-site visit, session 2).

Programme management highlighted the value of the CEIBS case centre in ensuring that the HEMBA curriculum is kept current and retains a strong practical element. Since the establishment of its case centre, CEIBS faculty have written more than 100 cases a year; cases used by faculty teaching on HEMBA have been updated within the past one to two years to ensure that they are tailored to the service industry (On-site visit, session 1). The expert peer group endorses the work of the case centre and encourages the HEMBA programme to

continue to develop case materials, ensuring that both Chinese and global business examples are included. Programme management also stressed the importance of teaching innovation to HEMBA and confirmed to the expert peers that faculty members who develop new courses and content are awarded additional teaching credit for doing so, which encourages faculty members to update content. (On-site visit, session 1)

During the on-site visit, programme management noted that student evaluations are consistently positive and that students respond to open-ended questions not just related to the professors, but also in relation to the relevance of programme content. (On-site visit, session 1) The SER provides an overview of student feedback regarding the academic content and logistical arrangements for each HEMBA course, which indicates that students are generally satisfied with the teaching quality and content of the core courses (SER, p. 26). Satisfaction levels provided through feedback surveys have also generally increased over time (Ibid.).

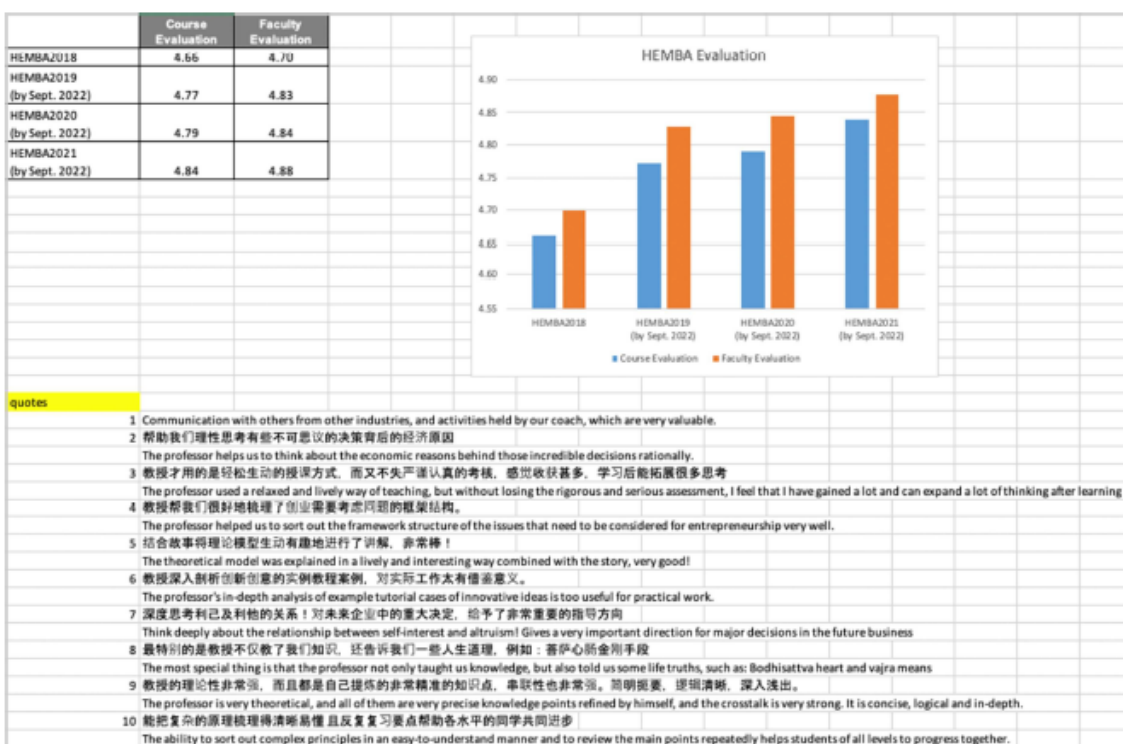


Fig. 2: Overview of HEMBA course evaluations from all cohorts (SER, p. 28).

The expert peers note with approval the large number of electives available to students in addition to the core modules, which have been designed specifically for HEMBA. This allows for the tailoring of programme content to each student's particular interests and context, whilst still facilitating the achievement of the learning objectives. The expert peer group also approves of the institutions' decision to open these electives to students who have not yet been able to graduate due to current challenges with international travel – as well as the creation of electives specifically with these cohorts in mind (On-site visit, session 1). However, the expert peers also note the absence of a module handbook that provides details of each course, its content, learning objectives and didactics and the related student exams. This would constitute an official record and provide a valuable transparency tool for HEMBA students, prospective students and faculty teaching on the programme. The expert peer group therefore includes a recommendation on this regard below.

Standard 2.01 is largely fulfilled.

### **Recommendation:**

The expert group recommends that CEIBS and EHL develop a module handbook for HEMBA, containing a full list of core and elective modules, their content, objectives, didactic methods used and a clear statement of how and when the module is to be assessed.

### **Standard 2.02**

The content of the study programme shall include academic knowledge and development of the professional field.

During the on-site visit, the EHL CEIBS Co-director noted that CEIBA and EHL are “trying to get the best of both worlds into the HEMBA programme” – in terms of CEIBS and EHL expertise as well as with regard to research-based learning and experiential learning; the SER confirms that CEIBS and EHL seek through HEMBA to “combine CEIBS’ robust business administration courses and EHL’s solid hospitality industry knowledge, allowing working professionals to develop the skills necessary to succeed in a fast-growing industry” (SER, p. 29). The expert peers heard from the EHL HEMBA Co-director that, at the beginning of the year before the programme commences, the co-director panel as well as the programme managers consider how a ‘red thread’ to run through the whole programme can be created to ensure consistency as well as the coverage of all learning objectives while avoiding any overlap (On-site visit, session 1).

The SER confirms that more than a dozen of CEIBS’ faculty members are on the list of Elsevier’s Most Cited Scholars in China and that EHL is consistently ranked first for peer-reviewed journal articles compared to other institutions in its comparator group in Switzerland (On-site visit, p. 31). The SER also highlights the awards provided by CEIBS and EHL to promote and encourage excellence and innovation in teaching and research, respectively, which, in turn, informs the content of, and teaching methodology used for, HEMBA. Appendix 3 of the SER lists the faculty members teaching on HEMBA, and the expert peers note the high calibre of the individuals listed. During the on-site visit, the faculty members interviewed confirmed their engagement in and with cutting edge research to inform course content and case studies (On-site visit, session 2).

CEIBS’ interdisciplinary research centre contributes to ensuring that programme content is informed by rigorous, current research. Since the establishment of HEMBA, the expert peers heard, close to one million CHF in funding has been raised to support further research into different aspects of the service industry. (On-site visit, session 1)

As set out above, programme participants are senior executives. The expert peers acknowledge the statement within the SER that participants’ “work and leadership commitments within their companies continuously create linkages to practice” and that “[r]egular interaction with students keeps...faculty members informed and interested in market developments” (SER, p. 30). In addition, CEIBS is also supported by “a large group of sponsoring firms and corporate recruiters...with alumni deeply embedded in the executive ranks of firms operating in China...All these stakeholders are formally and informally polled on a regular basis for their views and advice on how our programmes can better meet their needs and expectations” (Ibid.). Programme management confirmed that members of its Service Excellence Lab, which is a partnership between academics and industry, make a positive contribution to the programme’s curriculum through the writing and delivery of cases for the course. Alumni contribute to the programme content and delivery by meeting with students and engaging in discussion with them. All of this input helps to ensure that programme content remains current and relevant and that it can be applied by students immediately in their workplaces, which, as the faculty

members interviewed during the on-site visit confirmed, is an explicit demand of those enrolled on the programme (On-site visit, session 2).

From the detail provided within the SER and discussions during the on-site visit, the expert peer group concludes that one of the real strengths of HEMBA is its combination of academic content informed by cutting edge applied research and hands-on practical experiential learning. The expert peer group is satisfied that HEMBA combines academic knowledge and development of the professional field.

Standard 2.02 is **entirely fulfilled**.

#### **Commendations:**

The expert peer group commends CEIBS and EHL for their deft combination of academic content informed by cutting edge applied research and hands-on experiential learning in the HEMBA programme and encourages both institutions to continue the good work.

The expert peer group commends CEIBS and EHL for their strong links with industry partners and their incorporation of industry partners' input within the HEMBA curriculum.

The expert peer group commends HEMBA for the high degree of student satisfaction with the study programme and the way in which it is taught.

#### **Standard 2.03**

The methods of assessing the performance of students shall be adapted to the learning objectives. The admission requirements and requirements for being awarded a qualification shall be regulated and published.
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The SER clearly defines the admissions criteria and assessment process for incoming HEMBA students. The basic entry requirements for the programme are:

- At least a bachelor's degree.
- A minimum score of 75 in the GMAT-equivalent CEIBS entrance exam.
- 10 years' work experience, with seven years in managerial positions.
- Support from a highly committed organisation that allows participants two working days off each month to attend classes (though financial sponsorship is not obligatory).
- Demonstration of collegiate-level skills in the English language with proof of a minimum of six years of previous English language education. (SER, p. 34)

These requirements are also published on the HEMBA webpage (<https://www.ceibs.edu/hemba/admissions>).

The SER notes that, during admissions interviews, applicants are counselled and advised on how the programme can benefit them personally and professionally.

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Enrolment	52	48	92	109
Average age	41.1	42.48	40	40.7
International (%)	100% Chinese 1 from Chinese Taipei 1 from HK SAR	98% Chinese 1 from Chinese Taipei 1 from HK SAR 2% Int. (1 from Australia)	99% Chinese 1 from Taiwan 2 from HK SAR 1% Int. (1 from Australia)	100% Chinese 1 from Taiwan
Female (%)	36%	37.5%	47.8%	43.1%

Fig. 3: Demographics of HEMBA participants (SER, p. 35).

During the on-site visit, the expert peers heard that, within CEIBS, the bottom 5% of performers on each programme are identified and their characteristics and challenges analysed for admissions purposes (On-site visit, session 5).

The expert peers received assurance from the above details that the admissions requirements are clear and appropriate.

The HEMBA Student Handbook was provided to the expert peer group during the on-site visit upon their request. The handbook sets out details of course grading and evaluation. The SER confirms HEMBA students' knowledge and skills are assessed at course level using various forms of evaluation (including final exams, in-class quizzes, individual and group assignments, simulation, presentation, and class participation), both individually and in groups, with the evaluation structure for each course detailed in the course syllabus. The SER further sets out that faculty members teaching on HEMBA are responsible for the form and timing of evaluations (SER, p. 35). Appendix 4 of the SER provides details of assessment method distribution for HEMBA 2018 and 2019. Per the SER, normalisation and a curved grading system is employed across all CEIBS programmes, including HEMBA (ibid.). Further, since 2019, independent marking of selected assessments has been initiated. As set out above, where the proportion of students scoring less than 50% is greater than 10% (standard 2.01), the courses and learning goals are flagged and discussed to identify where improvements can be made (SER, p. 40).

The expert peers note the general student satisfaction with assessment of the HEMBA programme. Students with whom the peer group spoke confirmed that they receive very clear communication with regard to assessment (including examinations and any assignments). They noted that, in general, there is a culture of respecting the identified deadlines and a general unwillingness among students to negotiate extensions (On-site visit, session 3).

The peers are satisfied that details of the assessment regime set out in the Student Handbook are sufficiently clear. They also acknowledge the variety of assessment methods employed across the HEMBA programme. However, the expert peers note that the delegation of responsibility for assessment, including its form and timing, to individual faculty members teaching on the HEMBA programme may result in inconsistency across the programme. The expert peers suggest that the introduction of external validation of the suitability of assessment would be valuable; they further suggest that the process for extensions and resubmissions could be centralised to ensure consistency and constructive alignment across the programme.

Standard 2.03 is **largely fulfilled**.

### Area 3: Implementation

#### Standard 3.01

The study programme shall be regularly carried out.

The HEMBA programme has been provided since 2018, with an increase in enrolments from 52 students in 2018 to more than double that number (109) in 2021 (SER, p 35; Fig. 3 above). The SER provides a breakdown of the backgrounds of students enrolled in the 2021 cohort: 43% are women; 45% are first-generation entrepreneurs or inheritors of family businesses; 92.8% are in top management (SER, p. 40). Further, HEMBA 2022 also includes students from a more diverse set of industries (including robotics, cross-border e-commerce, alternative energies and IT) and increased diversity in students' origins (although the majority of students are, as in previous years, from Greater China) (Ibid.).

A comprehensive review conducted following the conclusion of HEMBA 2018 resulted in a number of adaptations to enhance future iterations of the programme – including with regard to learning goals 3 (Social Responsibility) and 4 (China Depth) (SER, p. 40). The HEMBA programme boasts an impressively high student satisfaction rate (approximately 4.8); students and alumni with whom the expert peers met verified their satisfaction with the programme, with alumni confirming that their expectations had been met.

To date, only one cohort of HEMBA participants has completed the programme. The expert peer group acknowledges that this is a result of Covid-19, which has given rise to strict border controls and quarantine measures being implemented and made the international travel required by certain HEMBA modules effectively impossible. Early on, based on consultation with HEMBA students, CEIBS and EHL decided that international modules would not be replaced with online components – the students consulted supported this decision, adverting to the benefits of networking and cultural immersion provided by the international modules. During the on-site visit, programme management detailed how CEIBS and EHL have worked to keep students from the 2019, 2020 and 2021 cohorts engaged and actively learning in the absence of international modules – this has included the introduction of a variety of new electives (On-site visit, session 1). Students confirmed their satisfaction with these innovations and their willingness to wait until travel is possible to complete the programme (On-site visit, session 3). The expert peers commend the actions that CEIBS and EHL have taken to ensure that students remain engaged in the programme, but have nonetheless included a recommendation on the development of a 'plan B' below.

The expert peers are confident that the unique features of HEMBA, which draw on the strengths of CEIBS and EHL, as well as the strong feedback and enhancement cultures of both institutions, has created a programme that will continue to attract a diverse selection of senior executives interested in broadening and deepening their knowledge of the service industry. However, notwithstanding the support among students for postponing graduation until the Covid-19 related travel restrictions have been lifted, the uncertainty as to when this might happen and the fact that this matter is beyond the control of CEIBS and EHL lead the expert peers to recommend that a viable 'plan B' is developed to allow students from the 2019, 2020 and 2021 cohorts – as well as future HEMBA students – to complete the programme and graduate.

Standard 3.01 is **partially fulfilled**.



### Recommendation:

The expert group recommends that CEIBS and EHL develop programme scenarios based upon the assumption that international travel will not be possible for some time to come. This includes devising solutions that will compensate for the international core modules that could not be completed by the HEMBA 2019, 2020 and 2021 cohorts.

### Standard 3.02

The available resources (supervision and material resources) shall enable students to attain their learning objectives.

An extensive complement of resources (human and material) is listed within the SER. In addition, the expert peers received further information confirming the satisfaction of enrolled students and alumni with faculty and their teaching, as well as with the physical resources associated with the programme, in facilitating their achievement of the learning objectives.

The programme is primarily taught on CEIBS campuses, where students have access to “highly interactive” classes with CEIBS faculty based on case-method teaching. This method is supported by annual in-house workshops from the CEIBS Case Centre and CEIBS Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) to promote the writing and use of cases and the sharing of methods among CEIBS’ professors (SER, p. 43).

The SER details recent renovation and enhancements to the EHL Lausanne campus. The campus incorporates student accommodation and the layout is intended to promote a healthy work-life-study balance for students. The SER includes reference to the academic and student services that are available to students engaging in their studies in Lausanne (SER, pp. 43-44). The expert peers note that the state-of-the-art facilities upon the EHL campus, set in a luxurious environment, support students in adjusting to the requirements embedded in their future careers.

As noted elsewhere in this report, the HEMBA programme makes ample use of experiential learning to enable students to apply learning from the programme. Opportunities for experiential learning include the Capstone Project, which is a mandatory real-situation group-learning project that involves groups of students working together on a project for a real company. The SER highlights that the Capstone provides an opportunity for class-wide mutual learning and understanding and has been well received by students (SER, p. 44). During ‘normal’ times (i.e. when travel is possible), experiential learning is also facilitated through student participation in international core modules (Ibid.).

Faculty members teaching on HEMBA employ technology-enhanced learning in the delivery of their programmes and the SER states that “pioneering faculty members have been experimenting with various online technologies to enhance student learning in class” (SER, p. 45). A digital Learning Centre and a bulletin board are provided through the course virtual learning environment, Black Board, and materials and information are also shared via Microsoft 365. Networking between students is facilitated through the use of WeChat – in advance of and during the programme.

During the on-site visit (session 3), students praised the CEIBS mentor-mentee programme and the engagement facilitated by the institution with alumni. The expert peers also heard that there is a strong culture within the HEMBA programme of peer-to-peer support and that individual professors are accessible where a student has questions or issues in relation to course content. The peer group learned that, while CEIBS does operate a career centre, this is not aimed at part-time graduate students, such as those enrolled on the HEMBA programme (On-site visit,

session 5). In specific modules, students are supported to learn and develop as individuals and leaders by executive coaches (SER, p. 47).

The expert peer group acknowledges the breadth of supports provided to HEMBA students and appreciates that HEMBA students are part-time graduate students and experienced, senior executives, who may not have call for the same supports that full-time students at an earlier stage in their career might require; however, the expert peer group nonetheless emphasises that all students should be entitled access to supports and advice where they encounter challenging situations; they suggest to CEIBS and EHL that it is important that a systematic framework of supports for HEMBA students be introduced and appropriately promoted to students. That HEMBA students frequently draw upon peer-to-peer support and advice from fellow students is very positive, given the breadth and depth of experience represented among HEMBA programme cohorts; however, reliance on peer-to-peer support gives rise to the risk of inconsistency of support. The same is true of ad hoc support provided by individual professors. The expert peers are of the opinion that the incorporation of systematic student supports to HEMBA would represent a significant enhancement to this innovative programme.

Standard 3.02 is **entirely fulfilled**.

**Commendation:**

The expert peer group commends CEIBS and EHL for providing students with an excellent learning environment (modern facilities, interactive classrooms, case centre at CEIBS, experiential learning options, and so on.)

**Standard 3.03**

The teaching staff shall have the competence appropriate to the special features of the study programme and its objectives.
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As stated elsewhere in this report, the expert peer group notes with approval the experienced and high-calibre faculty members teaching on HEMBA, who, through the incorporation of cutting edge research and case studies within their modules, ensure that students are apprised of current issues and challenges in the service industry.

The SER notes that the majority of CEIBS professors have come from leading international business schools with strong research orientations. Through the CEIBS case centre, faculty are also active in the production of case studies, which are integrated into HEMBA courses (SER, p. 48). The report details the improvements in the scope and quality of publications from EHL faculty over the past five years, with over 300 peer-reviewed articles published by EHL faculty members during this period. Strong relationships with industry and a broad cultural diversity among faculty members are also noted as distinct advantages that ensure the necessary knowledge and experience to teach on the HEMBA programme as well as achievement by students of its learning objectives (Ibid.).

During the on-site visit (session 2), HEMBA faculty detailed the teaching supports provided to them by CEIBS, confirming that teaching assistants attend each lecture and take a record of all discussions. Faculty acknowledged the value of teaching assistants' support in helping them to deliver each course as effectively as possible and supporting the implementation of any necessary improvements immediately.

Faculty also confirmed that appropriate and adequate support to attend conferences and engage with industry is received from both CEIBS and EHL and that faculty members are encouraged to develop their industry knowledge and teaching skills in a variety of ways. One professor spoke of his membership of a number of boards, which, he noted, allows him to bring

real world knowledge and best practice into the HEMBA classroom. The expert peers learned that, while a certain standard is expected of all CEIBS faculty with regard to publication (both volume and journal type), the institution ensures a lower teaching load for assistant and associate professors to increase the time available for research; as faculty members progress in their careers, their teaching load grows.

Faculty demonstrated a keen awareness of the need to tailor course content and delivery format, mode and the sequence of learning activities to their audience, acknowledging the seniority of HEMBA students and the experience that they have in their respective fields. The faculty members noted that HEMBA students will generally want to apply the learning in their workplaces rapidly and that this means that theory and practice must be balanced within courses. The expert peers heard from faculty that they feel well supported by the CEIBS/EHL joint programme team – including the programme’s two co-directors – in designing and delivering quality course content.

The expert peers are confident that HEMBA teaching staff has the competence appropriate to the special features of the HEMBA programme and its objectives and that teaching staff are supported to further develop their knowledge, skill and competence to ensure a quality learning experience for HEMBA students.

Standard 3.03 is **entirely fulfilled**.

#### **Commendation:**

The expert group commends CEIBS and EHL for the calibre of faculty it has selected to teach on the HEMBA programme and for the way in which faculty incorporate cutting-edge research within their teaching on the programme.

### **Area 4: Quality assurance**

#### **Standard 4.01**

Managing the study programme shall take into consideration the interests of the relevant interest groups and allow for the necessary developments to be achieved.
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Within the SER (p. 52), the HEMBA governance structure, including the CEIBS Learning Assurance Committee (LAC), the Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC), the Research Committee (RC), and the Management Committee (MC), is detailed. This structure ensures that representatives of both CEIBS and EHL contribute to programme governance, development and enhancement. The SER also details the ways in which students and external stakeholders contribute to the further development and enhancement of the programme.

Programme leadership confirmed during the on-site visit (session 1) that they receive regular feedback from faculty as well as from a strong alumni network. Although current circumstances (due to the pandemic) mean that it is challenging for the institutions to keep in contact with alumni, the institutions have established ‘*Stamms*’ – alumni groups based across a number of regions – and aim to involve these individuals in the delivery of the HEMBA programme at a very early stage. CEIBS and EHL are working to embed input from the *Stamms* into the future development of the programme.

At a macro level, industry input is provided through CEIBS’ and EHL’s academic and corporate advisory boards (On-site visit, session 5). When revising the HEMBA curriculum, for example, the formal revision process will generally involve the HEMBA programme academic committee, LAC, and MC and – externally – a strategic advisory committee, industry experts and representatives from industry associations and government representatives to ensure that the

curriculum not only fits with the overall learning goals, but also with the external market and learning demand (Ibid.).

Student feedback is provided through end-of-programme exit interviews, which investigate student perceptions of *inter alia* course overlap and sequencing, course relevance, student selection, facilities, administrative support and provision of services. Informal feedback is provided through a post-programme lunch or dinner attended by students, deans and key school staff (On-site visit, session 5). Students also provide feedback through direct contact with CEIBS' programme team during in-class visits. This feedback is shared with the HEMBA Academic Committee (HAC). Teaching evaluations are carried out by the individual institutions under existing systems. CEIBS carries out a feedback survey for all modules (including EHL-led modules) to evaluate student satisfaction with the academic programme and logistical arrangements. During the on-site visit, programme management (session 1) confirmed that feedback is also received through the student committee, which provides collective feedback from the student cohort. HEMBA faculty noted (On-site visit, session 5) that, given the seniority of students enrolled on HEMBA, quite a few changes and enhancements to the programme come from student feedback. HEMBA students and alumni (session 3) provided examples of instances in which they had given feedback on areas for improvement and observed rapid adjustments to the programme on the basis of the feedback. One such instance involved the initial HEMBA overseas module in Lausanne during 2018, during which feedback was provided by students with regard to their desire for increased hands-on experience. The student representative swiftly raised the topic with faculty and an immediate adjustment was made, with new modules, electives and field trips introduced.

The expert peer group is satisfied that students (and alumni) have a strong voice within the programme – that they are encouraged and facilitated to provide feedback, and that this feedback is acknowledged and acted upon rapidly by the institutions. Furthermore, the way in which CEIBS and EHL facilitate the input of industry – including alumni – to the HEMBA programme is exemplary and of great benefit to the programme, its students and professors.

Whilst the expert peers see much to commend in how stakeholder feedback is incorporated within the programme and acted upon by the two institutions, much of this input happens on a relatively informal and ad hoc basis. This is understandable, given that the programme is a relatively new one, but the expert peers suggest that CEIBS and EHL consider formalising and systematising some elements of the infrastructure to ensure consistency across programme cohorts. This aligns with experience and best practice within the Swiss system with regard to stakeholder involvement at institutional and programme level.

Standard 4.01 is **entirely fulfilled**.

#### **Commendation:**

The expert group commends CEIBS and EHL for the way in which they incorporate stakeholder feedback within the programme and the rapidity with which both institutions respond to any justified critique.

#### **Standard 4.02**

The study programme shall be an integral component of the quality assurance system of the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector.

The SER confirms that the HEMBA programme is accredited by EQUIS and AACSB and has EPAS recognition (SER, p. 54). As agreed by EHL and CEIBS, the programme is incorporated within the CEIBS learning assurance process, which has originated from AACSB accreditation.

As noted elsewhere in this report, HEMBA is incorporated within the existing feedback systems within CEIBS and EHL, with feedback elicited from students, faculty and external stakeholders, and enhancements effected as a result.

Institutional staff with responsibility for quality assurance acknowledged during the on-site visit (session 5) that the programme's QA system can tend to be rather informal, commenting that this informality may be "more powerful" within the context of HEMBA and in China. They noted that, when it comes to providing negative feedback, students are more likely to feel comfortable doing so informally and verbally. Where students do experience issues, they are raised with the class coordinators and then escalated to the class managers and on to the co-directors if necessary.

The expert peers acknowledge that the HEMBA programme is an integral component of both CEIBS' and EHL's quality assurance systems. However, the peers see room for enhancement and development in the systematisation of the programme's own quality assurance and note that it would be of benefit to all stakeholders to formalise and document the programme's annual quality cycle to ensure accessibility of information and consistency of quality assurance across iterations of the programme. This could be done as part of a programme quality assurance handbook. The expert peer group has made a recommendation in this regard below.

Standard 4.02 is **largely fulfilled**.

#### **Recommendation:**

The expert group recommends that CEIBS and EHL establish a quality assurance handbook for HEMBA in which all responsibilities, policies, processes and practices related to the programme are systematised and documented.

#### **Commendation:**

The expert group commends the responsiveness of programme management to student feedback, which contributes to high student satisfaction ratings among HEMBA participants.

The expert group commends CEIBS and EHL for the strong element of externality evident in programme evaluation, including external benchmarking through international accreditation processes.

## **5 Overall impression/Strengths and weaknesses**

The HEMBA is an innovative and unique programme that very much benefits from the individual strengths of CEIBS and EHL. The expert peers are of the view that the individual expertise, experience, perspectives and approaches of each institution complement those of the other; this was confirmed during discussions with students and alumni.

Notwithstanding the many strengths of HEMBA, the expert peer group sees it as crucial that CEIBS and EHL to work to develop a 'plan B' that can be implemented in the event that the Chinese zero-Covid policy remains in place and prevents the completion of the programme's international elements.

### **5.1 Strengths and areas for improvement**

The expert group has identified some strengths as well as areas for improvement.

#### Strengths

The expert peer group commends CEIBS and EHL for the following very positive elements of the HEMBA and of their collaboration:

- The complementarity of the two partner institutions in their development, delivery and continued enhancement of HEMBA. This includes complementarity of expertise, strengths, perspectives and approaches.
- The responsiveness of programme management to student feedback, which contributes to high student satisfaction ratings among HEMBA participants.
- The calibre of faculty involved in delivering the HEMBA programme and the way in which these faculty members incorporate cutting-edge research within their teaching on the programme.
- The experiential learning components incorporated within the programme and the strong links between the programme and industry partners.
- The international teaching locations in which the HEMBA programme is delivered.
- The mix of academic knowledge and practical, experiential learning that the HEMBA programme provides.
- The establishment of the CEIBS case centre and the support that it provides staff to write and use cases in the HEMBA programme.
- The systematic collection of feedback from internal and external stakeholders and the rapidity with which modifications in areas of importance are introduced.
- The openness of CEIBS and EHL to international accreditation processes.
- The excellent learning environment for students (modern facilities, interactive classrooms, case centre at CEIBS, etc.).

### Enhancement Areas

The expert peers are of the opinion that the following courses of action would significantly enhance the HEMBA and the learning experience it provides for students enrolled on it:

- The development of a 'plan B' to facilitate completion of HEMBA by all students while the Chinese zero-Covid policy remains in effect.
- The systematisation and formalisation of HEMBA's QA system, which would avoid any potential inconsistency across HEMBA courses and/or cohorts. Ideally, this should be documented in a QA handbook.
- The development of a module handbook that sets out details of each course, its content and learning objectives, didactic methods used, as well as a clear statement of how and when the module is to be assessed. This would provide a valuable transparency tool for all of the programme's stakeholders.
- The systematisation of the assessment system so that consistency can be ensured across programme courses. This could include the introduction of external validation of the suitability of assessment and the centralisation of the process for extensions and resubmissions to ensure constructive alignment across the programme and to avoid the potential for inconsistent treatment of students.
- The development of a systematic student support system to ensure that any programme participants who may be experiencing challenging circumstances are adequately and appropriately assisted, as well as the promotion of this system to all students.

- The regular review of programme learning outcomes. Given the global nature of the programme, any such review should consider the formulation of explicitly international and intercultural learning outcomes.
- The development and promotion of a systematic framework of supports for HEMBA students.
- The formalisation and systematisation of some elements of HEMBA’s stakeholder engagement to ensure consistency across programme cohorts.

## 6 List of recommendations

Recommendations for programme improvements		
1	Standard 1.01	The expert peer group recommends that CEIBS and EHL promote the programme to a wider audience and work to diversify HEMBA’s student body to include more international students.
2	Standard 2.01	The expert group recommends that CEIBS and EHL develop a module handbook for HEMBA containing a full list of core and elective modules, their content, objectives, didactic methods used and a clear statement of how and when the module is to be assessed.
3	Standard 3.01	The expert group recommends that CEIBS and EHL develop programme scenarios based upon the assumption that international travel will not be possible for some time to come. This includes devising solutions that will compensate for the international core modules that could not be completed by the HEMBA 2019, 2020 and 2021 cohorts.
4	Standard 4.02	The expert group recommends that CEIBS and EHL establish a quality assurance handbook for HEMBA in which all policies, processes and practices related to the programme are systematised and documented.

## 7 Conclusion

The expert peer group reiterates its position that HEMBA is a unique joint-degree programme that capitalises very well on the individual expertise, experience and approach of each of the partner institutions. The programme combines excellence in Business Administration and in Hospitality Management and its unique selling points include its global teaching locations, and its close links to industry, which provide enrolled students with both academic training on-campus and practical experience in the field.

Teaching on the HEMBA programme is informed by current research, not least the research conducted by CEIBS’ interdisciplinary research centre. Stakeholder feedback – internal and external – is gathered and evaluated and consequent improvements are continuously and rapidly implemented.

The expert peer group sees much to commend in the HEMBA programme and is confident that the programme will continue to develop and improve. It is to this end that the expert peers have included four recommendations within this report. These centre on the diversification and internationalisation of the student body; the development of a 'plan B' to facilitate completion of the programme by enrolled students while a zero-Covid policy continues to remain in effect in China; and the development of module and quality assurance handbooks associated with the programme.

Overall, the expert peer group concludes that the HEMBA programme complies with the AAQ evaluation standards to a very high degree. The expert peer group therefore advises the Commission AAQ to arrive at a positive evaluation decision and to authorise HEMBA to use the quality seal "AAQ-evaluated 2023" for its publications.

The AAQ Commission released the report on March 2023. HEMBA is authorised to use the quality seal "AAQ evaluated 2023" for its publications. The quality seal is linked with the expert report and clearly makes the connection to the standards that are the basis for the evaluation. The report is published on the website AAQ.

## 8 Feedback of HEMBA team

In February 2023, the HEMBA team submitted the position statement on the evaluation report to the AAQ. In the position statement, the HEMBA team notes that the team is constantly striving to improve through review and development. The team thanks the expert peers and AAQ for the evaluation, and acknowledges the contribution of staff to the HEMBA programme.

The team responds to each of the four recommendations made by the expert peers:

Recommendation	Standard	Summary of Response
The expert group recommends that CEIBS and EHL develop a module handbook for HEMBA, containing a full list of core and elective modules, their content, objectives, didactic methods used and a clear statement of how and when the module is to be assessed.	2.01	The HEMBA team commits to creating a module handbook to assist future students and faculty as well as other key stakeholders. The HEMBA team also confirms that this handbook will be reviewed and updated at regular intervals.
The expert peers note that the delegation of responsibility for assessment, including its form and timing, to individual faculty members teaching on the HEMBA programme may result in inconsistency across the programme. The expert peers suggest that the introduction of external validation of the suitability of assessment would be valuable; they further suggest that the process for extensions and resubmissions could be centralised to ensure	2.03	The HEMBA team notes that the variability of courses in the programme requires a certain degree of flexibility. Nonetheless, the team acknowledges the recommendation and states that the team will consider establishing an advisory committee to help evaluate different elements of the curriculum to ensure consistency. The team confirms that the primary responsibility for programme consistency lies with the two programme directors, and that this could be strengthened by introducing annual meetings for the whole HEMBA faculty for exchange and collaboration.



<p>consistency and constructive alignment across the programme.</p>		
<p>The expert group recommends that CEIBS and EHL develop programme scenarios based upon the assumption that international travel will not be possible for some time to come. This includes devising solutions that will compensate for the international core modules that could not be completed by the HEMBA 2019, 2020 and 2021 cohorts.</p>	<p>3.01</p>	<p>The HEMBA team notes that the Chinese borders are now open once more, which will mitigate the challenges regarding international travel. However, the HEMBA team also recognises in its response that it is important to plan for the future and to prepare for future disruptions in travel.</p>
<p>The expert group recommends that CEIBS and EHL establish a quality assurance handbook for HEMBA in which all responsibilities, policies, processes and practices related to the programme are systematised and documented</p>	<p>4.02</p>	<p>The HEMBA team recognises that the current quality assurance process for the programme is somewhat informal and can often take place verbally between students and staff. The team commits to formalising the process with the introduction of a quality assurance handbook. The handbook will detail the responsibilities, policies, processes and practices related to the programme, ensuring that these elements are clearly documented and assisting in making the quality cycle smoother and more consistent in future.</p>

The position statement is part of the evaluation documentation and attached to the evaluation report.

China Europe International Business School (CEIBS)  
Hirsackerstrasse 46, 8810 Horgen, Switzerland

EHL  
Route de Cojonnex 18, 1000 Lausanne 25, Switzerland

AAQ - Schweizerische Agentur für Akkreditierung und Qualitätssicherung  
Postfach  
Effingerstrasse 15  
3001 Bern

08.02.23

### **HEMBA Position Statement**

Dear Dr. Rolf Heusser, Dear Prof. Dr. Patric Arn, Dear Dr. Inger Seiferheld, Dear AAQ team,

Please find below the feedback and comments from the HEMBA team following the AAQ evaluation.

#### **Standard 2.01**

**The study programme shall show clear objectives, clarifying its special features and complying with national and international requirements.**

*Recommendation: The expert group recommends that CEIBS and EHL develop a module handbook for HEMBA, containing a full list of core and elective modules, their content, objectives, didactic methods used and a clear statement of how and when the module is to be assessed.*

The HEMBA team recognise that there is an absence of a module handbook and will work together to create this document to assist future students and faculty as well as key stakeholders. This handbook will be created collaboratively between the two institutions and will clearly state the core modules and the elective modules, including their content, objectives, didactic methods used and a clear statement of how and when the module is to be assessed. This handbook will be reviewed at regular intervals and updated accordingly.

#### **Standard 2.03**

**The study programme shall show clear objectives, clarifying its special features and complying with national and international requirements.**

*Recommendation: The expert peers note that the delegation of responsibility for assessment, including its form and timing, to individual faculty members teaching on the HEMBA programme may result in inconsistency across the programme. The expert peers suggest that the introduction of external validation of the suitability of assessment would be valuable; they further suggest that the process for extensions and resubmissions could be centralised to ensure consistency and constructive alignment across the programme.*

We wish to point out that the courses in HEMBA are quite varied ranging from in-class general management courses to skill-based leadership courses to experiential study tours. Assessment for these wide-ranging courses require a certain degree of flexibility. The HEMBA Academic Committee has provided faculty with general guidelines in terms of written and written evaluation, as well as individual and group evaluation. The assessment methods may be delegated to faculty members but as long as the overall learning objectives and student and graduate outcomes are fulfilled, flexibility is part of the academic design process. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the point raised by the peer review team. To overcome this issue, the HEMBA program will consider establishing an advisory

committee to help evaluate different elements of the curriculum to ensure consistency. The primary responsibility of the program consistency is with the two program directors from EHL and CEIBS respectively. This could be strengthened by annual meetings of the whole HEMBA faculty (EHL and CEIBS) for exchanges and collaborations.

### **Standard 3.01**

**The study programme shall be regularly carried out.**

*Recommendation: The expert group recommends that CEIBS and EHL develop programme scenarios based upon the assumption that international travel will not be possible for some time to come. This includes devising solutions that will compensate for the international core modules that could not be completed by the HEMBA 2019, 2020 and 2021 cohorts.*

Since the completion of the AAQ evaluation for the HEMBA program, borders in China are now open meaning that travel to and from China is possible again, alleviating the problem that was posed to the HEMBA program between early 2020 and January 2023. As international travel is now possible, the need for a plan B is less of a priority for the HEMBA team and the bigger priority is to execute the international modules for all cohorts who have been waiting to travel. Plans are already under way for those modules involving international travel.

With that said, the HEMBA team acknowledges that it is important to plan and prepare for any future travel disruptions that could arise in the nations in which the HEMBA program is carried out.

### **Standard 4.02**

**Managing the study programme shall take into consideration the interests of the relevant interest groups and allow for the necessary developments to be achieved.**

*Recommendation: The expert group recommends that CEIBS and EHL establish a quality assurance handbook for HEMBA in which all responsibilities, policies, processes and practices related to the programme are systematised and documented*

CEIBS and EHL acknowledge that, although based on an AACSB-modelled AoL plan, the current Quality Assurance process is somewhat informal and tends to take place verbally between students and staff. The HEMBA team will work to put a more formal process in place by the introduction of the Quality Assurance Handbook. This handbook will detail the responsibilities, policies, processes and practices related to the program to ensure that these elements are clearly documented and to assist in making an annual quality cycle smoother and more consistent going forward.

### **Concluding remarks**

The HEMBA team is constantly striving to improve through continuous review and development and thanks the expert panel and AAQ, as well as all the employees who contribute on a daily basis to the HEMBA program for this evaluation process.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Katherine Xin  
Associate Dean & Director of HEMBA, CEIBS

Dr. Achim Schmitt,  
Associate Dean Graduate Programs, EHL

AAQ  
Effingerstrasse 15  
Postfach  
CH-3001 Bern

[www.aaq.ch](http://www.aaq.ch)

