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# Institutional accreditation, César Ritz Colleges Switzerland, Verification of the fulfilment of conditions

Report | 30 October 2025



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## Part A

### Decision of the Swiss Accreditation Council

19 September 2025





The Swiss Accreditation Council publishes its accreditation decisions:

<https://akkreditierungsrat.ch/en/decisions/>



## Part B

### Verification report

05 May 2025



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## 1 Verification procedure

### 1.1 General information

#### *Decision/means of verification*

On 29 November 2023, the Swiss Accreditation Council (SAC) accredited César Ritz Colleges Switzerland (CRCS) as a Swiss University Institute of Applied Sciences subject to 8 conditions.

In its decision, the Accreditation Council specified the following deadlines and means of verification<sup>1</sup>:

Deadlines: (I) For conditions 4 and 6: 12 months. César Ritz Colleges Switzerland must submit a report on the fulfilment of the two conditions to the Accreditation Council by 28 November 2024. (II) For conditions 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8: 36 months. César Ritz Colleges Switzerland must submit a report on the fulfilment of the five conditions to the Accreditation Council by 28 November 2026.

Means of verification: (I) For conditions 4 and 6: Verification will be performed “sur dossier” with 3 experts. (II) For conditions 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8: Verification will be performed by means of a short visit of 1 day with 3 experts.

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

This report only concerns the verification of the fulfilment of conditions 4 and 6.

### 1.2 The procedure

#### *Schedule*

On 16 October 2024, CRCS sent its report on the fulfilment of conditions 4 and 6, together with the corresponding appendices, to the SAC. At the request of the experts, additional information was sent on 21 February 2025. The experts then met online on 28 April 2025. They discussed the documents provided by César Ritz Colleges Switzerland and prepared their analysis.

The three experts selected to carry out the “sur dossier” external evaluation were as follows:

- Prof. Liliane Michalik, Vice-President, University of Lausanne
- Prof. Patricia Pol, Economics and Management, Université Paris-Est Créteil (France)
- Krumma Jonsdottir, General Manager of Positive Performances, Reykjavik (Iceland)

The first version of the report verifying the fulfilment of the conditions was finalised in May 2025. It was forwarded to CRCS on 6 May 2025. The higher education institution communicated its position on the experts' conclusions on 22 May 2025. The report was finalised by the AAQ, which includes a decision proposal addressed to the Swiss Accreditation Council. The complete

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<sup>1</sup> HEdA Accreditation Ordinance, Article 15(3)

file was then forwarded to the SAC secretariat on 23 May 2025, to be dealt with at the meeting of 19 September 2025.

## 2 Verification report

### 2.1 Analysis of the fulfilment of conditions

#### Condition 4:

CRCS must rename the degrees awarded by CAAS in accordance with the legal requirements in Switzerland, or must carry out the complete separation of CRCS and Culinary Arts Academy Switzerland (CAAS) to ensure that the institutions are totally independent at all levels (legal, administrative, financial, etc.).<sup>2</sup>

#### *Description*

In order to meet the condition 4 set by the Swiss Accreditation Council, CRCS has decided to legally separate the two entities, César Ritz Colleges Switzerland and Culinary Arts Academy Switzerland (CAAS). The parent institution has therefore taken the necessary steps to separate them. Recognised by the canton of Valais, the two companies have been officially legally distinct since the beginning of July 2024, with CRCS registered in Brig-Glis and CAAS headquartered in Le Bouveret. The main changes brought about by the separation were presented to the group of experts.

At the operational level, the two organisations are independently governed and have their own specific internal administrative and financial operations. The two institutions award their own diplomas, each in its own name. They also have separate web domains and offer their students IT support (email address, Office 365, etc.) specific to their home institution.

The separation has also led to several changes in the staff, who sometimes used to work for both institutions. CRCS and CAAS have had to revise the contracts of several of their employees, who now belong to one or other of the schools. In some cases, the two institutions take advantage of the shared resources offered by the Swiss Education Group (SEG) – to which they both belong – which allow for a transfer of personnel. In such cases, the two institutions respect the agreement put in place by SEG. For practical reasons, CRCS and CAAS also have internal agreements regarding the sharing of their premises in Brig and Le Bouveret.

The separation of the two institutions has been communicated to the staff of both schools in general and to people closely concerned in particular. CRCS and CAAS were keen to point out that the transfer of the contract from one institution to the other had no economic or social consequences for the employees. Their working conditions remained unchanged. In their communications, the two institutions made a point of informing their employees of their right to refuse the transfer of the employment relationship, as provided for in the Code of Obligations

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<sup>2</sup> The French language version prevails: "CRCS doit renommer les diplômes délivrés par la Culinary Arts Academy Switzerland (CAAS) conformément aux exigences légales en Suisse, ou doit procéder à la séparation complète de CRCS et CAAS, de sorte que les institutions soient totalement indépendantes à tous les niveaux (juridique, administratif, financier, etc.)."

(art. 333). The distinction between the two organisations is also clearly established on their websites, which relay the information to a wider audience.

### *Analysis*

The group of experts observe that César Ritz Colleges Switzerland implemented a full legal, administrative, financial, operational, and communicational separation from Culinary Arts Academy Switzerland.

At legal level, the separation of the two entities was verified by the experts, who consulted the extracts from the commercial register made available to them by CRCS. They conclude that the two institutions are indeed separate entities with different registered offices (in Brig-Glis and Le Bouveret), both recognised by the Canton of Valais. Both institutions are now subsidiaries of the Swiss Education Group and each institution operates under an independent legal structure.

At administrative, operational and financial levels, the experts notice that separate governance and organisational structures have been established. CRCS and CAAS maintain distinct executive bodies, management teams, and administrative procedures. Updated organisational charts provided to the experts confirm the independence of leadership, operational responsibilities, and support functions.

The experts also have established that employment contracts were revised to reflect the new structure. Staff are now assigned exclusively to either CRCS or CAAS, and personnel sharing is regulated by a formal Price Transfer Policy within the Swiss Education Group framework. The experts note that, during the separation process, employment rights and obligations, including the right to refuse contract transfer under Article 333 of the Swiss Code of Obligations, have been formally communicated to employees. The experts emphasise that CRCS has provided adequate support to its employees in this regard.

The experts add that operational autonomy is reflected in distinct administrative systems, including independent IT environments. CRCS and CAAS provide separate email domains, Office365 platforms, and internal administrative tools. Each institution awards its own degrees, compliant with Swiss federal regulations.

The experts notice as well that CRCS and CAAS have developed independent public communications. Separate brochures, marketing materials, and websites are maintained, ensuring that the identity, programme offerings, and admissions policies of each institution are clearly differentiated and accessible to all stakeholders.

While pragmatic cooperation continues in limited cases regarding facilities, these arrangements are governed by formal agreements and do not compromise the autonomy of either institution.

The evidence provided demonstrates that the required separation has been completed in all dimensions as required by the Swiss Accreditation Council decision.

The group of experts considers that the condition is fulfilled.

#### Condition 6:

CRCS must ensure that the admission criteria for the Swiss University of Applied Science within the Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector (HEdA), ch. 4, art. 25, are respected and clearly communicated. In particular, CRCS must expect its applicants to have one year of professional experience in a related profession.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Description*

César Ritz Colleges Switzerland responded in two ways to condition 6 set by the Swiss Accreditation Council. Firstly, the institution updated its admission criteria to ensure that they comply with the legal requirements set out in the HEdA (section 4, article 25). Secondly, CRCS finalised the implementation of its Industry Immersion Year, which enables applicants who do not have sufficient professional experience to acquire it through recognised partner companies.

#### Admission requirements

CRCS has updated its admission requirements for the Bachelor's degree. In its *Admission Policy* for the 2024-2025 academic year, the institution states that in addition to a maturity certificate or vocational maturity certificate, adequate English language qualifications (IELTS academic module 5.5 or TOEFL iBT 55) are also required, as well as “one year of relevant professional experience or recognised equivalent” (p. 1). The document further specifies that in order to be exempted from the Industry Immersion Year (IIFY) – the year designed to provide students with the work experience necessary for entry into CRCS – applicants must have one year of full-time professional experience in a hospitality company or a vocational baccalaureate and a Federal Certificate of Competence (CFC) in one of the following six disciplines:

- Cook
- Accommodation specialist
- Catering specialist
- System catering specialist
- Hotel communications specialist
- Hotel, catering and tourism sales assistant

These six disciplines correspond to the hotel professions listed by the Swiss Hotel Association (HotellerieSuisse). Experience in one of these areas allows CRCS to ensure that the professional experience gained is relevant to a field of study related to that taught at the institution. Students who do not have the required qualifications are invited to complete the Industry Immersion Year before entering the Bachelor's programme.

#### Industry Immersion Year

The Industry Immersion Year is “a foundational year of practical training that ensures students develop the essential professional competencies and knowledge required for a career in hospitality” (*Industry Immersion Year. Overview*, p. 3). This one-year programme was created to

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<sup>3</sup> The French language version prevails: “CRCS doit s'assurer que les critères d'admission sur l'art. 25 LEHE et sur l'Ordonnance sur l'admission dans les hautes écoles spécialisées soient respectés et clairement communiqués. En particulier, CRCS doit exiger de ses futur-e-s étudiant-e-s qu'elles et ils possèdent une année d'expérience professionnelle dans une profession apparentée [à la discipline étudiée].”

meet the HEdA's legal admission requirements. Over the course of a year, prospective students acquire both practical skills – notably through an internship in a hospitality-related establishment – and theoretical knowledge related to the field of hospitality and catering.

The programme offered by CRCS consists of an internship, preceded by workshops and hands-on immersion sessions, as well as theoretical classes. The various modules provide specific training for careers in the hospitality industry, enabling students to acquire basic skills in different areas, such as:

- Culinary Arts
- Fine Dining & Service
- Hotel Operations and Rooms Division Operations
- Leadership & Personal Development, Customer Service
- Business & Technology Applications
- Language

All learning is geared towards practical application, enabling future Bachelor's students to acquire professional knowledge that will be useful in their work placements. In order to ensure that the learning objectives are aligned with the core competencies that reflect essential industry skills, CRCS has developed a mapping tool that identifies the skills developed by students in each module and their practical application in the workplace (see *Industry Immersion Year. Overview*, p. 6).

Internships offered during the year are full-time, six-month placements in recognised companies. They are designed to enable each student to acquire specific skills. Although these vary depending on the position held, CRCS has defined five learning outcomes for all types of internships. At the end of their work experience, students should be able to:

- Gain an awareness of the social, economic and managerial aspects which exist within the working environment;
- Transfer the theoretical knowledge and understanding, based on previous studies, into practical applications in a working environment;
- Contribute positively to a specific area of the organisation that may be based on individual requirements;
- Develop individual competencies and vocationally relevant skills whilst recognising the personal development that has taken place to increase employability;
- Identify gaps that exist in knowledge, understanding, competencies and skills.

These learning outcomes are complemented by key skills of various kinds (operational, planning and management of learning, interactive and group skills, self-appraisal and reflection on practice, new approach and attitude to internships, employability). These are directly linked to the professional skills identified by CRCS.

During their internship, each student is monitored by their employer and receives regular formative assessment of their work. Students are also required to carry out a self-assessment, which they record in a reflective report, in order to raise awareness of their learning. To facilitate this process, they keep a learning journal in which they can record their experiences as the internship progresses. This journal is personal and is not shared with the institution. Throughout

the internship, CRCS also provides its students with various references and additional reading material to enrich their knowledge.

At the end of the Industry Immersion Year, CRCS validates the internship based on three types of documents: the reflective report written by the student, two internship reports written by the employer – the first after two or three months, the second at the end of the internship; both are signed by the employer and the student – and the work certificates. These documents are compiled into a portfolio and sent to CRCS for validation.

The admission requirements established by César Ritz Colleges Switzerland are published in the CRCS brochure, the latest version of which has been sent to the experts. It can be downloaded from the institution's website, which also has an “admission” tab specifying the admission requirements for each degree. The new policy has been communicated to the various CRCS stakeholders.

### *Analysis*

The experts have examined the admission criteria set by CRCS for entry to the Bachelor's programme and note that the institution has modified them to meet the requirements of the LEHE (ch. 4 art. 25). All future Bachelor's students must now have one year's prior work experience in a discipline related to the one they are studying (in the case of CRCS, a Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Business Management).

For people who do not have this year of work experience, the CRCS organises an Industry Immersion Year. The documents made available to the experts indicate that it is possible to start this immersion year in October, January or July, which allows some flexibility depending on the timetable for obtaining the previous degree.

During the Industry Immersion Year, CRCS requires students to gain prior experience through two complementary approaches: i) practical and theoretical knowledge through teaching provided by CRCS, and ii) work placement/internship outside CRCS.

The experts have established that the Industry Immersion Year meets the usual requirements for the discipline concerned, for the reasons set out below.

### *Theoretical and practical knowledge*

CRCS itself provides its students with the necessary professional knowledge, in addition to the skills acquired during the internship. Given the specific nature of the discipline concerned, the experts believe that it is entirely appropriate for this knowledge to be taught directly by CRCS, which has suitable premises and qualified staff to enable students to develop the necessary skills in the best possible conditions. The objectives of the various courses and workshops, according to the syllabi provided by CRCS, enable the experts to see that the training is in line with the professional expectations of the sector. The experts also note that the various modules on offer – both in terms of content and teaching formats (interactive, role-playing, practical workshops) – place considerable emphasis on professional practice, placing students in situations similar to those they encounter on work placements.

### Internships outside CRCS

In order to ensure that internships meet the expected requirements, the CRCS itself provides students with a list of international establishments where this internship can take place. The experts had access to this list and were able to ascertain that the establishments listed are demanding and relevant, as they are directly linked to the hospitality professions and the Bachelor's programme in question. They are therefore recognised companies where students gain their first professional experience. The experts also consider that the conditions in which the internships take place are fully appropriate. Students are completely immersed in the world of work for the duration of their placement, which is full-time. It should enable students to acquire specific skills, a catalogue of which was drawn up by CRCS and forwarded to the experts. The experts noted that they corresponded perfectly to the basic requirements expected in hospitality-related professions. CRCS also makes additional documentation available to its students, enabling them, for example, to expand on the theoretical knowledge they have already acquired or to research a particular subject on their own. To ensure that these skills are acquired, CRCS has set up a monitoring system described in the course syllabus, which the experts consider to be entirely appropriate. The school encourages students not to remain passive about their learning and asks them to reflect personally on the development of their skills by means of a diary. Two placement reports are also requested from the employer – after 2-3 months and after 6 months – which make it possible to monitor the students' progress, without losing sight of the prospect of future entry into the Bachelor's programme. The experts note here that the students are asked to sign them, which shows that attention is paid to communication between the employer and the trainee and enables CRCS to ensure that good monitoring takes place throughout the internship. An assessment of the skills acquired by students is thus carried out through these evaluations. The internship ends with the award of a certificate.

These new admission criteria are published on the CRCS website and appear in a 9-page downloadable brochure entitled *Industry Immersion Year Overview*, produced by CRCS. Those who already have work experience are informed that they can be exempted from the Industry Immersion Year and enter directly in the first year of the 180 ECTS Bachelor. The information available to candidates is therefore complete. However, given their complexity and their recent creation, the experts feel that there is room for improvement to make them clearer. While the current communication seems to be aimed primarily at future international students with no prior professional experience, for whom the professional immersion year offered by CRCS is necessary, the experts suggest that it should also be directed more explicitly at candidates with more varied profiles.

The group of experts considers that the condition is fulfilled.

## **2.2 AAQ proposal**

### *Considerations*

The Swiss Agency for Accreditation and Quality Assurance notes that the experts examined the two conditions set out in the institutional accreditation. The experts' analysis and conclusions are consistent and entirely appropriate. Based on the report and documentation provided by



CRCS, the experts' conclusions and the higher education institution's response, the AAQ proposes that the two conditions be assessed as follows:

Condition 4: The condition is fulfilled.

Condition 6: The condition is fulfilled.

### **2.3 Statement by César Ritz Colleges Switzerland (CRCS)**

Dated 22 May 2025, the CRCS position statement expresses the institution's satisfaction with the conclusions of the experts and AAQ. It contains acknowledgements to the various parties and outlines the positive consequences that the fulfilment of the two conditions has had for the higher education institution. The position statement is included in Part C of this report.



## Part C

### Statement of César Ritz Colleges Switzerland (CRCS)

22 May 2025





Dr. Christoph Grolimund, Director  
Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ)  
Effingerstrasse 15  
3001 Bern

Brig, 22 May, 2025

Dear Dr. Grolimund,

On behalf of César Ritz Colleges Switzerland (CRCS), we would like to thank the AAQ team for the coordination and facilitation of the verification process concerning the fulfilment of Conditions 4 and 6 set in our institutional accreditation.

We would particularly like to express our sincere appreciation to the group of experts – Prof. Dr. Liliane Michalik, Prof. Dr. Patricia Pol, and Ms. Krumma Jonsdottir – for their thorough review and thoughtful conclusions. Their detailed assessment and recognition of the progress made by CRCS are both reassuring and motivating.

Below, we respond to the conclusions regarding each of the two conditions:

**Condition 4 – Separation between CRCS and CAAS**

CRCS acknowledges and welcomes the experts' recognition that the legal, administrative, financial, operational, and communicational separation between CRCS and Culinary Arts Academy Switzerland (CAAS) has been fully implemented.

We will continue to maintain this separation in full compliance with the applicable legal and accreditation frameworks.

**Condition 6 – Admission Criteria and Industry Immersion Year**

We also appreciate the experts' acknowledgement that the updated admission criteria and the implementation of the Industry Immersion Year fully address the legal requirements outlined in HEfA, art. 25.

The alignment of our programme with federal expectations, particularly the requirement for one year of professional experience, has been an important step in reinforcing the academic and professional standards of CRCS.

César Ritz Colleges Switzerland remains fully committed to the accreditation process and to the continuous enhancement of our institutional practices. We remain at your disposal should you require further clarification,

With appreciation,

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'TFlorenthal'.

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Tanja Florenthal  
Executive Director of Quality Assurance

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JArnanz'.

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Jorge Arnanz  
Dean

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