schweizerische agentur für akkreditierung und qualitätssicherung

agence suisse d'accréditation et d'assurance qualité

agenzia svizzera di accreditamento e garanzia della qualità

swiss agency of accreditation and quality assurance

Institutional accreditation, SBS Swiss Business School GmbH verification of the fulfilment of conditions

Report | 3.5.2024

Contents:

Part A – Decision of the Swiss Accreditation Council

Part B – Verification report

Part C – Statement of the SBS Swiss Business School GmbH

Part A

Decision of the Swiss Accreditation Council

19.06.2026

The Swiss Accreditation Council publishes its positive decisions at:
https://akkreditierungsrat.ch/en/decisions/

Part B
Verification report

Mai 3rd, 2024

Contents

1 Verification procedure 1
1.1 General information 1
1.2 The procedure 1
2 Analysis of the fulfilment of conditions 2
3 Antrag der AAQ 21
3 Proposal of AAQ 22
4 Statement by the higher education institution 23

1 Verification procedure

1.1 General information

Decision/means of verification

The Swiss Accreditation Council accredited SBS Swiss Business School GmbH as a university of applied sciences on 24th of September 2021, subject to eight conditions.

In its decision, the Accreditation Council specified the following deadline and means of verification[1]:

Deadline: 24 months. SBS Swiss Business School GmbH must submit a report on the fulfilment of the conditions to the Accreditation Council by 23. September 2023.

Means of verification: The verification is carried out by a short visit of half a day with three experts.

The Accreditation Council has commissioned the Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ) to verify fulfilment of the conditions.

1.2 The procedure

AAQ mandated two experts from the expert group for the initial accreditation (institutional accreditation) and one expert from the longlist for institutional accreditation.

- Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Fröhlich, ex. President of CBS Business School, Sustainable Supply Chain Expert
- Prof. Dr. Ruedi Nützi, Head of China Centre, FHNW
- Prof. Martin Halter, Head of Quality development, BFH

Schedule:

31.10.2024	AAQ receives the documents to check the conditions
08.03.2024	On site visit (1/2 day) at SBS Swiss Business School GmbH, Kloten
11.04.2024	Preliminary report and proposal by AAQ
29.04.2024	Position statement of SBS Swiss Business School GmbH
03.05.2024	Definitive report and proposal AAQ
20.09.2024	Decision of the Swiss Accreditation Council on the fulfilment of the conditions
21.10.2024	Publication of the report on the AAQ website

[1] HEdA Accreditation Ordinance, Article 15(3)

2 Analysis of the fulfilment of conditions

Condition 1 (regarding standard 1.1):

Die SBS muss eine grundlegende Überprüfung ihres Qualitätssicherungssystems und seiner Komponenten durchführen, sodass die Ergebnisse aus den Qualitätsmanagementprozessen die von der Qualitätssicherungsstrategie geforderten Ergebnisse liefern können. Die daraus resultierende Qualitätssicherungsstrategie muss veröffentlicht werden. SBS shall carry out a root and branch review of its quality assurance system to simplify the system and its components so that the outcomes from the quality management processes provide the results required by the quality assurance strategy and these facilitate institutional oversight of quality assurance and improvement. The resulting quality assurance strategy shall be published.

Description (from SBS's report on conditions)

SBS did a root and branch review of its quality assurance system, which led to changes in three significantly adapted documents. These are the SBS Institutional and Academic Governance Framework, the SBS Strategic Plan 2023-2025 and the Quality Education Handbook.

All of the documents have been straightened and are more user-friendly now. The requested quality assurance strategy is in Chapter 2 of the Quality Education Handbook and published on www.sbs.edu/quality-assurance-strategy.

The Quality Assurance Strategy includes the vision and mission - Quality Assurance, Context and legal requirements, Goals for Quality Assurance, Approach to Quality Assurance and Culture and Quality Management System, see below:

Quality Assurance Strategy

The Quality Assurance Strategy builds on the vision and mission of SBS and complies with legal requirements.

The goals of quality assurance are derived from the SBS Strategic Plan 2023-2025. The approach comprises stakeholder integration, continuous improvement, and outcome-based measurement.

The quality management system is integrated into the SBS Institutional and Academic Governance System.

SBS does external and internal quality assurance.

Vision and Mission – Quality Assurance

The vision and mission of SBS are positioning the institution as an internationally oriented tertiary education institution focusing on business education, applied research, and services.

The quality assurance strategy guides the activities in implementing the vision and mission.

Context and Legal Requirements

SBS is based in Zurich, Switzerland, and operates internationally, providing teaching, research, and services. The Quality of assurance strategy is to secure compliance and the organization's continuous improvement.

Switzerland is a European Higher Education Area member and subscribed to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015).

SBS complies with the requirements as described in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015) as specified by the Swiss Accreditation Council in accordance with the Higher Education Act (HEdA).

In addition, SBS aims to comply with European and International Quality standards through a rigorous internal review process and a series of external reviews with accreditation bodies based in Switzerland, Great Britain, and the United States of America.

Goals of Quality Assurance

The main goals for Quality Assurance derive from the SBS Strategic Plan 2023-2025.

Key Success Factors (KSF) and Key Performance Indicators (KPI) are described there.

The five main categories are:

1. Governance System – Vision and Mission – KSF

2. Swiss regulatory requirements - KSF

3. Core processes – teaching, research, and services – KSF and KPI

4. Accreditation and Certification Requirements – KSF

5. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) – KSF and KPI

Specific requirements from program accreditation are partially included. Outcome-based goals and measures for the educational programs add to it.

Approach to Quality Assurance and Culture

The quality assurance and culture approach comprises stakeholder integration, continuous improvement, and outcome-based measurement.

The relevant stakeholder groups are the students, the faculty and staff, alumni, the business community, and the owners. They are represented in Boards and actively engage in the governance and quality assurance of the organization.

The continuous improvement process is modeled on the classic Deming PDSA quality cycle (W. Edwards Deming link Oct. 10, 2020). SBS`s Plan-Do-Study-Adapt, adapt instead of act, indicates a contemporary agile management approach that builds stakeholder trust.

SBS has an outcome-oriented, integrated Institutional and Academic Performance Management System. On the program level, qualitative and quantitative data for formative and summative assessments are gathered, analyzed, and used for improvements.

References

Deming, W. Edwards (2020) PDSA Cycle https://deming.org/explore/pdsa/ Oct.10,
SBS Institutional and Corporate Governance Framework. SBS Internal Document; Zurich.
SBS Strategic Plan 2023-2025 (May 30th, 2023). SBS Internal Document; Zurich.
Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). (2015). Brussels, Belgium."

Quality Management System

The Quality Management System builds on the SBS Institutional and Academic Governance System as described in the "SBS Institutional and Academic Governance Framework" Handbook. It identifies the main stakeholder groups and clarifies the roles and responsibilities in the governance and quality assurance process.

The Quality Education Board (QEB) is key in the quality management system. The Faculty and Academic Board (FAB) is primarily involved in the teaching process, and the Research Advisory Board (RAB) is in the research process for internal quality assurance.

The external quality assurance is constituted by two institutional accreditations, the Swiss Accreditation Council (SAC) and British Accreditation Council (BAC), two program accreditations, the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) and International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE) and one Swiss quality certification by eduQua."

Discussion

One action to simplify the quality assurance system will be effective by January 2024. SBS will not continue eduQua certification. EduQua certification was the first external quality assurance system used by SBS to build its quality system. With the two institutional and two programmatic accreditation systems in place, the additional contribution of the eduQua system does not justify the effort and will help to simplify the system.

Why not retire one or more of the other accreditation systems? Accreditation by the Swiss Accreditation Council (SAC), Swiss institutional accreditation, is a must being a Swiss tertiary education institution. To lay off British Accreditation Council (BAC) accreditation is an option in the future, but currently, it is kept for two reasons. BAC and accreditation by SAC are in line with ESG criteria but focus on different aspects. Overall, this strengthens the institutional aspect of the SBS quality assurance system. The second reason is linked to creating value for students. International SBS students come from various countries with a British educational history. Having a degree from an institution that a British institution accredits creates value for them. In addition, it builds trust in the marketing and sales process.

The Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) and the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE) are accreditors for business programs. They share many aspects in their approach, and from a quality assurance perspective, one of the systems could be discontinued. From an international marketing and sales perspective, both programs add value for SBS to justify the effort.

Other aspects of simplifying the quality assurance system will be tended to in the report on conditions 2 and 3.

Analysis and assessment

The experts analysed conditions 1 and 2 together, as they are interlinked in terms of content and relate to the quality assurance system and the quality management system. The in-depth analysis is carried out under Condition 2.

However, it should be noted with regard to condition 1 that SBS has formalized and published a quality assurance strategy. The strategy is at a high abstract level, but the results of the quality management processes provide the results required by the quality assurance strategy.

The expert group assesses condition one as fulfilled.

Condition 2 (regarding standard 1.1):

Die SBS muss eine grundlegende Überprüfung ihres Qualitätssicherungssystems durchführen, um eine Rationalisierung der derzeitigen Verbreitung von Handbüchern, KPIs und Prozessen sicherzustellen. Weiterhin ist sicherzustellen, dass mit Blick auf die Integration in das Gesamtsystem die Rollenverteilung klar ersichtlich ist. SBS carries out a root and branch review of its quality assurance system to ensure the rationalisation of the current proliferation of Handbooks, KPIs and processes, and to ensure a clear role for each with a view to their integration into the overall system.

Description (from SBS's report on conditions)

The root and branch review of the SBS quality assurance system in connection with the other conditions (especially condition one) led to a rework of three institutional documents of SBS, simplification of the KPIs, and clarification of processes and roles.

Rationalization of Handbooks

SBS Strategic Plan 2023-2025, SBS Institutional and Academic Governance Framework and the SBS Quality Education Handbook. The three documents are now well aligned, and all the other documents were updated to mirror the changes.

Each handbook has a clear purpose, and content is not duplicated beyond the necessary information for the specific user group. For example, the root document of the vision and mission of the organization is the Strategic Plan 2023-2025 but referred to in the Faculty Handbook.

The approach of having handbooks for a specific program and target group, e.g., MSc Student Handbook or topic "Master Thesis Handbook" proved efficient and effective. The student finds all he/she needs for the program in the Student Handbook and when he/she starts with the thesis research, the necessary information is in one place. The "owners" of the handbooks are different but clearly identified. The program manager takes care of his/her Program Handbook, and the Head of Faculty is in charge of the Thesis Handbook.

The guiding information about the handbook title, version, owner, etc. can be found in the SBS Institutional Management Cockpit.

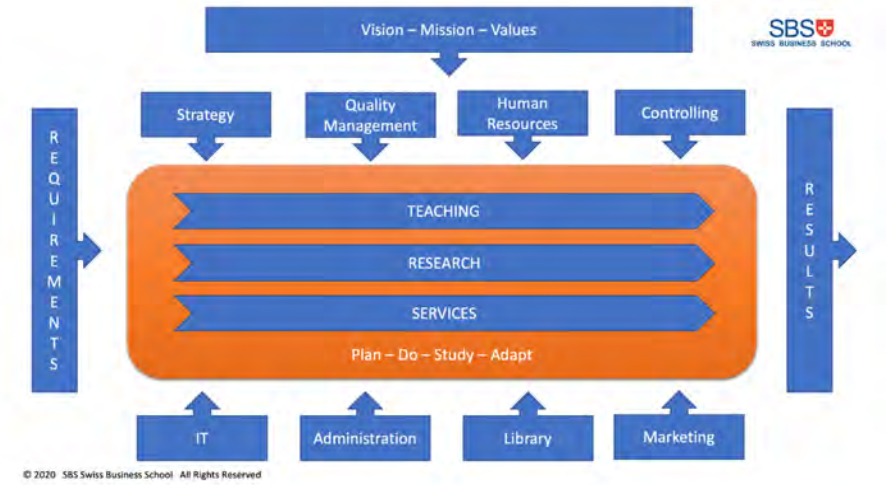
The trend of stronger regulating organizations by the lawmaker and the documentation requirements of Accreditation Agencies does not allow for reducing content. Current examples are the topics of data protection (New Federal Act on Data Protection - nFADP) and sustainability in general.

KPI

The institutional KPI system was revised and documented in the SBS Strategic Plan 2023-2025 More information about this topic can be found in 2.3. Processes and in Condition 3.

Processes

The SBS process map guides the quality assurance system as the institution's management. This system was in place when the accreditation by SAC took place in 2021.



Graphic 1: SBS Quality Education Handbook, p.12

The new SBS Strategic Plan 2023-2025 implements this process model and links the KPIs to it. In Chapter 4. "Priorities and Key Activities" Section 4.3. addresses "Core Processes – Teaching, Research and Services". Chapter 5 "Key Success Factors (KSF) and Key Performance Indicators (KPI) with specific KSF and KPIs for Teaching, Research, and Services.

The Boards report annually on the KSF and KPI to the President of the Supervisory Board (former president of the Swiss Business School), who writes an Annual Governance Report 2022-2023 based on the Strategic Plan 2023-2025.

Analysis and assessment of conditions 1 and 2:

During the round table discussions, the experts heard that SBS was primarily concerned with avoiding redundancies in the manuals and thus achieving better coordination of the manuals. It was less about abolishing as many manuals as possible. SBS has removed some, but new ones have been added. As SBS operates in a very diverse way, with different programs (BSc and MSc) and further education programmes (MBA and EMBA) with different content, it is helpful and essential for employees to be able to refer to a manual that focuses precisely on their activities and represents a tool for action.

The experts recognised that further simplification and streamlining was possible. As an example, the experts pointed to the merging of thesis handbooks for both Bachelor's and Master's programmes.

Another simplification from the point of view of the SBS is the abandonment of EduQua certification. This accreditation will no longer be carried out, but this does not lead to a simplification of the administrative processes themselves.

The experts welcome this step, as the different external perspectives (IACBE, ACPSP, EduQua, SAC and BAC) could also make it more difficult for the SBS to rationalise, as each evaluation places a slightly different emphasis and therefore focuses on a different structure or other instruments. To meet all the requirements, it is not surprising that the SBS responds with many instruments, KPIs etc.

The experts note that the will to simplify is there, but the evaluations and/or accreditations SBS has undergone point to different requirements, emphases, and developments. For example, the American evaluation emphasises the existence of the Quality Education Board (QEB). But in the lived SBS environment, the QEB is mainly integrated into the Faculty Advisory Board (FAB), they meet because the members are the same. The SBS is trying to develop logic and

structures. Ultimately, however, the BOT (Board of Trustees), made up of the two owners, can decide. The experts consider this to be in line SBS's status as a private business school that follows private law regulations.

The experts conclude that the SBS has a complex and comprehensible dashboard that includes many KPIs and KSFs. This collection of information and evaluation is used by the SBS to make strategic decisions and to check their alignment with the 2023-2025 direction.

The SBS has managed to avoid conflicts with a clearer division of roles as demanded in the condition. From the experts' point of view, the quality assurance system has been simplified, but further simplification should be considered in order not to overload the structure because SBS could not justify why such a complex structure is needed. Another questionable point lies in the fact that different positions are taken over by one person. So, it remains unclear how freedom of academia is guaranteed.

The expert group assesses condition two as fulfilled.

Condition 3 (regarding standard 1.2):

Die SBS muss ihr System von KPIs, institutionellem Dashboard und Cockpit einbetten, um sicherzustellen, dass sie eine formellere Überwachung der strategischen Ziele der Hochschule unterstützen. Die KPIs und das Cockpit sollten der Grösse und Struktur des Instituts angemessen sein. SBS shall embed its system of KPIs/institutional dashboard/Cockpit to ensure that they support a more formal monitoring of the School's strategic goals. The KPIs and the cockpit shall be appropriate to the size and structure of the institution.

Description (from SBS's report on conditions)

To comply with the condition, SBS reworked the KPIs and the steering system of the organization. This necessitated a rework of the SBS Strategic Plan, the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, which was replaced by the SBS Strategic Plan 2023-2025.

The changes in the strategic plan and the impact on the monitoring system are described here.

SBS Strategic Plan 2023-2025

There are several significant changes in the new Strategic Plan 2023-2025.

The vision of SBS, which included reaching institutional accreditation in Switzerland, had to be changed due to becoming HEdA accredited. This has opened new opportunities for the school.

The planning period is shortened from a five to a three-year cycle due to increased external volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA).

Key Success Factors (KSFs) are introduced, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are reworked to match the school's vision, mission, and priorities.

The Annual Reports of the Boards to the President of the Supervisory Board are fully in line with the new criteria and the changes necessitated by Condition 5 regarding the institution's Governance structure.

According to the new plan, the first annual report was done for the academic year 2022/2023.

The stakeholders were informed about the work on the strategic plan and the results relevant to them.

SBS Monitoring System

STRUCTURE

The structure of the Strategic Plan 2023-2025 is as follows:

• Vision and mission with key principles and values

• Governance and external requirements (including Swiss regulatory requirements and UN SDGs)

• The current internal and external situation with the consequences for the strategic plan

• Priorities and key activities

• Key success factors (KSF) and key performance indicators (KPI)

The structure logically leads to the KSFs and KPIs monitoring the institution.

KSFs are qualitative, and quantitative KPIs are used to monitor the execution of the organization's strategy.

MONITORING PROCESS

The internal and external boards and the Student Council report the activities' status at the end of each academic year to the President of the Supervisory Board. The Supervisory Board consolidates the information by adding the results of its activities into the Annual Governance Report.

The results are communicated to the relevant stakeholder groups, and actions are taken for the next annual cycle.

MEASUREMENT SYSTEM

To demonstrate how the measurement system works an example of the Strategic Plan 2023-2025, p.16

Goal	Met	Not-Met	In Progress
SBS Institutional and Academic Governance Framework System is operational.			
A system to measure that SBS is improving to implement the vision is to be created and implemented in 2023.			
SBS measures the implementation of the vision according to the developed system.			

Comments are added, especially for the categories "Not-Met" and "In Progress".

"Met" categories are not "done" for the three-year cycle of the strategic plan but are to be stabilized and improved in line with the PDSA approach.

SBS Cockpit Management System

When writing the initial Self-Study Report in 2021, the Cockpit Management System was in operation, but the administrative team had little experience with it. In 2023, the Cockpit has proven its worth. It is an appropriate document management system for the organization's size. It is user-friendly, and the current technical integration into Microsoft Cloud environment with each various services works well.

In the Section 2.1. "Rationalization of handbooks" the way the cockpit works is discussed. The necessity of administrating many documents is explained.

An investment into a more complex data management system or Enterprise Resource Planning System such as Microsoft Dynamics or SAP or "standardized solutions" for the educational sector is not justified and given the project risk of the implementation, is not appropriate. Should the organization grow substantially, this is a step to take.

More information about the Institutional Management Cockpit can be found in the SBS Quality Education Handbook, that states:
The Institutional Management Cockpit Table links the handbooks with the following criteria:
• Version control • Date change • Owner-Role • Owner-Name • Report-Frequency • Report-Due • Date • KPI • SDG's • Accreditation Report Requirements

See the following excerpt from the SBS Quality Education Handbook, section 7.1 Institutional Management Cockpit Table for clarification; this is not the latest version:

7.1. Institutional Management Cockpit – Table

For the current version of this table, use the source document.

Handbook Nr.	Handbook/W.Doc.	Versic	Date Change	Owner-Role	Owner-Name	Report-Frequency	Report-Due	KPI's	SDG's
A. Institutional Documents									
A.1.	SBS Strategic Plan 2023-2025	1,0	25-Apr-2023	Supervisory Board	C.Olsen	Annually	September	YES	4,5,10,11,12,16
A.2.	SBS Institutional and Academic Governance	2	25-Apr-2023	Supervisory Board	C.Olsen	Annually	October	YES	4.5.10.11.12.16
A.3.0 English	SBS Business Advisory Board HB	1,5	25-May-2022	Business Advisory Board	S. Gardner	Annually	October	YES	4.5.10.11.12.16
A.3.1 German	SBS Business Advisory Board HB	1,5	3-Jun-2022	Business Advisory Board	S. Gardner	Annually	October	YES	
A.4.	SBS Organizational Structure	1	29-Jun-2022	Dean of Administration and Finance	M.Karanfiloska	per need	October	NO	4.5.10.11.12.16
A.5.	SBS Quality of Education HB	2,4	31-May-2023	HQE	G.Singer	Annually	October	YES	4.5.10.11.12.16
A.6.	SBS Institutional Management HB	1,2	13-Jun-2022	Dean of Administration and Finance	M.Karanfiloska	per need	October	NO	4.5.10.11.12.16
B: Plans									
B.1.	SBS Strategic Communication Plan	1,5	4-Jun-2022	Marketing	V.Georgopoulos	Annually	January	YES	4.5.10.11.12.16
B.2.	SBS Strategic Enrollment Management Plan	1,4	3-Jun-2022	MEAT	N.Ergina	Annually	January	YES	4.5.10.11.12.16
B.3.	SBS Business Continuity Plan	1,6	10-Jan-2022	MEAT	N.Ergina	Annually	January	YES	4.5.10.11.12.16
C. Academic and Student Affairs									
Academic									
C.A.1.	SBS Curriculum Framework	1,2	3-Jun-2022	Academic Dean	B.Wolfs	5 yrs (curr.mapping)	October	NO	4.5.10.11.12.16
C.A.2.	SBS Credit Awarding HB	1,4	20-Apr-2023	Registrar	M. Fotiadou	Annually	October	YES	4.5.10.11.12.16
C.A.3.	SBS Credit Awarding Handbook (DBA) HB	1,3	30-Mar-2023	Registrar	M. Fotiadou	Annually	October	YES	4.5.10.11.12.16
C.A.4.	SBS Research Based Learning HB	1,2	28-May-2020	Academic Dean	B.Wolfs	5 yrs (curr.mapping)	October	NO	4.5.10.11.12.16
C.A.5.	SBS BBA Student HB	1,9	3-Mar-2022	Program Manager	Y.Godoy	Annually	October	NO	4.5.10.11.12.16
C.A.6.	SBS Top-up BBA HB	1,8	1-Mar-2022	Program Manager	Y.Godoy	Annually	October	NO	4.5.10.11.12.16
C.A.7.	SBS Online Top-Up Student HB	1,8	1-Mar-2022	Program Manager	Y.Godoy	Annually	October	NO	4.5.10.11.12.16
C.A.8.	SBS Msc. Student HB	1,10	26-Apr-2022	Program Manager	Y.Godoy	Annually	October	NO	4.5.10.11.12.16
C.A.9.	SBS MBA Student HB	1,8	26-Apr-2022	Program Manager	D.Gozalova	Annually	October	NO	4.5.10.11.12.16
C.A.10.	SBS OMBA Student HB	1,9	26-Apr-2022	Program Manager	D.Gozalova	Annually	October	NO	4.5.10.11.12.16
C.A.11.	SBS DBA Student HB	1,8	23-May-2022	Program Manager	B.Wolfs	Annually	October	NO	4.5.10.11.12.16
C.A.12.	SBS DBA PMO Student HB	1,8	23-May-2022	Program Manager	B.Wolfs	Annually	October	NO	4.5.10.11.12.16
C.A.13.	SBS Program Management HB	1,3	1-Apr-2022	FAB	B.Wolfs	Annually	September	NO	4.5.10.11.12.16
C.A.14.	SBS Awarding a Posthumous Degree HB	1,1	30-Mar-2023	Registrar	M. Fotiadou		October	NO	4.5.10.11.12.16
Student									
C.S.1.	SBS Reference Center and Libraries HB	1,2	11-Apr-2023	Front Office	L.Martinez	Annually	December	NO	4.5.10.11.12.16

Graphic 2: Extract of Quality Education Handbook

Analysis and assessment

The experts note that SBS has described the KPIs and KSFs and collects the data in the Management Cockpit System. Corresponding examples and analyses were presented to the experts, e.g. on the SDGs. The establishment of a sustainability centre was mentioned, as well as the co-organisation of the Sustainable Week (together with ETHZ and UZH), and sustainability is integrated into lectures (curriculum). More micro level examples were also mentioned, such as using public transport and being aware of food waste. The experts consider the visualisation and operationalisation of the KPIs and the KSF to be transparent and appropriate for a relatively small organisation. The experts were surprised by the KPIs presented by SBS on site because they were much better than the description in the report.

The expert group assesses condition three as fulfilled.

Condition 4 (regarding standard 1.2):

Die SBS muss ein Risikoregister mit Mechanismen zur Berichterstattung und Risikoverminderung erstellen. SBS shall develop a risk register with mechanisms for reporting on and mitigating against risk.

Description (from SBS's report on conditions)

Risk Register - Categories

SBS developed a risk register with mechanisms for reporting and mitigating against risk. The SBS Strategic Risk addresses the following risk categories:

1. Enrollment and Demographic Risks, 2. Ensuring Sustainable Financing of SBS, 3. Operational Risks, 4. Compliance Risks, 5. Health and Safety Risks, 6. Reputational Risks, 7. Challenges of meeting the Swiss Climate Action Plan

Risk Register - Description

The impact of the risks is evaluated based on current mitigation and the likelihood of occurring, and a weighted risk score is computed.

Risk details are described, and current and future mitigation are listed. For each risk category, there are one or more risk owners. Reporting mechanisms are in place, too.

A teach-out plan in case the school has to close is provided.

Two teach-out agreements with partner institutions (Swiss UMEF and ASIPES) are in place.

Preventive measures are taken with the finalization of a data-security insurance contract. If a data breach occurs, we can immediately rely on ICT and technical experts from the insurance company.

Corrective measures are in place. Budgeting is handled in a rigid cost-control but still a flexible way to react to unexpected events.

Contingency measures are in place with a CMT (Crisis Management Team), which was very effective during COVID-19.

A crisis communication plan is in place.

Analysis and assessment

Based on the written documentation and the discussions on site, the experts are convinced, that SBS has a risk register with reporting mechanisms, including crisis communication. Each risk category has one or more risk owners. The risks are described in detail and the future and current risks are measured and action is taken where necessary.

The expert group assesses condition four as fulfilled.

Condition 5 (regarding standard 2.1):

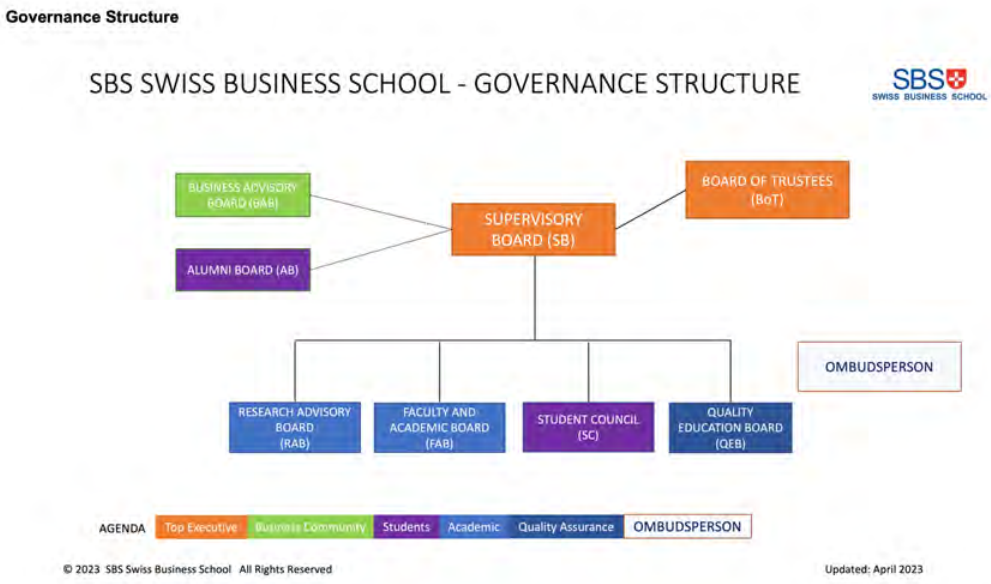
Die SBS muss eine Überprüfung ihrer Governance-Struktur durchführen, um sicherzustellen, dass die Regeln für die Leitung einer wissensbasierten Institution im Hinblick auf ihre institutionelle Unabhängigkeit sowie die Unabhängigkeit ihrer Mitarbeiter, Studierenden und Ausschussmitglieder gemäss dem Grundsatz der akademischen Freiheit eingehalten werden. SBS shall carry out an audit of its governance structure to ensure that it respects the rules for the governance of a knowledge driven institution in terms of its independence as an institution and the independence of its staff, students and committee members to adhere to the principle of academic freedom.

Description (from SBS's report on conditions)

To comply with condition 5, SBS audited its governance structure and reworked its Governance System.

The audit on the Governance System was done in Q4/2022 and Q1/2023. Multiple changes were made to ensure that the rules for the governance of a knowledge-driven institution and the independence of its staff, students, and committee members adhere to the principle of academic freedom.

The improvements were integrated into the SBS Institutional and Academic Governance Framework Handbook and approved by the Board of Trustees and the Supervisory Board on April 24, 2023. The changes were rolled out and put into action since then.



Graphic 3: SBS Institutional and Academic Governance Framework Handbook, p. 9

To the structure in place since September 2020, the Ombudsperson was added. No other structural changes were made. The Ombudsperson is "free floating" and reports not to a Board or a specific person. Any internal or external stakeholder can address the Ombudsperson.

Composition of the Boards

Changes were made in the composition of the Supervisory Board and the Faculty and Academic Board

Members of the Supervisory Board (SB)

2021	2023	Comment
The Chairperson: The President of the SBS	The Chairperson: The President of the SB	SBS changed to SB
The Vice President of SBS		Not part of the SB anymore
The SBS legal counsel	The SBS legal counsel	
An outside financial specialist	An external financial specialist	"outside" changed to "external" (correction) New – representing the faculty
	Head of Faculty and Academic Board (FAB)	New – representing the faculty
	Head of Research Advisory Board (RAB)	New – representing research topics
	Head of Quality Education Board (QEB)	New – representing quality topics
	Head of Student Council (SC)	joining on selected topics representing student interests; non-voting right

The SB was rebuilt to strengthen academic freedom and better represent the internal stakeholder groups.

In 2021, the Vice President of SBS was operationally in charge of the administration and finance of the institution as well as a member of the Board of Trustees, representing the shareholders' interests. Leaving the SB should allow for more academic freedom and a better balance of interests in general.

The Head of the Faculty and Academic Board (FAB) and the Head of the Student Council (SC) joined the SB, allowing a better representation of internal stakeholder groups.

The Head of the Research Advisory Board (RAB) and the Head of the Quality Education Board (QEB) joined the SB to strengthen research and quality topics, both vitally important for the organization.

Faculty and Academic Board (FAB)

Members of the Faculty and Academic Board

2021	2023	Comment
The Chairperson: Head of Faculty	The Chairperson: Head of Faculty	
Academic Dean and DBA Program Manager	Undergraduate Program Manager	Not part of the FAB anymore
Undergraduate Program Manager	Graduate Program Manager	
Graduate Program Manager	Graduate Program Manager	

The SBS Swiss Business School Registrar	The SBS Swiss Business School Registrar	
Head of Quality Education	Head of Quality Education	New – representing quality topics
Student Representatives (participate non-voting for selected topics)	Student Representatives (participate non-voting for selected topics)	
	Head of Research	New – representing research topics
	Associate Dean China	Strengthening international programs in China
	Two Members of the Faculty	Strengthening the reputation of the faculty

The composition of the FAB was changed to strengthen academic freedom and better represent the internal stakeholder groups.

In 2021, the Academic Dean was a member of the FAB and the Board of Trustees representing the shareholders' interests. Leaving the FAB should allow for more academic freedom and a better balance of interests in general.

The Head of the Research Advisory Board (RAB) and the Head of the Quality Education Board (QEB) joined the SB to strengthen research and quality topics, both vitally important for the organization.

The Associate Dean China joined to strengthen the representation of international programs in China.

To give more weight to the direct representation of the faculty, two members of the faculty were added.

Other Boards and Student Council

There are no major changes in the other boards and the student council from 2021 to 2023. The only function change is that the librarian is no longer part of the QEB.

Conclusion

With the changes in the Supervisory Board's composition and the Faculty and Academic Board, the influence of the shareholders was substantially reduced to increase the academic freedom of the other stakeholders in the institution.

The two Deans have double roles, managing the daily academic, teaching, and administrative activities and being members of the Board of Trustees representing the shareholders' interests. In their roles as Deans, they report to the Supervisory Board. In the Faculty and Academic Board, which is in charge of academic standards, they are not active anymore.

Analysis and assessment

The experts note that the SBS has adjusted the governance structure. The Academic Dean is no longer on the FAB and the Dean of Finance and Administration is no longer on the SB. Both deans are on the Board of Trustees as owners. These changes better safeguard academic freedom and reduce the influence of the two owners.

An ombudsperson has also been introduced, who is an external legal expert. All kind of problems can be addressed.

Election to the relevant committees, such as the FAB and RAB, is either by contract or by recommendation. Only members who are employed by SBS and are already board members can vote, i.e. no external persons such as lawyers or other businesspeople.

The experts have not yet been able to finally evaluate the full impact of these changes as they are still in an implementation phase. However, the experts consider that this approach is effective because the influence of the owners has been reduced and there is a clear understanding of potential conflicts of interest. Although this understanding of conflict exists, reducing the complexity of the processes will help to avoid a single person taking on multiple responsibilities in the future.

The expert group assesses condition five as fulfilled.

Condition 6 (regarding standard 3.1):

Die SBS muss eine Forschungsstrategie formalisieren, die sicherstellt, dass die Fakultät ihre Forschung gemäss den in der Strategie definierten Themen durchführt. SBS shall formalise a research strategy that ensures that faculty is carrying out research according to the themes defined in the strategy.

Description (from SBS's report on conditions)

SBS formalized its research strategy, documented in the SBS Research Strategy Handbook. It is in line with the Strategic Plan 2023-2025.

Research as a core process – Strategic Plan Alliance

The research function at SBS is one of the core processes (teaching, research, and services) in the Strategic Plan, see graphic 1 on page 6.

As is generally the case for the UAS, the research focus at SBS Swiss Business School is on applied research. As a business school, the research themes cover business research areas. In line with the SBS Values. The guiding principles for the research framework are:

F Fairness and Non-Discrimination

A Academic Freedom

A Accountability and Responsibility

S Stakeholder orientation

S Sustainability and sound risk management

T Transparency of structures and processes

Research Themes and Faculty Alignment

In view of the requirements in Condition 6, SBS Swiss Business School has expanded the research activities from previous years and redefined its research topics to cover the following themes:

1. Understanding the role of organizations and markets
2. Sustainability and development
3. Ethics, rights, and social justice

4. Topics covered in the business curriculum

The last theme was added in view of faculty whose research does not directly fall under the first three fields. This also aligns with the principles of “Fairness and Non-Discrimination” and “Academic Freedom”.

Within the institutional framework of SBS, the Head of Faculty has also collaborated with the Head of Research in identifying and strengthening the faculty involvement in research. Faculty interested in doing research have been identified during Faculty Appraisal meetings in 2022. The results showed that among 45 faculty members, nine had already published journal articles, 18 were potentially interested in publishing, and eight were new to research and wanted to know more. The Head of Research and the members of the RAB are available to help faculty who would like to do research and publish articles.

To ensure that “...faculty is carrying out research according to the themes defined in the strategy” (as part of Condition 6), a research remuneration scheme is used to compensate for faculty research time and encourage overall research activity at SBS.

Research and Conferences

Furthermore, SBS encourages young researchers and faculty to present their work at recognized conferences. They can also disseminate their work-in-progress via the SBS Working Paper Series. The latter was introduced in 2022. Three Working Papers have been published so far, and more than ten submissions for consideration as a Working Paper are at the screening stage at the time of writing this report. SBS Working Papers are available in PDF format on the SBS website at: https://www.sbs.edu/sbs-research-center/working-paper-series/.

In addition, SBS organizes a Research Conference once a year. The next one will be on October 20, 2023, with the main Conference theme: “Regional Business and Urban Development Challenges”. Zurich Airport Area business representatives will take part in a panel discussion. A call for papers is posted on the SBS website (https://www.sbs.edu/research-conferences-research-and-research- webinars/). Faculty participation in panel discussions and paper presentations is encouraged.

Publications

The SBS Publication List shows the academic journal articles and research activities undertaken by SBS-affiliated faculty and researchers and research activities conducted by SBS. The SBS Publication List is available on the SBS website (https://www.sbs.edu/sbs-publications/) and accessible to internal and external stakeholders. The topics covered in the articles published by SBS-affiliated faculty and researchers fall under the above research themes. SBS publication list shows a good level of research activity in 2021, 2022, and 2023 (as of September 12) with journal article publications, books, book chapters, and conference presentations and participation. The numbers and the diversified nature of the research output are encouraging.

According to Scopus records (search conducted on 11.09.2023), there are 64 publication records from 21 authors affiliated with SBS. This research output places SBS Swiss Business School at 513th among 910 institutions in Switzerland. In an earlier Scopus search conducted on 03.11.2022, SBS had the 520th position among 891 institutions in Switzerland. The current record shows an improvement in the rankings. It should be noted that the ranking is for all institutions in all fields – not only for those in business fields.

Research and the New Strategic Plan

A new strategic plan for SBS has been developed for 2023-2025. The existing research strategy has been updated accordingly. Research is an integral part of the SBS Process Map. The research themes were broadened to include all relevant management fields in the business education curriculum. A remuneration scheme for faculty and researchers is in place to compensate them for research time for publications and conference presentations. The faculty must include their course- relevant publications and research in their course syllabi. They should refer to their own research in their teaching. The faculty are informed of the new research strategy and the institutional framework in various ways – including the Faculty Meetings. The SBS Working Paper (WP) Series is introduced – with three papers published as of September 12, 2023. There are 10+ more WP submissions at the screening stage. In line with the SBS research strategy, SBS organizes a research conference once a year, and the SBS Journal of Applied Business Research is regularly published (one issue a year).

Conclusion

Developing research capabilities and resources takes time and is subject to the limitations of being a small "University of Applied Sciences Institute". As well acknowledged by the Swiss Government and also in academia, UAS face unique challenges when it comes to research. Most faculty are part-time and do not have doctoral degrees, and those who have doctoral degrees may be far away from academic publishing by now.

Despite these challenges, SBS has developed a framework that integrated research as a core process into its structure, included the Head of Research in the Supervisory Board, increased the visibility of its research through communication with stakeholders, and provided a remuneration scheme to provide research time compensation to faculty and researchers affiliated with SBS to research the themes defined in the research strategy.

Analysis and assessment

The experts note that the SBS have defined the research priorities described in the report on the state of the SBS in a research strategy. During the on-site discussions it became clear that the faculty members are researching the mentioned topics with great commitment and that everyone is welcome and can contribute. The fourth focus, which was formulated in a very open way, was very much welcomed, as it allows for different aspects to be subsumed under it. The experts also learned that the faculty members follow and research current trends. This allows for an agile approach to research, always from the perspective of the focus defined by the SBS. To illustrate this, some of the research projects mentioned are listed here: Albanian entrepreneur doing projects with Swiss entrepreneur, project on artificial intelligence, project on airport area. It was also clear that many lecturers work with case studies, and that research is directly integrated into teaching or flows into it.

The experts asked whether SBS had also submitted projects to Innosuisse, but this was answered in the negative. At this point, the experts would like to point out that this could be interesting for the SBS, as the funding of the research would be covered and would not go directly through the partners and the SBS as in the case of the other projects. The experts strongly recommend that SBS pursue this path and align its research strategy accordingly.

The experts note that SBS has established the guiding principles for research. The faculty members involved in research are committed and conduct research on topics related to the research strategy, either alone or in projects with other partners. The Research Advisory Board has been set up and enables exchange and quality assurance in research. The transfer of research to teaching takes place mainly through case studies. The experts recognise the process that SBS has initiated and encourage it to continue along this path. The SBS should

also try to submit projects to Swiss research funding platforms such as Innosuisse, FH Forschungsportal or PRME (Human global compact) or to network in order to position itself even better and not to fund research on its own.

On a positive note, it should be emphasised that the fields of research mentioned in the report are described very roughly. In the discussion with the faculty, however, it became clear that the fields were developed jointly and reflect the research expertise of the faculty.

The expert group assesses condition six as fulfilled.

Condition 7 (regarding standard 3.2):

Das Qualitätssicherungssystem der SBS muss für die regelmässige Evaluierung der Forschung einschliesslich der Forschungsstrategie sorgen. SBS's quality assurance system shall provide for the periodic evaluation of research, including the research strategy.

Description (from SBS's report on conditions)

KPI's for periodic evaluation

SBS has integrated research evaluation into its quality assurance system in line with its new strategy. SBS research strategy has been revised accordingly.

SBS set the following KPIs for periodic evaluation of research and its research strategy:

- 15% or more of the faculty involved in research
- Seven or more publications in peer-reviewed journals
- SBS Journal of Applied Business Research (JABR) - published
- Research conference organized or co-organized
- Faculty refer to their own research in class
- Improve the position of SBS in U-Multirank

The above metrics are evaluated as "met" or "unmet". All criteria have been met in 2022 and 2023.

As part of the SBS quality system, research is one of the core processes. The research function cooperates with other core processes, namely, teaching and services, as illustrated in the SBS Process Map (see graphic 1 on page 6). This interaction provides input from research to other core processes and vice versa – ensuring a dynamic quality assurance system.

Faculty – Research and Teaching

SBS faculty are required to list their research output or relevant work on the topic of the course they are teaching on the course syllabi. The faculty is also asked to integrate their research (where possible) into their teaching. The students are asked at the end of the course whether the faculty has referred to their research work during the course. The student course satisfaction survey is an evaluation tool to assess whether the objective of "Faculty refer to own research in class" is met. Other criteria are assessed more directly and quantitatively (e.g., the count of publications in peer-reviewed journals).

Students and Research

Students are internal stakeholders, and SBS requires the students to write a thesis at all levels of study (Bachelor's, Master's, MBA, and EMBA). In order to guide the students to write and defend their theses successfully, the research function cooperates with teaching and organizes "Thesis Research Seminars" for Bachelor's, Master's, and MBA students. The "Thesis Research Seminars" aim to provide the students with a better understanding of the thesis writing process. The seminars take place in four modules: 1) "Writing Your Thesis", 2) "Thesis Approval Form Elements and the Process", 3) Research Statistics I, 4) Research Statistics II. The modules are taught by SBS lecturers with Doctoral degrees who also act as members of the thesis defense committees. Hence, the students get first-hand guidance and advice from lecturers participating in the thesis defense process. In addition, a "Research Day" for MBA students is organized when the students have the opportunity to have one- to-one meetings with the instructors. Additional sessions on academic writing and research statistics are also organized. This is in line with quality assurance system objectives.

Research – Quality Assurance – Institutional Integration

As illustrated in the SBS Process Map, the PDSA cycle is applied to evaluate research strategy and outcomes in line with the quality assurance system. The Head of the Research Advisory Board presents the current situation and the phase in PDSA cycle at the RAB meetings and discusses with the RAB members if any further action needs to be taken.

The Head of Research, who is also the Head of the Research Advisory Board, presents the RAB news and position during the faculty meetings and receives feedback directly from the faculty members.

The Head of the RAB is also a member of the Supervisory Board and prepares the Annual Research Governance Evaluation, where the KPIs are assessed.

British Accreditation Council - Research

The efforts to institutionalize research as a core process at SBS have also been reviewed (albeit using different but similar criteria) by the British Accreditation Council (BAC), an institutional accreditation agency, in May 2023. The final report by the BAC included the following commentary on research at SBS:

The Institution actively encourages academic staff to undertake research and publish their findings. SBS closely tracks research activity and output with the aim of increasing the number of staff across the Institution who are publishing regularly in accredited journals and in conferencing proceedings.

A review of staff curricula vitae indicates that a number of staff are active in research and have recent publications in a number of academic journals.

Sponsorship is available through the Institution for academic staff to undertake research and for support to attend conferences to assist their professional development. The Institution provides time for staff to meet regularly to share and discuss current research activities. As a result, research and attendance at external events inform teaching effectively.

Details of research opportunities are widely disseminated to all relevant staff through the Institution's online platform. Staff confirm that sponsorship for research is available.

Source: BAC (2023). Link: https://www.the-bac.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/SBS-Swiss-Business- School-Re-accreditation-Inspection-Report-May-23-FINAL.pdf

Conclusion

In sum, SBS has developed and implemented a system for periodic research evaluation, including the research strategy in line with SBS's quality assurance system.

Analysis and assessment

The experts note that the SBS evaluates research and the research strategy based on the defined criteria (15 % or more of the faculty involved in research, seven or more publications in peer-reviewed journals etc. see first section above), or at least will do so in the near future. At this point in time, it has not yet been possible to carry out the evaluation based on the planned KPIs, or at least not comprehensively. As the research strategy has only recently been consolidated and established in its current version with the appointment of a research advisory board, which informs the above-mentioned committees (Faculty Advisory Board and the Supervisory Board). The Research Advisory Board collects information and analyses it in the relevant committees according to the PDCA cycle. The derived actions are communicated to the researchers via the Faculty Board. The experts consider the procedure described to be appropriate and consider this requirement to be met.

The expert group assesses condition seven as fulfilled.

Condition 8 (regarding standard 3.4):

Die SBS muss nachweisen, dass ihre Zulassungsbestimmungen den geltenden Gesetzen entsprechen. SBS shall demonstrate that admissions regulations are in accordance with the law.

Description (from SBS's report on conditions)

Admission Requirements - Review Panel Comment

The review panel wrote in their Expert report (6 July 2021) the following:
The review panel notes that Article 25 HFKG states that, for admission to a University of Applied Sciences and Institutes, students with a baccalaureate from a grammar school must have at least one year's work experience that has provided practical and theoretical knowledge in an occupation related to the field of specialisation. The Verordnung des WBF über die Zulassung zu Fachhochschulstudien SR 414.715 confirms this. SBS does not currently fulfil this requirement because of regulations of the canton of Zurich concerning work permits. On achieving accreditation, SBS will have the opportunity to align with this requirement.

SBS Career Advancement Program (CAP)

SBS developed the SBS Career Advancement Program (CAP) and aligned it with the specific requirements of the Canton of Zurich to address the condition. Here is a short description. The full program is described in an appendix.

At SBS Swiss Business School, most students are foreign nationals and require a resident permit to stay in the country. Therefore, articles 2 and 3 are specific. To overcome this, article 7 describes the details of the work experience, further detailed in article 8. These articles came into effect on January 1, 2022. Based on those articles, SBS Swiss Business School developed a unique program combining learning and "learn-work" experience in one year. At the end of that one year, SBS will evaluate 18 compulsory action competencies and 6 out of 14 elective action competencies. The program was prepared with the help of Mr. Bruno Weber, former Head of Education from Travail Suisse, Bern, and former member of the Swiss Hochschulrat.

Brief Synopsis. During the first semester, students come to SBS and participate in daily classes to improve communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking skills. The semester concludes with exams.

During the second semester, they learn to work! This means that they share their experiences with entrepreneurs and visit companies in the canton of Zurich. This is during the first two weeks. To inspire them and to see how Swiss SMEs work. They work in groups from the third week to create and successfully run their mini-companies. This is done at SBS under the constant guidance of teachers. It is not an internship in a company but creating mini-companies using the real world. Their mini- companies do business with other mini-companies in their group. It is very important that this takes place in SBS so that SBS has control over what happens daily and for quality assurance of their "work". Finally, it is important to mention that these students are not paid for this but must pay school fees because they are constantly supervised and have to take a final exam.

Conclusion

With the development and implementation of the SBS Career Advancement Program (CAP) and the acceptance of it by the Canton of Zurich, SBS fulfills the admission requirements of Article 25 HFKG.

Analysis and assessment

The experts note, that SBS fulfills the statuory admission requirement of one year's professional experience as required by law (Art. 25 Abs. 1 Bst. b HFKG, SR 414.20) for 25% of Bachelor students. The remaining 75% of the students (foreign nationals) must go through the Career Advancement Program (CAP). Various reasons have been put forward to justify this. The experts heard that the Canton of Zurich did not accept experience abroad. But they also heard that it did not allow foreign students to obtain a work permit to carry out the one-years' experience in Switzerland.

The Zurich cantonal authorities were unable to confirm the initial version (not accept experience abroad). However, they acknowledge that, for quota reasons, it is difficult to issue work permits to future students.

To make up for the lack of experience of the majority of its clientele (75% of bachelor students) and in an attempt to comply with the law on admission to universities of applied sciences, SBS implemented its own programme called CAP. This takes place at the Kloten campus of SBS, as described above.

The experts are unable to judge whether the CAP is equivalent to the statutory admission requirements[2]. Nevertheless, the experts point out that the one-year professional experience requirement for admission to a university of applied sciences or a university of applied sciences institute is an essential characteristic compared to other types of Higher education institutions in Switzerland. SBS Business School already had to explain how it deals with this requirement in its admission to the institutional accreditation procedure (Art. 4 Accreditation Ordinance, SR 414.205.3). Since before the first external evaluation, SBS Business School GmbH is fully aware of this requirement.

The group of experts therefore considers that it is not within its remit to assess whether or not the condition is met.

[2] Art. 7 und 8 Zulassungsverordnung FH (SR 414.205.7),
Best Practice AWE für die Bereiche Technik und Wirtschaft von swissuniversities
https://www.swissuniversities.ch/fileadmin/swissuniversities/Dokumente/Lehre/Best_Practice_Arbeitswelterfahrung.pdf

3 Antrag der AAQ

Considerations

Die AAQ stellt fest, dass die SBS für alle 8 Auflagen, die der Akkreditierungsrat im Rahmen seiner Verfügung über die institutionelle Akkreditierung der Swiss Business School vom 24. September 2021 gesprochen hat, einen Bericht über getroffene Massnahmen vorgelegt hat. Die Gutachtergruppe wiederum hat für alle 8 Auflagen die Dokumentation der SBS analysiert und während der verkürzten Vor-Ort-Visite vom 8.3.2024 mit den relevanten Stakeholdergruppen Gespräche geführt.

Für die Auflagen 1-7 ist die Gutachtergruppe nachvollziehbar zum Schluss gekommen, dass die jeweilige Auflage erfüllt ist.

Für die Auflage 8 hingegen kommt die Gutachtergruppe zum Schluss, dass die Bewertung der Erfüllung nicht in ihren Zuständigkeitsbereich fällt.

Auflage 8 («Die SBS muss nachweisen, dass ihre Zulassungsbestimmungen den geltenden Gesetzen entsprechen.») betrifft die Zulassung zur ersten Studienstufe gemäss HFKG: Als Fachhochschulinstitut im Bereich der Wirtschaftswissenschaft hat die Swiss Business School die Zulassung zur ersten Studienstufe gemäss Artikel 25 HFKG bzw. gemäss Artikel 2, 7 und 8 der Zulassungsverordnung FH zu regeln.

Gemäss Selbstdeklaration der SBS verfügen rund 75% der Studierenden über eine gymnasiale Matur bzw. deren Äquivalent – jedoch ohne die «einjährige Arbeitswelterfahrung nach dem 4. Abschnitt» der Zulassungsverordnung FH. Da die Mehrheit dieser Studieninteressierten aus Drittstaaten stammt, bleibt den meisten der Arbeitsmarkt der Schweiz verschlossen. Sie können die Anforderung der einjährigen Arbeitswelterfahrung gemäss Zulassungsverordnung FH nicht in der Schweiz nachholen. Die SBS hat, um Artikel 2 Absatz 1 Buchstabe c der Zulassungsverordnung FH dennoch zu erfüllen, das so genannte Career Advancement Program (CAP) geschaffen, das dem eigentlichen Bachelorstudium vorgelagert ist.

Das Career Advancement Program der SBS soll den zukünftigen Studierenden die einjährige Arbeitswelterfahrung in einem strukturierten Programm im Klassenzimmer, mit kurzen Praktika und der Arbeit in simulierten «mini companies» vermitteln. Indem das CAP sich auf den Kompetenzkatalog, der gemeinsam von den Fachhochschulen und den Arbeitsverbänden festgelegt wurde, bezieht, will das Programm sicherstellen, dass die Absolventinnen und Absolventen des Programms eine Arbeitswelterfahrung machen können, welche die angemessenen berufspraktischen und berufstheoretischen umfasst.

Das CAP der SBS ist geeignet den zukünftigen Studierenden während einem Jahr berufspraktische und berufstheoretische Kenntnisse zu vermitteln. Die Frage, ob dieses Jahr den Anforderungen an die Arbeitswelterfahrung im Sinne von Artikel 7 und 8 der Zulassungsverordnung FH entspricht, ist indes keine Sachfrage mehr, sondern eine Rechtsfrage. Da die von der Agentur eingesetzten Gutachterinnen und Gutachter Sachverständige im Sinne des Verwaltungsverfahrens sind, ist ihre Einschätzung, dass sie für die Beantwortung dieser Frage nicht zuständig sind, korrekt: Die Behörde darf den Sachverständigen nur mit der Beantwortung einer Sachfrage, nicht jedoch einer Rechtsfrage beauftragen (BGE 132 II 257 E. 4.4.1).

Die AAQ kommt zum Schluss, dass die Gutachtergruppe die Erfüllung der Auflagen 1-7 feststellt und die Erfüllung der Auflage 8 zu Recht nicht beurteilen kann.

Antrag

Gestützt auf die Dokumentation der SBS, den Bericht der Gutachtergruppe über die Erfüllung der Auflagen beantragt die AAQ:

1. Der Akkreditierungsrat stellt die Erfüllung der Auflagen 1-7 fest;
2. Der Akkreditierungsrat lässt die Rechtsfrage, ob das CAP die Arbeitswelterfahrung im Sinne von Artikel 7 und 8 der Zulassungsverordnung FH sicherstellt, durch die zuständige Behörde abklären.

3 Proposal of AAQ

Considerations

AAQ notes that SBS has submitted a report on the measures taken for all 8 conditions imposed by the Accreditation Council as part of its decision on the institutional accreditation of Swiss Business School on 24 September 2021. The expert group in turn analysed the SBS documentation for all 8 conditions and held discussions with the relevant stakeholder groups during the on-site visit on 8 March 2024.

For conditions 1-7, the expert group came to the conclusion that the respective condition is fulfilled.

For condition 8, however, the expert group concluded that the assessment of fulfilment does not fall within its remit.

Condition 8 ("SBS must demonstrate that its admission regulations comply with the applicable laws.") concerns admission to the first level of study in accordance with the HEdA: As a university of applied sciences institute in the field of economics, Swiss Business School must regulate admission to the first level of study in accordance with Article 25 of the HEdA and Articles 2, 7 and 8 of the FH Admission Ordinance.

According to SBS's self-declaration, around 75% of students have a high school diploma or its equivalent - but without the "one year of work experience according to Section 4" of the UAS Admission Ordinance. As the majority of these prospective students come from third countries, the Swiss labour market is closed to most of them. They cannot make up the one-year work experience requirement in Switzerland in accordance with the FH Admission Ordinance. In order to comply with Article 2 Paragraph 1 Letter c of the FH Admission Ordinance, SBS has created the Career Advancement Programme (CAP), which precedes the actual Bachelor's degree programme.

The SBS Career Advancement Programme is designed to provide future students with one year of work experience in a structured programme in the classroom, with short internships and work in simulated "mini companies". By referring to the catalogue of competences jointly defined by the universities of applied sciences and the professional associations, the CAP aims to ensure that graduates of the programme have a work experience that includes the appropriate practical and theoretical professional skills.

The SBS CAP is designed to provide future students with one year of practical and theoretical work experience. The question of whether this year fulfils the requirements for work experience within the meaning of Articles 7 and 8 of the FH Admission Ordinance is no longer a question of fact, but a question of law. As the experts appointed by the agency are experts within the meaning of the administrative procedure, their assessment that they are not responsible for answering this question is correct: the authority may only instruct the expert to answer a factual question, not a legal question (BGE 132 II 257 E. 4.4.1).

AAQ comes to the conclusion that the group of experts establishes the fulfilment of conditions 1-7 and is rightly unable to assess the fulfilment of condition 8.

Proposal

Based on the documentation of the SBS and the report of the expert group on the fulfilment of the conditions, AAQ requests that

1. the Accreditation Council determines the fulfilment of conditions 1-7;
2. the Accreditation Council asks the competent authority to clarify the legal question of whether the CAP ensures work experience within the meaning of Articles 7 and 8 of the FH Admission Ordinance.

4 Statement by the higher education institution

SBS Swiss Business School GmbH submitted its statement to the AAQ within the deadline on 29 April 2024. In this statement, SBS thanks the experts for their work and their approval of the fulfilment of conditions 1-7 and adds the following comment to condition 8:

“The CAP program is designed for students already in Switzerland and holders of a Swiss high school or gymnasium diploma. They can only proceed to further studies in the University of Applied Sciences system with working experience. Due to the restrictive issuing of work permits, the students living in Switzerland for years would have to leave Switzerland and their families and get work experience in another country.

The CAP program is created based on the following laws to provide that experience:

- Verordnung des WBF, Art 5, Anforderungen an die Arbeitswelterfahrung.
- Zulassungsverordnung FH vom 20.5.2021, Abschnitt 4, Art 7, Paragraph 1 und 2.
- the learning outcomes are based on "Kaufmann/Kauffrau EFZ".

We hope the SAC can support this innovative effort and the development of the CAP program.

We agree that students not living in Switzerland should get relevant work experience (equivalent to 200 days) abroad before they come to Switzerland.”

Part C

Statement of SBS Swiss Business School GmbH

29.04.2024

SBS
SWISS BUSINESS SCHOOL

Kloten, 29.04.2024

Institutional accreditation, SBS Swiss Business School GmbH verification of the fulfillment of conditions.

Dear Dr. Grolimund,

Dear Ms. Ramseyer,

Thank you for the Institutional accreditation, SBS Swiss Business School GmbH verification of the fulfillment of conditions report, dated 10.04.2024.

We at SBS would like to express our gratitude to the members of the expert group and the staff members of AAQ for their contributions.

The experts agree with the fulfillment of conditions 1 to 7.

For condition eight, we would like to add the following information. The CAP program is designed for students already in Switzerland and holders of a Swiss high school or gymnasium diploma. They can only proceed to further studies in the University of Applied Sciences system with working experience. Due to the restrictive issuing of work permits, the students living in Switzerland for years would have to leave Switzerland and their families and get work experience in another country.

The CAP program is created based on the following laws to provide that experience:

- Verordnung des WBF, Art 5, Anforderungen an die Arbeitswelterfahrung.

- Zulassungsverordnung FH vom 20.5.2021, Abschnitt 4, Art 7, Paragraph 1 und 2.

- the learning outcomes are based on "Kaufmann/Kauffrau EFZ".

We hope the SAC can support this innovative effort and the development of the CAP program.

We agree that students not living in Switzerland should get relevant work experience (equivalent to 200 days) abroad before they come to Switzerland.

We thank you for your attention and look forward to hearing from you.

With best regards,

Bert Wolfs, Ph.D.

Marijana Karanfiloska

SBS Swiss Business School
University of Applied Sciences Institute
Flughafenstrasse 3, 8302 Kloten-Zurich, Switzerland
Tel.: +41 44 880 00 88 E-mail: info@sbs.edu Web site: http://www.sbs.edu

BAC
EDUQUA CERTIFIED
ACBSP ACCREDITED
IACBE Accredited



AAQ
Effingerstrasse 15
Postfach
CH-3001 Bern

www.aaq.ch

