

# Decision of the FIBAA Accreditation and Certification Committee



20<sup>th</sup> Meeting on November 26, 2025

## CERTIFICATION

<b>Project Number:</b>	24/100, Cluster 3
<b>Institution:</b>	Gisma University of Applied Sciences
<b>Courses:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Character Development</li><li>2. Corporate Sustainability and Leadership</li><li>3. Ethics, Compliance and Code of Conduct</li><li>4. Project Management</li></ol>

The FIBAA Accreditation and Certification Committee has taken the following decision:

According to § 7 (2) in conjunction with § 10 (1) in conjunction with § 10 (2) and § 10 (4) of the “Special Conditions for awarding the FIBAA Quality Seal for Continuing Education Courses”, the continuing education courses are certified with two conditions (“Character Development”, “Corporate Sustainability and Leadership” and “Project Management”) and one condition (“Ethics, Compliance and Code of Conduct”), respectively.

- **Condition 1:** For all courses, the institution provides course (module) descriptions that contain all the information defined in the ECTS Users’ Guide.
- **Condition 2:** For the courses “Character Development”, “Corporate Sustainability and Leadership” and “Project Management”, the institution defines specific target groups on the basis of previous knowledge, experience, and educational level. The choice of the specific target groups should be based on the strategic objectives of the course.

► Proof of meeting these conditions is requested until August 25, 2026

Period of Certification: January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026 – December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2030

The FIBAA Quality Seal is awarded.



## Assessment Report

---

---

**Institution:**

Gisma University of Applied Sciences

---

**Continuing Education Courses:**

- Character Development
  - Corporate Sustainability and Leadership
  - Ethics, Compliance and Code of Conduct
  - Project Management
-

---

**Brief description of the continuing education courses:**

The courses are “professional certificates” that represent the University's first step into the field of continuing education. Overall, Gisma’s initial offer of professional certificates includes 16 courses covering various topics in technology and business management.

The courses are designed for four-weeks and are assigned 2.5 ECTS credits. They are delivered asynchronously online with eight hours of synchronous teaching, optionally in classroom or online.

The target group are working professionals seeking flexible, career-relevant training that can be balanced with job commitments (e.g., part-time, hybrid, or online delivery). The courses will also be **offered (for free) to Gisma’s full-time Bachelor and Master students.**

---

**Opening date of the procedure:**

March 20, 2025

---

**Date of filing the self-assessment report:**

July 29, 2025

---

**Date of online assessment conference:**

September 25, 2025

---

**Type of certification:**

Concept certification

---

**Mode of study:**

Part-time

---

**Initial start of the course:**

January 2026

---

**Start of course cycle:**

Every year January, April, July, October

---

**Capacity load:**

50 students per cohort, 2 parallel classes

---

**No. of ECTS credits assigned to the course:**

2.5 ECTS

---

**Hours (workload) per ECTS credit:**

25

---

**Intended level according to European Qualification Framework (EQF)**

EQF level 6

---

---

**FIBAA Project Manager:**

Michael Stephan

---

**Panel Members<sup>1</sup>:****Milena Kugel**

Student: M.Sc. Sustainable Corporate Management

University of Ulm, Germany

Completed: B.Sc. Economic Education (University of Hohenheim), Germany

**Prof. Dr. Christian Neuhäuser**

Professor for Practical Philosophy (Business Ethics and Philosophy, Political Philosophy)

Dortmund University of Technology, Dortmund, Germany

**Daniela Seiler**

Head of Technical Qualification Maintenance

DB Netz AG, Leipzig, Germany

**Prof. Dr. Selva Staub**

Associate Professor, International Trade and Logistics Department

Bandirma Onyedi Eylül University, Izmir, Turkey

**Prof. Dr. Kim Oliver Tokarski**

Professor of Entrepreneurship and Corporate Management

Bern University of Applied Sciences, Bern, Switzerland

---

<sup>1</sup> In alphabetical order

## Summary

The panels' assessment takes into account the self-assessment and the results of the online assessment conference as well as the statement of Gisma University of Applied Sciences to the assessment report dated November 7, 2025.

Regarding the procedure, it should be noted that the certification, which takes place before the course's initial start of the certificate courses is assessed like that of an already ongoing course.

The courses "Character Development", "Corporate Sustainability and Leadership", "Project Management" of Gisma University of Applied Sciences fulfil (with two exceptions) the FIBAA quality requirements for certified continuing education courses and can be certified by the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) under two conditions. The course "Ethics, Compliance and Code of Conduct" fulfils (with one exception) the FIBAA quality requirements for certified continuing education courses and can be certified under one condition.

The panel members identify need for action regarding the following aspects: Focus on the target group (three courses); **Structure of the course, application of the "European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System" (ECTS) and modularisation** (all courses); Therefore, they recommend the certification on condition of meeting the following requirements:

- Condition 1 (see Chapter 3.1): For all courses, the institution provides course (module) descriptions that contain all the information defined in the ECTS Users' Guide.
- Condition 2 (see Chapter 2): For the courses "Character Development", "Corporate Sustainability and Leadership" and "Project Management", the institution defines specific target groups on the basis of previous knowledge, experience, and educational level. The choice of the specific target groups should be based on the strategic objectives of the course.

Proof of meeting these conditions is to be documented by August 25, 2026

The further not fulfilled quality requirement: External evaluation by alumni, employers and/or other third parties (chapter 5) - is not an Asterisk Criterion, so that a further condition is not necessary and the measures the institution takes to solve the identified problem are to be considered in the context of the re-certification.

The panel members identify further development potential for the courses and recommend:

- recommends developing further courses, and also cluster courses in terms of stackability (see Chapter 1.2),
- defining and communicating coherent admission conditions that take into account the specific characteristics of the intended target groups and sufficiently support the achievement of the course objectives (see Chapter 2),
- rethinking AI regulations and ensuring a coherent policy for the courses for AI integration in teaching and learning (see Chapter 3.1),
- considering alternative assessment formats in the course of the follow-up of the condition about the definition of specific target groups and in the course of the development of the professional certificates (see Chapter 3.1),

- recommends increasing the number of contact hours in the curriculum to ensure the learners acquire the necessary theoretical foundation to achieve the learning outcomes (see chapter 3.2),
- updating case studies in the learning material (see Chapter 3.3),
- developing an emergency scenario in case the teacher is unable to attend (see chapter 4.1),
- continuous training of the staff involved in these courses, including part-time lecturers, **with respect to the specific courses' teaching and learning format** (see chapter 4.1),
- that the University pay particular attention to the quality of timely academic feedback during asynchronous learning (see chapter 4.1),
- aligning fact sheets and the intended online communication to the module descriptions (see chapter 4.2),
- **renaming the course "Character Development"** (see chapter 4.2),
- developing a concept for third party evaluation specifically tailored to the target group of professionals (see chapter 5).

The measures the institution eventually takes in order to implement the recommendations of the panel members are to be considered in the context of the re-certification.

A further positive aspect the panel would like to highlight although it did not lead to a formal **"exceed" or "exceptional" rating within the respective chapter:**

- The courses are convincingly integrated into the institution's **overall strategy** relating to the other offers of the institution and **Gisma's strategic positioning at the intersection of technology and business** (see chapter 1.2).

For the overall assessment please refer to the quality profile at the end of this report.

In this context, FIBAA did not check compliance with legal regulations. In particular, responsibility for compliance with the legal requirements of the Distance Learning Protection Act (FernUSG) lies exclusively with the University. FIBAA accepts no liability for violations of the FernUSG. In particular, FIBAA does not guarantee the legal admissibility, recognition, or official approval of courses, programmes, or other educational offerings of the University.

## Information about the Institution

Gisma is a registered University of Applied Sciences in the state of Brandenburg and belongs to the educational group of Global University Systems (GUS).

Its organisational structure is supposed to ensure a clear division of responsibilities, promoting efficient administration and scientific excellence<sup>2</sup>. While the Presidium comprises the President, the Vice President and the Executive Directorate, the Senate consists of the Executive Board members, as well as full-time professors, non-academic staff, and student representatives. It serves as the highest decision-making body for important academic matters such as establishing new professorships, approving the appointment of key academic staff, and adopting policies and organisational changes. The Executive Board submits proposed decisions to the Senate for approval. Beside the planned structure of Vice Presidents for Research, Cooperation and Academic Affairs, the Quality Management Department operates independently and reports directly to the President.

The University is divided into two academic departments, the Department of Business and the Department of Computer and Data Science. Each department is headed by a departmental head who oversees the academic programmes, programme directors, faculty, and research within their department.

**“Research centres” fall under the planned remit of the Vice-President for Research.** It is intended that this position will be filled by the end of 2025. Until then, the President and Vice President will oversee the Research Centres.

**Gisma’s range of courses primarily comprises full-time study programmes with a focus on technology, engineering and business.** The courses under review were designed in response to a growing demand and to target professionals in the executive education segment:

1. Character Development
2. Corporate Sustainability and Leadership
3. Ethics, Compliance and Code of Conduct
4. Project Management

This particular cluster of courses fits well within the Department of Business and serves as an alternative entry into higher education that can lead to continuing in academic programmes. **The courses also fit well within the University’s positioning at the intersection of business and technology** (see also Chapter 1.2).

Central functions such as admissions, accounting, finance, marketing, market research, resource management and legal services are part of **Gisma’s** professional services. However, they are support structures provided at GUS level to ensure efficiency and alignment of best practice across the group, as well as providing the best possible support to individual institutions.

---

<sup>2</sup> See self-report, page 8

# Description and appraisal in Detail

## 1 STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

### 1.1 Logic and transparency of course objectives (Asterisk Criterion)

Each course has defined qualification objectives and learning outcomes<sup>3</sup>.

#### **Character Development**

The course addresses the growing demand for leaders who can foster “character-driven” cultures, develop individuals and teams with strong moral and ethical grounding, and embed character into the core of organisational practices, by combining theoretical knowledge from research with practical application.

Learning outcomes: Upon successful completion of the course the graduate will be able to:

L01: Demonstrate deeper understanding of critical issues in the process of leadership development

L02: Critically analyse the different dimensions of leadership character

L03: Develop plans to align character development aspect in various plans and policies in the organisation;

L04: Design and deliver the character development programme based on the accepted scientific methodology in the field.

#### **Corporate Sustainability and Leadership**

The course rationale is that the imperative for organisations to embrace sustainability has become increasingly evident in today's global landscape. Climate change, resource depletion, and social inequalities pose significant challenges that demand innovative and responsible business practices. The course equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and ethical frameworks necessary to navigate these complex issues and drive sustainable transformation within their organisations.

Learning outcomes: Upon successful completion of the course the graduate will be able to:

L01: Demonstrate deeper understanding of corporate sustainability and its implications on businesses and society;

L02: Critically analyse key sustainability issues and challenges faced by organisations, including environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors;

L03: Develop and implement effective sustainability strategies and initiatives that align with organisational goals and values;

L04: Examine and evaluate sustainability risks and opportunities in a complex and dynamic business environment.

---

<sup>3</sup> See self-report pages 9pp. and Appendix A3 Module Descriptors

## **Ethics, Compliance and Code of Conduct**

The course designed to formalise the interlink business ethics programmes and strategies in companies. Ethics compliance needs a company-wide collaborative approach, which requires a deeper understanding of the strong ethical compliance mechanism to minimise the risk of ethical failures. The course offers a condensed yet comprehensive approach to training ethics compliance professionals for the companies in a short span of time.

Learning outcomes: Upon successful completion of the course the graduate will be able to:

- LO1: Understand the different ethical issues in management of the organisations;
- LO2: Apply critical ethical analysis in managerial decision making and action planning;
- LO3: Prepare ethics compliance policies and reporting processes in specific contexts;
- LO4: Independently design and implement the ethical code of conduct in their respective organisational contexts.

## **Project Management**

The course is designed to fill the growing gap in the workforce by training professionals who can effectively lead and manage projects in a changing, more complicated corporate environment. For businesses in all sectors, project management is essential to achieving strategic objectives. For career in project management, one needs to acquire the essential theoretical knowledge and practical abilities needed to effectively manage the full project lifecycle.

Learning outcomes: Upon successful completion of the course the graduate will be able to:

- LO1: Explain key project management concepts, methodologies, and frameworks and describe their relevance to various project contexts;
- LO2: Critically analyse project scenarios, identify potential risks and challenges, and propose effective solutions using structured problem-solving techniques;
- LO3: Demonstrate proficiency in applying project management tools and techniques (e.g., Gantt charts, risk management, resource allocation) to plan, execute, and monitor projects;
- LO4: Effectively lead project teams, manage stakeholder communication, and collaborate with team members to achieve project objectives while resolving conflicts and promoting a productive team environment.

All courses are designed at EQF Level 6: They use a critical understanding of theories and principles to impart advanced knowledge in a field of work or study. Students acquire advanced skills demonstrating mastery of the subject, as well as the ability to innovate. These skills are necessary for solving complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study. By the end of the course, students are able to lead complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or learning contexts. They have a critical awareness of knowledge issues within a field and at the intersection of different fields and take responsibility for the professional development of individuals and groups. In accordance with the German Qualifications Framework, they are also supposed to have acquired competencies for planning, processing and evaluating comprehensive technical tasks and problems, and for independently managing processes within the professional field.

To ensure adequacy, the objectives are reviewed regularly and are adapted accordingly if necessary (see chapter 4.2). The courses are also undergoing certification in the UK via CPD (Continuing Professional Development) and aim to become recognised and offered at the London campus as well.

## Appraisal

The qualification objectives of the courses are convincingly defined and correspond with the intended level of the European Qualification Framework. The qualification objectives are presented **in relation to the target group and the target group members' professional development.**

The qualification objectives embrace appropriate training of knowledge and skills.

The qualification objectives are based on subject-specific and generic learning outcomes that align with the level of the qualification to be awarded upon completion.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality re-quirements	n.r.
<b>1.</b>	<b>Strategy and Objectives</b>					
1.1*	Logic and transparency of course objectives			X		

## 1.2 Positioning of the course

### Character Development

According to Gisma<sup>4</sup>, this course is nationally and internationally positioned for professionals, leaders, and HR practitioners who seek to integrate ethical and character-driven practices into organisational culture and leadership. It targets those aiming to foster moral grounding and character development in teams and individuals.

**Strengths:** Combines contemporary research with practical “train the trainer” methodologies; strong focus on embedding character dimensions into HR policies and leadership roles.

**Weaknesses:** May lack technical depth in specific assessment tools for students unfamiliar with psychological or behavioural sciences.

**Opportunities:** Growing demand for ethical leadership and character-driven organisational cultures in response to corporate scandals and societal expectations.

**Threats:** Competition from broader leadership programmes that include character development as a secondary module.

<sup>4</sup> See self-report, page 10

Market positioning: Differentiated by its specialised focus on scientifically grounded character development, appealing to organisations and professionals prioritising ethical leadership and long-term cultural transformation.

### **Corporate Sustainability and Leadership**

According to Gisma<sup>5</sup>, this course targets mid-career professionals, sustainability officers, and executives aiming to integrate ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) principles into business strategies and operations.

Strengths: Holistic coverage of sustainability drivers, from strategic alignment to impact evaluation; emphasises leadership competencies for environmental, social, and governance (ESG) implementation.

Weaknesses: May require supplementary technical knowledge in environmental science or policy for deeper analysis.

Opportunities: Accelerating corporate focus on sustainability due to investor pressure and regulatory mandates (e.g., EU CSRD<sup>6</sup>).

Threats: Overlap with MBA sustainability modules or free ESG webinars offered by NGOs.

Market positioning: Distinguishes itself by bridging sustainability theory with actionable leadership strategies, appealing to professionals driving organisational change in alignment with global sustainability goals.

### **Ethics, Compliance and Code of Conduct**

According to Gisma<sup>7</sup>, this course is designed for compliance officers, managers, and ethics professionals in multinational corporations. The course addresses the need for robust ethical frameworks and compliance mechanisms in global business environments.

Strengths: Practical emphasis on real-world ethical dilemmas and compliance standards; aligns with global reporting practices and regulatory requirements.

Weaknesses: Limited focus on sector-specific compliance challenges (e.g., healthcare, finance).

Opportunities: Increasing regulatory scrutiny and corporate accountability trends amplify demand for certified ethics and compliance training.

Threats: Availability of free or low-cost generic compliance training modules online.

Market positioning: Stands out by offering a condensed yet comprehensive approach to ethics compliance, ideal for professionals seeking actionable skills to mitigate ethical risks and design enforceable codes of conduct.

### **Project Management**

According to Gisma<sup>8</sup>, this course is tailored for early-career professionals, aspiring project managers, and cross-functional team leaders across industries. The course equips learners with end-to-end project lifecycle management skills.

---

<sup>5</sup> See self-report, page 10

<sup>6</sup> [Home - CSRD directive](#)

<sup>7</sup> See self-report, page 10

<sup>8</sup> See self-report, page 11

**Strengths:** Balanced blend of theoretical frameworks (e.g., Agile, Critical Path) and hands-on tools (e.g., Gantt charts, risk management); includes emerging topics like AI in project management.

**Weaknesses:** Intensive four-week format may challenge students without prior exposure to project management basics.

**Opportunities:** Rising demand for certified project managers due to increased complexity in global projects and hybrid work environments.

**Threats:** Competition from PMP or PRINCE2 certifications, which are more widely recognised.

**Market positioning:** Differentiated by its industry-aligned case studies and focus on problem-solving, catering to learners seeking practical, immediately applicable skills.

Once delivery for these courses commences, an initial marketing review will be carried out after six months, assessing metrics such as applications, enrolments, completion and dropout rates, while also taking into account student feedback gathered from the relevant questionnaires, which are part of the Gisma quality cycle. Based on the findings, the competitiveness of the courses will be evaluated and where needed, adjusted and/or enhanced.

## Positioning of the course in the job market

Gisma has gathered the following arguments underlining the position of the courses in the job market<sup>9</sup>:

### Character Development

- **International Level:** This course targets HR professionals, leadership coaches, and organisational development specialists who aim to foster ethical and character-driven cultures in global corporations. With increasing emphasis on workplace integrity and psychological safety, multinational companies seek experts who can design and implement character development programmes supporting ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) principles.
- **National Level:** **Germany's strong corporate governance framework (e.g., Deutscher Corporate Governance Kodex)** and emphasis on ethical leadership in Mittelstand companies create demand for professionals skilled in character-based leadership. Public and private sectors prioritise soft skills development, particularly in industries like automotive, finance, and engineering, where ethical decision-making is critical.
- **Justification:** As businesses face scrutiny over corporate culture and ethical failures, this course equips professionals to assess, coach, and embed character dimensions in leadership and HR practices. It aligns with EU-wide initiatives on workplace ethics and **Germany's focus on sustainable corporate governance.**

### Job Roles Aligned:

- Leadership Development Consultant

---

<sup>9</sup> See self-report, page 9ff.

- HR Business Partner (Talent & Culture)
- Corporate Ethics & Compliance Officer
- Organisational Behaviour Specialist

### Corporate Sustainability and Leadership

- International Level: This course targets sustainability managers, ESG strategists, and CSR officers in global firms committed to net-zero transitions and circular economy models. The EU Green Deal and UN SDGs have escalated demand for professionals who can align business strategies with sustainability metrics.
- National Level: **Germany's "Energiewende"** (energy transition) and strict ESG reporting laws (e.g., CSRD) drive demand for sustainability experts in automotive, energy, and finance sectors. Mittelstand<sup>10</sup> firms also seek leaders to implement cost-efficient green practices.
- Justification: With Germany and the EU prioritising decarbonisation and ethical supply chains, this course equips professionals to lead sustainability initiatives - addressing a critical **talent gap in both multinationals and Germany's industrial core.**

#### Job Roles Aligned:

- Sustainability Strategy Manager
- ESG Reporting Analyst
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Lead
- Green Business Development Consultant

### Ethics, Compliance and Code of Conduct

- International Level: This course prepares compliance officers, risk managers, and corporate governance professionals for roles in multinational firms navigating complex regulatory landscapes (e.g., EU Whistleblower Directive, U.S. FCPA). Demand is rising in sectors like finance, healthcare, and tech, where ethical breaches carry significant legal and reputational risks.
- National Level: **Germany's stringent compliance laws (e.g., Geldwäschegesetz, Supply Chain Due Diligence Act)** drive demand for certified ethics professionals. Mittelstand firms and DAX-listed corporations increasingly invest in compliance training to meet EU standards and avoid penalties.
- Justification: With tightening global regulations, this course meets employer needs for professionals who can design ethical frameworks, conduct compliance audits, and mitigate risks - skills emphasised in **Germany's corporate governance reforms and international anti-corruption standards.**

---

<sup>10</sup> **"Mittelstand"** is not only the German expression for medium-sized enterprises but this sector is often dubbed "the backbone of German economy" with about 50 % share of total economic value added. Therefore, when describing a focus on the German market, **"Mittelstand"** in this context seems to be an appropriate terminology.

Job Roles Aligned:

- Compliance Manager
- Corporate Ethics Advisor
- Risk & Governance Analyst
- ESG Reporting Specialist

### Project Management

- International Level: This course caters to project managers, Agile coaches, and operations specialists in industries like IT, construction, and consulting, where structured project execution is critical. The global shift toward hybrid work and digital transformation has amplified demand for professionals skilled in remote team coordination and AI-enhanced project tools.
- National Level: **Germany's** strong engineering and manufacturing sectors require certified project managers to oversee complex initiatives (e.g., Industrie 4.0, renewable energy projects). **The country's dual education system also emphasises** project-based learning, creating demand for trainers and methodology experts.
- Justification: As Germany invests in infrastructure and digitalisation, this course bridges the skills gap by teaching industry-standard methodologies alongside emerging tools like AI-driven scheduling - aligning with EU competitiveness goals and national upskilling initiatives.

Job Roles Aligned:

- IT Project Manager
- Construction/Engineering Project Lead
- Agile Scrum Master
- Operations & Process Improvement Consultant

### Positioning of the courses within the institution's overall strategy

According to the institution<sup>11</sup>, the cluster of professional certificate courses demonstrates a strong **alignment with Gisma University of Applied Sciences' mission, vision, and strategic objectives**. These courses are **positioned within the University's broader commitment to fostering** technological fluency, innovation, and practice-oriented learning.

Each course is supposed to prepare students and professionals to navigate and lead in technology-driven business environments. This **supports Gisma's** mission to develop globally aware, ethically grounded, and resilient leaders equipped with critical and strategic thinking skills. The content of the courses blends theoretical foundations with practical applications, **reinforcing Gisma's focus** on bridging academic learning with real-world relevance and industry needs. Through case studies, hands-on projects, and applied learning methods, the programmes promote interaction with

---

<sup>11</sup> See self-report, page 14f.

enterprise practice, aligning with Gisma’s strategic emphasis on corporate engagement and employability.

Furthermore, the structure and delivery mode of these programmes - available both on campus and online - reflect Gisma’s ambition to expand its global reach and accessibility. They contribute to lifelong learning and professional development, particularly in areas of growing demand across sectors. This is in line with Gisma’s strategic priorities of innovation, globalisation, and growth, and reinforces its commitment to providing education that is both future-oriented and internationally competitive.

Overall, the integration of this course cluster into the institutional framework is coherent and compelling. The qualification objectives and learning outcomes of the courses are supposed to be well matched with Gisma’s strategic direction and educational philosophy, offering learners the competencies needed to drive positive changes in complex and evolving business environments.

## Appraisal

The reasons given for the positioning of the courses on the educational and on the job market are based on a strategic analysis and plausibly linked to the described qualification objectives and the course graduates’ profiles. (For a closer definition of the target groups, see condition chapter 2.)

The panel highlights that the courses are convincingly integrated into the institution’s overall strategy relating to the other offers of the institution and Gisma’s strategic positioning in the business field. The courses’ qualification objectives are in line with the University’s mission and strategic planning. As the panel sees potential in the underlying concept for the micro-credentials in Professional education, it recommends developing further courses, and also developing courses that build on or supplement each other (“stackability”).

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality re-quirements	n.r.
1.	Strategy and Objectives					
1.2	Positioning of the course					
1.2.1	Positioning of the course on the educational market			X		
1.2.2	Positioning of the course on the job market			X		
1.2.3	Positioning of the course within the institution’s overall strategy			X		

## 2 ADMISSION

### Focus on the target group

The target group for these certificate courses consists of working professionals seeking flexible, career-relevant training that can be balanced with job commitments (e.g., part-time, hybrid, or online delivery). They include:

- **Aspiring and Current Leaders:** Professionals aiming to enhance leadership capabilities, whether in ethical decision-making, team development, or sustainability-driven management.
- **HR and Compliance Specialists:** Practitioners focused on organisational culture, ethics programmes, or regulatory compliance who need updated frameworks and tools.
- **Project and Operations Managers:** Individuals responsible for executing initiatives efficiently, seeking certification to formalise skills or transition into higher-impact roles.
- **Sustainability and ESG Professionals:** Employees tasked with integrating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles into business strategies.

**Career Advancers and Career Changers:** Professionals across sectors looking to pivot into roles with growing demand (e.g., compliance, sustainability, or leadership development).

### Typical Target Group Profiles:

- **HR Business Partner (Mid-Sized Company):** Manages talent development but lacks formal training in ethical leadership or character-driven culture, wants to design evidence-based character programmes to reduce turnover and align with corporate values.
- **Compliance Officer (Financial Services Firm):** Ensures adherence to regulations but struggles with evolving international standards (e.g., EU Whistleblower Directive), seeks practical frameworks to implement anti-corruption policies and ethical reporting systems.
- **IT Project Coordinator (Tech Startup):** Leads agile teams but lacks formal project management certification, aims to master tools like risk matrices and Gantt charts to improve delivery timelines and stakeholder communication.
- **Sustainability Analyst (Manufacturing Company):** tracks carbon emissions but needs strategic skills to align metrics with corporate ESG goals, wants to lead sustainability audits and design circular economy initiatives for supply chains.

The target group also includes active students or alumni who seek to enhance their skillset and gain the relevant knowledge while being able to translate into an ECTS value, with the potential to utilise it as recognition of prior learning toward academic qualification.

Overall students of the course need to have an interest in digital technologies and their applications, the willingness to engage with business-specific topics and the ability to organise themselves and manage short-term studies and career. In order to verify the appropriateness of their application, they are required to submit a letter of motivation, alongside possessing the basic requirements to study at the relevant EQF level.

## Admission conditions

The admission conditions for the courses included in this report are closely aligned with the typical Bachelor's degree entry conditions of Gisma University of Applied Sciences, with a few key revisions. Applicants are required to provide:

- (1) Curriculum vitae in tabular form
- (2) Copy of the identity card, for foreign applicants of the passport
- (3) Letter of motivation
- (4) Original or certified photocopy of the school leaving certificate.

Foreign language certificates must be accompanied by a German or English translation, the accuracy of which is certified by a sworn interpreter or translator.

- (5) Other certificates or supporting documents in the original or as a certified photocopy
- (6) If applicable, proof of previous studies, enclosing a certificate of deregistration and a clearance certificate if the applicant studied within the area of validity of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany.
- (7) Proof of required language skills (a level of at least B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages or a comparable level of another classification system or language certificate. Proof is not required if the student comes from a country in which the language of study is the usual language of communication and teaching or if the student already has a degree for which the above-mentioned conditions or comparable ones already had to be fulfilled. In individual cases, the examination board will decide.)

Recognition of prior learning when applying to the courses would generally not apply. In the cases where the applicants already possess a similar qualification with awarded ECTS credits to the intended course of study, they would rather be recommended to choose an alternative course, unless they wish to deepen and update their knowledge on the initially chosen course.

## Legal relationship

Upon completing the application to study, students agree to enter into a contractual relationship with the University, which is governed by the Terms and Conditions and Data Privacy Statement document (see appendix). This document outlines the rights and responsibilities of the student, the University, services provided by the University, conditions for contract termination and provisions for Data Protection.

**In the starting phase, the courses will be taught by the “module leaders” (see chapter 4.1), which are full-time professors at Gisma. More full-time as well as part-time lecturers may be involved at later stages once the number of students and cohorts increases.**

## Appraisal

The panel points out that for three of the four courses (Exception: Ethics, Compliance and Code of Conduct) the institution's **information about the target groups is not only offering a very broad range**

of students (from current Bachelor and Master students at Gisma to professionals and “leaders”), but also in large parts contradicting information, e.g.:

Character development:

- Self-report (page 9): The course addresses the growing demand for leaders who can foster character-driven cultures, develop individuals and teams with strong moral and ethical grounding, and embed character into the core of organisational practices, by combining theoretical knowledge from research with practical application.
- Course fact sheet: **“Who is this programme for? MBA/MA/MSc students, social workers, migrants, individuals experiencing distress or post-traumatic stress disorder, and those shaping their future paths.”**

Corporate Sustainability and Leadership:

- Self-Report (page 11): **“Targets mid-career professionals, sustainability officers, and executives aiming to integrate ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) principles into business strategies and operations.”**
- Course fact sheet: **“for professionals aspiring to manage an organisation and make high-level business decisions backed by data. Specifically, the following will benefit the most from the course: Early career professionals from business, NGO and public-sector organisations. Researchers and learners interested in sustainability. Trainers, consultants and members from academia.**

Project management:

- Self-Report (page 12): **“Tailored for early-career professionals . . .”**
- Fact sheet: **“Mid- and senior-level executives”**

Therefore, the panel recommends the following condition:

- For the courses **“Character Development”, “Corporate Sustainability and Leadership” and “Project Management”**, the institution defines specific target groups. The choice of the specific target groups should be based on the strategic objectives of the course.

Admission conditions have been defined. Admission conditions and procedures are described, documented, and accessible for interested parties. However, the panel points out that admission conditions should also reflect and support the achievement of the course objectives. With respect to the **panel’s concerns** in terms of the target groups of three of the courses, the panel **recommends** defining and communicating coherent admission conditions that take into account the specific characteristics of the intended target groups and sufficiently support the achievement of the course objectives. **In the panel’s opinion, this could for instance be done by** describing a level or duration of professional experience considered to be ideal to join the courses, by describing the idea of the **“letter of motivation” in more detail and by** conceiving appropriate interview guidelines with applicants (esp. Gisma degree students).

The contracts between the institution and the learners, as well as between the institution and the teaching staff (full-time as well as part-time lecturers) are set down and documented. Rights and

obligations of both parties have been established and are known to all relevant parties. Transparency and legal certainty exist<sup>12</sup>.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality re-quirements	n.r.
<b>2. Admission</b>						
2.1*	Focus on the target group			X (ECCC)	Condition (CD) (CSL) (PM)	
2.2*	Admission conditions			X		
2.3*	Legal relationship			X		

---

<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that no comprehensive legal review can be carried out as part of the certification process.  
 Description and appraisal in Detail  
 © FIBAA Certification Report

## 3 IMPLEMENTATION

### 3.1 Structure and Content

#### **Structure of the course, application of the “European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System” (ECTS) and modularisation**

Each course is created as a module with 2.5 ECTS credits. Module descriptions include details on the courses.

The courses are designed as short courses, to be studied within four weeks. The workload is 63 hours which are split into 55 hours of self-study time (including assessment preparation and final test) and eight hours (two sessions of four hours each) in class on campus or hybrid. The exam is one hour at the end of the course. This corresponds to a workload of 16 hours a week, which allows to finish the course within the projected study time. The course structure consists of several topics **that promote the objectives and the learner’s** acquisition of the relevant knowledge and competences in line with the given learning outcome<sup>13</sup>.

#### **Certificate and Certificate Supplement**

Upon successful completion of the course, each learner will be awarded a Certificate of Completion indicating the course title, the number of credits earned, and the type of study pathway undertaken (campus-based or online). This certificate is issued through the Digital Qualification Framework (DQF.eu) platform, which enables the generation of secure, verifiable digital credentials aligned with the latest European Commission standards. Each certificate is paired with a tamper-proof digital badge, secured using the European Blockchain Services Infrastructure (EBSI) and accessible via QR code or digital link.

In addition to the certificate, learners receive a comprehensive certificate supplement, providing transparent information about the qualification, including:

- the EQF level,
- the workload expressed in hours or ECTS credits,
- the learning outcomes achieved, and
- the relevant frameworks and standards used for classification (e.g., ESCO, GreenComp, DigComp, where applicable).

Both physical and digital versions of the credential are fully interoperable, verifiable, and ready for integration into Europass or other recognised credential portfolios. This approach supports lifelong recognition, enhances mobility, and contributes to building trusted learning ecosystems across Europe and beyond.

#### **Logic and conceptual coherence of the curriculum**

The Module Descriptors<sup>14</sup> include the content and learning outcomes of the course.

---

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix A 3 Module Descriptors

<sup>14</sup> *Appendix A3 Module Descriptors*

## Character Development

Contents The foundations of Leader Character; Leader Character and organisational performance; Habit formation and leader character development; Character dimensions in leadership; Assessment of character in selection process; Cultural influences on leader character; Embedding character in HR practices; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) issues in leader character; Managing up and lateral leadership; Leader character assessment and coaching

Course Objectives:

- Developing understanding about the process of character development through contemporary research literature on the subject.
- Familiarizing with the different dimensions of character, particularly in leadership role situations.
- Building competencies for integration of character development issues in relevant HR policies and practices.
- Enhancing capacity to design and deliver character development programmes in the organisations

## Corporate Sustainability and Leadership

Contents: Foundations of Corporate Sustainability; Sustainability and Business Functions; Integrating Environment, Society and Governance in Business; Corporate Strategy and Sustainability; Sustainability and business decisions; Global best practices in corporate sustainability; Sustainability planning and management; Sustainability Standards, Reporting and Disclosure; Leadership for driving sustainability; Sustainability Planning, Impact Evaluation, and Management

Course Objectives:

- Developing understanding about the sustainability issues in the different corporate settings.
- Preparing for contextual integration of sustainability in specific business functions and processes.
- Building leadership competencies, required to drive the sustainability in the organisations across different contexts.
- Enhancing managerial and leadership capacity through formalised training in sustainability related initiatives with focus on holistic considerations.

## Ethics, Compliance and Code of Conduct

Contents: Ethics and Compliance in International Business; Ethical dilemmas in different business settings; Ethical failures in organisations; Ethical Decision-Making Frameworks; Effective code of conduct in businesses; Managing risk of ethical failures; Ethics compliance standards; Guidelines for ethical reporting in multinational corporations; International agencies and global corporate ethics eco system; Ethics reporting and global best practices

Course Objectives:

- Providing understanding of the core principles of ethics and compliance in international business.
- Training in application of ethical decision-making frameworks to real-world business scenarios.
- Developing ability to develop the ethical code of conduct across different business settings.
- Preparing for effective ethics reporting as per global compliance and reporting standards.

## **Project Management**

Contents: Introduction to key Project Management concepts, methodologies and frameworks; Agile and Hybrid Project Management Approaches; Project Selection and Portfolio Management; Organisational Context, Leadership and the Project Manager; Scope Management; Risk Management; Cost Estimation and Budgeting; Project Scheduling: Networks, Duration Estimation, and Critical Path; Advanced Topics in Planning and Scheduling and Resource Management; Project Evaluation, Control, Closeout and Termination; AI in project management

Course Objectives:

- Providing comprehensive understanding of key project management principles, methodologies, and frameworks.
- Developing abilities to apply project management tools and techniques to solve challenges in project execution using analytical thinking.
- Enhancing abilities to effectively use industry-standard tools and techniques for project planning, execution, and evaluation.
- Strengthening leadership capabilities and foster effective team collaboration and communication in managing projects.

To meet the requirements of a dynamic job market, the courses (as well as the degree programmes at Gisma) are supposed to be reviewed bi-annually or after each delivery block takes place, taking into account student feedback and impressions of the lecturer delivering the module. These impressions are collected by the module leader and form the basis for the annual monitoring report. These reviews are coordinated by the respective module leaders (see chapter 4.1). Student feedback is gathered via surveys which are conducted before the course finishes. The results are then analysed by quality management and academic management.

## **Regulations for participation and assessment**

Gisma has established framework admission, examination and study regulations<sup>15</sup> under which the courses are included. The regulations include guidelines on academic misconduct and plagiarism, as well as a process that ensures the student has an opportunity to respond to any allegations before a final decision is taken during the Examination Board. AI detection is monitored by Turnitin, which

---

<sup>15</sup> *Appendix: A 6 Executive Education Courses, Rahmenezulassungs, Studien, Pruefungsordnung*

is integrated into Canvas (see chapter 4.4), with each case being verified by the lecturer to avoid false positives.

Compensation for students with impairments due to a permanent or temporary disability or chronic illness is regulated in the study regulations. Students can agree with the University on the effort and duration of their studies on an individual basis if personal circumstances require it. The University provides advice and makes appropriate agreements to support.

### Types of Assessment

Besides participation in all the classroom sessions as well as in the examination, the final assessments for the courses consist of a test that is conducted face to face on campus, or online for online learners. As with standard written examinations, as advised by the Gisma Study Regulations, all examinations are proctored either via proctoring staff or integrated proctoring tools. To be eligible to sit for the end-of-course examination, students must complete the required assignment. Although this assignment does not carry any marks, its completion is a mandatory prerequisite for appearing in the examination.

### Appraisal

Each course consists of one module<sup>16</sup> and assigns credits on the basis of the necessary learners' workload. The course structure allows for finishing the course within the projected study time. The course descriptions provide detailed descriptions of intended learning outcomes and most of the information defined in the ECTS Users' Guide.

However, in the panel's opinion, some of the information in the course description needs amendment: For the "final assessment method and attendance" no information is given about the time frame of the final test and the weighting of the grading of the two factors "attendance" and "test". The panel therefore recommends the following condition:

- The institution provides course (module) descriptions that contain all the information defined in the ECTS Users' Guide.

The course's structural elements are convincingly described and activated. The course structure serves to promote the objectives and the learner's acquisition of knowledge and competences in line with the given objectives.

A certificate supplement (or "credential") documents the course and the associated qualifications in a transparent and coherent manner (analogously to the Diploma Supplement for degree programmes). It contains information on the full name of the learner, the title of the credential, the country of the issuer, the awarding body, the date of issuing, the learning outcomes, the workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes (in ECTS credits), the EQF-level of the learning experience leading to the certificate, the type of assessment required to obtain the certificate and the mode of study.

The curriculum adequately reflects the qualification objectives of the course. The contents of the modules are well-balanced, valid, up to date, logically connected (insofar as the course consists of multiple-related modules).

---

<sup>16</sup> [See ECTS Users' Guide, Chapter 3.4](#)

There are legally binding regulations for participation and assessment. Contractual regulations clearly define the conditions how to conduct the course successfully and receive the certificate. The institution has established plagiarism rules and regulations regarding the conduct of assessments including the use of AI. However, the discussions with course management, teachers and students revealed different assumptions with regard to the integration of AI in teaching and learning: Some perceive AI application as being strictly forbidden, some instructors seem to allow the application of AI, some do not. Therefore, as regulations do not seem to be clear, the panel **recommends** rethinking AI regulations and ensuring a coherent policy for the courses for AI integration in teaching and learning.

The University ensures the identity of the examinees by appropriate measures. Learners are given transparent information about these regulations.

The final assessments of each of the courses are suited in format and content to ascertain the intended learning outcomes. The requirements are in accordance with the intended qualification level (EQF, see chapter 1.1) and follow the course's characteristic structural features. Nevertheless, in the panel's opinion, different assessment formats than written tests may be better suited to assess the learning outcomes<sup>17</sup>. The panel therefore **recommends** considering alternative assessment formats to ascertain the respective learning outcomes.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Implementation</b>					
3.1	Structure and content					
3.1.1*	Structure of the course, application of the „European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)“and modularisation				Condition	
3.1.2*	Certificate and Certificate Supplement			X		
3.1.3*	Logic and conceptual coherence of the curriculum			X		
3.1.4*	Regulations for participation and assessment			X		
3.1.5*	Types of assessment			X		

<sup>17</sup> e.g. Reflective Essay or Learning Journal (self-report), Case Study Analysis, Presentation & Peer Review (Character development); Strategy Report (ESG strategy), Case Study, Simulation of sustainability dilemmas (Corporate Sustainability and Leadership), Ethical Case Analysis, Design of Code of Conduct/Compliance Policy (draft), Ethical Debate; case study, own practice appliance (Ethics, Compliance and Code of Conduct); Project plan/dossier, Simulation/project case (Project Management)

## 3.2 Training of Competences and Skills

### Methodological competence

The learning outcomes of the courses include the acquisition of methodological competences<sup>18</sup>. Students are supposed to develop a strong understanding of fundamentals and theories and gain the ability to critically analyse and interpret these. They learn to evaluate and apply relevant frameworks to real-world challenges. Students are always informed to avoid usage of generative AI when conducting their assignments, unless specifically requested to do so by the instructor.

The acquisition of methodological competence is a core pedagogical objective across all courses and is explicitly embedded in the learning outcomes of each module, in alignment with EQF Level 6 descriptors. These competencies include:

- Analytical and critical thinking,
- Problem-solving based on scientific methods,
- Evaluation and application of tools and models,
- Competence in selecting and applying methods appropriate to context (e.g., data analysis, research design, programming paradigms).

This ensures that learners not only acquire subject-specific knowledge but also develop transversal cognitive and methodological skills that support independent judgment, reflective learning, and innovation.

Overall, learners are expected to manage complex technical or professional activities and take responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts, equivalent to expectations for EQF Level 6.

The curriculum integrates current scientific and technical knowledge through research-informed teaching (RiT) strategies. Key indicators include:

- Use of up-to-date publications,
- Lecturer engagement in research and industry projects that are fed back into the course,
- Inclusion of case studies, including from recent white papers and EU-funded projects,
- AI tools (e.g., Elicit, Semantic Scholar, ChatGPT) used to support literature reviews and hypothesis testing.

### Integration of theory and practice

As a general approach, and also for the courses, Gisma encourages the integration of research and practice with teaching and learning, as well as applied research and experimental development. An important aspect of this approach is involving students in research projects through collaborations. Integrating research into teaching enriches the transfer of scientific knowledge and enhances the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning at Gisma are characterised by a strong practical focus, which is of high relevance to the courses, as their target group is practitioners.

---

<sup>18</sup> see *Appendix A3 Module Descriptors*

## Interdisciplinary skills/Transdisciplinary skills

According to Gisma<sup>19</sup>, each of the courses allows learners to acquire interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary qualifications upon the completion of the course. These can be found in the Module Descriptors, and are also outlined as follows:

### Character Development

This course draws upon psychology, ethics, leadership theory, and organisational behaviour to foster holistic leader growth. The course merges behavioural science and moral philosophy with human resource management practices, allowing students to understand how character influences leadership effectiveness. It also explores cultural and societal factors, emphasising interdisciplinary methods for embedding character values into organisational policies and leadership training initiatives.

### Corporate Sustainability and Leadership

This course is inherently interdisciplinary, combining environmental science, social governance, business strategy, and leadership studies. It integrates insights from sustainability science, ethics, economics, and organisational management to address complex global challenges. Students engage with cross-sector concepts such as circular economy principles, environmental policy frameworks, and sustainable innovation strategies, blending technical knowledge with ethical leadership and change-management practices.

### Ethics, Compliance and Code of Conduct

This course combines elements from law, business ethics, sociology, and international governance to provide a multifaceted understanding of ethical compliance in organisations. Students learn how legal frameworks, corporate governance structures, and moral reasoning intersect in developing and enforcing codes of conduct. Real-world case studies link principles of philosophy, regulatory policy, and risk management, enabling students to design ethical programmes that are both culturally sensitive and globally compliant.

### Project Management

The course integrates knowledge from management science, engineering, technology, psychology, and communication studies. The course teaches structured methodologies like Agile and hybrid approaches while also drawing on data analytics, leadership theory, and behavioural economics. Students learn to navigate technical, human, and organisational factors, applying interdisciplinary problem-solving and digital tools (including AI) to effectively plan, execute, and lead projects in diverse industries.

## International and Intercultural contents

All courses include international components, for example in the learning outcomes and required reading lists. Further case studies of international relevance are used. The courses were designed **with this aspect in mind as Gisma's vision and mission also take this aspect into account**. Gisma University of Applied Sciences positions itself as a private, internationally oriented university that

---

<sup>19</sup> See self-report, page 21 pp.

occupies a unique niche, supported by its existing network of global organisations from industry and academia. With its focus, Gisma plays an important role in supporting companies in their internationalisation and transformation processes by equipping both German and international students for careers in the global and regional (German) economic landscape.

Selection criteria for lecturers further include international professional experience and/or an international focus in one's own research. All courses are taught in English and include an international perspective, for example, in case studies and the lists of required reading. Employees and students at Gisma have an international background. In fact, over 90% of students enrolled at Gisma come from abroad. Therefore, Gisma focuses on providing its students with an international qualification.

On a course-by-course basis, the aspects of each course are as follows:

### **Character Development**

International and intercultural aspects are woven throughout the course by examining how leadership character manifests differently across cultural contexts. Learners explore research on global leadership models, such as the contrast between collectivist leadership styles in Asia and individualist approaches in Western economies, drawing on studies like Mazutis & Seijts (2014). The course also addresses Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) by analysing how cultural norms shape perceptions of integrity, accountability, and decision-making in multinational organisations. Case studies include Scandinavian flat hierarchies versus Middle Eastern top-down leadership structures, helping students assess the universality or cultural specificity of character traits. The course is taught in English to a diverse cohort, with group exercises simulating cross-cultural team dynamics, such as giving feedback in high-context versus low-context cultures. By the end, learners gain the ability to design character development programmes that respect cultural nuances while maintaining organisational ethical standards.

### **Corporate Sustainability and Leadership**

This course emphasises global sustainability challenges by contrasting regional ESG regulations, **such as the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) versus the U.S. SEC's climate disclosure rules.** Learners evaluate how cultural and economic factors influence sustainability adoption, for example, resistance to decarbonisation in fossil-fuel-dependent economies versus **Scandinavia's green energy transition. Case studies from companies like Patagonia and Unilever** illustrate how sustainability strategies must adapt to local contexts while maintaining global standards. The course is delivered in English, with assignments requiring alignment with international reporting frameworks like GRI or SASB<sup>20</sup>.

**Debates on topics such as the "just transition" encourage learners to weigh environmental goals** against socioeconomic realities in different regions. Graduates gain the skills to lead sustainability initiatives that are both globally principled and locally viable.

### **Ethics, Compliance and Code of Conduct**

This course embeds international perspectives by comparing regional compliance frameworks, **such as the EU's stringent GDPR versus the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) and examining** how cultural attitudes toward corruption influence corporate policies. Real-world case studies, like the

---

<sup>20</sup> **Global Reporting Initiative (GRI, [GRI - Home](#)); Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB)**

**Volkswagen emissions scandal and Siemens' bribery case, highlight how ethical failures often stem** from mismanaged cross-cultural pressures. The curriculum also covers global reporting standards and the role of international agencies, such as the UN Global Compact, in shaping corporate ethics. Delivered in English to a multicultural audience, the course includes role-playing exercises where learners negotiate ethical dilemmas in different business environments - for instance, balancing gift-giving traditions in some cultures with strict anti-bribery policies. Graduates leave equipped to draft compliance policies that are both globally consistent and locally adaptable.

### **Project Management**

International and intercultural considerations are integrated into this course through case studies of **cross-border projects, such as IKEA's hybrid Agile-Waterfall** implementations in Asia and Europe. Learners analyse how cultural differences affect project execution, including communication styles, risk tolerance, and decision-making hierarchies. The unit on AI in project management explores how digital tools can bridge language and time-zone barriers in global teams. The course is taught in English with collaborative assignments that simulate virtual international teams, requiring tools like Trello or Jira for asynchronous coordination. By engaging with these scenarios, students develop the ability to manage projects that span multiple cultures while adhering to methodologies like PMI and PRINCE2.

### **Employability/Acquisition of future and/or soft skills**

The specific aim of the courses is to help learners acquire knowledge and skills in relation to the topics offered, which have all been confirmed by market research and academic input to be aligned with the changing needs of the current and future job market (see chapter 1.2). The programmes aim to enhance existing skills of learners and increase their employability in general and potential for further career growth. The courses offered either aim to address gaps in terms of knowledge generally offered within a university or workplace setting, or provide skills that are in growing demand and are projected to have a more pivotal role in companies in the next five to ten years, for example:

Proficiency in AI-enhanced project scheduling and risk assessment tools

- Ability to manage hybrid and cross-cultural teams using industry-standard methodologies (e.g., Agile, Critical Path)
- Skills to navigate intercultural compliance dilemmas (e.g., bribery norms in emerging markets)
- Ability to develop audit-proof reporting processes for multinational corporations
- Skills to embed ethical leadership into HR policies and talent development programmes
- Strategic ESG integration into core business functions (e.g., supply chains, operations)
- Proficiency in sustainability reporting standards (e.g., GRI, SASB)

## Professional ethics and/or societal issues

Among other content, students are made aware of their social responsibilities. They are encouraged to reflect on the need to justify corporate decisions and management actions to various stakeholders.

Students will be equipped with an interdisciplinary foundation and digital competencies to enable them to identify problems and develop innovative solutions for societal problems. In the courses, a focus is put on the evolution of AI and its ethical aspects.

## Appraisal

The acquisition of methodological competences on the intended level of the European Qualifications Framework is ensured. It is set down as a learning objective in the module descriptions.

Theory and practice are systematically interrelated throughout the curriculum, thereby promoting **the learners' ability to transfer theoretical knowledge to solve problems in practice**. Knowledge delivery and practical contributions by teaching staff, guest lecturers and learners complement each other to develop competences. The panel acknowledges that the teaching staff has appropriate practical background (see also chapter 4.1). The panel **recommends** increasing the number of contact hours in the curriculum to ensure the learners acquire the necessary theoretical foundation to achieve the learning outcomes.

Due to the limited scope and duration of the courses, the panel team assesses the criteria **“Interdisciplinary skills/Transdisciplinary skills”** and **“International and intercultural contents”** as not applicable.

Employability in the respective occupational field is basically promoted in accordance with the qualification objectives (see chapter 1.1) and the defined learning outcomes. However, with reference to the condition in chapter 2, the panel **recommends** reviewing and - if necessary – adjusting course content in terms of employability after clarifying the focus on the target groups.

Ethical implications and current societal issues are appropriately integrated in the courses **“Character Development”**, **“Corporate Sustainability and Leadership”** and **“Ethics, Compliance and Code of Conduct”**. For the course **“Project Management”** with the limited scope of 2.5. ECTS credits the panel team assesses the criterion as not applicable.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Implementation</b>					
3.2	Training of Competences and Skills					
3.2.1	Methodological competence and academic work (academic work if applicable)			X		
3.2.2	Integration of theory and practice			X		
3.2.3	Interdisciplinary skills/Transdisciplinary skills (if applicable)					X

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality re-quirements	n.r.
3.2.4	International and intercultural contents (if applicable)				X
3.2.5*	Employability/Acquisition of future and/or soft skills				X
3.2.6	Professional ethics and/or societal issues				X (CD) (CSL) (ECCC)  (PM)

### 3.3 Teaching and Learning Methodology

Gisma offers blended learning to enable demand-oriented, flexible, and international study. Students engage with face-to-face teaching in the physical and virtual classroom and learning also includes structured asynchronous learning activities (e.g., readings, case studies, assignments).

The following teaching and learning methods support the overall learning experience, among others:

- Process-oriented learning: Students immerse themselves in a topic, learning to explore different perspectives and viewpoints. They develop their own positions, enhance their critical thinking through case study discussions and explore different approaches to thinking.
- Project-based learning: Students acquire deeper knowledge by actively engaging with real-world challenges and problems.
- Inquiry-based learning: Students are guided by key questions to discover facts and relationships independently.
- Collaborative learning: Students learn together in groups of four to six and in cohorts of the entire class. This approach is used, for example, when students are searching for solutions or developing business models.

Teaching methods in use are lectures and discussions, case studies and simulations, group tasks and workshop activities, technology enabled learning as well as projects.

Each module comprises six pedagogical elements, which are made available to students on Canvas (see chapter 4.4). Each teaching sequence begins with a short text featuring a practical example that illustrates the relevance of the topic or session. This text links to the required reading on Perlego and an article on EBSCO, as well as providing references to further literature. Students can access the materials required for synchronous instruction (lecture directories). The recorded session is then published as a video for review. A media library contains supplementary video and/or audio material for each learning unit. Flashcards containing key terms and essential questions are available as narrated PowerPoint presentations. The hands-on lab includes various practical exercises, such as case studies, projects, group work and research assignments. Each

learning unit concludes with knowledge tests in the form of quizzes, as well as a summary of 'What you should take away from this session' in the form of a short text or video podcast.

All teaching material is or will be designed to support both structured instruction and independent study. Course materials are created by subject matter experts and instructional designers in accordance with internal curriculum development guidelines, which emphasise:

- Constructive alignment with module learning outcomes
- Integration of active learning elements
- Use of contemporary academic and industry sources

All materials are reviewed quarterly for up-to-dateness and relevance, particularly in the context of proliferation of AI usage in Business, Leadership and Project Management. A comprehensive annual review is conducted as part of the Annual Monitoring Report process, where feedback from learners, faculty, and industry partners is evaluated to ensure the content remains aligned with the current state of knowledge and labour market demand. For courses delivered online or in blended format, learning is supported through a range of digital assets hosted on the learning management system (LMS), including:

- Welcome and orientation videos introducing course goals, structure, and digital navigation
- Self-check quizzes with automated feedback to reinforce core concepts
- Discussion forums and peer-collaboration tasks to encourage reflective and intercultural dialogue
- Digital glossaries, interactive concept maps, and infographics for visual learners

A reading list is part of the module descriptors. All required literature is available via links in Canvas.

## Appraisal

**The theoretical background of the lecturers and the institution's and lecturers' experience in its practical application ensures that the methodical-didactical design of the course is plausible and oriented towards the course-specific learning objectives, towards the target group, and the teaching and learning format. A mix of different teaching and learning methods is applied. Proof of science-based teaching within the course has been provided. Learners are encouraged to take an active role in the learning process (e.g. through group work, peer-to-peer learning).**

During the assessment conference students from degree courses deliberated that when participating online in teaching sessions, they did not always feel sufficiently integrated. To ensure integration of online students in hybrid teaching sessions, the panel therefore **recommends** applying interactive teaching methods specifically designed for hybrid environments, for instance integrating discussions, group work or, as suggested by the students, more gamification elements.

At the time of the assessment, course and learning materials were not fully developed yet. The panel had the opportunity to see samples. The samples of course and learning materials are oriented towards the intended learning outcomes and correspond to the required qualification level. They are up to date and easily accessible for the learners. Course materials are user-friendly and

appropriately encourage learners to engage in further independent studies. General standards for materials lead the teaching staff and support the lecture quality. Access to literature and digital media is available online and offline. During the assessment conference students from degree programmes highlighted that materials are very specifically tailored to the respective modules. On the other hand, students of the degree programmes indicated that case studies are outdated. The panel also tracked outdated examples in the material provided<sup>21</sup> for the professional certificates. Therefore, the panel **recommends** updating case studies in the learning material.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Implementation</b>					
3.3	Teaching and Learning Methodology					
3.3.1*	Logic and transparency of teaching and learning methodology			X		
3.3.2*	Course materials, required and recommended literature			X		

<sup>21</sup> The assessment was based on the provided online course materials. Eg. “Innovation Management & Digital Transformation” could update examples resp. cases. In terms of digital transformation more recent sources could be added, e.g.:

- [A Synthetic Review on Enterprise Digital Transformation: A Bibliometric Analysis](#)
- [Digital transformation in business and management research: An overview of the current status quo - ScienceDirect](#)
- [Digital Transformation: A Bibliometric Analysis | IGI Global Scientific Publishing](#)
- [Digital transformation: a review, synthesis and opportunities for future research | Management Review Quarterly](#)
- [Sustainable Management of Digital Transformation in Higher Education: Global Research Trends](#)
- [Digital Transformation in SMEs: A Bibliometric Analysis | Journal of Information Systems Engineering and Management](#)
- [Discovering Themes and Trends in Digital Transformation and Innovation Research](#)
- [Mobilising new frontiers in digital transformation research: A problematization review - Ashrafi - 2025 - Information Systems Journal - Wiley Online Library](#)

## 4 RESOURCES AND SERVICES

### 4.1 Teaching staff of the course

In terms of academic structure, each course will have a module leader and additional lecturer(s) teaching the courses. One of the lecturers can also be the module leader. Initially, only full-time professorial staff at Gisma would be lecturers and module leaders for each course, as they possess the necessary expertise and competencies. In case of rising demand for teaching resources, Gisma plans to deploy further teaching staff, which may include full-time professors, lecturers or part-time lecturers.

The academic qualifications of teaching staff reflect the Gisma University of Applied Sciences Appointment Regulations, which are in turn aligned with the Brandenburg Higher Education Law. Full-time professors will have a relevant professorship denomination, a PhD with a high achievement level and notable research publications. In proof of relevant professional or artistic experience, including at least three years' experience, of which at least two years must have been spent outside the higher education sector. In addition, it is a requirement for professors to have significant achievements in their denomination area. The criteria are all insured by the appointment procedure and approved by the Brandenburg Ministry of Science, Research, and Culture.

Appointed professors are required to have several years of practical experience.

**In line with Gisma's identity as a University of Applied Sciences, teaching staff seamlessly integrate** applied research, professional projects, and high-profile affiliations into their instruction. This approach ensures that current scientific findings and theoretical knowledge are incorporated into course content, resulting in teaching that is both evidence-based and research-informed. Programme design reflects this ethos, embedding the latest academic insights into the structure **and delivery of each course. For example, in Gisma's full-time data science modules,** students engage with state-of-the-art techniques in data cleaning and preprocessing - often based on recent publications by their own professors. Similarly, developments in areas such as natural language processing and deep learning are directly integrated into the curriculum, providing students with timely exposure to emerging technologies.

For part-time lecturers, in addition to a relevant qualification to teach the course, they will be expected to have industry knowledge and be practitioners, to be able to offer the latest insights while delivering the content.

For training of faculty members an Induction Framework has been designed to engage staff in a creative and rewarding learning community as early as possible for the benefit of students, staff, and other stakeholders. It outlines various induction components including department induction, organisational induction, teaching related induction, and assigns clear responsibilities for the provision of necessary information to enable new or adjunct employees to be quickly and effectively integrated into their new role. Access to the faculty handbook and a range of activities available through the Induction Framework aim to assist new faculty members to:

- Become accustomed to Gisma and their local workplace,
- Understand Gisma and its strategic direction,
- Know Gisma values and how these translate to behaviours in the workplace,
- Understand their role and responsibilities within the organisation,

- Establish networks with colleagues across Gisma and the GUS network,
- Successfully complete their probationary period.

Staff development at Gisma is a strategic process aimed at supporting the professional growth, engagement, and retention of all staff members. It encompasses a wide range of learning opportunities and activities designed to enhance individual and institutional performance in **alignment with Gisma's mission and strategic goals**. While staff development often involves participation in formal courses, it also includes online learning modules, project-based learning and guided experimentation, attendance at conferences and exhibitions, coaching and mentoring, and any other structured activity that promotes reflection, knowledge acquisition, skills enhancement, and professional confidence.

At Gisma, staff development activities are defined as any learning experience that:

- Enhances the ability of individuals, teams, and the institution to effectively deliver on **Gisma's mission and strategic priorities**,
- Equips staff to perform their current and future roles, while building capacity to adapt to change,
- Supports the assurance and continuous improvement of teaching, learning, research, and the services that underpin them.

Staff development is firmly linked to institutional objectives and is viewed as an essential component of job performance and career growth. Planning for staff development is informed by annual performance appraisals, programme monitoring reports, student and peer feedback, institutional priorities and change management needs. This ensures that development initiatives are purpose-driven, responsive to needs, and integrated into the broader quality assurance and enhancement framework.

Gisma also recognises the value of team development in fostering collaboration and institutional culture. Regular team-building workshops are held for both academic and administrative staff, with the aim of strengthening communication, alignment, and cross- functional cooperation. These workshops are typically conducted annually and are led by professional facilitators to ensure a high-quality, structured experience.

In addition to structured staff development programmes, targeted personnel development and qualification training are provided to individual staff members based on identified needs and professional goals. These initiatives are designed to support both personal and institutional growth and may include:

- Participation in specialist seminars and workshops across key operational and academic areas, such as:
  - Teaching and learning methodologies
  - Marketing and communications
  - Quality assurance and accreditation
  - Programme and curriculum management

- Individual coaching sessions tailored to professional development objectives
- Group workshops aimed at enhancing team effectiveness, leadership, or specific functional competencies

At Gisma, all faculty – including full-time, visiting, and practitioner lecturers – undergo a comprehensive onboarding process that introduces them to the **University’s** quality assurance systems, teaching and learning strategies, and blended learning approach. Onboarding is delivered through both individual and group sessions, helping foster early engagement and collegial collaboration among faculty.

Following onboarding, faculty receive ongoing support from the Registry Department, which provides: Guidance on the application of academic policies, regulations, and procedures, administrative and operational assistance throughout the teaching cycle, and integration support to ensure faculty are fully connected to institutional structures and teams.

Regular faculty meetings, currently held at least once a month in a virtual format, are chaired by the President and serve as platforms for updates, academic coordination, and exchange. These sessions also include contributions from Quality Management and Blended Learning Coordination Teams.

**Gisma’s Online Didactics and Innovation Representative supports** faculty with course and lesson design. This includes one-on-one consultation and shadowing opportunities, internal and external workshops focused on digital pedagogy and lesson planning, as well as participation in teaching development meetings to share innovative practices and refine teaching strategies.

Faculty teaching the Professional Certificates are actively encouraged and supported in experimenting with innovative pedagogical approaches, assessment methods, and student engagement strategies. Key practices include:

- **Collaborative Support from Academic Units: Administrative and academic support teams’** partner with faculty to relieve non-core academic tasks – such as developing learning outcomes maps or building simulations – enabling faculty to focus on content and delivery.
- **Spaces for Innovation and Experimentation:** Dedicated, low-risk environments have been created where faculty can pilot new teaching methods, digital tools, and learning activities. These act as test beds for scalable innovation.
- **Incentivising Innovation:** Faculty innovators receive targeted support from instructional designers, educational technologists, and assessment specialists. Successful initiatives are showcased during innovation expos and workshops, which are regular features in faculty development meetings.
- **Building an Innovation Community:** Cross-functional conversations involving faculty, staff, and students are actively promoted to foster a culture of innovation. Topics include curriculum design, online learning, digital assessment, and the future of pedagogy.

Gisma has implemented a comprehensive approach to fostering collegiality and integration across its entire faculty body - including full-time, visiting, and adjunct faculty. Faculty integration is closely aligned with the outcomes of **Gisma’s** quality assurance cycle, drawing on key inputs such

as Annual Monitoring Reports and student feedback collected through Student-Staff Liaison Meetings.

To promote effective collaboration and alignment within the teaching team, Gisma has put the following mechanisms in place:

1. Interview and Appointment Process: The integration process begins at the recruitment stage, where interviews are structured not only to assess academic and professional qualifications but also to evaluate the **candidate's alignment with the Institution's** pedagogical ethos and collaborative culture.
2. Alignment Meetings: Newly appointed faculty – core or visiting – are invited to meet with the Departmental Head and relevant module leaders. These meetings ensure that the new faculty member understands the programme structure, pedagogical approaches, and quality expectations, enabling alignment of teaching content, delivery style, and assessment practices.
3. Faculty Handbook: All faculty are provided with a comprehensive faculty handbook that outlines the **Institution's** policies, teaching frameworks, assessment protocols, and academic integrity guidelines. This serves as an essential resource for ensuring consistent delivery across modules.
4. Regular Meetings: Weekly faculty and departmental meetings are held to discuss pedagogical developments, student feedback, curriculum coordination, and any emerging issues. These foster an ongoing culture of collaboration and continuous improvement.
5. Quarterly Townhall Events: To ensure inclusive communication and a shared institutional vision, quarterly townhall events are organised. These sessions bring together faculty, staff, and leadership for open dialogue on strategic updates, policy changes, and shared challenges.

All faculty involved in teaching in the courses are invited to participate in planning meetings held prior to each academic quarter. These sessions are designed to ensure alignment across modules in terms of learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment strategies. During these meetings, module guidelines and assessment/reassessment briefs are reviewed and finalised, incorporating feedback from the most recent Examination Board.

To support the interdisciplinary structure, module leaders work collaboratively to ensure effective cross-module integration and a coherent progression of learning throughout the learner journey.

The Executive Education Course Director (see chapter 4.2) plays an active role in monitoring module performance, student feedback, and assessment consistency. Faculty members are expected to engage with these reviews and contribute constructively to ongoing enhancement efforts. Between formal quarterly reviews, course progress is monitored continuously through weekly departmental meetings, ad-hoc discussions, and ultimately summarised in the Annual Programme Monitoring Report, forming a critical component of the **University's quality assurance** cycle.

Academic support will be granted similar to the established procedures of the degree programmes, with teaching staff available for feedback during in-class hours and via Canvas contact during self-study hours.

## Appraisal

The qualification structure, tasks and number of teaching staff correspond with the requirements of the course. The institution has non-discriminatory regulations/processes in place for the selection of new teaching staff. However, the panel would like to point out that in the beginning each course is assigned to one teacher. The panel therefore **recommends** developing an emergency scenario in case the teacher is unable to attend.

The academic, pedagogical and professional qualifications of the teaching staff correspond to the requirements and objectives of the course. The teaching staff is able to cater to the needs of the target group. As far as the pedagogical qualifications are concerned, the panel would like to point out that the teaching and learning format with a low proportion of synchronous courses is quite new for the institution and therefore **recommends** continuous training of the staff involved in these courses, including part-time lecturers, with respect to the **specific courses'** teaching and learning format.

On the basis of the collaboration procedures established for the current degree programmes, the institution plans to apply the processes for the courses under review. Thus, it will be systematically ensured that teaching staff cooperate internally for the purpose of tuning the components of the course towards the overall qualification objectives. Meetings of all those teaching in the course take place regularly at appropriate intervals.

Support of the learners is an integral part of the services provided by the teaching staff. It serves to help learners study successfully. Support of the learners is offered on a regular basis which is transparently communicated to the learners. During the assessment conferences current students of the institution explained that they prefer face-to-face teaching as feedback during face-to-face teaching was quick and satisfactory, whereas it was somewhat more difficult to receive feedback online. The panel therefore **recommends** ensures timely academic feedback during self-study times (see also chapter 3.3).

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Resources and Services</b>					
4.1	Teaching Staff of the course					
4.1.1*	Structure and quantity of teaching staff			X		
4.1.2*	Academic qualification of teaching staff			X		
4.1.3*	Pedagogical qualification of teaching staff			X		
4.1.4	Professional experience of teaching staff			X		
4.1.5	Internal cooperation			X		
4.1.6*	<b>Learners' support by teaching staff</b>			X		

## 4.2 Course Management and overall organisation

At Gisma, an Executive Education Department is being formed to specialise in Professional Certificates. It is led by an appointed Departmental Head, who serves as the academic and operational lead for the courses.

The Departmental Head is responsible for the conception, planning, organisation, and quality assurance of the professional courses. In close collaboration with the Presidium and the Quality Management Department, the Departmental Head defines the academic and operational standards of the courses.

Key Responsibilities of the Departmental Head:

- Coordinating with module leaders to design and continuously develop the curriculum,
- Preparing documentation for programme accreditation and re-accreditation, together with the Quality Management Department,
- Overseeing the organisation of teaching and examinations, in coordination with the Examination Committee and the Registry Department,
- Coordinating the evaluation of courses in collaboration with the Quality Management Department,
- Providing guidance and academic advising to students.

The Departmental Head plays a central role in the selection and onboarding of lecturers, ensuring that teaching staff are aligned with the **courses'** learning objectives, curricular structure, and institutional standards. In addition, the Departmental Head actively monitors and analyses a broad range of data, including student evaluations, faculty and industry feedback, market trends, and application figures. This information is used for the annual programme review and to guide ongoing improvements in the programmes' **content**, delivery, and relevance.

The development and implementation of the programmes have been supported by the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Quality Management Team, and other faculty members. Regular communication, shared responsibility, and mutual support are seen as central to the broader development of Gisma as a university<sup>22</sup>.

The Departmental Head is supported by an administrative framework, with particular assistance from the Registry Office, which plays a key role in ensuring the smooth operation of the programme.

Gisma offers a broad range of services through departments like Programme Consultants, Admissions, Student Support, the Registry Office, Career Centre, Quality Management, Library, and IT Services. Operational functions such as finance, HR, marketing, and campus management are handled through shared services within the GUS group, ensuring efficient, solution-oriented support.

The Registry Office manages all formal academic administration, including:

---

<sup>22</sup> See self-report, page 30

- Enrolment and module registration,
- Examination scheduling and timetables,
- Student ID cards and official documents,
- Course material support and Canvas LMS guidance,
- Support for programme changes, interruptions, and complaints.

Students and faculty receive digital handbooks with vital information at the start of each programme. New lecturers are onboarded through meetings with Programme Directors and receive training on Canvas, exams, and administrative procedures.

Programme Consultants and the Admissions Office assist prospective and new students with:

- Programme options and application guidance,
- Visa and accommodation support,
- Admission testing, recognition of prior learning, and enrolment.

The Student Support Department helps students before and during their studies by offering:

- General support and campus orientation,
- Housing assistance and visa extensions,
- Advice on living and studying in Germany,
- Help with financial matters and work visa applications post-graduation.

The Career Centre connects students with the job market, offering job search guidance and fostering employer relationships to boost employability.

Quality Management, overseen by the President, ensures quality standards through:

- Development and monitoring of quality systems and accreditation,
- Programme development and evaluation,
- Oversight of University development projects and stakeholder involvement.

The Registry and the Student Support Departments serve as the first point of contact for students regarding programme-related queries or interpersonal issues, including conflicts within teams. Professional Certificate learners primarily interact with the Registry and Student Support teams via email, phone, Canvas, and the Student Portal. Depending on the nature of the issue, students may be supported by the Registry Officer, the Head of Student Support, or the Vice President of Academic Affairs, ensuring a responsive and empathetic resolution process.

A ticketing system ensures responses within 48 hours for queries and two business days for official documents. This has increased the effective response time of staff and has helped categorise queries into manageable workflows. The Gisma team has constantly sought feedback from students on this aspect in the format of Student Staff Liaison Meetings, given its growth in recent years, and it was acknowledged by student representatives that the wider student body finds the response times to be good, and staff readily available on all campuses or online for consultation.

All departments that students get in contact with operate with an open-door policy and are accessible via in-person visits, phone or video calls, and email. While there are no formal office

hours, staff are available throughout regular business hours to provide support and guidance. Recognising that some students may feel more comfortable approaching peers, class leadership is also expected to be available for informal support when needed. Using Microsoft Teams, both staff and students are connected to the same network, and are able to interact via instant messaging, and online calls, should there be no opportunity to have face-to-face consultation. Gisma University of Applied Sciences has followed this practice, drawing on the lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing provision for international students who are waiting on their visa to be granted to be able to start their studies online. In that regard, all teaching and administrative staff are trained and prepared to offer consultations in any format.

On campus, students have daily access to coffee and food via vending machines, ensuring refreshments are always available.

In addition to the personnel development described above<sup>23</sup> (which is not only available for teaching staff) and to support long-term career progression and academic engagement, Gisma offers scholarship opportunities for eligible employees to participate in degree programmes offered by the University, provided they meet the relevant admission requirements. This not only strengthens internal expertise but also deepens institutional knowledge and commitment.

Recognising the needs of its diverse workforce, Gisma also provides German language courses for international employees to support their integration, communication, and engagement within the University and broader community.

The documentation of the course is facilitated by the marketing department. The marketing department provides information in the following formats:

- Programme Page: A dedicated webpage as the primary source of programme information,
- Interactive Events: Webinars, online information sessions, and live Q&A events,
- **Local Visibility: Management of Gisma's Google Business Profile,**
- Visual and Downloadable Content: Updated brochures, factsheets, videos, and testimonials.

While there are no dedicated pages set up yet for the Professional Certificates described here, factsheets have been prepared<sup>24</sup>. How the courses would be advertised online will follow the format of the factsheets and can also be observed on the [www.gisma.com](http://www.gisma.com) website where **Gisma's** full-time programmes are advertised.

Since its inception, Gisma has championed internationality and cooperation, establishing itself **today as Germany's most international university, with 98.2% of its student body representing** over 90 countries. With courses delivered entirely in English by an internationally experienced faculty and staff, Gisma fosters a diverse, inclusive, and globally engaged academic environment. Internationalisation is systematically embedded not only through student and staff diversity but also through curriculum design, pedagogy, and learning activities. Global case studies, cross-

---

<sup>23</sup> See 4.1 (staff development planning and programmes, regular team-building workshops, targeted personnel development and qualification training)

<sup>24</sup> See appendix A 5 Programme Factsheets

cultural teamwork, and active student engagement ensure that graduates develop the competencies needed to lead effectively in international contexts.

**Gisma University of Applied Sciences' teaching and learning concept is based on the 'Principles of Teaching and Learning'** and the Internationalisation Strategy, which define the University's quality objectives and standards. Gisma promotes a learning organisation that focuses on lifelong learning. Knowledge transfer focuses on linking science and international professional practice. Teaching and learning focus on relevance, using thematic approaches, tailored methods, and the integration of diversity.

Students are encouraged to declare any disabilities or special needs during the application process. The University then evaluates what reasonable adjustments can be made in terms of facilities, resources, or support. Examination accommodation is clearly outlined in the Study and Examination Regulations and further detailed in the Programme Handbooks, ensuring transparency and accessibility for all students.

The Career Centre at Gisma University of Applied Sciences offers students and alumni comprehensive support. Close partnerships enable access to guest lectures, company visits, exclusive networking events and joint consulting projects. A particular highlight is the Gisma Career Day, which gives students the opportunity to connect directly with employers regarding internships, jobs and permanent positions.

The Career Centre also offers career counselling and coaching, including individual coaching, workshops and training on topics such as applications, self-marketing, networking, negotiation, presentations and decision-making. Further students receive assistance in finding internships and job opportunities in Germany and worldwide. The Career Centre collaborates with the Handshake platform<sup>25</sup>, which provides access to a wide range of employers.

## Appraisal

The person in charge of the overall quality of the course (content, methodology and development) has clearly defined responsibilities. The qualifications and experience of the course management correspond with the requirements of the course.

Teaching staff and learners are supported by a sufficient number of administration staff that is clearly qualified to provide the described services. All processes described are implemented appropriately and the course can run smoothly. Decision-making processes, authority, and responsibilities are clearly defined. Teachers are included in the decision-making processes where their areas of expertise/activity are involved.

Main contact persons for the learners have been appointed. Learners are informed on all relevant matters in advance and in a comprehensive way. The information is distributed in an understandable and user-friendly manner. User-friendly access to administrative support and services is ensured. The reachability of service staff is clearly determined. Requests are dealt with in a timely manner. During the assessment conference students confirmed that this is not only valid for on-campus support, but also for online support.

---

<sup>25</sup> <https://joinhandshake.de/>

In periods requiring personal attendance, a contact person is available to help with enquiries and acute problems and questions. In the periods requiring personal attendance, it is ensured that learners have the possibility to provide themselves with foods/drinks.

The course title, issuer of the Certificate Supplement (see chapter 3.1.2), awarding body, qualification objectives, content, workload, type of assessment, and teaching and learning format have been suitably documented, published, and are easily accessible for the learner before enrolment. However, the panel would like to point out that the fact sheets used for marketing and **communication are to some extent not consistent to the module descriptions. The “How you will learn?” and the “What will you learn?” sections in the fact sheets differ from the learning and teaching methods and the course and learning objectives as described in the module descriptions.** The panel therefore strongly **recommends** aligning fact sheets and the intended online communication to the module descriptions.

**The panel would also like to point out that communication around the course “Character development” is especially misleading.** Apart from the **panel’s concern about the focus on the target group** (see condition chapter 2), the panel points out that the module description focuses on building leadership skills based on the knowledge on character development methods and issues. The current courses title and some information in the fact sheet suggest that the course is about the students’ character development. The panel therefore **recommends** considering renaming the course **“Character Development”** to better represent the contents and learning objectives of the course.

Furthermore, **the claim of the fact sheet “Become an expert in leadership”** to the panel is not feasible, given the short duration of the course. Hence, the panel **recommends** communicating realistic goals for the course.

The institution ensures inclusion and equality to cater to special needs of learners<sup>26</sup>. There is support for learners in special circumstances, such as impairments or disabilities, with children, foreign learners, economically or/and socially disadvantaged learners and/or learners from non-academic backgrounds. During the assessment conference, the institution provided examples how the institution inquires about a need for support and how support is provided case-by-case.

**Measures to create and maintain a professional network to facilitate the graduates’ career development** have been provided. The institution offers support in career counselling.

---

<sup>26</sup> e.g.: with learning/mobility/economic/social issues etc, and also those who are exceptionally able.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
<b>4. Resources and Services</b>					
4.2 Course Management and overall organisation					
4.2.1* Course management (content and methodology)			X		
4.2.2* Process organisation and administrative support for learners and teaching staff			X		
4.2.3* Information and transparency			X		
4.2.4 Inclusive and equitable education			X		
4.2.5 Networking and Career Counselling			X		

### 4.3 Cooperations

The initial concept of course design was advised by a fellow institution within GUS Germany, the Berlin School of Business and Innovation. Gisma University of Applied Sciences would act as the main facilitator of the courses. The cooperation agreement<sup>27</sup> of Gisma and the Berlin School of Business and Innovation also includes the right for both partners to distribute the courses.

There are discussions and plans to have internal cooperations with other **courses in Gisma's** portfolio, and in a less formal and binding format, collaborations with regional or international **HEI's (e.g. Berkeley and MIT) for content, case studies and joint research, connecting to these courses.**

Gisma maintains an ongoing exchange with industry partners and actively involves them in guest lectures as part of the quarterly Skills Sprint Weeks. A Skills Sprint Week is a week-long event during which the module coordinators invite guest speakers from various industries to the campus and organise visits and workshops at companies or political institutions in the metropolitan region. Each guest lecture, company visit, or workshop is part of an individual module but is open to all Gisma students.

At Gisma, collaboration with regional, national, and international businesses and organisations is an integral part of the institutional strategy and educational model. These partnerships take a variety of forms, including:

- Recruitment of industry professionals as lecturers to bring practical insights into the classroom,
- Participation in advisory committees and academic boards,
- Employment pathways for graduates through direct recruitment by partner companies.

Since its founding, Gisma has proactively cultivated strong ties with the business community – engaging with companies, industry associations, and professional networks to ensure that employer expectations and emerging workforce trends are reflected in the design and delivery of its degree programmes. Currently, this network is being actively expanded, with a particular focus on:

<sup>27</sup> See Appendix BSBI-GISMA IP transfer and license agreement

Deepening relationships with institutions and business leaders in the Berlin/Brandenburg region; building new supra-regional and international partnerships; and pursuing membership in leading regional, national, and global business associations. Gisma already collaborates with a number of prominent companies and organisations, including: Deloitte, PwC, EY, Delivery Hero, Wayfair, Crealytics, PlanA, Grover, SumUp, HomeToGo, Zalando, and Uniqlo, among others.

The University has also established partnerships with several prominent professional organisations operating in the region, including the SAP University Alliance and the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), Berlin Partner, and the Economic Development Agency Brandenburg (WFBB). These collaborations provide valuable opportunities for both students and academic staff to participate in a range of joint events and initiatives, while also enhancing the **quality and impact of Gisma’s Skills Sprint Week** collaborative activities.

**For the courses under review, Gisma’s** Corporate Advisory Board (CAB) as a consulting body will review the courses on a bi-annual basis (see also chapter 5).

### Appraisal

The scope and nature of cooperation with the Berlin School of Business and Innovation are plausibly presented. The cooperation is actively pursued and has a clear impact on the conception of the courses.

The cooperation contract does allow Berlin School of Business and Innovation (BSBI) to market the courses in their name and issue respective certificates. The panel would like to point out that communication in case of FIBAA certification must not evoke the impression that this certification has been awarded to BSBI. As the certification covers Gisma infrastructure, personnel, course management, and quality assurance, in all communication it has to be made clear that the certification was granted to Gisma.

**Gisma’s approach to cooperations with enterprises and other organisations** is not focused mainly on the benefit of specific programmes or courses, but eligible for the whole range of programmes (Corporate Advisory Board, Skills Sprint Week). The scope and nature of cooperation with enterprises or other professional organisations are plausibly presented. The cooperations are actively pursued and have a clear impact on the conception and implementation of the course.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Resources and Services</b>					
4.3	Cooperations with academic institutions or enterprises (asterisk criterion for cooperation courses)					
4.3.1(*)	Cooperations with academic institutions			X		
4.3.2(*)	Cooperation with enterprises or other professional organisations			X		

## 4.4 Facilities

Gisma currently has a total area of 2,500 m<sup>2</sup> available at the Potsdam campus including 13 classrooms and 1,176 m<sup>2</sup> at the Berlin campus, including 11 classrooms. A second campus in Berlin is set to open from September 2025. The main focus of the location would be Undergraduate and Professional Certificate learners, initially.

Classrooms are designed for traditional lectures and seminars and optimised for hybrid delivery with seamless integration between physical and virtual learning spaces. Continuous software updates and system developments are undertaken to improve the learning experience. Where changes affect students directly – such as during programme launches, assessment periods, or graduation – the IT and support teams work proactively to ensure extra support is available, maintaining a high standard of service during critical periods of demand. Free Wi-Fi is available to students throughout the premises.

Gisma uses the internationally well-established learning management system Canvas to support its blended learning approach. Canvas supports different teaching and learning methods as well as learning spaces, e.g., self-discovery, individual learning, and group learning. The student-centered solution is designed for collaborative and peer-to-peer learning and supports social learning interaction.

Students can participate in live synchronous lectures, either in person or virtually. Asynchronous learning phases also allow students to schedule their studies flexibly. These are supported by IT tools such as MS Teams (or Zoom) and the Canvas learning platform, which support different teaching and learning methods, learning spaces (e.g. self-directed, individual and group learning), collaborative learning and peer-to-peer interaction. The platform enables instructors and students to interact in various learning environments, post feedback and suggestions, and conduct and record live teaching sessions. Discussions can take place in breakout rooms or outside of class during group work, in either video or text format via chats or forums. Teaching and learning materials can be uploaded or linked. A dashboard keeps instructors and students informed about news, deadlines, mandatory and supplementary learning resources, and the grading system. Students can also use Canvas to view their transcripts and timetables, and to communicate with their study group or instructors.

The administrative processes at Gisma are supported by electronic services and functions. Canvas is also used to publish information relevant to the degree programme or the entire University. For example, a module schedule contains the module objectives and associated learning outcomes, which are assigned to the weekly or block-based learning activities and teaching methods, including references to relevant literature.

Faculty are carefully selected based on their ability to deliver instruction in a blended-learning format and are further supported through regular training sessions on blended learning principles and their application in teaching. In addition, a dedicated project coordinator provides continuous support to faculty members in the organisation and use of Canvas throughout the entire teaching and assessment cycle.

The University operates an in-house data analysis and management system that collects and stores student data at every stage of the study process. The system is fully integrated with both the learning management system and the student portal, ensuring that all relevant academic and administrative information is available in a centralised and secure environment. It is supported by

an in-house development team, which allows for continuous optimisation and adaptation to institutional needs. The system is highly customisable and can be tailored for each university within the group.

Beyond storing and displaying data on a large scale, the system synchronises student results from Canvas and automatically generates essential documents such as records of achievement, transcripts, and certificates. These are subsequently verified by the Registry Team and signed by the President and the Head of the Examination Board prior to graduation. The platform also provides the Examination Board with key analytical data, including pass/fail rates, average grades, and attendance records, thereby enabling evidence-based decision-making in examination procedures.

Furthermore, the system supports compliance with external requirements by producing statistical reports for submission to the statistics office and other relevant authorities. The ability to process large amounts of data efficiently, combined with real-time synchronisation and reporting functionality, ensures that the system provides a reliable foundation for learning analytics, quality assurance, and institutional governance.

All data is managed in strict compliance with data protection regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Access rights are role-based, ensuring that sensitive student information is only available to authorised users. Data is stored securely on protected servers, and the in-house development team monitors and updates the system continuously to maintain the highest standards of security and privacy. The most recent review of GDPR data compliance took place in February 2025.

All learning and teaching materials for the Professional Certificates are accessible 24/7 via the Canvas learning management system. Students also have unlimited online access to academic literature and resources through platforms such as EBSCO, allowing them to study at their own pace and according to their individual schedules. Administrative and professional support services are provided equally to all students, ensuring a consistent and inclusive learning environment.

Gisma employs resident IT staff who are available to support both students and faculty throughout the courses. The academic support team includes two staff members who specifically assist faculty and students in the day-to-day management of the Canvas LMS. In addition, Gisma benefits from group-wide shared services in IT, further strengthening its technical infrastructure and responsiveness.

## Appraisal

As the assessment conference took place online, the panel would like to point out that its assessment of the physical infrastructure is based on the feedback of current students. Based on this, **the quantity, quality and equipment of the facilities are sufficient to accommodate learners' and teachers' requirements. They include up-to-date media and IT facilities.** Barrier-free access is ensured. Aspects of cybersecurity are taken into account for the provision of infrastructure.

The teaching platform is clearly structured and designed to be user-friendly. It is stable and scalable and there are no disruptive impulses during use. It offers sufficient possibilities for embedding text, audio, images, graphics, animation, multimedia files and social media. The panel notes that the platform does not offer specific offers for hearing and visual impairment. With respect to the case-by-case dealing in terms of inclusive and equitable education (see chapter 4.2)

and the prospect of a growing number of students at Gisma, the panel suggests that a respective offering in the future could relieve the administrative effort of case-to-case dealing.

The institution enables and supports the implementation of digital teaching. Teachers have sufficient technical advisory and support services available.

The institution has a data analysis system and sufficient technology to process large amounts of data. The panel points out that it remains unclear whether the University is aware of the potential of the data and what the University will do with this data. The panel therefore suggests developing a data analysis concept.

Learners can reach the technical support of the institution via a range of channels. Questions regarding technical issues and the teaching platform are answered and solved in a timely manner. The institution ensures appropriate training for the learners to handle technologies and tools.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Resources and Services</b>					
4.4	Facilities					
4.4.1*	Infrastructure of onsite teaching environment (if applicable)			X		
4.4.2*	Teaching and learning platform			X		
4.4.3	Technical unit (for online courses)			X		
4.4.4	Data analysis system			X		
4.4.5*	Technical support for learners			X		

## 5 Quality Assurance

The Quality Management Department oversees the activities of the University's academic and operational teams, ensuring that the University operates in accordance with internal, stakeholder and government policies and regulations. It is also responsible for reviewing reports such as quarterly student feedback reports, annual programme monitoring reports.

The University's quality management is governed by the Quality Regulations, which are designed to ensure the continuous improvement of all services provided by the University. These regulations are based on the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle and set out specific measures and tools for achieving quality objectives. The framework covers teaching and learning, continuing education, and research.

The teaching and the performance of the service areas are regularly evaluated as part of course and service surveys, as well as graduate surveys. Other key mechanisms for continuous monitoring and further development of study programmes and the new courses under review include institutionalised coordination meetings between teaching staff, an open-door policy and communication with elected student representatives, and an annual report on programme quality.

**Gisma's** quality regulations define that the development of new and existing programmes involves current and former students, relevant administrative functional areas (e. g. marketing and career services), and potential employers <sup>28</sup>.

As with the programme review cycles, insights of Gisma professors who are practitioners in the field, the business expertise of the Corporate Advisory Board on a bi-annual basis, as well as feedback questionnaires from learners after each delivery instance, will be taken into account and used for continuous re-evaluation and alignment of the course topics to the evolving job market.

Course evaluations take place immediately after the end of the course, before the examination. It is carried out electronically using the software SurveyMonkey. The questionnaires contain standardised questions and are used in the same way for the courses as for all degree programmes at Gisma. The Commission for Degree Programme Quality reviews the questions once a year to ensure they are up to date, adapting them if necessary.

The questionnaire covers the following topics:

- aspects of teaching,
- learning opportunities,
- assessment and feedback,
- academic support,
- organisation and management,
- learning resources and community, and
- overall student satisfaction.

Students are also asked about the practical relevance of the course, whether the workload is appropriate, what they like about the course, and how it could be improved. The workload survey is used to assess the feasibility of each course. This data is made available to module leaders.

---

<sup>28</sup> *Appendix A 9 Quality Regulations of Gisma University of Applied Sciences; § 3 (5)*

They are required to check the workload of the individual courses and, if necessary, make adjustments with lecturers.

The results of the evaluation are discussed and evaluated and if necessary, measures are proposed. Summarised results for each course are made available to the respective lecturer. If the evaluation results regarding the quality of teaching are not satisfactory, the module leader will hold a discussion with the lecturer. This meeting will cover specific goals and measures to improve the quality of teaching. Over time, the evaluation documents the extent to which the agreed measures have led to development and improvements.

The aggregated results of the evaluation are made available to students, who are regularly informed about the results of the course evaluations and any agreed measures in public university meetings, also known as town hall meetings. Students are also informed about the evaluation results and the measures taken via the Canvas teaching and learning platform.

In order to identify emerging quality issues at an early stage and to initiate optimisation measures, weekly coordination meetings are held: the Faculty Meeting (professors, quality management, blended learning project coordination, and the university executive board) and the Weekly Update Meeting (all departments from academia and administration).

Another measure for internal quality assurance is maintaining close contact with students. The **University's open-door** policy encourages students to approach the relevant staff directly and informally in case of problems - if necessary, also with the support of a moderator. This allows for timely personal intervention if required.

External evaluation of the courses is supposed to be incorporating feedback from alumni, employers, and third-party stakeholders at regular intervals. Graduate surveys are conducted in two phases: first, six months after course completion to assess short-term impact on employment and skill relevance, and then at three-year intervals to evaluate long-term career progression and alignment with qualification objectives. These surveys specifically measure how the course has supported professional development, innovation capacity, and real-world application of the acquired skills.

In addition to alumni feedback, employers play an active role in evaluating the relevance and effectiveness of the course content. This is done through structured input during Skills Sprint Weeks (quarterly), where learners work on applied challenges set by industry partners, and through formal Corporate Advisory Board reviews held bi-annually. These evaluations focus on skill applicability, innovation readiness, and evolving industry needs. The insights gathered are systematically integrated into the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and feed directly into the quality development cycle.

Evaluation outcomes are not only reviewed but also translated into concrete, time-bound measures. These actions are then tracked through an internal implementation framework to ensure that they are:

- a) effectively implemented,
- b) assessed for their quality and fidelity to the original objectives, and
- c) adapted, when necessary, based on new findings or changes in the external environment.

The results of evaluations are shared transparently with respondents who consented to follow-up, as well as with relevant faculty and administrative teams, creating a feedback loop that ensures continuous improvement grounded.

## Appraisal

As the courses have not started yet, the panel during the assessment conference verified existing structures and processes for the degree programmes and discussed their application to the courses under review.

There is a quality-assurance and development procedure, which is eligible to systematically and continuously monitor and develop the quality of the courses with respect to its contents, processes, and outcomes following a PDCA cycle. Sufficient staff resources are available, and the **responsibilities are clearly defined. Teaching staff and learners' contribution to quality**-assurance and development procedures is described. When reviewing the workload, the institution is also prepared to consider evaluation findings, including feedback from learners.

Evaluation by learners is supposed to be carried out regularly at appropriate intervals and in accordance with a prescribed procedure; the outcomes are supposed to be communicated to learners and to provide input for the quality development process.

Quality control by teaching staff is supposed to be carried out regularly at appropriate intervals and in accordance with a prescribed procedure; the outcomes are supposed to be communicated to the teaching staff, course management and students as well as are supposed to provide input for the quality development process.

As graduates of the professional certificates do not have access to the learning platform longer than six months after graduation and will likely not attend town hall meetings, the panel **recommends** developing a specific concept to communicate the outcomes of quality assurance and evaluation to the graduates and alumni of the professional certificates.

As far as an external evaluation is concerned, the alumni survey would benefit from additional questions, e.g. regarding **the student's motivation for taking the course and the impact on job-related aspects** after accomplishing it. The panel also points out that existing procedures for degree students (e.g. survey templates, data raising and communication) will not be fully applicable for the professional certificates. The panel therefore **recommends** developing a concept for third party evaluation specifically tailored to the target group of professionals.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
<b>5.</b>	<b>Quality Assurance</b>					
5.1*	Quality assurance and development of course content, processes and outcomes			X		
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Instruments of quality assurance</b>					
5.2.1	Evaluation by learners and course graduates			X		
5.2.2	Quality assurance by teaching staff			X		
5.2.3	External evaluation by alumni, employers and/or other third parties				X	

# Quality Profile

Institution: Gisma University of Applied Sciences

Continuing Education Course:

- Character Development (CD)
- Corporate Sustainability and Leadership (CSL)
- Ethics, Compliance and Code of Conduct (ECCC)
- Project Management (PM)

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
<b>1. Strategy and Objectives</b>					
1.1*			X		
1.2					
1.2.1			X		
1.2.2			X		
1.2.3			X		
<b>2.</b>					
2.1*			X	Condition (CD) (CSL) (PM)	
2.2*			X		
2.3*			X		
<b>3. Implementation</b>					
3.1					
3.1.1*				Condition	
3.1.2*			X		
3.1.3*			X		
3.1.4*			X		
3.1.5*			X		

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.2	Training of Competences and Skills					
3.2.1	Methodological competence and academic work (academic work if applicable)			X		
3.2.2	Integration of theory and practice			X		
3.2.3	Interdisciplinary skills/Transdisciplinary skills (if applicable)					X
3.2.4	International and intercultural contents (if applicable)					X
3.2.5*	Employability/Acquisition of future and/or soft skills			X		
3.2.6	Professional ethics and/or societal issues			X (CD) (CSL) (ECCC)		X (PM)
3.3	Teaching and learning methodology					
3.3.1*	Logic and plausibility of teaching and learning methodology			X		
3.3.2*	Course materials, required and recommended literature			x		
<b>4.</b>	<b>Resources and Services</b>					
4.1	Teaching staff of the course					
4.1.1*	Structure and quantity of teaching staff			X		
4.1.2*	Academic qualification of teaching staff			X		
4.1.3*	Pedagogical qualification of teaching staff			X		
4.1.4*	Professional experience of teaching staff			X		
4.1.5	Internal cooperation			X		
4.1.6*	<b>Learners' support by teaching staff</b>			X		
4.2	Course management and overall organisation					
4.2.1*	Course management (content and methodology)			X		
4.2.2*	Process organisation and administrative support for learners and teaching staff			X		
4.2.3*	Information and transparency			X		
4.2.4*	Inclusive and equitable education			X		
4.2.5	Networking and Career Counselling (if applicable)			X		
4.3	Cooperations					
4.3.1(*)	Cooperation with academic institutions (if applicable, Asterisk Criterion for cooperation courses)			X		
4.3.2(*)	Cooperation with enterprises or other professional organisations (if applicable, Asterisk Criterion for cooperation courses)			X		
4.4	Facilities					

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.4.1*			X		
4.4.2			X		
4.4.3			X		
4.4.4			X		
4.4.5*			X		
<b>5. Quality Assurance</b>					
5.1*			X		
5.2					
5.2.1			X		
5.2.2			X		
5.2.3				X	