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**Institutional accreditation
Glion Institute of Higher Education
(GIHE)**

External assessment report | 20 June 2025



Content:

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Section A

Decision of the Swiss Accreditation Council

20 June 2025





The Swiss Accreditation Council publishes its accreditation decisions:
<https://akkreditierungsrat.ch/en/decisions/>



Section B
Proposal of the agency

27 February 2025



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Preliminary remarks

Purpose and object of institutional accreditation

The process of institutional accreditation pursuant to the HEdA provides Switzerland with an instrument to control access to its higher education landscape. Institutional accreditation assesses the quality assurance systems of higher education institutions; through these systems, higher education institutions guarantee the quality of their teaching, research and services.

The quality assurance system is evaluated by external experts, who review the concepts and mechanisms of quality assurance and quality enhancement against quality standards. They assess whether the various elements of the system form a fully consistent and coherent whole that enables the higher education institution to ensure the quality and continuous improvement of its activities in accordance with its type and specific characteristics. The relationship between the resources used and the results achieved are also considered. A review of the whole system every seven years allows the higher education institution (HEI) to regularly assess the state of development and the coherence of the different elements.

Proposal by the agency

The institutional accreditation procedure is designed as a “peer review” process. Each report by a group of experts therefore represents a snapshot of a specific higher education institution. Accordingly, the reports by the groups of experts are not suitable for the purpose of drawing comparisons between higher education institutions. The accreditation decisions, on the other hand, must be consistent: the same findings must lead to the same decisions.

In its proposal, the agency verifies whether the deliberations of the group of experts are coherent, i.e. related to the standard and evidence-based, and is consistent with previous processes.

AAQ does not comment on the recommendations of the group of experts and accepts these as part of the review process. The recommendations are presented by the group of experts as suggestions to promote quality enhancement and the HEI is free to interpret how these might be implemented across the institution. AAQ attributes a high importance to the way in which a HEI addresses recommendations following a review process and will seek evidence of good practice in future self-assessment reports. However, the recommendations are not legally binding and do not have to be implemented.

1 Glion Institute of Higher Education (GIHE)

Glion Institute of Higher Education (GIHE) was established as the *Institut International de Glion* above Montreux in 1962. It was initially operated under private ownership and underwent several changes. In 2016, GIHE came under the ownership of Eurazeo. GIHE operates as part of Eurazeo’s hospitality education group, Sommet Education Sàrl, a Swiss-registered company. Sommet is parent company to GIHE alongside four other institutions (including Les Roches [Switzerland], Ecole Ducasse [France]). As parent company to GIHE, Sommet offers support functions to the institution in the areas of human resources, IT, marketing, legal and finances. The institution is legally registered in Bulle in the canton of Fribourg and the Bulle campus serves as the institution’s primary campus on which its key academic, research and administrative departments are based, as well as its executive offices.

GIHE programmes offer business education that combines academic courses, hands-on practical skills and professional internships with a focus on developing the soft skills required in

the hospitality and luxury world. The institution delivers both bachelor's and master's programmes in the areas of hospitality and luxury business management across its three physical campuses. Executive continuing education programmes are provided virtually. GIHE maintains academic collaboration agreements with numerous university partners and a large number of industry partners who support student placements and internships, and with whom GIHE engages on problem-solving research and consulting activities.

GIHE's student population on its physical campuses is comprised primarily of international students – both young adults and individuals who have already entered the workforce. Students enrolled on executive education on GIHE's virtual campus are generally working professionals. In 2023 GIHE enrolled 1971 students of 98 nationalities. In the academic year 2023/24, there were 45 permanent faculty members engaged by the institution. These work alongside 74 visiting faculty (employed on a temporary basis), whose primary focus is the delivery of master's and/or executive programmes. GIHE also employs 157 administrative and operational staff members.

2 Legal basis

- *Federal Act of 30 September 2011 on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector (Higher Education Act, HEdA), SR 414.20;*
- *Ordinance of the Higher Education Council of 28 May 2015 on Accreditation in Higher Education (Accreditation Ordinance HEdA), SR 414.205.3;*
- *Ordinance of the Higher Education Council of 29 November on the Coordination of Teaching at Swiss Universities, SR 414.205.1;*
- *Ordinance of the Higher Education Council of 20 May 2021 on Admission to the Universities of Applied Sciences and the Institutes of the Universities of Applied Sciences (Admission Ordinance UAS), SR 414.205.7.*

3 Facts

Glion Institute of Higher Education (GIHE) applied for institutional accreditation as a Swiss University Institute of Applied Sciences pursuant to Art. 8 para. 1 of the Accreditation Ordinance on 18 July 2023.

GIHE chose the Swiss Agency for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ) as its accreditation agency.

GIHE chose English as the language through which the procedure would be conducted, in accordance with Art. 9 para. 7 of the Accreditation Ordinance. Both the self-assessment report (SAR) and the report by the group of peer experts were to be written in English. The national language chosen for the official administrative part of the process is French.

On 22 September 2023, the Accreditation Council decided to accept the application of GIHE on the basis of Art. 4 para. 2 of the Accreditation Ordinance and forwarded the application documents to AAQ.

AAQ opened the proceedings on 17 October 2023.

On 30 April 2024, AAQ informed GIHE of the composition of the group of experts, which comprised the following :

- Dr. Fabienne Marchand, Head of Continuing Education, UniDistance, peer leader

- Prof. Patric Arn, Director of Studies BA Tourism, Fachhochschule Graubünden
- Prof. Carmine Garzia, Ass. Prof. of Management (UNISG, IT), Prof. of Management and Entrepreneurship (SUPSI) and Prof. of Business strategy (USI)
- Krumma Jonsdottir, Founder of “Positive Performances”, Reykjavik (Iceland)
- Nils Winterhalter, Master’s student in Business and Economics, Universität Zürich

On the basis of the self-assessment report (SAR) of 12 July 2024 and the on-site visit of 22 and 23 October 2024 (which was preceded by a preliminary visit on 25 September 2024), the group of experts considered whether the accreditation requirements pursuant to Art. 30 HEdA were fulfilled and recorded their conclusions in a report.

Based on the documents relevant to the procedure – in particular, the SAR and the preliminary report of the expert peer group – AAQ formulated the draft accreditation application and submitted the expert peer group’s report and the agency’s proposal to GIHE for comment on 27 February 2025.

AAQ received the comments of GIHE on the group of experts’ report and AAQ’s accreditation proposal on 18 March 2025.

On 17 April 2025, AAQ proposed to the Accreditation Council that GIHE be accredited as a “Swiss University Institute of Applied Sciences”.

4 Considerations

4.1 Assessment and accreditation recommendation by the group of experts

In its final assessment of the institution’s quality assurance system, the expert group highlights several strengths: Quality assurance is deeply embedded in the institutional culture, with a long-standing commitment to external evaluations and accreditations. The system is characterized by active participation from both internal and external stakeholders and incorporates innovative elements. The integration of students into quality assurance processes is particularly strong, with mechanisms such as class representatives and student ambassadors ensuring their active involvement. The PDCA-cycle effectively includes all stakeholders, reinforcing a structured and continuous improvement approach. Staff members are well informed about the quality assurance system. There is a high level of transparency in documentation, and communication within the institution is particularly effective.

At the same time, the expert panel identifies several significant challenges: In the area of research, further expansion is necessary, and research must be systematically integrated into the quality assurance system to ensure consistent oversight and development. Regarding teaching, the transformation of the BBA program into a BSc must be successfully completed, and a clear framework must be put in place to support this transition. Additionally, promotion criteria within the institution are not always transparent. The establishment of clear and well-defined guidelines, particularly for the promotion of professors, is essential to ensure fairness and merit-based advancement. Furthermore, within their report, the experts highlight existing shortcomings in gender equality and equal opportunities.

Based on its analysis the group of experts sees the need for corrections to be effected in the following areas:

- Equal opportunities and true gender equality (Art. 30 para. 1. let. a num. 5, standard 2.5)
- Teaching and research (Art. 30 para. 1 let. a num. 1; standards 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4)

- Promotion of faculty members (Art. 30 para. 1 let. a num. 1; standard 4.3)

Consequently, the group of experts recommends five conditions:

In its analysis of Standard 2.5, the expert group acknowledges the institution's strong inclusion of diverse nationalities and its effective management of cultural diversity among both staff and students. However, the experts identify significant shortcomings in gender equality and equal opportunities. Based on this analysis the group of experts assess standard 2.5 as being "partially fulfilled" and formulates the following condition:

Condition 1 (regarding standard 2.5)

GIHE must establish a clear policy for promoting equal opportunities and actual gender equality for all representative groups across all aspects of its activity. It must define precise objectives in this area and an action plan for achieving them, and communicate the policy to all employees and students across all GIHE campuses.

In its analysis of standard 3.1, the expert group recognizes that GIHE is in the early stages of developing a research culture. While an emerging research environment can be observed, the current level of faculty-led research remains limited to a small group of individuals. The expert group emphasizes that research must be further expanded and fully integrated into the institution's quality assurance system. In particular, the experts recommend leveraging GIHE's strong industry connections to foster research partnerships that contribute to both academic knowledge and industry innovation.

Based on this analysis, the expert group assesses standard 3.1 and 3.2 as "partially fulfilled" and formulates the following conditions:

Condition 2 (regarding standard 3.1)

GIHE must establish a strategy and define objectives to ensure that the institution continues to develop its own research, integrating scientific results, increasing the number of its own researchers and confirming the allocation of sufficient resources.

Condition 3 (regarding standard 3.2)

GIHE must establish a comprehensive policy with associated infrastructure for the evaluation of its research strategy, activity and results.

In its analyses of standards 3.1 and 3.4 the group of experts notes that GIHE must complete the transformation of the BBA into a BSc to comply with the Swiss Law (HEdA, ch. 4, art. 25) and Accreditation Ordinance (section 1, art. 2 and section 2, art. 4). The group of experts formulates a condition:

Condition 4 (regarding standard 3.4)

GIHE must modify its degree programmes, associated diplomas and admission requirements so that they comply in full with the HEdA (ch. 4, art. 25) and its Accreditation Ordinance (section 1, art. 2 and section 2, art. 4). These changes must be clearly communicated to prospective students and all stakeholders through the institution's website, published materials and all other forms of public communication.

In its analysis of Standard 4.3 on criteria for staff promotion, the expert group notes that a number of positive health and well-being measures, such as opportunities for mobility and development, are valued by staff. However, the criteria for promotion are not always clear. They

need to be clearly defined, particularly for the promotion of professors. GIHE also needs to be more active in supporting young researchers. One condition is linked to the criteria for promotion:

Condition 5 (regarding standard 4.3)

GIHE must establish a clear promotion system for all faculty and staff members – in particular for the new generation of scientists – and clarify the promotion procedure for professors.

4.2 Appraisal of the assessment and accreditation proposal by the group of experts

AAQ states that the group of experts has reviewed all standards.

AAQ judges the assessment of the group of experts and the conclusions drawn to be conclusive and coherently derived from the standards. AAQ accepts the conditions as wholly appropriate in identifying the areas for improvement in the development of the quality assurance system.

AAQ supports the proposal of the group of experts to allow GIHE a period of 24 months to fulfil the imposed conditions. Given the range of standards concerned, AAQ believes a site visit of one day with 2 experts is appropriate.

5 Accreditation proposal

AAQ states that GIHE meets the requirements of Article 30 HEdA for institutional accreditation as a University of Applied Sciences Institute:

– *Article 30 para. 1 let. a and c*

The group of experts' analysis of the standards in relation to the Accreditation Ordinance shows that GIHE fulfils the requirements according to let. a num. 1–7 as well as let. c, or will have fulfilled them after fulfilling the conditions.

– *Article 30 para. 1 let. b*

As GIHE applied for accreditation as a University of Applied Sciences Institute, this requirement is not applicable.

Based on the self-assessment report of GIHE, the analysis in the report of the group of experts, the accreditation proposal of the group of experts and the position statement of GIHE, AAQ proposes that accreditation be granted to GIHE as a University of Applied Sciences Institute with five conditions:

Condition 1 (regarding standard 2.5)

GIHE must establish a clear policy for promoting equal opportunities and actual gender equality for all representative groups across all aspects of its activity. It must define precise objectives in this area and an action plan for achieving them, and communicate the policy to all employees and students across all GIHE campuses.

Condition 2 (regarding standard 3.1)

GIHE must establish a strategy and define objectives to ensure that the institution continues to develop its own research, integrating scientific results, increasing the number of its own researchers and confirming the allocation of sufficient resources.

Condition 3 (regarding standard 3.2)

GIHE must establish a comprehensive policy with associated infrastructure for the evaluation of its research strategy, activity and results.

Condition 4 (regarding standard 3.4)

GIHE must modify its degree programmes, associated diplomas and admission requirements so that they comply in full with the HEdA (ch. 4, art. 25) and its Accreditation Ordinance (section 1, art. 2 and section 2, art. 4). These changes must be clearly communicated to prospective students and all stakeholders through the institution's website, published materials and all other forms of public communication.

Condition 5 (regarding standard 4.3)

GIHE must establish a clear promotion system for all faculty and staff members – in particular for the new generation of scientists – and clarify the promotion procedure for professors.

AAQ proposes a period of 24 months for the fulfilment of the conditions.

AAQ proposes a review of the conditions with two experts during a one-day site visit.



Section C

Expert report

11 February 2025



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1 Glion Institute of Higher Education: Brief description

Glion Institute of Higher Education (GIHE) was established as the *Institut International de Glion* in Glion above Montreux in 1962. It was initially operated under private ownership and, during this period, underwent a number of changes, including a change of name (to *Centre International de Glion* in 1977) and the introduction of a second campus (in Bulle, Fribourg) in 1989. In 2002, the institution was acquired by Laureate Education, and a third campus was established (in London) in 2013. Subsequently, in 2016, GIHE came under the ownership of Eurazeo.

GIHE now operates as part of Eurazeo's hospitality education group, Sommet Education Sàrl, a Swiss-registered company. Sommet is parent company to GIHE alongside four other institutions (Les Roches [Switzerland]; Ecole Ducasse [France]; the Invictus Education Group [South Africa]; and the Indian School of Hospitality [India]). As parent company, Sommet offers support functions to GIHE in the areas of human resources, IT, marketing, legal and finances. The institution is legally registered in Bulle in the canton of Fribourg and the Bulle campus serves as the institution's primary campus on which its key academic, research and administrative departments are based, as well as its executive offices.

GIHE programmes offer business education that combines academic courses, hands-on practical skills and professional internships with a focus on developing the soft skills required in the hospitality and luxury world. The institution delivers both bachelor's and master's programmes in the areas of hospitality and luxury business management across its physical three campuses. Executive continuing education programmes are provided virtually. GIHE maintains academic collaboration agreements with numerous university partners and a large number of industry partners who support student placements and internships, and with whom GIHE engages on problem-solving research and consulting activities.

GIHE's student population on its physical campuses is comprised primarily of international students – both young adults and individuals who have already entered the workforce. Students enrolled on executive education on GIHE's virtual campus are generally working professionals. In 2023, across its full portfolio of programmes, GIHE enrolled 1971 students of 98 nationalities (of these, 1446 were bachelor's students; 503 were on master's programmes; and 22 were engaging in programmes of continuing education). In academic year 2023/24, there were 45 permanent faculty members engaged by the institution. These work alongside 74 visiting faculty (employed on a temporary basis), whose primary focus is the delivery of master's and/or executive programmes. GIHE also employs 157 administrative and operational staff members.

2 Analysis of follow-up on the results of previous procedures

Through its application for accreditation, GIHE is seeking to be recognised as a University of Applied Sciences Institute. This is the first such application by GIHE and, there is therefore no follow-up to report from previous processes under Swiss law.

The application for accreditation is made on the basis of the institution's mission to “develop professionals for global careers in the world's premier hospitality and luxury businesses” and its vision is to be “known worldwide for excellence as a higher education institution for hospitality and luxury business management” (Self-assessment report (SAR), p. 5).

Although, as noted above, GIHE has not previously applied for accreditation under Swiss law, the institution has, over the past 20 years, engaged in external review as part of a number of accreditation processes. These processes include:

- Review and institutional accreditation by the Commission on Technical and Career Institutions (CTCI), a commission within the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), in 2001.
- Review and renewal of accreditation by the (re-named) New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE; previously NEASC) since 2005 (with the most recent comprehensive review occurring in 2019). The outcomes of this review included two areas for improvement, which related to (i) finances, and (ii) the change of ownership from Laureate to Eurazeo in 2016. NECHE also requested that GIHE improve its faculty governance. GIHE worked to resolve the two areas of concern and, in spite of the pandemic, made improvements in market revenue, durability and enrolment, and ensured that the transition phase between the two parent companies complied with higher education standards.
- Annual review of the London campus by the British Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), which is mandatory for any foreign institution delivering tertiary-education programmes within the UK. The most recent QAA review of GIHE’s London campus took place in 2023. Different areas of good practice were identified, such as the support and guidance of international students, preparation of students for the “real world”, and the provision of comprehensive feedback on assessment. There were three recommendations issued by QAA, which related to the re-introduction of teaching observations; the role of students in academic governance; and the review of the student complaints procedure. GIHE has undertaken specific activities to address these aspects.

3 Quality assurance system of GIHE

GIHE has a defined quality assurance system, which has developed over the past twenty years.

The key elements of the institution’s quality assurance system are detailed within the GIHE Institutional Quality Framework (GIQF). The GIQF asserts that it applies to all elements of GIHE’s provision at all levels of the institution and across each of GIHE’s campuses, including the London campus, which is also managed, monitored and supported by the GIHE Switzerland executive and governance structures. The framework provides the basis for GIHE’s identification of objectives and institutional responses thereto, as well as the establishment of a reporting and monitoring infrastructure. The framework is built upon two pillars:



Fig. 1: Graphic representation of GIHE’s Institutional Quality Framework (GIQF)

1. the **approach to quality assurance**, which is grounded in the development and maintenance of quality standards; the definition of and reporting against quality objectives; and the maintenance of quality assurance processes.
2. the development and maintenance of a **quality culture** through community development, continuous improvement and stakeholder engagement.

A comprehensive set of 22 quality standards flow from the GIQF, which cover the full spectrum of GIHE's provision at all levels of the institution's provision and across all campuses. The standards are structured under nine main themes:

- Governance and organisation
- Mission and planning
- Quality and information management
- Academic programmes and standards
- Teaching, learning, research, scholarship and faculty
- Student support
- Human resources and development
- Finance and infrastructure
- Communication, integrity and transparency

Each standard comprises a number of indicators which GIHE considers in evaluating whether or not the overarching standard has been met.

GIHE's policies, objectives and performance indicators flow from, reflect and support the standards and principles set out in the GIQF. In particular, the GIQF informs the Academic Quality Framework (AQF), which defines roles and responsibilities within the academic quality assurance system, describes the various review and evaluation processes that programmes and their component courses undergo to support continuous improvement, and sets out guiding principles for the quality assurance of academic delivery:

- Continuous improvement;
- Student-centred approach;
- Stakeholder engagement;
- Institutional accountability;
- Academic excellence.

GIHE maintains a comprehensive suite of policies, which is available to all staff, academic and administrative, on the institution's digital repository "Central Station". Quality objectives are defined. Each objective is measurable and is linked back to the relevant GIQF standard. Objectives undergo periodic review to consider their relevance and alignment with both the institutional mission and vision, as well as accreditation body requirements and industry standards. Periodic reporting supports the institution to track its progress in meeting its quality key performance indicators (and thus its quality objectives).

GIHE's implementation and monitoring of its quality assurance system is based on and supported by the Deming (or "Plan, Do, Check Act" [PDCA]) model. Annual reporting processes by heads of department to the GIHE Leadership Committee are informed by this model and have clear linkages with the institutional strategy and GIQF standards.

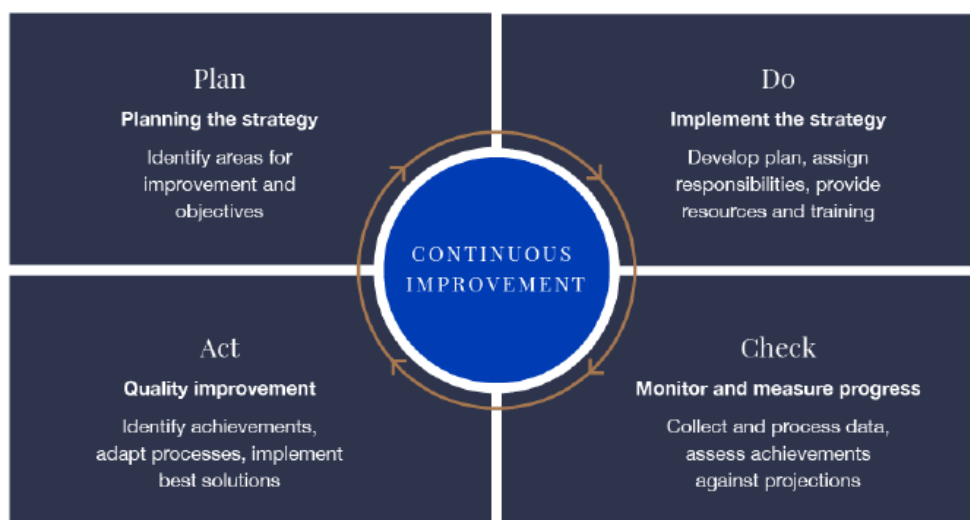


Fig. 2: The GIHE PDCA Cycle

4. Analysis of the compliance with the quality standards

Area 1: Quality assurance strategy

Standard 1.1: The higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector shall define its quality assurance strategy. This strategy shall contain the essential elements of an internal quality assurance system aimed at ensuring the quality of the activities of the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector and their long-term quality development as well as promoting the development of a quality culture.

Description and analysis

GIHE's quality assurance strategy and system and its approach to quality are described within the GIQF and the framework supports the institution in defining a roadmap for the maintenance and further development of quality. The framework covers all aspects of GIHE's provision of education and delivery of services across all campuses, although it is notable that it does not elaborate in detail on the institution's quality strategy with regard to the area of research. The framework mandates the development of – and reporting against – SMART¹ quality objectives to support the achievement of the GIHE quality strategy. It also requires that these be reviewed periodically to ensure relevance and alignment with GIHE's institutional strategy, the requirements of accreditation bodies and the expectations of industry. Through implementation of the PDCA cycle, corrective mechanisms may be introduced and implemented if necessary.

The GIQF sets out five principles upon which GIHE's approach to quality is founded, which are in alignment with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. These call for a student-centred approach to quality assurance that is based in collaboration and engagement with internal and external stakeholders, compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory requirements, observance of best (pedagogical and industry) practices, and the promotion and implementation of continuous improvement through periodic monitoring, review, and revision of approaches.

¹ Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound.

The experts are satisfied that the institutional and quality assurance strategies are genuinely connected, mutually supportive of each other, and have developed in tandem with each other. Furthermore, it was clear to the group of experts that the quality assurance strategy is also interlinked with and strongly informs both organisational and structural aspects of the institution.

The group of experts observed the presence of a pervasive culture of quality in GIHE and noted that, within GIHE, quality assurance is a “habit” that is inculcated within all stakeholders from the commencement of their time with the institution. Throughout the site visit, their discussions with the spectrum of GIHE’s internal stakeholders – from members of the governing board to students at all levels, academic staff (both full-time and visiting faculty) to professional and administrative staff, as well as executive management and those members of staff involved in GIHE’s governance committees – gave the experts confidence that quality is really lived within the institution. A shared “quality vocabulary” was evident among stakeholders.

The quality assurance system is well documented, and the experts find there to be a comprehensive awareness of where/with whom the various responsibilities for quality lies, allied with consciousness of the elements of the quality strategy among leadership, students and staff. These elements include GIHE policies and procedures, objectives and those practices and platforms that have been put in place to support the assurance and enhancement of quality at GIHE. Across a number of sessions at the on-site visit, Central Station, the institution’s central repository for quality policies, procedures and reporting, was mentioned as the definitive “source of truth” for GIHE’s staff when it comes to current information about quality. Furthermore, GIHE’s cadre of Quality Assurance Champions was noted to provide very welcome and supportive points of reference on quality assurance matters for all institutional stakeholders as well as an important means of supporting dissemination of quality assurance information. It was also noted that the Champions are key to GIHE’s efforts to maintain and continuously enhance its quality assurance policies and procedures.

The group of experts confirm the existence of a clearly defined quality assurance strategy. This strategy contains the essential elements of an internal quality assurance system aimed at ensuring the quality and development of the activities of a University of Applied Sciences Institute as well as promoting the development of a quality culture.

Conclusion

The expert group assesses standard 1.1 as entirely fulfilled.

Standard 1.2: The quality assurance system shall be incorporated into the strategy of the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector and efficiently support its development. It includes processes verifying whether the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector fulfils its mandate while taking account of its type and specific characteristics.

Description and analysis

In its institutional strategy, which defines its mission and vision, GIHE’s Governing Board has set a clear mandate for the institution. The current strategic plan – in effect for the period from 2024-2027 – sets out four key strategic pillars that, in the experts’ opinion, should enable the institution to fulfil its mandate. The third pillar, entitled “Drive an effective organization” (GIHE 2024-2027 Strategic Plan) refers directly to quality assurance system in place at GIHE.

A detailed overview of the GIHE quality assurance system is set out under section 3. As described there, there are two key pillars that underpin the system (quality approach and quality culture), which are supported by and aligned with institutional governance and the institutional

strategy, mission and vision. The institution maintains a comprehensive set of policies and procedures, which are accessible to all institutional stakeholders through Central Station. It also sets and periodically reviews a suite of 22 quality standards, from which flow the institutional quality objectives, against which GIHE departments report. These objectives are periodically reviewed with a view to ensuring that their currency and relevance is maintained.

Through its reporting upon key performance indicators (KPIs) (which, as noted above, are aligned with the quality objectives), GIHE verifies that objectives are achieved (or, where it is evident that they have not/will not be, takes action to update the objective or the action(s) intended to respond to same). During the on-site visit, the group of experts heard that the Governing Board maintains visibility of the progress on rolling out the institutional strategy through its guidance in the development of KPIs, its oversight of how KPIs are met, and the organisational structure that has been put in place in GIHE. KPIs are recorded and reported upon electronically by means of a dashboard and, where feasible, reporting on progress in meeting these takes place quarterly (although some KPIs – like student satisfaction – can only be reported upon at the end of each semester). At year-end, using this system, a check is carried out to consider whether or not each KPI has been met.

GIHE's monitoring and review of its quality assurance system is undertaken in accordance with the principles set out in the PDCA cycle, which is intended to support the institution in ensuring compliance with existing policies and procedures, and endeavouring to ensure a continuous cycle of improvement with regard to quality assurance. During the on-site visit, it was clear to the group of experts that there is acceptance of the PDCA model within the institution among academic and administrative staff, as well as executive leadership and the Governing Board, even though this model is a relatively new one for the institution.

The group of experts observes that the quality system is well integrated into the institution's strategy and that it covers governance, resources, teaching, and services. Nevertheless, it also notes that the strategy does not sufficiently cover research, which is still underdeveloped in the institution (see the explanation under standard 3.1 and related condition #2). As a crucial area of activity for any University of Applied Sciences Institute, research should be much more strongly reflected within the institutional strategy.

Conclusion

The expert group assesses standard 1.2 as largely fulfilled.

Recommendation #1: Incorporate research more strongly within the institutional strategy.

Standard 1.3: At all levels, all representative groups of the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector shall be involved in developing the quality assurance system and in its implementation, in particular students, mid-level faculty staff, professors and administrative and technical staff. Quality assurance responsibilities must be transparently and clearly assigned.

Description and analysis

Implementation of GIHE's quality framework is supported and guided by its system of governance, which is concretised within the institutional Governance Policy.

The institution's process for quality management comprises three legs, which set out the discrete and complementary responsibilities of the various actors within the institution's executive and governance structures:

1. Institutional governance
2. Internal quality assurance policies and procedures
3. External quality assurance

Other elements of GIHE’s internal quality assurance system include the Academic & Research Board, which reviews and revises educational programmes in accordance with the Academic Quality Framework.

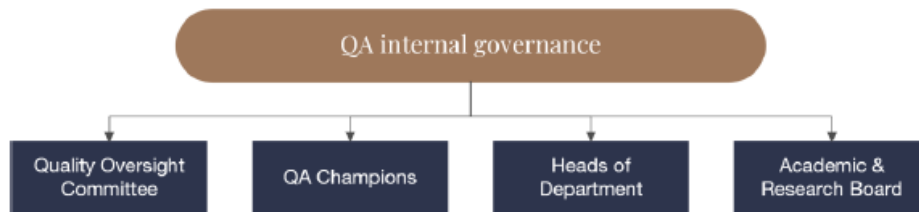


Fig. 3: Graphic representation of GIHE’s internal governance of quality

The above diagram and Fig. 4 under standard 2.1 illustrate the relationships and systems of planning from the supreme institutional authority (i.e. the Governing Board) to its standing committees (i.e. the Academic and Student Experience Standing Committee; the Governance Standing Committee; and the Finance, Audit, Control and Planning Standing Committee), the Leadership Committee, the Academic and Research Board, and the various departmental committees. What it does not show, however, but what the experts were able to notice during the interviews, is the institution's bottom-up reporting, which operates largely via the same players.

Responsibility for the operational management of quality rests with the Quality Oversight Committee, which includes members of GIHE management, as well as representatives from among the institution’s Quality Assurance Champions. This committee reviews and analyses all quality assurance mechanisms within the institution and supports their alignment with GIHE’s standards, objectives and values.

Institutional constituents from across faculty, professional and administrative staff, and the student body may support the development of the institutional quality assurance system in a number of ways. Foremost among these is through their membership of committees, which incorporate participation from institutional constituents at all levels within the institution as well as external membership. Faculty and staff may also volunteer as Quality Assurance Champions. Each department has one such Champion, who supports the Head of Institutional Effectiveness in aligning each department’s quality assurance with institutional quality assurance and disseminating information about quality to colleagues within their department. Quality Assurance Champions also work with heads of department to coordinate the revision of departmental documents and processes.

The Champions promote the further development of GIHE’s quality culture, and support awareness and accessibility of GIHE policies and procedures. They also provide feedback on the QA processes within each department, which, in turn, may support the review and enhancement of the quality framework, where appropriate. The group of experts note with approval that there was widespread awareness and appreciation of the Quality Assurance Champions throughout the on-site visit – from among GIHE leadership to members of faculty and professional administrative staff. During the on-site visit, it was very clear to the group of experts that the Quality Assurance Champion system is well embedded and trusted by institutional stakeholders as a means of keeping them informed of any changes and updates to policy, procedure and practice, and of effecting change to the quality assurance system.

During the on-site visit, the role of students within GIHE's governance was discussed. It was noted that the student voice feeds into the institution's quality assurance system through student membership of committees such as programme committees and the Academic and Research Board. Each cohort of students elects a class representative who speaks on behalf of their classmates during meetings with faculty at programme and academic committee meetings. During the on-site meeting visit, the group of experts heard of instances where concrete changes were made promptly on the basis of class representative feedback. For example, the group of experts note GIHE's good practice in embedding additional experiential learning and instruction on critical research methods within individual programmes following consideration of class representative feedback by the Academic and Research Board.

The Undergraduate Student Academic Council (USAC), in conjunction with class representatives, suggests enhancements and provides feedback on academic initiatives. Members of the USAC also act as full members of their respective Program Committees. During the on-site visit, it was clear to the group of experts that USAC members and class representatives play a key role in channelling feedback between their classmates and faculty, staff and leadership through well-defined structures, which include regular meetings with their classmates. Feedback collected from these sessions are passed on to the relevant institutional constituents at regular Student Experience Feedback Sessions and/or to relevant individuals. The group of experts heard that class representative feedback has led to the shifting and alignment of teaching approaches by individual faculty members. GIHE acknowledged the absence of students from the Quality Oversight Committee and recognised an opportunity to further strengthen the student voice in institutional governance through the inclusion of students on this body. This was welcomed by the experts.

A variety of external stakeholders may contribute to the development of quality assurance within GIHE. The Alumni Organisation meets for an annual general meeting once per year and provides feedback and suggestions to GIHE's Governing Board and the group of experts heard examples of changes prompted by alumni feedback. External input is also collected through the input of the Research Advisory Board, the Research Expert Panel, and the Hospitality and Luxury Insight Council, each of which is composed of external subject matter experts who advise the institution on research initiatives and proposals.

Conclusion

The expert group assesses standard 1.3 as entirely fulfilled.

Standard 1.4: The higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector shall periodically analyse the relevance of its quality assurance system and make the necessary adjustments.

Description and analysis

GIHE engages in reflection upon and evaluation of its quality assurance system and the relevance of its component parts. This reflection is organised in such a way that it comprises various processes, initiated both internally and externally, which support GIHE's analysis of the relevance of its quality assurance system as well as the undertaking of adjustments and enhancements where the need to do so is identified. The system includes both internal and external evaluation and review processes that are conducted on planned cycles of varying duration (ranging from weekly to once every number of years). A calendar of the various internal and external monitoring and review processes is maintained by GIHE.

As noted elsewhere in this report, over the past 20 years, the development of GIHE’s quality assurance system has been much influenced by the institution’s engagement in external periodic quality reviews by bodies such as NECHE and QAA. For example, the 2023 review of GIHE’s quality assurance standards (and resulting adjustments) was influenced by a new set of NECHE higher education standards and by compliance with Swiss requirements for University of Applied Sciences Institutes. GIHE undergoes NECHE evaluation every two, five and ten years and the institution submits an annual report to the body. The institution’s London campus undergoes review by QAA on a four-year cycle and these reviews have supported GIHE to streamline processes and formalise and document policies. During its annual review of GIHE’s policies and procedures, the Quality Oversight Committee considers the alignment of policies and procedures with institutional standards and strategic objectives, as well as with external requirements and makes any necessary amendments.

Faculty and staff are regularly surveyed (see standard 2.2), which provides a further means of contributing feedback on, and evaluating, the quality assurance system.

A KPI dashboard supports GIHE to track quality assurance monitoring and review processes. KPIs – and actions intended to respond to them – are adjusted when a need to do so is identified. The dashboard is supported by the Central Station and the Institutional Document Repository platforms. These provide central locations at which all institutional constituents can access relevant policies and procedures and inform themselves of any amendments thereto. Dissemination of changes to the quality assurance system is also facilitated by the Quality Assurance Champions.

The group of experts note with approval that GIHE subjects its quality assurance system to a variety of types of evaluation and review with above-average frequency and heard evidence of measures that are taken to update and revise the system on the basis of these processes. The group of experts is confident that the recently adopted PDCA cycle will further strengthen the existing system of monitoring and review as it continues to be embedded within these processes.

Conclusion

The expert group assesses standard 1.4 as entirely fulfilled.

Area 2: Governance

Standard 2.1: The quality assurance system shall ensure that the organisational structure and decision-making processes enable the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector to fulfil its mission and to achieve its strategic objectives.

Description and analysis

GIHE’s Institutional Strategy 2023-2027 identifies the institution’s mandate, mission and objectives and guides governance across GIHE. GIHE’s institutional governance is a complex undertaking, given the breadth of its academic delivery, which sees it provide a diverse range of programmes (under- and postgraduate programmes, as well as executive education programmes), which are delivered both online and on-site across three campuses in two different jurisdictions. The institution has developed correspondingly and appropriately complex and comprehensive governance and organisational structures, in which overall responsibility for determining GIHE’s strategic and academic direction across all three campuses resides with the Governing Board, the highest institutional authority. Ultimate responsibility for institutional quality is vested in the GIHE Governing Board; however, the board delegates responsibility for the GIQF to GIHE’s Quality Oversight Committee. Three seats on the Governing Board are occupied by

representatives of Sommet Education, leaving the majority of seats for external, independent members, who do not hold any financial interest in GIHE. The collective expertise of Governing Board members encompasses the areas of hospitality, luxury and education consultancy and is directed towards identifying and progressing the institution’s strategic objectives.

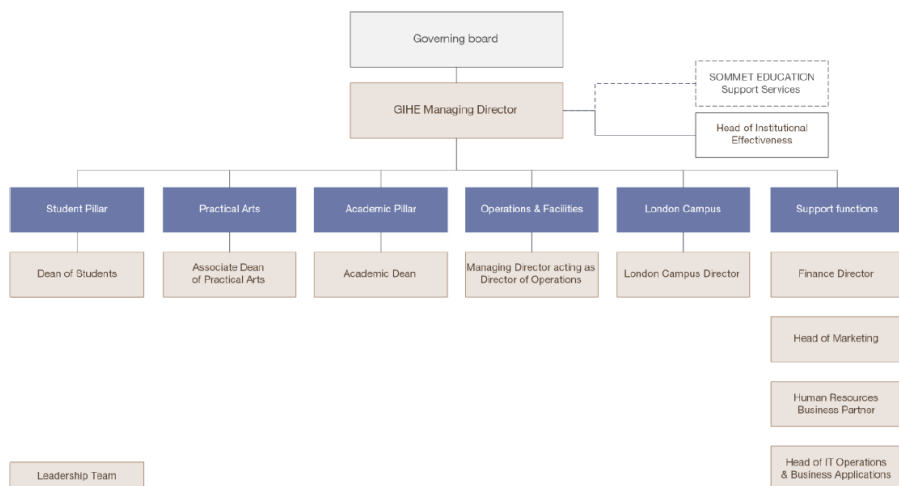


Fig. 4: GIHE organisational chart

Responsibilities for implementing strategy and for leading operations are delegated to committees or to individual office-holders and clear reporting and communication lines were evident to the group of experts during their review of documentation and at the on-site visit. In the interests of efficiency, three standing committees, each of which comprises members of the Governing Board, have been delegated responsibility by the Board for the furtherance and oversight of specific areas of strategy and governance. Responsibility for the operational management of the institution is delegated by the Governing Board to the Managing Director, who is supported by the Leadership Committee. Within this committee, the Academic Dean, as Chief Academic Officer, oversees the institution’s academic activity across all three campuses.

Through the provision of shared corporate services (including tax, legal and PR services), which are also made available to other institutions operating under the ownership of Sommet Education, GIHE benefits from economies of scale. During the on-site visit, GIHE also noted that it has been of value to the institution to exchange experiences with other institutions who are part of the Sommet group and observed that these relationships have been drawn upon to inform both the development of the quality assurance system and the furtherance of strategic objectives. Examples include advice from a sister institution on the establishment of a new institutional committee that is responsible for professorial promotions. GIHE might consider strengthening and developing these relationships to consider where additional synergies might lie and whether and how these could yield further mutual benefits.

At the on-site visit, GIHE confirmed that oversight of the institutional strategy and its roadmap is a shared undertaking that involves all institutional constituents. The voices and contributions of faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders are incorporated, bottom-up, within the institution’s quality assurance system and support the achievement of its mission and strategic objectives through various means, not least through GIHE’s system of committees, including the Quality Oversight Committee. Membership of the Quality Oversight Committee represents a cross-section of the institution, including the Head of Institutional Effectiveness, members of the Leadership Team and representation from among GIHE’s Quality Assurance Champions, who provide feedback directly from their departments and trigger enhancements to the GIQF.

This overall quality assurance infrastructure, supported by GIHE's KPI system in tandem with the oversight provided by the Governing Board and GIHE's committee structure, provided the group of experts with assurance that the institution is well equipped to monitor the implementation of its strategy, identifying at an early juncture any challenges arising, and making the necessary adjustments.

Conclusion

The expert group assesses standard 2.1 as entirely fulfilled.

Standard 2.2: The quality assurance system shall systematically contribute to providing relevant and current quantitative and qualitative information on which the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector relies to make current and strategic decisions.

Description and analysis

GIHE's quality assurance system leverages a variety of methods – both formal and informal – of collecting and analysing qualitative and quantitative information. For the most part, there are systems in place to support the prompt dissemination of results of recent analyses, as well as their continued accessibility to stakeholders, to support strategic decision-making.

An analysis of quantitative institutional data is conducted annually, with each department and committee taking charge of data analysis for their own discrete area. Annual reports for various areas or pillars of the institution are published. These provide an overview of the progress made on achieving the objectives laid down for the relevant area in the concluded academic year and set out an overview of objectives for the coming academic year, which are aligned with institutional strategy.

GIHE's system of KPIs provides a valuable source of quantitative information for the institution, a practice that has been informed over a number of years by GIHE's engagement in external evaluation and accreditation processes. The group of experts noted that quality objectives and related KPIs are well defined across 11 distinct domains that map to the institutional Quality Standards. Strategic-level KPIs are also defined and tracked. The indicators provide GIHE with a data-driven method, through the reporting of statistical data to individual committees and to the Governing Board, to verify that its objectives are being achieved. It was evident during the on-site visit that stakeholders – from the Governing Board through to the Leadership Team to individual members of faculty – are aware of this system, that they find the information that it produces to be relevant and useful, and that they leverage it to support them in undertaking their work and, ultimately, in ensuring that the strategic objectives of the institution are achieved. As discussed under standard 1.3, the institution has established a KPI dashboard and KPI-owners are expected to report on indicators to the Governing Board periodically. Annual progress on meeting quality objectives and KPIs – and, therefore, on implementing GIHE's strategy – is reported upon within an annual progress review, which also considers why KPIs and related objectives may not have been (fully) met.

Qualitative data emanates from a variety of sources, including inter alia committee meeting minutes; the results of self-assessment by institutional bodies; numerous surveys (of staff and students); the institutional course review and evaluation (CRE) system; annual staff performance review sessions; and focus groups.

During the on-site visit, student feedback was referred to by GIHE as its greatest source of information and this is reflected in the numerous surveys in which the institution invites students to engage. An institutional Student Satisfaction Survey (conducted at the end of each semester)

facilitates students to provide holistic feedback on their experience at GIHE, including the programmes on which they are enrolled and related facilities, as well as other aspects including food and accommodation, health and safety, and information and communication. GIHE's CRE system also informs the quality assurance and enhancement of its academic provision. These surveys are completed by students, who share reflections on their learning experience upon conclusion of each course of study within their programme. The process is supplemented by an annual faculty self-reflection report, discussed during annual appraisal, during which faculty members must consider the CRE outcomes related to their courses and identify where enhancements should and can be effected, including how well they have supported students to meet the relevant learning outcomes.

Staff are surveyed periodically to determine their satisfaction with GIHE as a workplace and their awareness of specific themes. Outcomes of surveys are used to devise detailed action plans to mitigate or rectify any weaknesses or challenges identified (for example, the "ENGAGE" action plan, developed on the basis of the 2023 ENGAGE survey). Alternatively, survey outcomes may support the establishment of a baseline, which, in turn, is leveraged to set objectives (for example, on the basis of a recent survey of staff members' quality mindset, GIHE established a threshold of 8/10 as the threshold for future such surveys). As part of a relatively new development, all survey results are made available to relevant staff members through PowerBI and are used by faculty members (specifically departmental heads) to determine areas that students have identified for improvement and to effect related enhancements and, more generally, to provide insight and direction for faculty, staff, institutional leaders and governance committees.

GIHE and its staff also rely on informal feedback to support decision-making within the institution. Examples include question and answer sessions at monthly all-staff meetings; a "feedback station", which provides a space where staff and students can share ideas; and discussions between faculty members and students during and after class on areas for potential improvement.

For the most part, the group of expert finds that there are systems in place to support the evaluation of learner and staff experience, as well as the prompt dissemination of results of analyses to stakeholders; however, during the on-site visit, the group of experts also noted the risk of fatigue, particularly among students, given the frequency with which they are asked to respond to surveys (it was noted that students are asked to complete at least 20 feedback forms per semester). GIHE representatives acknowledged this risk. Whilst the utility of surveys (and the brevity of feedback forms) was noted by many stakeholders at the on-site visit, the group of experts nonetheless advises GIHE to review its system of surveys, particularly surveys of students, and consider whether the data sought are relevant and whether all of the surveys conducted are necessary. In connection with this, GIHE should consider the rhythm with which it surveys staff and students to mitigate the risk of survey fatigue and encourage greater enthusiasm and engagement with these processes.

The group of experts notes that, while GIHE leadership, faculty and staff receive and are able to reflect upon the outcomes of GIHE surveys, students do not always have the opportunity to witness how the PDCA loop has been closed when it comes to feedback that they have provided. This matter is discussed in more detail under standard 3.2 and under 5.1 for the points concerning communication..

Conclusion

The expert group assesses standard 2.2 as largely fulfilled.

Recommendation #2: Review the exact quantity of formal and informal feedback requested from institutional stakeholders to ensure that the volume of feedback sought is reasonable and that the data gathered are necessary.

Standard 2.3: The quality assurance system shall ensure that the representative groups of the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector have an appropriate participatory right and that basic conditions are in place allowing them to independently operate.

Description and analysis

GIHE's various representative groups are represented in the governance structure, which is organised as follows:



Fig. 5: Graphic representation of GIHE's governance structure

Appropriate participatory rights are granted to Governing Board members; institutional (executive) leadership (through the Leadership Committee and through their ex officio membership of other relevant committees); and to faculty, staff, and students, who may volunteer to participate in the governance system as members of various committees. The participation of relevant external voices (including alumni and industry partners) in the quality assurance system is also facilitated.

The conditions for membership of the Governing Board, its standing committees and other committees within the governance system are clearly defined within the relevant terms of reference. During the on-site visit, the group of experts noted that all institutional constituents were aware of their respective roles, and of where this information could be accessed if necessary. The clear delineation of the various purposes and remits of the various entities engaged within the governance system supports and ensures their independent operation.

During the on-site visit, the group of experts heard from staff, faculty and students from across the institution that they feel empowered to contribute to and shape the quality assurance and governance systems through the establishment of new committees and procedures, which, in turn, support the enrichment of student learning and experience, one of GIHE's strategic pillars.

Two entities in particular support the participation of GIHE students and facilitate the elected representative students to enhance the overall student experience – these are the Student Government Association (SGA) and the Undergraduate Student Academic Council (USAC). The

SGA provides a link between students on those campuses, GIHE faculty and staff, and the GIHE Leadership Committee. A number of committees cascades from the superordinate SGA and these provide feedback and suggest and implement initiatives regarding extracurricular and social activities in GIHE relating to, for example sports, charity, and sustainability. The group of experts heard that students are supported to develop new committees, or expand existing ones, where they perceive there to be a need or desire for these from the student body. The experts observe that these committees provide a safe space for the implementation of new, bottom-up, initiatives led by students. For its part, the USAC, in conjunction with class representatives, suggests enhancements and provides feedback on academic initiatives. Members of the USAC also act as full members of their respective Program Committees.

Faculty (including visiting faculty) and staff participate in various institutional committees. Of particular note is the Faculty Council, which was re-established in summer 2024, and which is intended to represent and facilitate communication between all GIHE faculty members across the institution's three campuses and with other institutional stakeholders. The group of experts support the revival of this body, which will strengthen the voice of faculty members on academic matters (for example, during the first council meeting, discussions centred around the impact of generative AI on education and actions that GIHE might take to future-proof its academic delivery).

The continued participation of alumni in GIHE life is supported by a global GIHE Alumni Association, which has formal governance structures and links with GIHE through which it may suggest enhancements to aspects of GIHE's academic delivery. During the on-site visit, the group of experts were told that many alumni retain close links with GIHE following their graduation and may also provide informal feedback on changes to programmes or other aspects of the student experience that may be beneficial. Examples of such enhancements were discussed during the on-site visit and include adjustments to the system of resident weeks embedded within the executive master's programmes.

The group of experts notes and welcomes GIHE's enhancement mindset when it comes to further scaffolding the participatory rights of students and faculty members. They are nonetheless confident that all relevant representative groups are currently empowered to participate in GIHE's life and development.

Conclusion

The expert group assesses standard 2.3 as entirely fulfilled.

Standard 2.4: The higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector shall give consideration to an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development in the completion of its tasks. The quality assurance system shall ensure that the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector sets objectives in this area and also implements them.

Description and analysis

GIHE has developed a sustainability policy, which is aligned with the overall Institutional Strategy, and details objectives for economic, social and environmental sustainability. The policy also specifies categories of indicators for the achievement of these objectives and is accompanied by an action plan, which sets out further indicators at a more granular level, each of which can be mapped back to the sustainability objectives. Clear actions, accompanying timelines for their achievement, and the entity accountable for same, are associated with each indicator, along with an overview of its status (i.e. "in progress", "completed") for the current academic year. Detailed

information on the institution's performance against the identified indicators for previous academic years, where available, are also included within the action plan.

An annual report is presented to the Governing Board and published within GIHE. In addition to setting out the concrete data relating to the achievement of sustainability indicators (and associated objectives), this report includes reflections on the data collection and analysis processes, including recommendations for under-performing indicators. The group of experts note with approval the structured and detailed process in place for setting and implementing sustainability objectives, and for reporting on actions taken; however, they also note the need for greater proactivity in the setting of objectives (with associated timelines) within the sustainability strategy.

Economic sustainability

With regard to economic sustainability, the group of experts are satisfied from their review of documentation submitted by GIHE and discussions with Governing Board members, including members of the Financial, Audit, Control and Planning Standing Committee, that GIHE has strong structures in place to ensure continuing financial viability and sustainable economic growth. This is reinforced by the support of its strong parent company, Sommet Education.

In spite of GIHE's solid financial status, the group of experts note with approval the institution's formalisation of its teach-out policy to protect enrolled learners in the event of institutional closure or the discontinuation of a programme.

Environmental sustainability

GIHE undertakes a range of activities to promote and support environmental sustainability, with engagement from across the institutional community including leadership, students, staff, and faculty members, and progress and outcomes are reported back through institutional governance and through the annual report. The institution's activities contribute to an overarching corporate social responsibility programme coordinated by Sommet Education. Students appeared enthusiastic about their experience of participating in the GIHE Green Committee, one of the sub-committees of the Student Government Association, and the experts heard that this committee collaborates with the Events Committee to ensure that events are planned and conducted in compliance with sustainability principles and practices.

Environmental sustainability is also embedded within the curricula of both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes (including executive programmes). Students are facilitated to incorporate environmental sustainability within the research projects that they undertake. Environmental sustainability is also considered by GIHE's researchers – areas currently explored include food waste – and research-active staff outlined plans to develop further research related to sustainability in the hospitality and luxury sectors.

Social sustainability

When it comes to social sustainability, there are initiatives in place to support the wellbeing and safety of staff and students, which include training for staff on specific topics (for example, with regard to students who may require support for mental health issues), the provision of medical and counselling services for staff and students, and support to students for the payment of medical expenses. The experts also heard from GIHE staff that there are processes in place to provide flexibility where needed for those with changing family circumstances – including in instances where a staff member may need to move from full-time to part-time work because of specific caring responsibilities.

On the whole, GIHE's 2023 sustainability report shows that it is making good strides towards meeting the relevant indicators that it has set in this area. However, it has not achieved the

indicator for staff retention; this was set at 85% for 2023, but the actual percentage associated with staff retention for 2023 was 82%. Discussions during the on-site visit confirmed that GIHE is currently investigating reasons for this deficit, and this is welcomed by the group of experts, but they nonetheless encourage GIHE to consider whether a retention rate of 85% is actually acceptable for the institution. GIHE might consider setting a more ambitious target when it comes to preventing staff turnover and may want to devote particular attention to considering the attrition rate for professional and administrative staff. The group of experts note the range of leisure, social, health and wellbeing activities available to GIHE employees and policies to prevent overtime. They further note that GIHE's surveys of staff indicate that 92% of the institution's employees rate their mood from "good" to "excellent".

The substantial fees paid by students enrolled with GIHE might be viewed as a barrier to enabling social sustainability. To go some way towards supporting less privileged students, financial aid, scholarships and repayment plans are provided by the institution (9.3% of students currently benefit from scholarships), and the group of experts heard that examples of situations in which these supports had been facilitated.

Globally, the experts observe that the indicators associated with goals in the "social sustainability" area are set at a relatively low level and encourage GIHE to increase their ambition in the development of such indicators. Going forward, GIHE should ensure that the focus it places upon on social sustainability is equal to that which it places on economic and environmental sustainability.

Conclusion

The expert group assesses standard 2.4 as largely fulfilled.

Recommendation #3: Act more proactively in setting sustainability objectives in general, and further develop GIHE's sustainability strategy to incorporate high-level objectives to support the achievement of meaningful social sustainability with regard to all institutional stakeholders.

Standard 2.5: To carry out its tasks, the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector shall promote equal opportunities and actual gender equality for its staff and students. The quality assurance system shall ensure that the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector sets objectives in this area and also implements them.

Description and analysis

GIHE's codes of conduct for students and staff set out a commitment to promote and respect diversity, equity and inclusion within the GIHE community across all aspects of GIHE's academic delivery and service provision. As noted under standard 2.5, the institution has recently established a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, which includes both student and staff representatives and whose mission is to foster an inclusive environment that embraces diversity and promotes understanding, respect and equal opportunities.

Based on student statistics for 2023 the group of experts observed a good gender balance across much of the institution's activity, with slightly more female (56%) than male (44%) students enrolled across programmes. It is notable that three-quarters of Leadership Committee members are women, and that women are also in the majority (64%) on the Employee and DEI Committees. The group of experts endorse the recommendation arising from a recent Governing Board self-evaluation to reflect upon the gender imbalance within the Governing Board (67% male, 33% female) and encourages GIHE to actively work to promote and attain greater diversity, including balance between the genders, on that body.

In addition, to ensure real promotion of actual gender equality and equal opportunities, the institution might also consider developing more objectives and indicators to consider progression opportunities for women, individuals from racial and ethnic minorities and those with disabilities. The group of experts welcome that GIHE is monitoring and has set (modest) goals in respect of the rate of internal promotion – but encourages the institution to explore further how gender, race and disability impact the ability of faculty and staff members to be promoted. As a subsequent step, GIHE should consider identifying baselines and developing – and monitoring progress to achieve – corresponding objectives.

GIHE confirms that there is a gap between the salaries of men and women working in GIHE of 2.3% (in favour of men). This is below the associated threshold that has been identified by the institution. The group of experts welcomes GIHE’s identification of objectives and indicators in the area of pay equality, which reflect its obligations under Swiss legislation, but urges the institution to go further in promoting actual gender equality and to revise the associated threshold so that the goal in this area is actual parity of remuneration between men and women.

The group of experts explored how GIHE ensures gender balance on its committees during the on-site visit and were told that, apart from those instances where members are appointed ex officio, the institution relies on volunteers from among faculty, staff and students. Up until now, GIHE has been fortunate that this system has led to a relatively balanced committee composition (though increased representation of men across staff committees would be welcomed by the group of experts). However, the group of experts note that there is a need for a more formal system of ensuring diversity on institutional committees and encourage GIHE to put corresponding policy and process measures in place.

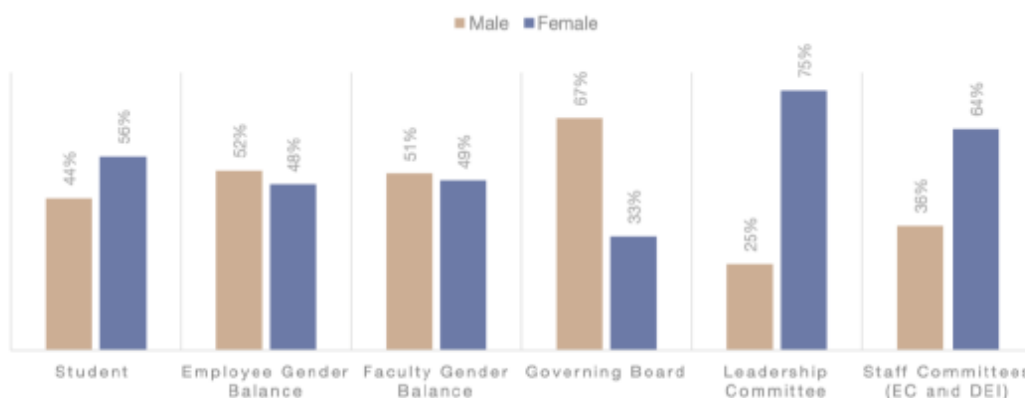


Fig. 6: Gender balance across GIHE stakeholders

The group of experts observed that GIHE’s quality assurance system goes some way towards supporting the inclusion of students from a variety of backgrounds within GIHE. During the on-site visit, they heard examples of how the institution accommodates students with specific learning needs. There are structures in place to ensure, for example, that students with dyslexia are supported during their academic journeys, and training has been organised by the DEI Committee on the provision of supports for students who are neurodivergent or who have mental health issues. During the on-site visit, there was discussion of how staff are supported to develop cultural sensitivity competences to enable them to manage challenging conversations regarding racial or ethnic conflict when they arise in the classroom (for example, the situation in Ukraine).

However, in other areas, there is a much more *ad hoc* approach to facilitating participation by disabled students in GIHE life rather than a clear and transparent policy. For example, the experts heard of how GIHE has taken reactive measures to accommodate students with temporary incapacities, but also noted details of barriers to the admission of students with

permanent disabilities. Among the reasons identified for these were the volume of practical activity incorporated within GIHE's programmes and the physical infrastructure of the Glion campus. To support a more comprehensive and universal approach to the meaningful participation and integration of disabled students within the institution, the group of experts have identified a need for a more proactive stance towards supporting all prospective students to enrol in GIHE programmes, irrespective of the disabilities they may have, as well as further formalisation of the structures and supports within this area. They encourage GIHE to take a more responsive approach, and to consider how universal design might be deployed to ensure that all students, irrespective of physical (dis)ability are enabled to study with, and feel welcome at, GIHE. This also applies to staff or prospective staff with disabilities.

The experts encourage GIHE to demonstrate greater proactivity in the setting of objectives (with associated timelines) to ensure real equity of treatment for all students, prospective students, and staff. The group of experts note that the DEI Committee should be in a position to support GIHE in these endeavours.

Conclusion

The expert group assesses standard 2.5 as partially fulfilled.

Condition #1: GIHE must establish a clear policy for promoting equal opportunities and actual gender equality for all representative groups across all aspects of its activity. It must define precise objectives in this area and an action plan for achieving them, and communicate the policy to all employees and students across all GIHE campuses.

Area 3: Teaching, research and services

Standard 3.1: The activities of the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector shall correspond to its type, specific features and strategic objectives. They shall mainly relate to teaching, research and services and be carried out in accordance with the principle of freedom and independence within the limits of the mandate of the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector.

Description and analysis

The group of experts consider GIHE's mission and vision to be well aligned with GIHE's vocational and professional orientation and the scope of a Swiss University of Applied Sciences Institute. They also note GIHE's excellent international reputation when it comes to the formation of professionals working within the hospitality industry. Depending on its type and specific features, GIHE provides teaching activities, services and research.

Teaching

GIHE's programme portfolio comprises both undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes, which are delivered on each of GIHE's three campuses; GIHE also provides continuing education programmes, which are delivered online. GIHE's two four-year undergraduate bachelor's programmes (one in International Hospitality Business and one in Luxury Business) currently lead to the award of bachelor of business administration (BBA), but work is ongoing to migrate these to programmes that lead to the award of bachelor of science (BSc). Further detail is provided under standard 3.4. In 2024, GIHE launched four 90 ECTS Master of Science programmes, which are aligned with European standards and spread across its various campuses. The programmes focus on International Hospitality Business / Hospitality Business Leadership; Hospitality, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation; Luxury Management and Guest Experience; and Real Estate, Finance and Hotel Development.

Experts believe that teaching at GIHE is excellent. Teaching at GIHE is student-centred and seeks to develop students' capacity for innovation. To this end, the institution bases its teaching on research and involves its students in various projects carried out within the institution. Bachelor's students are introduced to research and are required to carry out a number of applied research projects during their studies. For example, in the Bachelor's programmes, they can produce an Applied Business Project (ABP); in the Master's programmes, the business courses require them to complete a Critical Research Methodologies and to carry out a Business Research Project. Practical placements are also incorporated within programmes and the group of experts heard that students seeking internships receive an average of three offers through GIHE's network of contacts. The experts note that the structure of GIHE programmes lends itself to the smooth integration of practice placements that complement the academic elements of the programmes very well. During the on-site visit, the experts heard that GIHE's partners span the hospitality and luxury sectors, as well as the financial, sports, social media and digital industries, and the group of experts note with approval that GIHE's has an innovative approach to programme development, which considers the needs of these industry sectors.

Services

GIHE provides services to industry and the communities surrounding its campuses. These include training and solution-focused research to support industry partners and services for (and donations to) causes including environmental issues and charity. For example, GIHE has established a charity committee that supports initiatives such as World Poverty Day. Services provided to industry include the Applied Business Projects (ABPs), which students may undertake instead of a thesis as a capstone assessment at the end of their degree programme.

ABPs see students working with real industry data to develop solutions to existing issues and challenges. GIHE has also developed and offered a massive open online course (MOOC) on the luxury industry, which is provided free of charge through the FutureLearn platform. There are plans to provide approximately three further short free courses as well as plans for further provision of paid services for the business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-government (B2G) markets – for example, GIHE's already provides services on a project basis to the Saudi Cultural Mission, which involves GIHE receiving Saudi students to undertake a one-week intensive programme that covers areas relevant to the hospitality industry. The group of experts welcome the range of services currently provided by GIHE to a variety of partners and stakeholders, and encourage it to expedite its plans to develop additional monetised services for industry.

Research

Research in GIHE is still at an early stage, and the institution acknowledges that it must develop it further. Over the past year, it has commenced work to establish, support and promote research activity, and evidence of an emerging research culture was presented to the group of experts. The institution has recently created the Glion Research and Innovation Centre (GRIC), which serves as an institutional center for conducting applied research and will support the expansion of research capacity. GIHE has also developed objectives linked to the development of research capacity within its Academic and Research Strategy. KPIs that support the institution in achieving these objectives have been identified.

The publications submitted to the experts by GIHE show that the institution has started to engage primarily in applied research. The institution is clearly well connected with industry and attuned to sector trends and needs. In this regard, the experts welcome that GIHE has identified defined areas of research focus (i.e. the luxury and hospitality sectors). They note that these are appropriate and well aligned with GIHE's overall institutional strategy and mission, even if they still need to be refined and formalised. In this sense, the experts advise GIHE to adopt a common institutional definition of "applied research" to ensure that faculty members understand what GIHE

expects of them in terms of research in these areas – this includes precise methodologies for conducting research, and criteria for developing research questions linked to the identified pillars. The supports and training for research case-writing currently provided by GIHE is a good first step, in the view of the experts.

During the visit, the experts had the opportunity to talk to the institution's researchers. At present, a small team is involved in research and benefits from protected time to carry out research activity. The team is complemented by visiting researchers. These are contracted to engage in research work attributed to Glion, enabling the institution to temporarily fill the gap in the number of permanent faculty carrying out research. During the interviews, the institution seemed aware that it needs to do more to encourage its professors to become genuinely involved in research and to gear its recruitment policy towards attracting suitable researchers. In this regard, GIHE has already developed a faculty research incentive programme, which aims to recognise and reward research effort, including through the provision of bonus payments and opportunities for promotion. From 2025, the institution will also allocate provision for a number of new academic posts, 60% of whose time will be devoted to research (with the remaining 40% set aside for teaching). These measures should enable research to develop favourably.

According to the institution, the initiatives discussed above will be supplemented by engagement in research collaborations with external academics and industry partners. The experts are convinced that the rich network of contacts between GIHE and industry will help to expedite the development of applied research. They encourage the institution to use its network to create research partnerships. In doing so, the experts recommend that GIHE be cautious and ensure that the distinction between applied research and the services that it provides is clearly understood by all engaged in research at GIHE. The experts are convinced that the institution will develop in the right direction, given the existence of a well-established GIHE policy on academic freedom and independence, which researchers are well aware of. Nonetheless, it is crucial that faculty members understand that the research they engage in must lead to research with, among other things, peer-reviewed scientific results that are relevant to the field. In this sense, GIHE must ensure that there are clear definitions of – and a clear distinction between – student-led research, which is not included under the category of institutional research, and faculty-led research, which requires specific supports and an environment conducive to building an institutional research portfolio.

Conclusion

The expert group assesses standard 3.1 as partially fulfilled.

Condition #2: GIHE must establish a strategy and define objectives to ensure that the institution continues to develop its own research, integrating scientific results, increasing the number of its own researchers and confirming the allocation of sufficient resources.

Recommendation #4: Identify opportunities to build on the services that GIHE currently provides to the hospitality and luxury sectors and engage in collaborative research projects with industry partners.

Standard 3.2: The quality assurance system shall provide for a periodic evaluation of teaching and research activities, of services and of results achieved in these areas.

Description and analysis

Details of the systems in place for the monitoring and evaluation of GIHE's activity are set out under standard 1.4 and section 3 of this report. As detailed there, GIHE's evaluation, infrastructure is grounded within the GIHE Institutional Quality Framework, which incorporates the

setting and maintenance of quality standards, from which defined, measurable quality objectives and indicators, as well as GIHE's quality assurance policies, processes and practices, flow. The GIQF informs the Academic Quality Framework (AQF), which sets out guiding principles, defines roles and responsibilities within the academic quality assurance system, and describes the various review and evaluation processes that programmes and their component courses undergo to support continuous improvement.

Periodic evaluation and reporting on the QA system incorporates input from the institution's representative groups (leadership, students, faculty and professional and administrative staff) and is undertaken in alignment with the PDCA model, which supports adjustment and enhancement where necessary and appropriate. Overall responsibility for quality rests with the Governing Board, which delegates responsibility for various aspects to specific entities within the university's governance system. External input is provided through various means, including through GIHE's engagement with the processes of external accreditation bodies and the advice of external examiners, as well as through the external Hospitality and Luxury Insight Council (HLIC), which advises inter alia on the alignment of academic programmes with industry needs.

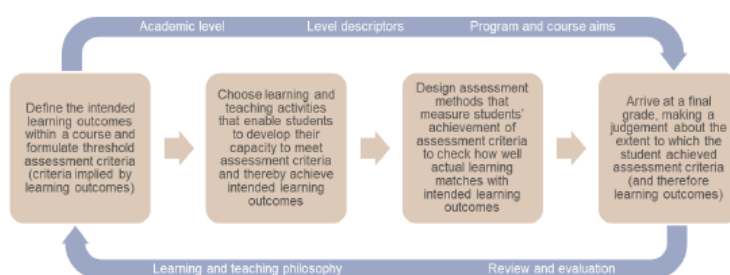


Fig. 7: GIHE programme design and review process

Teaching and learning are assessed through various means, including through formal programme review processes (annual or per semester) and (annual) self-assessments by faculty members, peer-to-peer observation and Course Review and Evaluation (CRE) surveys, undertaken by students upon the completion of each course, as well as consultation with and surveys of class representatives. Proposed adjustments may also be discussed and “tested” with the HLIC. There are formal processes for the approval of proposals for enhancement, with the final instance being presentation for consideration and approval to the Academic & Research Board. Examples of enhancements noted by the group of experts include the updating of language diagnostic tests for students on the basis of the faculty self-reflection process and changes in the process for assignment feedback for students on the basis of class representative surveys.

During the on-site visit, the CRE system was noted by leadership, faculty and staff to be of particular value to the institution in assessing the effectiveness and currency of its curricula and the group of experts note and welcome the institution's openness to adjusting its academic delivery based on student feedback. Industry partners – including those sitting on the HLIC and organisations providing practice placement opportunities – are consulted on services provided by the institution, both formally and informally, and their feedback supports GIHE to tailor its services.

The current dearth of real evaluation of GIHE's research activity represents a gap within GIHE's quality monitoring and reporting infrastructure. The institution has, as noted under standard 3.1, set research objectives and indicators, which it monitors and reports upon within its governance infrastructure. However, GIHE is at an early stage of developing its research strategy and culture. The group of experts note that GIHE need to establish a much more comprehensive system of monitoring and evaluation for research activities and their results.

Conclusion

The expert group assesses standard 3.2 as partially fulfilled.

Condition #3: GIHE must establish a comprehensive policy with associated infrastructure for the evaluation of its research strategy, activity and results.

Standard 3.3: The quality assurance system shall ensure that principles and objectives linked to the European Higher Education Area are taken into consideration.

Description and analysis

GIHE describes itself as a “Swiss, European and international institution” (SAR, p. 44). Its presence in Switzerland and the UK and its engagement with academic and industry partners in Europe, Asia, and the US, give it a global outlook that informs the continued development of its curricula. An overview of the ways in which GIHE has aligned its provision with the requirements of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the requirements of the Bologna system has been presented to the experts. GIHE has allocated ECTS credits to its programmes and courses and also maps these to US Carnegie credit units. The institution has ensured that ECTS credits are allocated equally across semesters and years.

GIHE programmes are structured in compliance with the Swiss National Qualifications Framework and Bologna requirements: the institution has developed specific learning outcomes for each programme and course that it delivers. The group of experts is satisfied that these are in alignment with the Dublin Descriptors. A diploma supplement is issued to each graduate alongside their degree, which is particularly important in view of the diversity within GIHE’s student body, and allows students greater flexibility in their future studies and careers.

In accordance with ESG 1.3, GIHE’s teaching, learning and assessment, as well as its quality assurance system, are student-centred – student feedback is regularly sought through a variety of means (see, for example, standard 3.2 above), analysed, and used to effect enhancements to GIHE’s curricula and learning environment.

Student members (both undergraduate and postgraduate, including those on executive master’s programmes) are included within GIHE’s governance committees and can, through this membership, contribute to learning environment enhancements. During the on-site visit, the group of experts heard of measures in place to facilitate a reasonable assessment workload for students, including the maintenance of an “assessment map”, which is populated for each cohort with all assessment dates, as well as the provision of appropriate notice in advance of assessment events.

Given the international nature of the student body within the institution, the group of experts understand that many GIHE students are not interested in taking advantage of mobility arrangements. Nevertheless, GIHE does provide for student mobility and there is evidence of students moving within GIHE (for example, from a Swiss campus to the London campus) and to sister institutions within the Sommet Education group. Students whom the experts met at the on-site visit were, for example, aware of opportunities for transfer to the Les Roches Marbella campus. Articulation agreements are in place with other institutions, which provide for advanced entry into GIHE programmes, and the experts had sight of sample articulation agreements as well as the Articulation Agreement Policy.

Mobility opportunities are also provided to staff members – campus exchanges are offered on a regular basis. Staff mobility requests may be discussed during annual appraisal processes and,

during the on-site visit, the group of experts heard of instances where a faculty member moved from GIHE to a sister institution's campus, which provided an opportunity to build relationships, network, and exchange knowledge and experience with staff on that campus.

Conclusion

The expert group assesses standard 3.3 as entirely fulfilled.

Standard 3.4: The quality assurance system shall ensure compliance with the criteria for admission, for the assessment of the student performance and for issuing final diplomas according to the mission of the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector. These criteria shall be defined, communicated and applied systematically, transparently and consistently.

Description and analysis

GIHE has well defined regulations that cover all phases of the student life-cycle – from application and admission to progression through recognition and certification. It appears that these regulations are, for the most part, consistently applied – although GIHE must ensure that students with disabilities are provided with equal opportunities during the application and admissions process (see standard 2.5).

GIHE describes its approach to admissions as “holistic” (SAR, p. 47) and notes that the soft skills, mindset, creativity and drive of each individual are considered alongside academic and previous work achievements. The group of experts were provided with an overview of the outcomes of a review 2023 admissions processes, which contained adjustments to the process where areas of inefficiency or challenge were identified. Students largely originate from outside of Switzerland and, as part of the overall enrolment and induction processes within the institution, there are well established processes in place to support the integration of international students. These commence before enrolment with the assignment of admissions counsellors.

Inconsistency of English-language competence appears to be a challenge for GIHE and its students. GIHE has outlined a number of measures it intends undertaking to support greater levels of fluency among students, including the acceptance of (only) certain English certificates, the inclusion of testing of language competence within interviews, and the incorporation of English language electives for students. The group of experts support these proposals and encourage GIHE to implement them as soon as possible.

Criteria for enrolment on to GIHE programmes have been determined and are set out within GIHE's Admissions Policy. These cover prior educational attainment (including, for master's applications, the relevance of the applicant's prior educational experience), age, and level of English language proficiency. In addition, GIHE is taking steps to meet the requirements of the HEdA, which stipulates that prospective entrants to first-cycle studies within a University of Applied Sciences who have a general baccalaureate must also have completed at least one year of work experience “in an occupation related to the desired field of study” (ch. 4, art. 25). To facilitate this, GIHE has formalised an experiential year that combines a semester of practical arts and a 24-week internship, which, combined, correspond to one year's professional experience. This experiential year will be recommended for all students, but will be compulsory for any students who have less than one year's work experience. No ECTS credits will be allocated for the year of professional practice; it will serve solely to provide adequate professional experience for students who do not meet the requirements of the HEdA in this regard when they enrol at GIHE.

The group of experts were initially concerned that prospective students might be able to circumvent the requirements for professional experience discussed above by commencing their studies on the London campus; however, these concerns were allayed by GIHE's assurances that all students must begin their undergraduate studies on the Glion campus.

A further measure being undertaken by GIHE to ensure compliance with Swiss federal law is the updating and migrating of GIHE's undergraduate programmes from four-year bachelor of business administration (BBA) programmes to three-year programmes that lead to the award of bachelor of science (BSc). Both changes will take full effect from Spring 2025. The experts are confident that, upon their full implementation, these arrangements fulfil GIHE's obligations under Swiss federal law; however, they note that GIHE refers within its SAR to "gradually adapting" (SAR, p. 49) its admission criteria and urges the institution not to delay in implementing either of these measures. Failure to do so will result in the institution's contravention of Swiss federal law and, consequently, an inability to meet the accreditation criteria for a Swiss University of Applied Sciences Institute.

Furthermore, the group of experts is not satisfied that GIHE's work to formalise the experiential year and to transition to the BSc award-type (and the potential impact of these changes for prospective students) are currently being well communicated by GIHE. In order to ensure absolute clarity for those interested in enrolling on GIHE's undergraduate offerings, GIHE must ensure that the status of both changes is clearly communicated to all relevant stakeholders both on its website and in any promotional materials, and that both measures are completed in a timely manner (this includes the development of the diploma and diploma supplement documents, and the finalisation of and communication of arrangements for the experiential year).

Clear guidance and procedures with regard to assessment methodologies and feedback techniques are set out within the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Handbook and regulations with regard to grading, transfer and progression are set out in the Academic Rules and Regulations document. The Progression and Awards Board manages student progression and monitors and reports on the allocation of grades and credits, and clear and comprehensive terms of reference regulate the conduct of Progression and Awards Board meetings. The institution has an Academic Misconduct Policy in place, which defines a range of misconduct types in an accessible manner and provides clarity for students on the process for managing suspected instances of academic misconduct. During the site visit students confirmed that information is provided to them with regard to admissions, curricula and assessment, including during an induction week before the commencement of their studies, and that they felt well supported by GIHE, its faculty and staff.

Procedures and regulations for the making of awards – including the making of exit awards where a student elects to withdraw from a programme before completing sufficient credits for a major award – are also set out within the Academic Rules and Regulations. All awards issued are Swiss diplomas and this was clear to all students whom the group of experts met during the on-site visit, including those studying on GIHE's London campus.

Conclusion

The expert group assesses standard 3.4 as partially fulfilled.

Condition #4: GIHE must modify its degree programmes, associated diplomas and admission requirements so that they comply in full with the HEdA (ch. 4, art. 25) and its Accreditation Ordinance (section 1, art. 2 and section 2, art. 4). These changes must be clearly communicated to prospective students and all stakeholders through the institution's website, published materials and all other forms of public communication.

Area 4: Resources

Standard 4.1: With its competent authorities, the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector shall assure that its personnel resources, infrastructure and financial means allow for operating on a going concern basis and for achieving its strategic objectives. The origin and allocation of financial resources and financing conditions shall be transparent.

Description and analysis

GIHE has a robust financial model to ensure its continued financial viability and economic growth. Although an independent, autonomous institution, it is supported by its parent company, Sommet Education. During the on-site visit, the group of experts had the opportunity to discuss GIHE's financial resources with the institution's board, which includes membership from Sommet, and appreciated their forthrightness and frankness. The group of experts was satisfied that the board has engaged in shrewd and responsible financial stewardship of GIHE and is confident that the financial resources available to the institution are more than sufficient to ensure that it continues to operate as an ongoing concern. This includes the board's reinvestment of profit within the institution and its decision that profits are not currently to be distributed to shareholders.

GIHE's financial statements are audited annually by external auditors and undergo a screening process by NECHE. The experts note that GIHE does not currently publish financial statements or other financial information and encourages the board to consider modelling transparency by publishing an annual summary of financial information (see standard 5.2).

GIHE is primarily funded through student fees, with 73.6% of revenue emanating from net tuition. While a lack of growth in student numbers was acknowledged by board members, the group of experts is satisfied that GIHE's student recruitment processes, including the supports provided during the application process, as well as the quality assurance and enhancement measures that facilitate a supportive learning environment, have led to stable and steady student numbers. Other sources of income for GIHE include room and board for students (16.8%).

GIHE's board has also displayed responsible stewardship with regard to its maintenance and enhancement of GIHE's infrastructure. With the support of Sommet Education (and its previous parent company, Lauret), GIHE's board has engaged in a scheme of capital investment to ensure the upkeep of the institution's physical infrastructure. This has entailed the investment of 15 million CHF in GIHE buildings since 2016 (1.3 million CHF is invested in renovation annually).

The group of experts had the opportunity to visit both the Glion and Bulle campuses and were satisfied that the physical and virtual infrastructure provided by GIHE are well suited to the nature of GIHE's delivery. This includes the availability of well-equipped kitchens, restaurants and other amenities used to support the practical elements of GIHE's programmes. However, during the on-site visit, the experts heard that elements of GIHE's physical infrastructure do not lend themselves to accommodating students and staff with physical disabilities (see standard 2.5). A comprehensive set of digital resources is available to students, including learning supports and library resources (99.6% of library resources are now available digitally). The group of experts welcome the fact that the GIHE's library team has decided to encourage greater awareness and accessibility of digital library resources.

GIHE class sizes are relatively small (ranging from 15 to a maximum of 25 learners), which is appreciated by students, and teaching staff are accessible to students outside of class through both formal and informal channels.

GIHE has a total of 233 members of staff, with 118 of these working on the Bulle campus, 104 in Glion, and 11 on the London campus. Of these, 119 are faculty members (of whom 45 are

permanent and 74 are visiting lecturers); 39 are academic staff; 114 are involved in operations; 14 work in support functions; and nine are executives (all of whom are members of GIHE's Leadership Committee). During the on-site visit, the group of experts spoke to institutional leadership about the planning, recruitment and staff development processes in place to ensure that personnel resources are adequate for the institution's size and appropriate to its mission, vision and vocational nature. Recruitment planning is undertaken by managers on both an annual basis and, for longer-term projects, a three-year cycle, with draft plans reviewed by HR, Finance and the Heads of Pillars/Departments. The plans are, ultimately, considered for approval by the Governing Board.

The recruitment process itself is flexible and may be adapted depending on the available position. During the on-site visit, it was noted that recruitment for operations staff is complicated, and that turnover is to be expected, in spite of efforts by the institution to provide opportunities for career progression and investment.

While a lack of growth in student numbers was acknowledged, the group of experts received evidence of stable and steady student numbers. Given GIHE's model of delivery, whereby undergraduate students commence their academic journey on the Glion campus and then continue on to Bulle, student numbers fluctuate from semester to semester in Glion. Sensible and sustainable measures are in place to balance human resources and ensure operational efficiency and staff wellbeing across the academic year – during the on-site visit, GIHE confirmed that there are processes to refocus the energies of Glion faculty and staff during the more fallow second semester, with many supporting Bulle operations during that time; Bulle staff also assist with the annual summer camp on the Glion campus.

The group of experts note that, while the current complement of staff might be sufficient for an institution that is solely focused on teaching and training, it is not fully appropriate for a University of Applied Sciences Institute that is working to develop a research culture and build its research activity. Condition #2, formulated under the standard 3.1, should make it possible to remedy this shortcoming, since it entails increasing the number of the institution's own researchers.

Conclusion

The expert group assesses standard 4.1 as entirely fulfilled.

Standard 4.2: The quality assurance system shall ensure that the entire staff is qualified according to the type and specific characteristics of the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector. To this end, it shall also provide for its periodic assessment.

Description and analysis

As noted under standard 4.1, GIHE has a total of 233 members of staff across its three campuses. This figure comprises faculty (both permanent and visiting), academic staff, operations staff, support staff, and executives, and the group of experts met with enthusiastic and motivated representatives of each of these groups during the on-site visit.

The group of experts is satisfied that students enrolled in GIHE are taught by well qualified teachers and that appropriate training is provided to new staff as required. Sample job descriptions were provided to the experts, as well as sample contracts. The job description outlines the purpose of the role, the requisite experience, knowledge and skills, and the key responsibilities of the role, alongside the internal and external "networks of interaction". All faculty members must have teaching expertise and/or industry experience, while senior lecturers are required to have both academic and industry expertise.

GIHE has a process for annual performance review in place. These reviews are conducted by the line manager or programme director. The group of experts heard that student feedback, which is presented to faculty members during their review meetings, provides a crucial source of information to inform the review and updating of teaching and assessment approaches. Based on the discussion, faculty members will put objectives in place – the previous year’s objectives and progress in their achievement are also discussed. The performance review process is seen by faculty as a clear, fair and inclusive process that offers opportunities to discuss and set objectives to achieve progression and to indicate specific areas of interest, including with regard to research.

The group of experts is confident that there are robust recruitment, support and training measures in place to ensure that GIHE has a complement of teaching staff that is well qualified and whose knowledge, skill and competence is commensurate with the requirements of a University of Applied Sciences Institute. However, they note that there are deficits when it comes to research.

A proportion of GIHE faculty are clearly interested in and enthusiastic about becoming more involved in research; GIHE has put measures in place to support all faculty who are new to research, irrespective of their contractual status. GIHE has also recruited both full-time and visiting faculty with impressive research track records and initiated a competitive scheme to reward any faculty engaging in research, whereby all successful respondents to a call for proposals are granted a monetary bonus, paid in two instalments (the final upon peer review of the research).

The experts welcome these measures, but nonetheless recommend that GIHE increase the support and guidance for existing staff to allow them to further develop their scientific skillsets.

Conclusion

The expert group assesses standard 4.2 as largely fulfilled.

Recommendation #5: Increase the support and guidance for existing staff to allow them to further develop their scientific skillsets.

Standard 4.3: The quality assurance system shall ensure that the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector supports the career development of its entire staff, particularly the new generation of scientists.

Description and analysis

GIHE provides various supports to faculty and staff members to support their upskilling and professional development. Supports may be individualised to suit the needs of the faculty member, but global faculty development sessions (for example, on digital literacy) are also provided.

As noted under standard 4.2, GIHE has an annual performance review process in place for all employees. The review meeting provides an opportunity to reflect upon the past year, consider skills gaps and progression aspirations, and identify training needs to support continuous professional and career development.

The group of experts discussed with GIHE the opportunities available to all categories of staff for progression and career development. It was noted that, for technical and operational staff, there tends to be less space to develop and grow. The experts note that this is not unusual for this category of staff within the higher education sector because of the nature of these jobs, but nonetheless encourage GIHE to consider where there might be room for enhancement of progression opportunities available to these cohorts. There are more opportunities available to both teaching and research staff. It was noted during the on-site visit that GIHE has, in recent

years, moved from a very flat faculty structure to one in which there is more space and opportunity for advancement. The experts note that details of faculty structure and ranks are set out within the Faculty Handbook – from lecturer through senior lecturer to the various categories of professor. While criteria and characteristics are detailed for each rank, in general, the detailed criteria for promotion for faculty were not clear to the experts, nor did they appear clear to faculty members. For example, it is noted within the Faculty Handbook that faculty members must inter alia have an exemplary record of research and/or industry relations to become an Associate Professor; however, “exemplary record” is not defined in any further detail. Similarly, while an overview of the performance review process for professional and administrative staff is provided to these staff members, there was no detail within these documents regarding opportunities for promotion, nor in relation to the criteria and processes for same. It seems that, in general, for all employees, career advancement tends to be based upon individual initiatives (sometimes – for faculty members – linked to research endeavours). According to the experts, GIHE needs to update and clarify the processes and criteria regarding promotion for all categories of staff and communicate these.

When it comes to research, as noted above, GIHE provides tailored supports where research is a new undertaking for the individual. These supports encompass a “new-to-research” induction that is provided to a relatively small number of faculty members each semester and covers topics such as case-writing. The institution also provides support for first publications. While the group of experts welcome the assistance and guidance that GIHE currently provides to early-career researchers, they are not confident that these are sufficient to enable such individuals to embark on their research journey with the necessary level of confidence and assurance. The experts encourage GIHE to redouble their efforts to support more proactively career development opportunities for the new generation of scientists. This includes broadening out the range of available assistance for such individuals and facilitating increased networking to build a genuine community of practice for researchers within the institution. This will be crucial for GIHE if they are to attract young and talented researchers to the institution, many of whom will wish to progress in their careers.

In this regard, GIHE has recently established a recruitment committee, and the group of experts welcome the necessary transparency and consistency that this should bring to the recruitment and progression processes. The experts note that the establishment and operation of this committee should go some way towards rectifying the deficits noted above. In particular, they note that it should provide much greater clarity in relation to promotions to the rank of professor.

Conclusion

The expert group assesses standard 4.3 as partially fulfilled.

Condition #5: GIHE must establish a clear promotion system for all faculty and staff members – in particular for the new generation of scientists – and clarify the promotion procedure for professors.

Area 5: Internal and external communication

Standard 5.1: The higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector shall make public its quality assurance strategy and ensure that the provisions corresponding to quality assurance processes and their results are known to employees, students and if necessary external stakeholders.

Description and analysis

GIHE's quality strategy and processes are well and clearly documented and their dissemination is supported by strong communication processes, both formal and informal, internal and external. During the on-site visit, the group of experts observed an institutional community in which all members appeared to be aware of where to go when seeking information about specific policies, processes or practices.

GIHE regards its organisational structure as a central part of the institution's communication infrastructure. This facilitates the cascading (top-down) of strategic information from the Leadership Team as well as providing a channel for bottom-up communication from faculty and staff members through management to leadership and a touchstone between the operational and the strategic management of the institution. Staff information sessions are held monthly but more informal channels are also commonly used (for example, between the Academic Dean or a programme director and individual faculty members). The group of experts endorses GIHE's view that the organisational and governance structures are a powerful communication and dissemination mechanism for the institution; however, it observes that the meeting minutes produced by the relevant bodies within these systems could be more detailed.

New employees are provided with inductions, which are an opportunity to learn about the institution's QA policies, procedures and processes, and seem to work well in the institution.

The appointment of a Quality Assurance Champion within each operational area means that the individuals holding these roles are easily identifiable and approachable to their colleagues. The Champions signpost new or revised policies, and respond to colleagues' questions or refer them to the correct point of contact. The Central Station platform is also of note. In addition to policies and procedures, Central Station also provides tutorials and related videos for employees. GIHE faculty and staff (and, in some cases, students) appear to appreciate and rely heavily on both of these platforms as "the first source" of information.

There are comprehensive processes in place to support clear and accessible communication to and from students. As in the case of employees, the organisational and governance structures are of particular importance: student members of committees (including the Student Government Association) and class representatives convey information to students. During the on-site visit, institutional leadership noted that faculty are encouraged to communicate informally with students to share information. Students spoke appreciatively of faculty members' openness to informal communication and faculty members themselves noted the value of informal and ad hoc communication with students.

The experts encourage this type of activity, but also note that the institution sometimes fails to communicate the results of its quality assurance processes to students. This applies, for example, to the communication of results obtained through the CRE system. The experts recommend that GIHE ensure that the outputs and outcomes of these processes are systematically communicated.

Conclusion

The expert group assesses standard 5.1 as largely fulfilled.

Recommendation #6: Ensure that the results associated with the curriculum review and enhancement (CRE) system, as well as the adjustments made on the basis of these results, are available to students.

Standard 5.2: The higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector shall regularly publish objective information about its activities, its study programmes and the qualifications awarded.

Description and analysis

GIHE publishes objective information about its activities in a number of ways. Externally, these include the GIHE website, public fora, a GIHE magazine, brochures, and other promotional materials. Internally, Central Station provides a “one-stop-shop” for employees to access updates on key statistics, progress in meeting GIHE’s KPIs, and the like. GIHE’s marketing team is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the information provided and consistency across all publications.

The experts note that the website is well populated and provides an overview of *inter alia* the school’s academic delivery, service provision, and infrastructure. Comprehensive information on accommodation options is provided for prospective students. Specific information for alumni is also detailed. Key figures are shared, such as graduate outcomes (including the employability rate for GIHE graduates and the graduation rate); number of industry partners; and the faculty to student ratio. This information is particularly relevant to GIHE’s external community, including prospective students and industry and academic partners, and is recalculated and updated annually.

The full suite of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, as well as GIHE’s executive education offerings, is also detailed on the institutional website, which provides information about entry requirements, including the necessity for an experiential year (or appropriate professional experience) prior to entry into the undergraduate programmes. Here, the experts note that, while the new BSc programmes and the experiential year are referenced on the website, the transitional measures from the BBA to BSc are not explicitly detailed. Fulfilment of condition #4 formulated under standard 3.4 will rectify this omission.

The programme webpages set out simple visual representations of the programmes’ structures. Information is presented clearly, with a good mix of text, graphics and multimedia content, and the structure of the website is easy to navigate. Specific advice is provided for those learners who wish to transfer from another institution to GIHE. Testimonials from a selection of GIHE’s alumni are also included.

The website provides hyperlinks to the academic catalogue and GIHE’s academic regulations for all programmes. Academic calendars are provided for three calendar years. The group of experts welcome this as a model of transparency and note the value of this comprehensive set of information for prospective students in advance of their enrolment with GIHE, which aligns with the requirements of the ESG.

Whilst GIHE’s website and brochures are very informative, the group of experts note that GIHE does not publish financial information, nor does it publish its annual report or other useful reports, such as the annual sustainability report, outside of the institution (the annual report and other thematic reports are made available internally through Central Station). The experts note the valuable information that these documents contain and encourage GIHE to share its annual report and a synopsis of financial information externally. They have made a recommendation in this regard.

Conclusion

The expert group assesses standard 5.2 as largely fulfilled.

Recommendation #7: Consider publishing annual and financial reports to ensure full transparency for students, prospective students, and external stakeholders.

2 Outline of the strengths and challenges of the system and its overall assessment

Strengths:

Quality culture

A very well embedded tradition of quality permeates all aspects of GIHE's academic delivery and service provision. This quality culture is truly "lived" by all representative groups within GIHE and has developed incrementally over time, influenced to a large extent by the external quality assurance and accreditation processes in which GIHE has engaged. There are robust systems in place to collect and analyse data and report against key performance indicators, as well as the effectiveness of the institution's periodic review of its quality assurance system, which is supported by both internal and external processes.

Documentation and communication of quality

Linked to the above, GIHE's quality culture is well documented and supported by strong communication and dissemination processes, both formal and informal. Of particular note here are the Quality Assurance Champions, who serve as role models and provide an efficient and effective way of disseminating information and embedding an institutional quality culture in a coherent manner. The Central Station platform, which provides one accessible "source of truth" for all of GIHE's quality documentation, is also of note in this regard.

Participation

There is comprehensive participation in GIHE's quality assurance system from across all representative groups within GIHE, including students, faculty, staff, leadership, and external stakeholders. A range of committees supports the engagement of individuals within the quality assurance and governance infrastructure and facilitates bottom-up initiatives to assure the institution of the quality of its delivery and to make appropriate enhancements. All stakeholders appear to be acquainted with the PDCA process and apply it as expected according to their respective roles. The re-establishment of the Faculty Council as a platform through which members of faculty can exchange with each other and contribute to and influence the quality assurance system is very welcome. There are also excellent systems to integrate students within the quality system, through their participation in committees and societies, as well as the appointment of class representatives and student ambassadors. Similarly, new faculty and staff members are well supported in informing themselves about the quality assurance system and receive ample opportunities to participate at an early stage.

Quality of Teaching

During the site visit, the evaluation team observed a structured and generally high-quality teaching approach. The lecturers involved demonstrated an effort to foster problem-solving skills and self-directed learning among students. Course content appeared to be selected with the aim of ensuring relevance and applicability, supporting students in developing critical thinking and independent problem-solving capabilities. One notable aspect of the teaching observed was the clarity of learning objectives. Lecturers generally set well-defined goals for each session, providing students with an understanding of expected outcomes. Additionally, engaging tasks were incorporated into the teaching process, encouraging active participation and deeper learning. The use of materials appeared to be of good quality, ensuring that students had access to relevant and up-to-date resources. Beyond content delivery, lecturers contributed to a learning environment that encouraged interaction, communication, and collaboration. There were indications of positive relationships between lecturers and students, which seemed to support a constructive learning atmosphere. Overall, the quality of teaching observed reflects an intention to

provide structured and effective education. The combination of structured content, defined objectives, engaging methodologies, and quality materials contributes to a solid learning experience. The emphasis on deeper learning and positive communication appears to enhance the teaching approach, supporting the overall effectiveness of the academic programs.

Positive relationships with industry

GIHE maintains a comprehensive network of relationships with industry across a breadth of sectors and both it and its graduates are very well regarded by its industry partners. The feedback and insights provided by industry contribute significantly towards programme development and partners also provide internship opportunities to GIHE students. In turn, industry partners benefit from GIHE's provision of services and may approach GIHE for support with specific challenges that they are experiencing. The group of experts are confident that GIHE will continue to contribute to the evolution of the hospitality and luxury sectors in particular, and see ample opportunity for GIHE build on existing positive relationships to strengthen and deepen engagement with industry partners, incorporating industry input into the development of GIHE's research activity.

Areas for improvement:

Diversity and equality

GIHE's student population represents a diverse mix of nationalities and ethnicities, with students originating from over 100 countries, and the institution is adept at managing cultural difference within the student and staff body. The institution has measures and structures in place to support diversity, equity and inclusion, including a recently established DEI committee. However, notwithstanding these, there are deficits in how GIHE ensures real gender equality and equal opportunities for students with disabilities, which, to be rectified, will require the institution to move from being reactive towards instances of inequity to a much more proactive approach to promoting diversity and equity and pre-empting and preventing discrimination. This includes any potential discrimination or biases within GIHE's admissions policies and procedures.

Student feedback

The experts welcome GIHE's plan to include student representation within its Quality Oversight Committee. They also note with approval the multiple opportunities that GIHE provides students to contribute to the quality of academic delivery and of the wider learning environment by providing feedback through regular surveys, through the class representative system, and as members of committees. GIHE analyses the student feedback provided and may act upon it to adjust and enhance the quality assurance infrastructure. However, while staff are provided with details of student feedback through PowerBI, students do not have the opportunity to view these data, nor do they have access to the faculty responses to their feedback. To ensure that students have full sight of how their feedback impacts upon and triggers positive change to the institution's quality assurance system, GIHE should provide anonymised summaries of the results of student feedback processes to all stakeholders, including students, and ensure that these are easily accessible and comprehensible.

Transition towards the Bachelor of Science

GIHE's undergraduate programmes currently lead to the award of Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) but are being transitioned to lead to the award of Bachelor of Science (BSc). This will include the incorporation of an experiential year in certain circumstances (where students have not previously completed one year's relevant work experience) to ensure compliance with Swiss federal law. GIHE does not currently provide clear and transparent

information to prospective students about the transition and its potential impact. In order to ensure absolute clarity for those interested in enrolling on GIHE's undergraduate offerings, GIHE must ensure that the status of the transition is clearly communicated to all relevant stakeholders both on its website and in any promotional materials, and that the transition is completed in a timely manner (this includes the development of the diploma and diploma supplement documents, and the finalisation of and communication of arrangements for the experiential year).

Promotion of staff

GIHE's staff are well supported by the institution – GIHE provides a comprehensive complement of health and wellbeing measures for its employees, as well as other opportunities, such as mobility and research supports, and these are clearly appreciated. However, it is crucial within any workplace that the processes for promotion of staff be clear, transparent and well communicated. This is not the case within GIHE – particularly in relation to promotion to the rank of professor. Many faculty and staff do not seem to be aware of the existence of the recruitment committee nor how career moves are handled. To ensure absolute clarity for its staff and faculty, GIHE must update the processes and criteria regarding promotion. Furthermore, GIHE should consider putting measures in place to support more proactively career development opportunities for early-career researchers.

Research

As outlined throughout this report, GIHE has a strong tradition of academic delivery, whose evolution and currency are supported by its closeknit partnerships with industry. It also has a well-rooted system of service delivery to industry and to the communities surrounding it. These two pillars are beginning to be supplemented by an emerging research culture, in which GIHE's researchers appear to be well connected with partners in higher education institutions elsewhere and which appears to be drawing upon the institution's existing relationships with industry. However, GIHE's research culture is still at an early stage. GIHE must develop its research activity further and include it within its quality assurance system.

3 Recommendations for the future development of quality assurance

Area 1: Quality assurance strategy

Standard 1.2:

Recommendation #1: Incorporate research more strongly within the institutional strategy.

Area 2: Governance

Standard 2.2

Recommendation #2: Review the exact quantity of formal and informal feedback requested from institutional stakeholders to ensure that the volume of feedback sought is reasonable and that the data gathered are necessary.

Standard 2.4

Recommendation #3: Act more proactively in setting sustainability objectives in general, and further develop GIHE's sustainability strategy to incorporate high-level objectives to support the achievement of meaningful social sustainability with regard to all institutional stakeholders.

Area 3: Teaching, research and services

Standard 3.1

Recommendation #4: Identify opportunities to build on the services that GIHE currently provides to the hospitality and luxury sectors and engage in collaborative research projects with industry partners.

Area 4: Resources

Standard 4.2

Recommendation #5: Increase the support and guidance for existing staff to allow them to further develop their scientific skillsets.

Area 5: Internal and external communication

Standard 5.1

Recommendation #6: Ensure that the results associated with the curriculum review and assessment (CRE) system, as well as the adjustments made on the basis of these results, are available to students.

Standard 5.2

Recommendation #7: Consider publishing annual and financial reports to ensure full transparency for students, prospective students, and external stakeholders.

4 Accreditation proposal of the expert group

Based on the self-assessment report of Glion Institute of Higher Education (GIHE) of 12 July 2024 and on the on-site visit that took place from 22 to 23 October 2024, the group of experts proposes to grant GIHE accreditation subject to the following conditions:

Area 2: Governance

Standard 2.5

Condition #1: GIHE must establish a clear policy for promoting equal opportunities and actual gender equality for all representative groups across all aspects of its activity. It must define precise objectives in this area and an action plan for achieving them, and communicate the policy to all employees and students across all GIHE campuses.

Area 3: Teaching, research and services

Standard 3.1

Condition #2: GIHE must establish a strategy and define objectives to ensure that the institution continues to develop its own research, integrating scientific results, increasing the number of its own researchers and confirming the allocation of sufficient resources.

Standard 3.2

Condition #3: GIHE must establish a comprehensive policy with associated infrastructure for the evaluation of its research strategy, activity and results.

Standard 3.4

Condition #4: GIHE must modify its degree programmes, associated diplomas and admission requirements so that they comply in full with the HEdA (ch. 4, art. 25) and its Accreditation Ordinance (section 1, art. 2 and section 2, art. 4). These changes must be clearly communicated to prospective students and all stakeholders through the institution's website, published materials and all other forms of public communication.

Area 4: Resources

Standard 4.3

Condition #5: GIHE must establish a clear promotion system for all faculty and staff members – in particular for the new generation of scientists – and clarify the promotion procedure for professors.

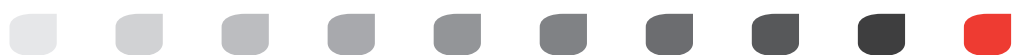
The expert group envisages a time horizon of 2 years for the fulfilment of the conditions; the review is to take place within the framework of a shortened on-site visit 1 day with 2 experts.



Section D

Position statement of Glion Institute of Higher Education (GIHE)

18 March 2025





AAQ
Effingerstrasse 15,
P.O. Box
3001 Bern
Switzerland

Bulle, 18 March 2025

Dear Dr Grolimund,

We acknowledge receipt of the External Assessment Report dated February 27, 2025, regarding the institutional accreditation of Glion Institute of Higher Education (GIHE).

GIHE would like to express its gratitude to the Experts' team for their thorough assessment, constructive feedback, and dedication throughout the accreditation process. We also appreciate the collaborative and transparent approach taken during the site visit and the follow-up discussions.

Furthermore, we extend our thanks to AAQ and the Swiss Accreditation Council for their coordination and oversight of this important process, ensuring that all stakeholders were well-supported during the evaluation.

We have reviewed the External Assessment Report carefully and fully acknowledge the conditions for accreditation outlined in the assessment. Additionally, we see the experts' recommendations as valuable opportunities for further institutional development and continuous quality enhancement.

Below is our response to each condition:

Condition 1: Equal opportunities & gender equality (Standard 2.5)

GIHE is committed to fostering an inclusive academic and professional environment. It recognizes the need to strengthen policies on gender equality and equal opportunities and will:

- ensure formal institution-wide policies are developed to promote gender equality and diversity;
- establish defined, measurable objectives and a corresponding action plan;
- ensure clear communication to all stakeholders of these initiatives across all GIHE campuses.

Condition 2: Research development (Standard 3.1)

GIHE acknowledges the importance of enhancing its research strategy and commits to:

- increasing faculty engaged in research activities;
- developing a comprehensive research framework with clear strategic objectives;
- allocating appropriate resources to support research activities.

Condition 3: Research evaluation (Standard 3.2)

To strengthen its approach to research assessment, GIHE will:

- implement structured policies for evaluating research outcomes;
- establish a clear system of research monitoring and reporting;
- ensure that research impact is aligned with academic and industry best practices.

Condition 4: Academic program compliance (Standard 3.4)

GIHE is committed to ensuring that its academic programs fully comply with Swiss higher education regulations and will:

- complete the transition from BBA to BSc, aligning with the requirements of HEdA (ch. 4, art. 25);
- update and communicate program structures and admission requirements clearly to all stakeholders;
- ensure compliance with Swiss accreditation standards across all degree programs.

Condition 5: Faculty promotion criteria (Standard 4.3)

GIHE acknowledges the need to clarify and formalize promotion criteria for all faculty and staff members and commits to:

- establish transparent promotion guidelines for faculty, research and staff members;
- clearly communicate the updated promotion process to all faculty and staff members.

Implementation timeline

GIHE is committed to fulfilling these five conditions within the 24-month timeframe set by the expert panel and will:

- develop a detailed action plan for each condition;
- prepare for the follow-up site visit to demonstrate compliance and improvement.

We appreciate the expert panel's insights and remain dedicated to enhancing academic excellence, strengthening our research culture, and fostering an inclusive institutional environment. We look forward to our continued collaboration with the AAQ and the Swiss Accreditation Council in this accreditation process.

Respectfully,



Mr Jose Emmanuel Soler
Managing Director



Dr Antonina Santalova
Academic Dean

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