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REG.Nº.: 355-02-03-16-0020

**FINAL REPORT ON  
QUALITY ASSURANCE AUDIT OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL AND BUSINESS  
STUDIES,  
CELJE, REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA**

**This report was made by the Audit Committee:**

1. Doc. dr. sc. Maja Martinović, Committee Chair
2. Prof. dr. sc. Mirko Soković, Committee member
3. Katarina Gaži – Pavelić, mag. oec., Committee member
4. Dr. sc. Vesna Dodiković-Jurković, Committee member
5. Tea Markotić, Committee member

**Zagreb, March 2016**

## Foreword by the Chair of the Audit Committee

Croatian Agency for Science and Higher Education (hereinafter: ASHE) carried out external quality assurance audit (hereinafter: audit) of the International School for Social and Business Studies, in accordance with the Article 30, Paragraph 1, Item 4 of the Statute of the Agency for Science and Higher Education, Decision of the Management Board of the Agency for Science and Higher Education from 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2014 (CLASS: 602-04/14-09/0010, REG.NO.: 355-01-14-11) and a request from the International School for Social and Business Studies, Celje, Republic of Slovenia.

ASHE audit procedure is in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (hereinafter: ESG, 3rd edition, 2009), developed by the E4 - ENQA, EUA, EURASHE and ESU, with Article 23 of the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (Official Gazette 45/09), Articles 30/1 and 44/2 of the Agency Statute, and Article 2 of the Ordinance on External Audit of Quality Assurance Systems at Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Croatia.

In the implementation of this procedure at the International School for Social and Business Studies in Celje (hereinafter: ISSBS), the autonomy of ISSBS was taken into account, following the principle that higher education institutions (hereinafter: HEI) are primarily responsible for quality assurance of all their activities. The aim of external quality assurance audit procedure is to assess how HEI monitors and improves the quality of its activities, and to evaluate the coherence of the overall quality assurance system.

On the basis of documentation submitted before and during the site visit, documents available on the ISSBS website, information obtained during the site visit and from the meetings with stakeholders of the HEI QA system, and upon reviewing relevant documents that are integral to the QA system, as well as documents developed during the follow-up phase, the Audit Committee assessed the level of development, efficiency and functionality of QA system at ISSBS.

Result of external QA audit procedure is an objective assessment of institutional quality assurance system with recommendations for its improvement.

We would like to thank the dean of the ISSBS, doc. dr. sc. Srečko Natek, and all the employees, students and other stakeholders for their close cooperation in this procedure and hospitality during the site visit.

Committee Chair:



Doc. dr. sc. Maja Martinović



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## SUMMARY

The Audit Committee appointed by the Croatian Agency for Science and Higher Education carried out the audit of quality assurance system at the International School for Social and Business Studies in Celje, Slovenia, in accordance with the ASHE Manual for Audit of Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Croatia, and ASHE Audit Criteria that were developed in line with the ESG.

The task of the Audit Committee was to determine:

- the degree of development of QA system at HEI;
- if the activities and the results of those activities that comprise the QA system are efficient and in accordance with national and ESG standards.

During the course of this procedure, Audit Committee identified HEI's strengths, weaknesses and good practices, and provided recommendations for the following period.

### *Strengths*

- The management of ISSBS provides support to development of quality assurance system and stimulates strategic development of quality culture.
- In addition to mandatory national external evaluations, ISSBS is open to external evaluations by international QA agencies. Results of internal and external evaluations are used for development of individual activities and QA system as a whole.
- Special attention is paid to improvement of study programmes, on the basis of external evaluation outcomes.
- ISSBS actively contributes to regional development through innovations and cooperation with the business sector.

### *Weaknesses*

- In addressing internationalisation issues, ISSBS has been focusing more on the concept of internationalisation at home.
- Informal system of addressing students' complaints does not allow for monitoring their number and reasons behind complaints, as well as how are the pertaining issues resolved.

### *Good practice*

- ISSBS conducts student survey for systematic evaluation of the quality of teaching, for both teaching and associate staff, and uses the results for targeted improvements.
- New methods and technologies are being introduced, with the goal of improving the teaching process.
- International external evaluations are planned and carried out, with the aim of improving the quality assurance system.

**General recommendations**

- Regularly monitor the implementation of strategic goals, in accordance with the defined responsibilities and time-frame.
- Inform all the stakeholders on the revised ESG.
- Adapt the institutional QA system to the requirements of the new ESG, and evaluate the impact of innovations on the efficiency of the institutional management.

**Degree of development of HEI's QA system according to the ESG (Part I):**

<b>ESG standard</b>	<b>Degree of development of HEI's QAS before the follow-up</b>	<b>Degree of development of HEI's QAS after the follow-up</b>
1.1. Quality Policy and QA procedures	PRELIMINARY-INITIAL PHASE	DEVELOPED PHASE
1.2.1. Approving, monitoring and periodical revision of programmes and levels	DEVELOPED PHASE	DEVELOPED-ADVANCED PHASE
1.2.2. Scientific research and development	DEVELOPED PHASE	DEVELOPED- ADVANCED PHASE
1.3. Student grading	INITIAL-DEVELOPED PHASE	DEVELOPED PHASE
1.4. Quality assurance of teaching staff and its interaction and influence on the society of knowledge, and contribution to the regional development	INITIAL PHASE	INITIAL-DEVELOPED PHASE
1.5. Resources for study and student support	DEVELOPED PHASE	DEVELOPED PHASE
1.6. Information systems	INITIAL PHASE	INITIAL-DEVELOPED PHASE
1.7. Informing the public	DEVELOPED PHASE	ADVANCED PHASE
<b>Overall assessment of QA system:</b>	<b>INITIAL-DEVELOPED PHASE</b>	<b>DEVELOPED PHASE</b>



## **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of documentation submitted and made available, observations made during the site-visit and interviews conducted with the representatives of QAS stakeholders, the Audit Committee concluded in its first report that HEI's QA system is in the transitional phase of development between initial and developed phase. HEI accepted Committee's recommendations and prepared a plan of activities for the follow-up phase (Supplement 5.3), in order to further improve QA system.

After analysing the documents submitted upon the completion of the follow-up phase, the Audit Committee concluded that HEI's QA system is currently in the developed phase.

Included in this Final audit report are recommendations for the following period, provided to ensure the implementation of the established QA mechanisms, continuous improvement of the system, and consequently of all institutional activities.

The Committee expects that HEI will continue to develop its quality assurance system, in accordance with recommendations, and that its improved functionality will contribute to the development of institution as a whole.

## **Recommendations of the Audit Committee**

The Audit Committee recommends that the Agency for Science and Higher Education issues a certificate to the International School for Social and Business Studies in Celje for an efficient, developed and functional quality assurance system, valid for a five-year period upon the adoption of this Report.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. External quality assurance audit procedure

In line with the audit model as defined by the ASHE Audit Manual (2010), all the stages of external QA audit of ISSBS have been carried out and institutional quality assurance system assessed for its efficiency, level of development, and contribution to continuous improvement of quality culture at the HEI, in accordance with ESG. As per ESG 1.1.-1.7., a higher education institution should establish an effective quality assurance system that is fit for purpose and includes all institutional activities, as well as internal self-evaluation mechanism. With systematic data collection and analyses, as well as implementation of improvements, new cycles of development are encouraged, of both quality assurance system and higher education institution as a whole, while assuring transparency and motivating all the stakeholders for active participation in quality assurance system.

The Audit Committee visited the institution on 26-27 March 2015, after which it drafted and submitted the Report on Quality Assurance Audit of the International School for Social and Business Studies, Celje, Republic of Slovenia (CLASS: 602-04/15-09/0001, REG.No: 355-02-03-15-0001). On 1st of July 2015, ISSBS submitted the ISSBS Response to the ASHE Report on QA Audit of ISSBS and Plan of activities for the follow-up phase.

After a 6-month follow-up period, ISSBS submitted its Follow-up Report on Quality Assurance Audit of the ISSBS, Celje, Republic of Slovenia / Fulfilment of the action plan activities, including documented evidence of measures taken.

Audit procedure ends with this Final report, which provides the final assessment of the level of development and efficiency of ISSBS's quality assurance system, as per ASHE criteria and ESG.

## 1.2. Audit Committee

### **Doc. dr. sc. Maja Martinović**, Committee Chair

Professor of Marketing, Chair of the Marketing and Communication Department, President of the Quality Board and Associate Dean for the MBA Program at the Zagreb School of Economics and Management. She participated in the Quality Management in Higher Education Institutions conferences organized by AACSB International and Harvard University. Certified ASHE audit expert since 2013.

### **Prof. dr. sc. Mirko Soković**, Committee member

Full professor at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. Contributor to numerous EU projects and Erasmus+ contact person at his institution. SQAA evaluation expert since 2006. Certified ASHE audit expert since 2013.

### **Katarina Gaži – Pavelić, mag.oec.**, Committee member

Certified EOQ (European Organisation for Quality) quality systems manager and auditor. Has been working as the quality management expert and consultant for more than 15 years. Certified ASHE audit expert since 2012.

### **Dr. sc. Vesna Dodiković-Jurković**, Committee member

Deputy Director of the Croatian Agency for Science and Higher Education, quality assurance expert and ISO 9001 internal auditor. Previous employments include University of Zagreb and Ministry of Science, Education and Sports - Directorate for Science. Quality assurance trainings include: Institutional Audit Training at University of Warwick, Great Britain; UNESCO training External Quality Assurance: Options for higher education managers; Manchester Institute of Innovation Research: Evaluation of Science and Technology policies; Galilee International Management Institute, Israel: Management of Higher Education Institutions; European Academy for Taxes, Economics and Law: Workshop Performance Audit in the Public Sector, Berlin. Author of number of papers and conference presentations from the area of quality assurance, and contributor to development of ASHE audit model.

### **Tea Markotić**, Committee member

Student at the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Maribor, Slovenia. SQAA evaluation expert, member of Quality Committee of University of Maribor. Certified ASHE audit expert.

The Audit Committee was accompanied by ASHE coordinator, Goran Briški, prof.





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### 1.3. Audit goals

At its first meeting held on 23 February 2015, the Audit Committee defined goals of the procedure, methods of audit panel's work, implementation of the procedure and protocol of the site-visit.

The following goals of the audit procedure were defined:

- To assess the integrity of QA documentation
- To determine the effectiveness and degree of development of quality assurance system at ISSBS
- To carry out the external QA audit in, accordance with the procedure for external QA audit as defined by Audit Manual and regulations

Methods of work of the Audit Committee were also set:

- Discussing the submitted documentation
- Meeting with all the stakeholders of ISSBS
- Collecting additional audit trails during the site visit
- Writing of report
- Reaching all decisions by consensus.

With audit procedure, good practice from the area of quality assurance is shared and its application in HEI's QA system reviewed. Audit procedure and publishing of audit reports stimulate discussions on quality assurance between the stakeholders of HEI's quality assurance system.

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#### 1.4. Audit documentation

The Audit Committee reviewed the following documentation:

*Documents submitted before the first meeting of the Audit Committee (original titles of documents)*

- Samoevalvacijsko poročilo za leto 2013 in študijsko leto 2012/2013
- Samoevalvacijsko poročilo za leto 2014 in študijsko leto 2013/2014
- Self-evaluation report for 2014 and the 2013/2014 academic year
- Report on the International School for Social and Business Studies
- Appendix 1. Organisation chart of ISSBS
- Appendix 2. Rules on Quality
- Appendix 3. Curriculum overview: ISSBS study programmes
- Appendix 4. List of competences and learning outcomes
- Appendix 5. The Basis for the Planning of teaching in 2014/15
- Appendix 6. Plan for the implementation of teaching in 2014/15
- Appendix 7. Annual Schedule in 2014/15 (study programme: Business in Contemporary Society)
- Appendix 8. Course Syllabus "Fundamentals of Marketing" 2014/15 (study programme: Business in Contemporary Society)
- Appendix 9. Plan for the Study unit implementation "Fundamentals of Marketing" in 2014/15
- Appendix 10. Students questionnaire 2013/14
- Appendix 11. Teaching staff questionnaire 2013/14
- Appendix 12. Graduates questionnaire 2011/12
- Appendix 13. Administrative staff questionnaire 2013/14
- Appendix 14. Academic calendar 2014/2015

*Documentation submitted at the request of Audit Committee*

At its first meeting held on 23 February 2015, the Audit Committee requested the following additional documents:

- Terms and definitions for Self-evaluation report (table containing definitions of all terms and abbreviations in Self-Evaluation Report)
- ISSBS Development Strategy Plan 2014-2018
- Annual Work Programme
- Financial Plan (abbreviated version)
- Annual Report of Work
- Plan of Study Programme Implementation
- Plan of implementing activities to achieve the Rules of Quality
- List of tutors

- Report and analysis of surveys for 2013/2014
- Code of Ethics (if available)
- Examples of minutes from the two successive meetings of Academic Assembly, Committee for Quality and Evaluation, Committee for Student Affairs and Student Union (2013/2014)

Upon the request of the Audit Committee, ISSBS submitted the following documents (original titles of documents):

- Terms and Definitions of Self-Evaluation Report
- STRATEGIJA RAZVOJA MFDPŠ 2014-2018
- ISSBS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY PLAN 2014-2018
- Mednarodna fakulteta za družbene in poslovne študije: LETNI PROGRAM DELA 2014 (*Annual Work Programme 2014*)
- FINANČNI NAČRT (*Financial Plan 2014*)
- Mednarodna fakulteta za družbene in poslovne študije: LETNO POROČILO ZA LETO 2014 (*Annual Report of Work 2014*)
- IZHODIŠČA ZA NAČRTOVANJE IZOBRAŽEVALNEGA DELA ZA ŠTUDIJSKO LETO 2014/2015 (*Plan of Study Programme Implementation*)
- Načrt izvajanja procesov za zagotavljanje kakovosti v študijskem letu 2014/2015 (*Plan of implementing activities to achieve Rules of Quality*)
- List of tutors in 2014/2015
- KONČNO POROČILO: ANALIZA O IZVEDBI IZOBRAŽEVANJA (interno gradivo) (*Analysis of education implementation, students, 2013-2014*)
- Analiza o izvedbi izobraževanja na MFDPŠ (Študenti); Študijsko leto 2013/2014 (*Summary analysis education implementation 2013-2014*)
- Evaluation of teachers, classes workload (example)
- KONČNO POROČILO: ANALIZA O DELOVANJU FAKULTETE (interno gradivo) (*Analysis of institutional performance, HE teachers, 2013-2014*)
- ANALIZA O DELOVANJU FAKULTETE (interno gradivo) (*Analysis of institutional performance, staff, 2013-2014*)
- ANALIZA O IZVEDBI IZOBRAŽEVANJA (interno gradivo) (*Analysis of education implementation, alumni, 2011-2012*)
- ANALIZA O IZVEDBI IZOBRAŽEVANJA (interno gradivo) (*Analysis of education implementation, alumni, 2012-2013*)
- Zapisnik 9. akademskega zbora MFDPŠ, 18. 4. 2013. (*Minutes of 9th Academic Assembly, 18 April 2013*)
- Zapisnik 10. akademskega zbora MFDPŠ, 6. 12. 2013. (*Minutes of 10th Academic Assembly, 6 December 2013*)
- Zapisnik 1. Redne (konstitutivne) seje Študentskega sveta Mednarodne fakultete za družbene in poslovne študije Celje, 20. 11. 2014. (*Minutes of 1st session of the Student Union, 20 November 2014*)



- Zapisnik 1. Redne seje Študentskega sveta Mednarodne fakultete za družbene in poslovne študije Celje, 4. 2. 2014. (*Minutes of 2nd session of the Student Union, 4 February 2014*)

*Documentation made available during the site visit*

During the site visit, the following ISSBS documents were made available to the Audit Committee (original titles of documents):

- Diploma Supplement examples (*4 examples*)
- Navodila za pisanje zaključnih del
- Examples of exams (*various types*)
- Examples of final Bachelor works and Master theses (*5 examples*)
- Zapisnik zajtrka s kadroviki 2013; zapisnik zajtrka s kadroviki 2014
- Splošne kompetence študentov: examples of questionnaires and the analysis
- Pravilnik o postopku in merilih za priznavanje znanja in spretnosti
- Learning agreement for studies (*1 example*)
- Transcript of records (*1 example*)
- Erasmus departure information - Confirmation of attendance (*1 example*)
- Odločba – priznavanje znanj in spretnosti (*1 example*)
- Pravilnik o mobilnosti študentov
- Seznam sklenjenih sporazumov MFDPS / Pregled vzpostavljenega strokovnega, raziskovalnega in znanstvenega sodelovanja MFDPS / Tuje in druge SLO institucije
- Spremembe študijskih programov v letu 2013
- Spremembe sestavin učnih načrtov učnih enot ESD v 2013 in 2014
- Pravilnik o projektni nalogi 2011 in 2012 (projektna naloga VKI, priloga k diplomi in predmetnik)
- Primeri pritožb študentov (*2 examples*)
- Matrika kompetenc
- Predmetnik MZ v času mednarodne akreditacije FIBAA, predmetnik MZ v času mednarodne akreditacije AQ Austria
- Zapisnik 113. kolegija dekana
- Alumni MFDPS: Poročilo o službenem potovanju ter možnostih razvoja programa alumni na fakulteti
- Pravilnik o delovnem času in vrednotenju dela na MFDPS
- Pravilnik o disciplinski odgovornosti študentov MFDPS
- Dokumenti po službah: referat, izobraževanje, raziskovanje, mednarodno sodelovanje, sodelovanje z okoljem, kadri
- Načrt udeležb na konferencah, posvetih, seminarjih in izobraževanjih za študijsko leto
- List of competences and learning outcomes (ECS, BCS, KM, MQE, HRM, KM PhD)
- Various types of learning outcomes assessment methods

In addition, ISSBS IT system NOVIS was demonstrated to the Audit Committee during the site-visit.

### 1.5. Site visit to HEI

The Committee drafted a protocol of the site visit that included meetings with all the stakeholders and tour of the ISSBS, in order to gather additional data and evidence for drafting of a report on efficiency and level of development of QA system.

ASHE submitted the Protocol of the site visit to ISSBS.

Site visit to the ISSBS was carried out from 26-27 March 2015, in accordance with the Protocol of the site visit.

Protocol of the site visit to ISSBS is provided in **Supplement 5.2** of this report.

### 1.6. Structure and content of the report

The Audit Committee drafted the first report on the basis of documentation analysis, information gathered during the site visit and meetings with various groups of stakeholders. The first audit report was structured as follows:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Description of the ISSBS QA system
- 3) Results of audit
- 4) Conclusion
- 5) Supplements

The report was adopted by the ASHE Accreditation Council and submitted to ISSBS, which provided feedback and submitted its plan of activities for the follow-up phase.

### 1.7. Feedback and plan of activities for the follow-up phase

The Audit Committee drafted the “Report on Quality Assurance Audit of the International School for Social and Business Studies, Celje, Republic of Slovenia” (CLASS: 602-04/15-09/0001, REG.No: 355-02-03-15-0001), which was sent to the HEI on 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2015.

On 1st of July, ISSBS submitted the “ISSBS Response to the ASHE Report on QA Audit of ISSBS and Plan of activities for the follow-up phase” (**Supplement 5.3**). The document listed activities to be carried out, in line with recommendations of the Audit Committee from the Report, including guidelines/objectives, persons responsible for implementation and adoption of measures taken, as well as target dates and documents. The activities planned follow individual ESG standards, 1.1. – 1.7.

## 1.8. Follow-up report and documented evidence

On 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2016, ISSBS submitted its “Follow-up Report on Quality Assurance Audit of the ISSBS, Celje, Republic of Slovenia / Fulfilment of the action plan activities”.

The following appendices to the report were submitted as documented evidence (original titles of documents):

- Appendix 1: Rules on Quality
- Appendix 1a: Quality indicators 1 and 2
- Appendix 1b: Scheme of QA system
- Appendix 1c: Scheme of QA documentation
- Appendix 2: Quality Handbook\_sl
- Appendix 3: Self-Evaluation Report\_sl
- Appendix 4: Breznik, K. & Đaković, G. (2016). Erasmus student mobility flows - the national-level social network analysis of Slovenia. *International Journal of Innovation and Learning*, forthcoming.
- Appendix 5: Analysis of student graduation\_sl
- Appendix 6: Analysis of student progression and performance at exams\_sl
- Appendix 7a: The appointment of tutors 1\_sl
- Appendix 7b: The appointment of tutors 2\_sl
- Appendix 8: Plan for the Implementation of Quality Assurance Processes
- Appendix 9: TNHE contract, validated by the SQAA\_sl
- Appendix 10: International Target Markets and Students survey\_sl
- Appendix 11: International Promotional Activity plan
- Appendix 12: Benchmarking of ISSBS study programmes in Slovenia\_sl
- Appendix 13: SPIN analysis\_sl
- Appendix 14: Analysis of academic terms (student workload)\_sl
- Appendix 15: Graduate profiles ECS, BCS, KM, MQE, HRM\_sl
- Appendix 16a: Model of general and specific competences based on the Tuning project
- Appendix 16b: Workshop for Teachers\_sl
- Appendix 16c: Workshop for Employees\_sl
- Appendix 16d: Workshop for Students\_sl
- Appendix 16e: Syllabi
- Appendix 16f: Focus group 1 cycle students\_sl
- Appendix 16g: Focus group 2 cycle students\_sl
- Appendix 17: Examples - Course delivery plan\_sl
- Appendix 18: Guidelines for Professional Development of Staff\_sl
- Appendix 19: The appointment of Svet MFDPŠ\_sl
- Appendix 20a: Letter of intent CERD



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- Appendix 20b: Certification CERD
  - Appendix 21: Summary of implemented measures

**During the follow-up period** (from July 2015 to January 2016), ISSBS implemented a number of measures aimed towards development of a functional quality assurance system. Some of these activities include:

- Revision of ISSBS Development Strategy
- Introduction of the quality strategy as a chapter in ISSBS Development Strategy 2014-2020
- Strategic goals, core processes and related indicators measuring the quality and performance were interlinked
- ISSBS Advisory Board was established, consisting of eminent professionals, and representing an important link with the labour market, business sector and local community.
- Rules on Quality containing descriptions of ISSBS's main activities and core processes was updated and amended.
- Quality Handbook was developed and adopted.
- All the course syllabi were updated and learning outcomes were defined at the course level, following Bloom's taxonomy.
- The appeals process was introduced and added as a part of the information package to students. In addition, data on grading is available in Data Warehouse, providing up-to-date information on student performance.
- Guidelines for the Professional Development of Staff, Annual plan of internal training for academic staff and Individual programme of teacher's professional development, as well as Guidelines for Publishing were introduced.
- A new webpage was developed, providing information on projects in progress and publishing opportunities.
- The tutoring system has been further developed.
- English part of the official ISSBS website was redesigned and made more user-friendly.

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF HEI

### 2.1. Organizational structure of HEI

#### 2.1.1. Organizational units

The following organisational units have been defined at the institutional level, tasked with carrying out educational and research activities:

- academic units
- departments
- institutes
- centres.

Organisational units also include the library and Academic Press.

**Academic units** are formed around particular courses or parts of study fields to coordinate and develop education and research activities in a particular scientific or professional field. The process of forming academic units started in 2012/2013, when heads of academic units were appointed. There are currently 6 academic units at ISSBS, formed around 6 study programmes:

- *Economics in Contemporary Society (ECS)* (1st cycle)
- *Business in Contemporary Society (BCS)* (1st cycle)
- *Knowledge Management (KM)* (2nd cycle)
- *Management and Quality in Education (MQE)* (2nd cycle)
- *Human Resource Management (HRM)* (2nd cycle)
- *Knowledge Management (KM – PhD)* (3rd cycle)

**Departments** are defined to encompass wider parts of study fields, to guide and coordinate education and research activities of the academic units of a particular scientific or professional field. Currently, there are no departments at ISSBS.

**Institutes** are formed around particular research fields to carry out basic, applied, development and other projects, as well as consulting and other professional services financed from public funds or by private clients. ISSBS currently has 3 institutes.

**Centres** are formed to carry out, organise and encourage education and research activities, to disseminate contemporary work methods, findings and achievements, as well as to carry out computer, information and documentation-related activities. There are currently 4 centres at ISSBS, Career Centre being one of them.

**ISSBS library** is part of COBISS, a national library and national information system. Its services are available to the ISSBS students and staff, as well as to the general public. It also



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offers the ISSBS students and teaching staff remote access to journals and e-publications of the Emerald Group Publishing Ltd. and to the ProQuest databases.

**ISSBS Academic Press** is an important part of the support infrastructure for research activities. It publishes study materials for students, scientific publications such as monographs, as well as an international scientific journal.

### 2.1.2. Management and permanent bodies of ISSBS

The ISSBS bodies are the Senate, Academic Assembly, Management Board, Dean, Director and Student Council.

The **Dean** of ISSBS is the head and representative of ISSBS. The Dean appoints associate deans. Currently, ISSBS has one Associate Dean.

The **Director** of ISSBS is authorised to represent ISSBS on behalf of the Dean. Director is appointed by the Management Board of ISSBS.

The **Senate** of ISSBS is the highest professional body in which the scientific and professional disciplines of ISSBS are equally represented. The Senate has 9 members, 7 of which are members of the ISSBS academic staff and 2 are members of the Student Council of ISSBS. The Dean of ISSBS is an ex officio member of the Senate. The ISSBS academic staff members of the Senate are elected for a period of two years or until the next Senate election, and may be re-elected. The ISSBS student members of the Senate are elected for a period of one year, and may be re-elected as well. The Senate generally meets once per month and appoints several permanent committees to help it with its work.

The **Academic Assembly** of ISSBS consists of all ISSBS academic staff members involved in its education and R&D activities (in 2014/2015, it had 43 members). Students are involved in its work through their representatives (20% of all members). The Academic Assembly meets at least once per year. Its responsibility is to elect Senate members, to propose candidates for Dean to the Senate, to review the report on ISSBS's activities, quality assurance and to submit proposals and initiatives to the Senate.

The **Management Board** of ISSBS is an administrative body with five members, i.e. 3 representatives of the ISSBS founder, 1 representative of the ISSBS staff and 1 representative of local business/community. Management Board members are appointed for a period of four years, with the possibility of re-appointment. The Management Board is in charge of managing ISSBS. It reviews the Statute of ISSBS (and its modifications and amendments), appoints the Dean on the Senate's proposal, appoints the Director on the founder's proposal, determines ISSBS's tuition and other fees on the Dean's proposal, adopts the ISSBS work programme, financial plan, annual report and internal regulations, makes decisions on

financial investments, appoints its own working groups and carries out other tasks in accordance with the legislation, the Statute of ISSBS and other relevant regulations.

The **Student Council** of ISSBS is the ISSBS student representative body, governed by the Higher Education Act, the Statute of ISSBS and its own Rules. It consists of nine student representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate study programmes.

The Senate also appoints the following **permanent committees**:

- Committee for Study Affairs,
- Committee for Student Affairs,
- Committee for the Recognition and Evaluation of Qualifications,
- Committee for the Recognition of Knowledge and Skills,
- Committee for Science and Research,
- Committee for Elections to Titles,
- Committee for Quality and Evaluation.

### 2.1.3. Development of HEI

International School for Social and Business Studies (ISSBS) is an independent higher education institution, with its seat in Celje, founded in June 2006 on the basis of Act on Higher Education and Criteria for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes. On 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2006, ISSBS was accredited by the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Higher Education (Decision 1/15-2006). As per this Decision, ISSBS develops and implements study programmes in the fields of social and/or economic, business and administrative sciences. Important directions for ISSBS - in addition to internationalisation - are research and co-operation with its community.

ISSBS carries out accredited study programmes – developed in accordance with Bologna guidelines – at all three levels:

- ***Economics in Contemporary Society*** (undergraduate academic study programme – 180 ECTS),
- ***Business in Contemporary Society*** (undergraduate professional study programme – 180 ECTS),
- ***Knowledge Management*** (graduate study programme – 120 ECTS),
- ***Management and Quality in Education*** (one-year graduate study programme – 60 ECTS),
- ***Knowledge Management*** (doctoral study programme – 180 ECTS).

ISSBS has obtained national accreditation for all its study programmes. Undergraduate study programme **Economics in Contemporary Society** and graduate study programme **Knowledge Management** were first accredited by the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (SQAA) in 2006. SQAA also accredited undergraduate professional

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study programme **Business in Contemporary Society** and graduate study programme **Management and Quality in Education** in 2007.

In the academic year 2007/2008, a research group was established at the ISSBS; that same year the group was registered at the Slovenian Research Agency, and started with its operation.

The second-cycle study programme **Knowledge Management** was also accredited by Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) in 2010.

New graduate study programme **Human Resource Management** was accredited in 2011.

The first four ISSBS study programmes were re-accredited by the SQAA in September 2013. In 2013, ISSBS obtained accreditation of its first doctoral study programme **Knowledge Management**.

ISSBS has been a holder of the Extended Erasmus University Charter since 2008.

The academic year 2011/2012 marks the beginning of student mobility at the institution, both incoming and outgoing, when first four ISSBS students went abroad within the Erasmus programme, and first five international students came to ISSBS in Celje.

#### 2.1.4. Employees and students

ISSBS has 17 full-time academic staff: 2 full professors, 3 associate professors, 6 assistant professors, 1 senior lecturer, 2 lecturers, 1 lector and 2 assistants. Teaching process also includes 26 contractually hired external associates. Institutional activities are supported by 13 administrative and other staff (Assistant Director, administrative and technical staff).

In the academic year 2014/2015, the total of 495 students was enrolled at ISSBS, at all three levels: 312 students at 1<sup>st</sup> level, 178 at 2<sup>nd</sup> level and 5 doctoral students (which is significantly lower than the maximum number of 692 enrolled students in 2011/2012). The reason behind this drop, as explained by the management, is a prolonged economic crisis in Slovenia.

A breakdown by study programmes shows the following numbers:

- **Economics in Contemporary Society**, 96 students (83 full-time and 13 part-time),
- **Business in Contemporary Society**, 217 students (209 full-time and 8 part-time),
- **Knowledge Management**, 178 students (177 full-time and 1 part-time),
- **Management and Quality in Education**, no students enrolled.
- Doctoral programme **Knowledge Management**, 5 students (only part-time).

Student/full-time teacher ratio is 29:1, an average in Slovenia. If external associates are taken into account, the ratio is 11.5:1.

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Student/administrative staff ratio is 38:1, which is not uncommon for smaller higher education institutions.

## 2.2. Vision, mission, values and strategy

### **Vision**

“To be internationally recognised for our academic excellence and social responsibility.”

### **Mission**

“To enrich our students' and graduates' professional development and to improve their employability through excellent internationally oriented education and research in the fields of business, economics and management, so as to contribute to the development of the knowledge society and prosperity of the region, country and global community.”

### **Values**

- “- Accountability and trustworthiness to those we serve.
- Creativity and innovation in what we do.
- Diversity and uniqueness in whom we are.
- Integrity and respect in the way we treat each other.”

### **Strategy**

“ISSBS pursues the following 14 strategic goals, grouped by areas of strategic direction:

Educational activities: development and delivery of a high-quality and internationally oriented study programme to enhance the employability of graduates:

1. High-quality delivery of study programmes.
2. Continuous improvement of study programmes.
3. Internationalisation of education.
4. Introduction of e-learning.

Research activities: promotion of research and its international integration:

5. Strengthening of research activities.
6. Involvement of students in research work.
7. Strengthening of the dissemination and visibility of research findings.

Collaboration with the environment and social responsibility: socially responsible operations in the environment, in which the faculty operates:

8. Collaboration with higher education institutions.
9. Inclusion of social responsibility into the study programmes.
10. Raising awareness of societal challenges and their solutions amongst the interested public.

Ensuring operating conditions at ISSBS:

11. Maintenance and development of existing infrastructure.

12. Development of the human capital.
  13. Achievement of a diversification of funding.
  14. Development of an internal quality system.
- 1.3 Activities and key processes.”

### 2.3. Quality assurance system

As a HEI that is a part of the European Higher Education Area, ISSBS is aware that it has a primary responsibility for quality of its all operations. In line with ESG (part I. for HEIs), ISSBS management decided to introduce quality management system based on the Deming cycle, also known as PDCA cycle (P - Plan, D - Do, C - Check, A - Act). This concept was previously used for the most part in non-formal ways, however, it was mostly formalised during the follow-up phase. The person responsible for ISSBS's operation and implementation of quality system is Dean. Other bodies responsible and involved in QA are: the Management Board, the Senate with its 6 committees, the Committee for Quality and Evaluation and The Academic Assembly. The Rules on Quality, adopted in December 2013 and revised in 2015, define the quality system and quality assurance procedures and instruments at the ISSBS. Committee for Quality and Evaluation takes care of developing QA system, its processes and instruments. All employees, students and external stakeholders are included in the quality assurance system at HEI. Quality manager was also appointed during the follow-up phase.

The statement on ISSBS's mission, vision and values was adopted by the Senate of ISSBS in January 2012. The first ISSBS strategic document was adopted in April 2014 for the period 2014-2018. The Strategic document defines four areas of strategic direction. One of them is operational excellence, with a defined long-term strategic goal of developing internal quality system. Based on the strategic document, ISSBS adopted “Letni program dela 2014” (*Annual Work Programme 2014*) in April of 2014. This document links long- and short-term strategic goals, and also provides performance indicators, with starting value in 2013 and final value for 2018. However, the document does not define who is responsible for the implementation of adopted strategic goals, nor whose responsibility is would be to assess the level of their implementation.

Self-evaluation is an overall assessment of ISSBS's operations, carried out by its staff. ISSBS produces a self-evaluation report (SER) for every academic year, the last one being for the academic year 2013-2014. SER includes data, some analyses and trends, but does not clearly refer to all ISSBS's quality assurance indicators (Rules on Quality; Appendix 4: ISSBS's quality assurance indicators) or indicators linked to strategic goals. The main quality assurance instruments are different types of surveys: Student opinion surveys and the actual student workload, Graduate opinion surveys, Teaching staff opinion surveys and Administrative staff opinion surveys. The surveys are analysed on a regular basis, using SPSS or similar programmes.



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The internal QA system, or its parts, is also subject to external evaluations. External evaluation is a process during which ISSBS's operation is assessed by external evaluators. ISSBS was a subject of national SQAA external evaluation, as well as FIBAA professional accreditation of a study programme.

ISSBS is very open to internal and external evaluations, and considers them beneficial to its further development.

### 3. AUDIT RESULTS

#### 3.1. External audit of quality assurance system at HEI

The Audit Committee assessed the compliance of quality assurance system at the ISSBS with ESG (Part I - 1.1.-1.7.), on the basis of documentation submitted by the HEI, information collected during the site-visit, and the review of Follow-up report and documents that were made or amended during the follow-up period, in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee.

#### ESG 1.1. Quality Policy and QA procedures

**STANDARD:**

They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.

**GUIDELINES:**

Formal policies and procedures provide a framework within which higher education institutions can develop and monitor the effectiveness of their quality assurance systems. They also help to provide public confidence in institutional autonomy. Policies contain the statements of intentions and the principal means by which these will be achieved. Procedural guidance can give more detailed information about the ways in which the policy is implemented and provides a useful reference point for those who need to know about the practical aspects of carrying out the procedures.

The policy statement is expected to include:

- the relationship between teaching and research in the institution
- the institution's strategy for quality and standards
- the organisation of the quality assurance system
- the responsibilities of departments, schools, faculties and other organisational units and individuals for the assurance of quality
- the involvement of students in quality assurance
- the ways in which the policy is implemented, monitored and revised.

The realisation of the EHEA depends crucially on a commitment at all levels of an institution to ensuring that its programmes have clear and explicit intended outcomes; that its staff are ready, willing and able to provide teaching and learner support that will help its students achieve those outcomes; and that there is full, timely and tangible recognition of the contribution to its work by those of its staff who demonstrate particular excellence, expertise and dedication. All higher education institutions should aspire to improve and enhance the education they offer their students.

**Evidence from the previous report:**

- ISSBS mission, vision, and strategic development goals are formally set and published, and ISSBS has a strategic plan which is published as a separate document (ISSBS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY PLAN 2014-2018). Policy document is not provided as a separate document. However, the SWOT analysis is not completely adequate.

- ISSBS Development Strategy Plan contains defined quality assurance model, and PDCA cycle is included. Nevertheless, practical and real implementation of PDCA cycle is questionable.
- The enrolment policy is public and all the relevant stakeholders are very-well informed of it. The Rules of Quality exists, although they are not made in the form of a guide. The *Annual Work Programme* (Letni program dela) also exists.
- “Letno poročilo za leto 2014” (2014 *Annual Report*) contains a list of long-term and short-term goals and its implementation.
- ISSBS has submitted its Self-evaluation report for the academic year 2013/2014. It is based on reports that are addressed by ISSBS Academic Assembly and ISSBS Management Board and adopted by ISSBS Senate.
- Students are involved in quality assurance activities regarding changes to study programmes. Students’ and all other relevant stakeholders’ evaluations related to study programmes are regularly conducted and their results analysed. Student evaluations are anonymous. Students are in general very satisfied with ISSBS; they express a high level of affiliation and satisfaction with the achieved competencies.

The Audit Committee reached the following conclusion: ISSBS mission, vision, strategic development goals, and strategic plan are formally defined and published. ISSBS also provided its Self-evaluation report, the Rules of Quality, and the *Annual Work Programme*, while the Policy document is not provided as a separate document. However, ISSBS needs to review some of the documents, and define and describe basic processes, as well as the procedures for improvement. It is also recommended to consider the aligning of SER with NAKVIS criteria. Students and other relevant stakeholders are involved in quality assurance activities. Students are generally satisfied with the ISSBS. In accordance with HEI’s education and research excellence goals, ISSBS needs to revise its goals, targets, objectives, and KPI, and set them at a higher level. The importance of international context is evident from the institutional mission; in order to fulfil the mission, additional systematic efforts are needed to further develop the segment of internationalization. It would be recommended to align ISSBS internationalization criteria with the criteria of internationalization developed by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). Taking into account teachers’ goals, which guide them in the production of intellectual contributions, it is necessary to develop the guidelines for publishing and define the Teachers Development Plan (TDP) for a period of few years. This can be a crucial link between teachers’ development and HEI’s mission, providing guidance and motivation for the teachers towards activities most valued by ISSBS. It is also recommended to introduce other means of study programmes quality evaluation (in addition to surveys), to reconsider the adequacy of trimesters, and to establish the position of Quality Manager.

#### **Recommendations for the follow-up:**

- In order to fulfil the ISSBS mission, additional effort is needed towards strengthening of international segment (development of joint and double degree programmes, cooperation with international institutions, activities aimed at attracting more foreign



students, etc.), with clearly defined international target markets (target groups of international students). Development of international activities needs to be aligned with mission and learning goals and objectives of degree programmes.

- Revision of ISSBS's SWOT analysis. The Audit Committee would recommend to replace the item "students in general are passive", listed in the "Weaknesses" section of the SWOT analysis, with "low pass rate", i.e. something which can be influenced on and rectified by the institution.
- Benchmarking of ISSBS, for better positioning in international environment.
- Establish, present and describe basic processes, and define the procedure for process improvement.
- Consider aligning SER with NAKVIS criteria. SER should include advantages and recommendations or possibilities for future improvements.
- Develop and implement retention strategies and policies, which will motivate students to complete their studies sooner, and with a better success. Design programmes aimed at increasing student retention.
- In accordance with the ISSBS education and research excellence goals, ISSBS needs to revise goals, targets, objectives, and key performance indicators (KPI), and set them at a higher level.
- Develop guidelines for publishing in required disciplines. Guidelines should prescribe and give instructions to teachers on how, where and what to publish, and should be communicated to teachers in order to increase publishing in certain departments and to direct publishing activities towards "research excellence" stated in the mission.
- In order to improve the publishing activities across departments, define the Teachers Development Plan (TDP) for a period of few years, update the plan annually and determine the status at the end of each year. TDP should include the expected intellectual contributions and other activities (e.g. professional development) of each teacher. That means that every teacher knows exactly how many contributions from the field of expertise need to be published, and they are informed about the average criteria needed for maintaining their status. It also provides ISSBS with an effective tool for guiding development of teachers, as well as controlling their progress.
- Review the Rules of Quality in order to produce a manual for all relevant stakeholders.
- Analysis of ISSBS activities needs to be based on the analysis of effectiveness in achieving strategic goals.
- It is also recommended to align ISSBS internationalization criteria with the criteria of internationalization developed by ECA (ECA Certificate for Quality of Internationalization). Links:  
<http://ecahe.eu/home/internationalisation-platform/certification/>  
<http://ecahe.eu/home/internationalisation-platform/certification/relevant-documents/>
- Consider introducing other means of study programmes quality evaluation (in addition to surveys).
- Although the students are satisfied with trimester system since it allows them to work full-time and take less exams in one exam period, Audit Committee would suggest to ISSBS to reconsider the adequacy of programme delivery in trimesters (with regard to

the plans for stronger international development, international student recruitment policy and exchange, and improvement of student retention).

- Consider establishing a position of Quality Manager (person operatively in charge of ISSBS quality system).

#### **Analysis after the follow-up:**

- ISSBS Development Strategy 2014-2020 has been completely revised, but internationalisation criteria are not yet aligned with ECA criteria. To address the internationalisation issues, ISSBS has been focusing more on the concept of internationalisation at home. This includes the introduction of more up-to-date foreign literature for students, implementation and promotion of upgraded international summer school in cooperation with foreign partners, the introduction of e-learning support (Moodle e-classroom) for all ISSBS courses, delivery of individual courses in English language, and inclusion of foreign visiting professors in the delivery of study programmes. On the other hand, ISSBS cooperates in the mobility project Erasmus+ in accordance with Erasmus Policy Statement (Overall Strategy). Additional efforts, resources and time are needed for implementation of ECA internationalisation criteria and for updating the Internationalisation Strategy with ECA criteria. ISSBS plans to address this issue in the following period.
- ISSBS has conducted a study on international target markets and found that Slovenia is recognised as an attractive location for international students in the Balkan region, especially Macedonia and Kosovo. Moreover, a study was conducted on Erasmus mobility students (incoming and outgoing), and it was found out that the possible target markets are Eastern European countries and Balkans (Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Poland, and Latvia).

Letter of Intent has been signed with partners in Priština, Kosovo, where ISSBS also runs some promotional activities. Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD) will carry out and co-operate with ISSBS in programmes promotion and application procedure for study in Slovenia. ISSBS has organised a conference on 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2016, which was attended by over 300 participants from higher and secondary education institutions from Kosovo.

- ISSBS had a plan to sign a Consortium agreement on developing a joint study programme with Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland, but due to some adjustments of programmes, this project has been put on hold. Another initiative is going on with FH Burgenland (<http://www.fh-burgenland.at/>), but no results have yet been achieved.

In November 2015, the TNHE contract with SEEU Macedonia Tetovo was validated by the SQAA. This contract gives ISSBS the right to deliver master programme Management and Quality of Education in Macedonia in the academic year 2016/2017.

- ISSBS has not yet undertaken benchmarking for better positioning in the international markets in the above mentioned countries. The institution plans to carry this out in 2016.



- ISSBS's SWOT analysis has been discussed by ISSBS's management team and upgraded. Updated SWOT analysis is included as an appendix to ISSBS Development Strategy 2014-2020.
- The existing Rules on Quality ISSBS were revised in detail and updated. In this document, all ISSBS's *core processes* and *main activities* are defined on the basis of revised ISSBS Development Strategy 2014-2018. In the Rules on Quality, ISSBS defines additional quality assurance methods (in addition to surveys): focus groups, interviews, knowledge tests, Student and Higher Education Teacher data warehouse, document analysis, and benchmarking. Monitoring, evaluation, and quality assurance are based on the use of data collection/data analysis instruments, aimed at different target stakeholder groups (students, graduates, teachers and associates, professional services, employers), the institution, and study programme. Strategic objectives were used for developing the expanded set of quality indicators, which enable monitoring of *core processes* and *main activities*. Quality indicators have also been categorised according to SQAA (NAKVIS) quality assurance areas.
- ISSBS also upgraded the Quality Handbook, improving definitions and descriptions of all core processes as defined by the Rules on Quality, and also all supporting documents and procedures necessary to implement the core processes.
- ISSBS defines methods and time-frames with regard to collecting data on student performance in exam periods, progression into the next year of study, and graduation. The analysis of student progression and performance at exams is conducted after each trimester and at the end of the academic year. The analysis of student graduation is also conducted. Analyses are defined in the Rules on Quality and in the annual Plan for the Implementation of Quality Assurance Processes (defining methods and time-frames for of data collection).

Student performance results are continuously discussed at meetings.

ISSBS Quality Handbook describes the process of supporting the students and increasing their motivation to study. In addition, ISSBS developed a policy regarding the tutoring system and career centre activities – preparation for exams and midterms, workshops for preparation of thesis proposals, workshops, consultations, additional exam dates, regular public announcements of these topics, promotion of student awards.

- ISSBS developed Guidelines for Publishing professional and scientific papers in domestic and international publications, providing specific instructions on how and where to publish. Information on publishing is also available on ISSBS website (Raziskovalne priloznosti in dosezki), with the aim increasing individual research performance.
- ISSBS developed Teachers Development Plan (TDP). This document includes guidelines for professional development of staff, addressing teaching, research and professional activities. The purpose of TDP is to facilitate the managing of teacher's professional, research and personal development. Every teacher at ISSBS knows exactly how many contributions from the field of their expertise need to be published, and teachers are encouraged to plan their own development and critical evaluation of

its achievement. The Teacher's Development Plan was adopted by the ISSBS Senate on 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2016.

- 2015 Annual Report and Self Evaluation Report contain analysis of ISSBS activities. Those reports include indicators, which are also indicators for achieving strategic objectives and specified target values. The indicators are used for analysis of the achievements, as well as suggestions for improvements.
- ISSBS analysed the impact of the trimester concept on student performance and workload in the academic year 2014/15, and found (based on student's surveys) that students have a positive attitude towards trimester system, since it allows them to study gradually. All instances of potential trimesters/semesters conflict, with regard to student mobility, have been successfully resolved.
- The dean appointed dr. Vesna Skrbinjek as a person responsible for QA. She works in the Education Office on developmental tasks, and is going to attend training at Slovenian Association for Quality and Excellence for the position of Quality Manager.

### **Conclusion**

ISSBS has upgraded the QA system as well as required organisational activities. The dean appointed the person operatively in charge of ISSBS quality system.

Rules on Quality were revised and amended to include descriptions of main activities, core processes and related indicators. New Quality Handbook was adopted to support development of quality culture. ISSBS has developed the Teachers Development Plan (TDP) for the purpose of managing teachers' professional, research and personal development. ISSBS has developed Guidelines for Publishing, containing information on where and how to publish, in order to increase individual research performance. On the basis of past research, activities, contacts and discussion, ISSBS clearly defined and outlined target markets for promotional activities, aimed at the delivery of study programmes for international students. ISSBS has not yet aligned their internationalisation criteria and strategy with ECA criteria.

The core activities were linked with strategic objectives and with quality indicators, which enables the evaluation of the effectiveness of QA system. 2015 Annual Report and Self Evaluation Report contain analysis of ISSBS activities, indicators, and target values. The core processes of ISSBS are linked with SQAA quality assurance areas. Suggestions for improvement are included.

ISSBS has not yet implemented the recommendation regarding the adequacy of programme delivery in trimesters, since at this moment the institution does not consider this issue a hindrance.

### **Level of development: DEVELOPED PHASE**

#### **Recommendations for the following period:**

- Align ISSBS internationalisation criteria and strategy with ECA criteria.
- In the next period conduct benchmarking of ISSBS programmes, for better positioning in international markets (especially in selected Balkan countries).



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- Establish collaboration with foreign higher education institutions, for the purpose of developing multiple/joint study programme and attracting international students
  - In order to fulfil ESG 1.1. and PDCA model, the Audit Committee recommends defining a procedure for process improvement, and including the evaluation of ISSBS management in Self-evaluation Report.
  - Self-evaluation process is crucial for further development of ISSBS QA system. Consider including self-evaluation in Quality Handbook, so as to benefit from its objectivity.
  - New Rules of Quality should be applied consistently. It is recommended to assess its impact on development of quality culture at ISSBS in following period.
  - ISSBS 2016 Annual Work Programme should include the action plan of improvements, based on recommendations from 2014-2015.

### ESG 1.2.1. Approving, monitoring and periodical revision of programmes and levels

**STANDARD:**

Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.

**GUIDELINES:**

The confidence of students and other stakeholders in higher education is more likely to be established and maintained through effective quality assurance activities which ensure that programmes are well-designed, regularly monitored and periodically reviewed, thereby securing their continuing relevance and currency.

The quality assurance of programmes and awards are expected to include:

- development and publication of explicit intended learning outcomes;
- careful attention to curriculum and programme design and content;
- specific needs of different modes of delivery (e.g. full time, part-time, distance-learning, e-learning) and types of higher education (e.g. academic, vocational, professional);
- availability of appropriate learning resources;
- formal programme approval procedures by a body other than that teaching the programme;
- monitoring of the progress and achievements of students;
- regular periodic reviews of programmes (including external panel members);
- regular feedback from employers, labour market representatives and other relevant organisations;
- participation of students in quality assurance activities.

**Evidence from the previous report:**

- ISSBS delivers accredited study programmes (national SQAA re-accreditation in 2013 for the period of seven years). HEI also pursued international accreditation of two study programmes and an institutional evaluation. International accreditation was carried out by the Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation (AQ Austria). In addition, ISSBS has FIBAA professional accreditation of the second-cycle programme Knowledge Management (2010, valid until 2016).
- Although there is no formal procedure defined, study programmes are revised.
- The revision of the study programmes is not systematic. Competencies and responsibilities are overlapping and are not clearly defined.
- There are some examples of syllabi innovation (e.g. micro and macroeconomics).
- Admissions to the 3<sup>rd</sup> year are not based on the clear policies for admission. It is possible to enrol to 3<sup>rd</sup> year with 90 ECTS, out of which it is possible to transfer some from 1<sup>st</sup> year of study.
- Student surveys and other relevant stakeholder evaluations related to quality of study programmes are regularly conducted and analysed. Surveys are carried out for all levels of study programmes and cycles of study. ISSBS regularly evaluates student satisfaction with courses, lectures, services, and study in general.
- ISSBS has defined a list of competencies and learning outcomes, which describe both general and subject-specific competencies. Still, intended learning outcomes stated in the syllabi are not used to express what are students expected to achieve, and how are they expected to demonstrate that achievement.

The Audit Committee reached the following conclusion: ISSBS delivers accredited study programmes, some of which also have international accreditations. Study programmes are

revised, but their revision is not systematic. Clear and consistent procedure for the revision of study programmes needs to be defined. There are some examples of syllabi innovation. Admissions are not based on clear policies. Also, an analysis of ECTS value is recommended. Students are involved in quality assurance activities. There is a defined list of competencies and learning outcomes for every study programme. The Audit Committee suggests aligning syllabi with good European / international practice. Since the use of correct verbs is a key to successful writing of learning outcomes, we recommend the use of Bloom's taxonomy.

### **Recommendations for the follow-up:**

- Define a clear and consistent procedure of study programs revision. Distinctly define the scope and responsibilities within the procedure. In order to reach institutional mission and goals, ISSBS needs to specify activities that represent high-priority efforts toward continuous improvement. Analyse distribution of the obligatory and elective courses in study programs during all three years, as same as ECTS value. (For example, in the first year of Economy for Contemporary Society (ECS) programme there are 6 obligatory courses, each worth 9 ECTS credits. Perhaps a different distribution of ECTS can be considered in order to increase the pass rate. Mathematics and Statistics 1 (9 ECTS) course can be used as an example. In this course, it may be possible to separate mathematics and statistics. In the second year of the programme, there are also 6 courses worth 9 ECTS, and on the third year there are 4 elective courses worth 6 ECTS. It is recommended to consider this for all programmes.).
- Modernize syllabi and align them with the good European / international practice in the same field.
- Since intended learning outcomes are describing what the students can do at the end of the learning activity, we recommend the use of Bloom's taxonomy, which is often used in writing learning outcomes, since it provides a ready-made structure and list of action (active) verbs.

### **Analysis after the follow-up:**

- The process of continuous improvement of study programmes is defined in Quality Handbook, and includes all the stakeholders and formal procedures that ISSBS has to follow in case of changes.  
Data Warehouse was used to analyse student progression into next year of study; the analysis of three programmes showed that student progression is adequate. The analysis also showed that student workload during trimester does not affect their performance. Study programmes are accredited and ISSBS does not plan to introduce any significant changes regarding distribution of courses and ECTS.
- All stakeholders were included in the process of updating the syllabi using the triangulation technique and with the help of relevant literature on how to define learning outcomes. The competencies for business sciences, stemming from Tuning project (OECD) with 12 General Competencies and 15 Specific Competencies, were adopted to fit ISSBS study programmes, amounting 13 General Competencies and 20 Specific Competencies. On-line questionnaire survey was conducted among students

and employers. Students were asked to assess to what extent they have acquired general and specific competencies during their studies. The employers were also asked to provide their assessment of the practical applicability of competencies listed. After the survey, two meetings for student focus groups were organized in May 2015, and one meeting for employers and representatives of local institutions.

ISSBS organized a *How to revise course syllabus?* workshop for teachers. Teachers developed a new e-form of the Course Syllabus by the end of August 2015. Revised course syllabi were adopted by the Senate on 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2015.

- Taxonomy of general and specific competencies, with full revision of learning outcomes at course and programme level, has been implemented. At the programme level, ISSBS developed a model of general and specific competencies based on the methodology of the Tuning project and appropriate learning outcomes based on Bloom's taxonomy. Based on the revised learning outcomes, new formulation of a more specific graduate profile was developed, including a "job profile" and a list of specific jobs.

### **Conclusion**

The process of continuous improvement of study programmes is defined in Quality Handbook, and includes all the stakeholders and formal procedures that ISSBS has to follow in case of changes. All stakeholders were included in the process of updating the syllabi. A workshop was organized for teachers on the revision of course syllabus subject. Revised course syllabi were adopted by the Senate. Full revision of learning outcomes at course and programme level for ISSBS study programmes has been implemented. At the programme level, ISSBS developed a model of general and specific competencies based on the methodology of the Tuning project and appropriate learning outcomes based on Bloom's taxonomy. Data Warehouse was used to analyse students' progression into next year of study.

### **Level of development: TRANSITION BETWEEN DEVELOPED AND ADVANCED PHASE**

#### **Recommendations for the following period:**

- Since ISSBS the analyses showed that students perform better in elective courses and elective courses are introduced in the last year of study, we encourage benchmarking of study programmes, bearing in mind increase of student mobility and internationalisation of the whole institution.



### ESG 1.2.2. Scientific research and development

#### **Evidence from the previous report:**

- Income derived from research and development activities make approx. 20% of ISSBS's total income.
- ISSBS has been awarded HR Excellence in Research label.
- ISSBS Research Group for Social and Business Studies is registered at the Slovenian Research Agency (SRA); number 2711 (19 researchers and 2 AS).
- In addition to research projects funded by SRA, HEI is involved in international projects funded by the European Union and/or other international organisations (European Structural Funds, 7th Framework Programme, EACEA Tempus IV, EACEA LLP: EQF, Jean Monnet, Leonardo da Vinci, projects funded by municipalities, ministry, etc.).
- The ISSBS is also a co-founder of the international academic publisher ToKnowPress. Teachers are encouraged to publish their research and have published 4 monographs since 2012.
- Teaching staff participates in research projects, academic and professional conferences, and publishes scientific and professional monographs.
- The Audit Committee would like to acknowledge the excellent MakeLearn project: every year at the end of June, ISSBS organises the International Scientific Conference on Management of Knowledge and Learning – MakeLearn. It is organised in co-operation with foreign university partners and international institutes and/or organisations.
- HEI established the International Journal of Management, Knowledge and Learning – IJMKL (2012).
- Intellectual contributions are not evenly distributed across departments.

The Audit Committee reached the following conclusion: The Self-evaluation report provides useful information about the ISSBS research output and variety of research activities. However, the Audit Committee would recommend drafting of Teachers Development Plan (TDP) and Guidelines for Publishing. We would also like to see how ISSBS intends to improve the quality of its intellectual contributions, especially in the area of peer-reviewed articles in journals with international publishing boards and international reviewers.

#### **Recommendations for the follow-up:**

- Introduce Teachers Development Plan (TDP) and Guidelines for Publishing for teachers.
- Intellectual contributions need to be equally distributed across departments.
- Apart from increasing the volume of R&D activities, HEI also needs to improve the quality of intellectual contributions, in accordance with “scientific research excellence” stated in strategic directions of ISSBS. In addition to in-house journal,

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teachers should be encouraged to publish primarily in journals with international publishing boards and international reviewers.

**Analysis after the follow-up:**

- ISSBS designed and introduced a Teachers Development Plan (TDP). Guidelines for the Professional Development of Staff were developed for the purpose of managing teachers' professional, research and personal development. The Guidelines address several goals connected with: systematic and continuous professional development of employees, opportunities for career advancement, encouragement of creativity and knowledge transfer between employees, increasing career flexibility and international mobility, and raising awareness among employees that their work contributes to strengthening of the values and implementation of vision, mission and objectives of ISSBS.
- Research results of individual researchers or research groups are presented on ISSBS website (link: [\*Raziskovalne priložnosti in dosežki\*](#)). As per Guidelines for Professional Development of Staff, teachers need to regularly submit detailed annual plans of individual research projects' applications, participation in research projects, publications of scientific papers (recognised by Scopus, SCI Expanded, SSCI, and other relevant databases), and publications of scientific monographs. The implementation of the plan is discussed at annual development interviews conducted by the ISSBS dean and the director. All activities (the planning, self-evaluation, and annual interview) are based on an e-form, provided as an appendix to the document Guidelines for the Professional Development of Staff.
- ISSBS improves the quality of intellectual contributions by encouraging the ISSBS teaching staff to publish scientific/research papers in journals with international publishing boards and international reviewers, and in international journals recognised by Scopus, SCI Expanded, and SSCI databases. ISSBS also regularly informs the teaching staff on public calls for research projects and publishing opportunities, via e-mail and website. Publishing opportunities are listed on ISSBS website (link [\*Raziskovalne priložnosti in dosežki\*](#)) and information on publishing are available in the Quality Handbook (process E).

**Conclusion**

ISSBS designed and introduced Teachers Development Plan (TDP) and Guidelines for Publishing for teachers. Research results of individual researchers or research groups are published on ISSBS website. The implementation of the plan of research is discussed at annual development interviews, conducted by the ISSBS dean and the director. ISSBS improves the quality of intellectual contributions by encouraging the teaching staff to publish scientific/research papers in journals with international publishing boards and international reviewers, and in international journals recognised by Scopus, SCI Expanded, and SSCI databases. ISSBS also regularly informs the teaching staff on public calls for research projects and publishing opportunities, via e-mail and website.



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**Level of development:** TRANSITION BETWEEN DEVELOPED AND ADVANCED PHASE

**Recommendations for the following period:**

- ISSBS plans and monitors intellectual contributions of teaching staff, consequently improving their quality. The institution has only just begun with systematic activities towards increasing teachers' research work and publishing in journals with international publishing boards and international reviewers, and also in the international journals recognised by Scopus, SCI Expanded, and SSCI databases. The Committee recommends that these activities are continued and regularly monitored.

### ESG 1.3. Student grading

**STANDARD:**

Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.

**GUIDELINES:**

The assessment of students is one of the most important elements of higher education. The outcomes of assessment have a profound effect on students' future careers. It is therefore important that assessment is carried out professionally at all times and that it takes into account the extensive knowledge which exists about testing and examination processes. Assessment also provides valuable information for institutions about the effectiveness of teaching and learners' support.

Student assessment procedures are expected to:

- be designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and other programme objectives;
- be appropriate for their purpose, whether diagnostic, formative or summative;
- have clear and published criteria for marking;
- be undertaken by people who understand the role of assessment in the progression of students towards the achievement of the knowledge and skills associated with their intended qualification;
- where possible, not rely on the judgements of single examiners;
- take account of all the possible consequences of examination regulations;
- have clear regulations covering student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances;
- ensure that assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the institution's stated procedures;
- be subject to administrative verification checks to ensure the accuracy of the procedures.

**Evidence from the previous report:**

- ISSBS Rules of grading have been defined.
- The list of all courses, provided in the table (course/examination type map) offers insight into the grading criteria (components of the final grade such as examination, projects, seminars, etc.), explained in their respective syllabi.
- The matrix with courses linked to general learning outcomes and competencies has been developed, and its integration with syllabi is underway. Written exams include information on grading criteria as well as introductory data.
- Students are informed of the grading system. Their grades are structured to include a number of segments (oral presentation, case study, seminar work, group work, final exam). Discussion about the learning outcomes revealed that LO are not adequately defined. It was also noted by the Audit Committee that the exam grading criteria have not been clearly established, i.e. that the grading system is not uniform, inasmuch as teachers are independently choosing the minimum threshold of 50 or 60 percent for their courses.
- Grading criteria are not aligned across the courses.
- There is no clear and defined procedure for students' complaints. Students' complaints related to grades are submitted directly to the teacher, mainly in an informal manner. (There is also a mailbox for students' complaints and suggestions, but it was said that it is generally empty because students express their dissatisfaction directly to the dean or administrative staff.).
- There are some issues with student course/exam pass rate. (Although the students are generally very satisfied, pass rate does not reflect that.)
- The number of regular exams is rather small.

The Audit Committee reached the following conclusion: Rules of grading have been defined by the HEI, and students are familiar with the grading system. Nevertheless, the exam grading criteria have not been clearly established, and grading criteria are not aligned across the courses. There is no clear and defined procedure for students' complaints and Audit Committee recommends that such procedure is set. There are also some issues regarding the exam/course pass rate, and the number of regular exams is rather small. We recommend improvements of the assessment process as a central process in linking together the mission, learning goals and student learning outcomes. A workshop for teachers is recommended to help improve their understanding of the role of assessment processes in curricula development.

**Recommendations for the follow-up:**

- In order to integrate the mission and the learning process, student learning goals and objectives (learning outcomes) need to be redefined. Define the learning goals as a product of HEI's reflection on the skills, values and knowledge students are expected to gain through teaching process. Adjust the goals and objectives of each programme as a starting point for determining the goals and objectives of each course. The course goals should describe what students will achieve in the course, and the objectives (learning outcomes) should describe what students need to do in order to achieve it. Objectives need to be described in the syllabus with active verbs. (Objectives are indicated outcomes that have been developed to assess each individual student directly.).
- Organize workshops on learning outcomes for teaching staff and external stakeholders.
- Make constructive alignment of all learning outcomes at the course level with the learning outcomes at the programme level.
- Include grading in the course syllabi and describe in detail quantitative and qualitative grading.
- The syllabi need to be presented to students at the beginning of each course, and made transparent by publishing learning management system (LMS) pages of each course.
- Define and audit consistency of the implementation of grading criteria and the established rules.
- Align the grading criteria.
- Consider introducing two exam terms in one exam period in order to achieve better course pass rate.
- Set up clear and defined procedure for students' complaints. Monitor the number of complaints and the reasons behind complaints, as well as how the complaints are resolved and issues improved.
- Analyse the distribution of obligatory courses and their ECTS credits in correlation with 3<sup>rd</sup> year of study enrolment, where students can transfer 30 ECTS. Establish if this is a potential reason (or one of the reasons) for student drop-out in first two years?

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**Analysis after the follow-up:**

- Learning outcomes in syllabi have been completely re-defined for BCS, ECS, KM, and MQA study programmes. Teachers were asked to link the learning outcomes of their courses with specific competences, based on findings from targeted survey of students and employers and focus groups. Revised course syllabi were adopted by the ISSBS Senate on 30 September 2015.
- All the stakeholders were included in the process of recognising the required competences and providing direction to the syllabi by using the triangulation technique. Review of learning objectives, competencies and learning outcomes at the course level started was carried out by using all relevant literature, in addition to on-line survey targeting ISSBS students, on-line survey targeting employers in the region, focus groups with first and second cycle students, and group interview with employers. Collecting the necessary data, ISSBS organized a '*How to revise course syllabus*' workshop for teachers. After the workshop, the teachers were invited to fill-in the new e-form of the Course Syllabus, and to revise their course syllabi (emphasis being on learning outcomes and literature update). Revised course syllabi were adopted by the Senate.

The course delivery plan was changed to relate to syllabi (to include student activities, competencies / learning outcomes). New delivery plan template was developed to link syllabi learning outcomes with delivery plans. Changes to study programmes in academic year 2015/2016 include the introduction of e-classroom support for all the courses. The process of delivering a regular update of course syllabi is described in Quality Handbook (Process C).

- At the programme level, ISSBS developed a model of general and specific competencies based on the methodology of the Tuning project and appropriate learning outcomes based on Bloom's taxonomy. Data Warehouse was used to analyse students' progression into next year of study.
- ISSBS has updated its Rules on Grading, adding uniform grading scale and grading criteria for every course. To achieve a positive grade on the final course assessment with a numeric rating scale, a student must achieve at least 60% of points. Scale is numeric and descriptive and it is included in a course syllabus.
- Students are informed on the new grading criteria at introductory meetings in the first week of October. Presentations from introductory meetings are also available via e-classroom.
- The analysis of student progression and performance at exams is conducted after each trimester and at the end of the academic year. The analysis of student graduation is also carried out. Analysis of the effectiveness and performance of study is prepared four times a year, after each examination period, using data from the Student Data Warehouse.
- Although ISSBS updated Rules on Grading, adding uniform grading scale and grading criteria, it was not possible to assess the consistency of the implementation of grading criteria and the established rules during the relatively short follow-up phase. An assessment of the effects of changed grading criteria is scheduled for Spring 2016.

- The grading criteria were aligned.
- ISSBS developed the policy and instructions on tutoring. In 2015/2016, there were 5 student tutors (helping students with Economics, English, Mathematics, Accounting, Finances, Business Law). Potential problems are identified by continuously monitoring the data on students' performance and graduation, and addressed by conducting activities such as consultations, additional tutorials, additional exams, encouraging students to approach supervisors and start with their final theses, etc.
- ISSBS has formalized the student appeal process and published it on Novis, Moodle and in Study Guide (along with other instructions and rules). All information are also published in central information system Novis. ISSBS plans to include an analysis of the appeals (their number, reasons, solutions) in the Quality Report (Self-Evaluation Report), and potential improvements in the Action plan (Annual Work Programme). Until now, however, the appeals did not point to any specific issue and the analysis was deemed unnecessary. The analysis of resolved complaints was not mentioned in the Follow-up Report, or the appendices.
- ISSBS conducted an analysis of student drop-out, and found that student progression is good for all three study programmes. At the moment, ISSBS does not plan to introduce any changes in this regard.

### **Conclusion**

Learning outcomes in syllabi have been completely re-defined for BCS, ECS, KM, and MQA study programmes. All the stakeholders were included in the process of recognising the required competences and providing direction to the syllabi by using the triangulation technique. Full revision of learning outcomes at course and programme levels has been implemented. Although ISSBS updated Rules on Grading, adding uniform grading scale and grading criteria, it was not possible to assess the consistency of the implementation of grading criteria and the established rules during the relatively short follow-up phase. The grading criteria were aligned, and students were informed about the new grading criteria. Analysis of the effectiveness and performance of study is prepared four times a year. The policy and instructions on tutoring were developed, and ISSBS is trying to enhance student retention in several ways. Analyses of student drop-out in first two years should be continued. ISSBS collected data via student survey, but the numbers are still very low. Additional actions are needed to achieve a decrease of the drop-out rate.

### **Level of development: DEVELOPED PHASE**

#### **Recommendations for the following period:**

- Check consistency of the implementation of grading criteria and the established rules.
- A full analysis of a possible correlation between drop-out rate and ETCS credits/year is recommended. Development of retention or drop-out KPIs is also recommended.



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- Close monitoring of student retention, and regular annual analysis of resolved student appeals is recommended. Based on the findings thereof, the institution should develop appropriate action plan for improvements.



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## ESG 1.4. Quality assurance of teaching staff

**STANDARD:**

Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.

**GUIDELINES:**

Teachers are the single most important learning resource available to most students. It is important that those who teach have a full knowledge and understanding of the subject they are teaching, have the necessary skills and experience to transmit their knowledge and understanding effectively to students in a range of teaching contexts, and can access feedback on their own performance. Institutions should ensure that their staff recruitment and appointment procedures include a means of making certain that all new staff have at least the minimum necessary level of competence. Teaching staff should be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching capacity and should be encouraged to value their skills. Institutions should provide poor teachers with opportunities to improve their skills to an acceptable level and should have the means to remove them from their teaching duties if they continue to be demonstrably ineffective.

**Evidence from the previous report:**

- Pedagogical and didactical qualifications are regularly evaluated through student surveys.
- Once a year the dean carries out interviews with the teaching staff.
- Teaching staff takes part in mobility programmes.
- Teaching staff attends workshops on HE pedagogy, didactics and research methodology.
- Teaching staff is also encouraged to publish their research internationally (ToKnowPress).
- ISSBS has signed 31 bilateral mobility agreements with partner institutions and is a full member of the Erasmus exchange programme.
- ISSBS has a strong presence in Savinja region.
- ISSBS has 30 agreements with various organisations.
- ISSBS puts a lot of emphasis on social responsibility, which includes co-operation with regional secondary schools and organising round tables for the general public. In the 2013/2014 academic year, elective course “Social Responsibility and Volunteering“ was introduced.
- The requirements for teaching appointments are in accordance with national appointment procedures.
- Teachers are available for consultations and counselling.
- Teachers are actively involved in the development of the region and different activities related to building relationships with business community and general public. (Examples are media appearances of teachers, publishing articles in journals, etc.)
- There is no difference between full-time and contractual teachers in any activity carried out by ISSBS.
- Teachers’ workload is appropriately managed and monitored.
- There is no Teachers’ Development Plan.

- Student surveys and other relevant stakeholder evaluations related to quality of study programmes are regularly conducted and analysed.

The Audit Committee reached the following conclusion: Knowledge transfer skills and efficiency of teaching are evaluated not only by student surveys. There is no systematic approach to professional development of teaching staff. It is recommended to establish mechanisms for improving teachers' competencies, as well as to encourage teachers' international professional development. Teaching staff is actively involved in regional development.

#### **Recommendations for the follow-up:**

- Establish mechanisms for improving teachers' competencies – introduction of mandatory pedagogic/didactic trainings for teachers with lower grades in student evaluations.
- In accordance with teaching and research excellence goal, clearly define own criteria for teachers' advancement and promotion.
- Encourage teachers' international professional development. Develop annual plans for national and international professional trainings and specializations of teachers.
- In addition to surveys, introduce other means of quality assurance and analysis of HEI's performance and effectiveness (e.g. peer-review, focus groups, introduction of interviews with stakeholders in SER, etc.).

#### **Analysis after the follow-up:**

- ISSBS has introduced Guidelines for the Professional Development of Staff, Annual plan of internal training for academic staff and individual programme of teachers' professional development, as well as Guidelines for Publishing.
- Updating Rules on Working Hours and Remuneration in accordance with Guidelines for Professional Development of Staff is planned for the first half of 2016/2017.
- The document Guidelines for the Professional Development of Staff was prepared with the purpose of managing teachers' professional, research and personal development. Guidelines for Publishing (Quality Handbook E-3) address several goals, among which is "to increase a person's career flexibility and international mobility".
- Although some additional methods of quality assurance and analyses of HEI's performance and effectiveness have been introduced, peer-review is not among them.

#### **Conclusion**

ISSBS has partially implemented the above recommendations. ISSBS annual plans for international professional development include only teacher participation at international conferences; international professional trainings and specializations are not included. Although some additional methods of quality assurance and analyses of HEI's performance and effectiveness have been introduced, peer-review is not one of them.



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**Level of development:** TRANSITION BETWEEN INITIAL AND DEVELOPED PHASE

**Recommendations for the following period:**

- It is recommended that annual plans for international professional development also include international professional trainings and specializations of teachers.
- Introduce peer-review as one of the evaluation tools.

## ESG 1.5. Resources for study and student support

**STANDARD:**

Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.

**GUIDELINES:**

In addition to their teachers, students rely on a range of resources to assist their learning. These vary from physical resources such as libraries or computing facilities to human support in the form of tutors, counsellors, and other advisers. Learning resources and other support mechanisms should be readily accessible to students, designed with their needs in mind and responsive to feedback from those who use the services provided. Institutions should routinely monitor, review and improve the effectiveness of the support services available to their students.

**Evidence from the previous report:**

- Participation in research projects, MakeLearn, KoME - annual student conference.
- ISSBS has 31 bilateral mobility agreements.
- ISSBS has two student tutors. Tutoring carries 1 ECST point of elective course. Tutors collaborate with teachers and Student Council, the support from management is assured.
- ISSBS students and teachers share a restaurant with the Faculty of Logistics, which is situated in the same building.
- All classrooms are equipped with computers and projectors, and are air-conditioned.
- There is also a computer room, which is available to students at any time and can be used for group studying.
- Staff and teachers' offices are small but appropriate for work.
- Library is small and does not have a separate reading room. Students can use the library to study even in the off-hours.
- Tutors and Student Council do not have their own offices, and they meet with the students in classrooms, which are mainly empty in the morning hours.
- All classrooms and offices are accessible to students with motoric disabilities.
- Student accommodation includes hotel capacities, private accommodation and student dormitory.

The Audit Committee reached the following conclusion: Resources regarding staff and equipment are sufficient to provide stability and ongoing quality improvement of student support. Audit Committee recommends further development of tutoring system, as well as adjustment of library working hours to accommodate students' needs. In order to fulfil the institutional mission, HEI should put additional effort in developing programmes and courses that could be fully delivered in English language.

**Recommendations for the follow-up:**

- In order to fulfil the institutional mission, additional effort should be put in developing programmes and courses that would be delivered in English.
- Adjust the library working hours to accommodate students' needs.



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- Since ISSBS only has two student tutors, we recommend further development of tutoring system.

#### **Analysis after the follow-up:**

- ISSCB has introduced an additional elective course in the third year of bachelor study Foreign language in Business 3 – English. An English native speaking teacher is currently undergoing election process. She will be included in the course delivery in the academic year 2016/2017, delivering one half of the course.
- Results of the ISSBS student surveys (conducted at the end of the year), that also include questions on satisfaction with library services, show that students are satisfied with the library and its working hours. That is the reason why library working hours have not been changed.
- ISSBS has established mechanisms to further enhance tutoring system. The institution currently has five tutors, covering most problematic courses. Tutors also take part in other activities (Introductory week, participating in Student Council meetings, Open Days, e-Classroom Tutoring, etc.).

#### **Conclusion**

Some efforts were made in developing programmes and courses that would be delivered in English. ISSBS has implemented this recommendation with one elective course in English, half of which will be delivered by a teacher who is native speaker. Analysis of students' surveys showed that students are satisfied with library working hours, which is the reason why this recommendation was not implemented. ISSBS has fully implemented the recommendation for development of tutoring system.

**Level of development:** DEVELOPED PHASE

#### **Recommendations for the following period:**

- Additional effort should be put in developing programmes and courses that would be delivered in English.

## ESG 1.6. Information systems

**STANDARD:**

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.

**GUIDELINES:**

Institutional self-knowledge is the starting point for effective quality assurance. It is important that institutions have the means of collecting and analysing information about their own activities. Without this they will not know what is working well and what needs attention, or the results of innovatory practices.

The quality-related information systems required by individual institutions will depend to some extent on local circumstances, but it is at least expected to cover:

- student progression and success rates
- employability of graduates
- students' satisfaction with their programmes
- effectiveness of teachers
- profile of the student population
- learning resources available and their costs
- the institution's own key performance indicators.

There is also value in institutions comparing themselves with other similar organisations within the EHEA and beyond. This allows them to extend the range of their self-knowledge and to access possible ways of improving their own performance.

**Evidence from the previous report:**

- QA system is currently being developed (some QA documents have been adopted).
- There are some mechanisms of monitoring, collecting, analysing and disseminating data.
- All established rules and regulations are published.
- Some QAS information is inconsistent (in different documents).
- Some QA procedures are implemented informally, which can (and possibly did) result in a loss of important QA data.
- Relevant information is available to all the stakeholders (analysis, trends, and evaluation results), but the implementation is rather low (feedback on surveys, plan of activities for improvements, etc.).

The Audit Committee reached the following conclusion: Quality assurance system is currently being developed at ISSBS, and some information is still inconsistent. We recommend the adoption of Quality Strategy and Rules of Procedure for the Committee for Quality and Evaluation.

**Recommendations for the follow-up:**

- Develop Rules of Procedure for Committee for Quality and Evaluation.
- Develop Quality Strategy.

**Analysis after the follow-up:**

- Rules of Procedure for Committee for Quality and Evaluation were not presented.
- Quality Strategy was not developed as a separate document.

## **Conclusion**

ISSBS has not fully implemented the above recommendations in the follow-up phase (the quality strategy has been introduced as a chapter in ISSBS Development Strategy 2014-2020). This notwithstanding, the Audit Committee recognises that HEI regularly collects and analyses the basic data on student profile, student progression and success rates, employability of graduates, students' satisfaction with their programmes, effectiveness of teachers, learning resources available, the institution's own key performance indicators etc. ISSBS introduced in its annual Self-evaluation Report (SER) analysis of strengths and weakness for the previous academic year. In accordance with the Audit Committee's recommendations, ISSBS also included recommendations for the following period, which stimulate new cycles of development (*Samoevalvacijsko poročilo MFDPŠ 2014/2015*). This can be considered as an additional effort to strengthen the improvement phase of PDCA cycle and use relevant information for the effective management.

**Level of development:** TRANSITION BETWEEN INITIAL AND DEVELOPED PHASE

### **Recommendations for the following period:**

- We recommend the adoption of Quality Strategy as a separate document, as well as the adoption of Rules of Procedure for the Committee for Quality and Evaluation.

## ESG 1.7. Informing the public

**STANDARD:**

Institutions should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering.

**GUIDELINES:**

In fulfilment of their public role, higher education institutions have a responsibility to provide information about the programmes they are offering, the intended learning outcomes of these, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, and the learning opportunities available to their students. Published information might also include the views and employment destinations of past students and the profile of the current student population. This information should be accurate, impartial, objective and readily accessible and should not be used simply as a marketing opportunity. The institution should verify that it meets its own expectations in respect of impartiality and objectivity.

**Evidence from the previous report:**

- ISSBS publishes a Study Guide, organizes Open days, and hosts meetings with secondary school counsellors of the Celje region.
- There are numerous examples of how different stakeholders contribute to better public information: series of roundtables, “Alumni and Friends of ISSBS” activities, EU+PIK@ project, The Academic Press of ISSBS, LLA, etc.
- Public is informed about the enrolment policy and criteria.
- Some ISSBS alumni also contribute through various activities; for example, they distribute promotional flyers to potential students.

The Audit Committee reached the following conclusion: ISSBS demonstrates a wider social influence through interaction of all the stakeholders with business community, as well as through PR activities, which is an important tool for building relations with businesses and the broader community. We recommend improvements to the dissemination of information and promotional activities in an international environment.

**Recommendations for the follow-up:**

- Improvements of information dissemination and promotional activities in an international environment.
- In accordance with the plans for internationalisation, publish criteria for international student enrolment on ISSBS web-site.

**Analysis after the follow-up:**

- Several measures are planned for 2016 for improving information dissemination and promotional activities in national and international environments. Main activities in the international promotional activity plan for 2016 include introducing not only courses but also study programmes in English (Master and PhD level), providing information of international student mobility by publishing experiences of incoming and outgoing students, promoting Mediterranean Summer School and International Conference MakeLearn & TIIM Joint.





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- Important information on study programmes and information on student mobility are provided on ISSBS website. Information on enrolment procedure and enrolment criteria is also published.

### **Conclusion**

ISSBS has fully implemented the recommendation for improvements of information dissemination and promotional activities in an international environment. In accordance with the plans for internationalization, ISSBS publishes criteria for international student enrolment on its website.

**Level of development:** ADVANCED PHASE

### **Recommendations for the following period:**

- Implement all planned activities for improving information dissemination and promotional activities in and international environment.
- Regularly publish information on study programmes and courses offered in English.

#### 4. FINAL ASSESSMENT OF THE LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM AT THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL AND BUSINESS STUDIES, CELJE

The Audit Committee concludes that ISSBS has carried out a number of activities during the follow-up period aimed at improving the functionality and efficiency of its quality assurance system.

Included in this Final audit report are recommendations for the following period, provided to ensure the implementation of the established QA mechanisms, continuous improvement of the system, and consequently of all institutional activities.

On the basis of analysis of documentation submitted before and after the follow-up, or made available via web-site, as well as interviews conducted with the main stakeholders of the QA system, information collected during the site visit, and analysis of the progress made during the follow-up phase, the Audit Committee concludes that ISSBS's quality assurance system is currently in the **developed phase** according to ASHE audit criteria.

The Committee expects that ISSBS will continue to develop its quality assurance system, and that its improved functionality will contribute to the development of institution as a whole.

##### **Recommendations of the Audit Committee**

The Audit Committee recommends that the Agency for Science and Higher Education issues a certificate to the International School for Social and Business Studies in Celje for an efficient, developed and functional quality assurance system, valid for a five-year period upon the adoption of this Report.

Zagreb, March 2016

Committee Chair:



Doc. dr. sc. Maja Martinović



## 5. SUPPLEMENTS

- 5.1. Audit results according to the Criteria for assessing the level of development and efficiency of QA systems at higher education institutions and Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)



ESG- standards	Preliminary phase	Initial phase	Developed phase	Advanced phase
<p><b>1.1. Policies, mission, vision, general strategy of the institution/sub-strategies;</b> Goals, overall structure and internal cohesion of the quality assurance system; documentation – including the quality policies, procedures and responsibilities of all the stakeholders – is published.</p>	<p>Policies, mission, vision, general strategy are being prepared and drafted. Quality assurance system is being established. Institution does not have quality assurance procedures for its activities.</p>	<p>Policies, mission, vision, general strategy are adopted and published. Quality assurance system is established. Quality assurance procedures exist for some activities, but are neither organised nor interconnected.</p>	<p>Quality assurance covers many institutional activities and quality assurance procedures make a cohesive quality assurance system that is continuously and effectively improved on the basis of internal QA audit results. All documents of QA system are published.</p>	<p>Quality assurance covers all institutional activities. QA system is continuously and effectively improved on the basis of results of both internal and external audits.</p>
<p><b>1.2.1. Approving, monitoring and periodical revision of programmes and levels</b></p>	<p>There are no formal mechanisms of approving, monitoring and periodical revision of programmes and levels. Learning outcomes have not been made for all study programmes. Minimal resources have been secured for teaching and study. Students and other stakeholders are not involved in quality assurance activities. Feedback is not collected.</p>	<p>Formal mechanisms of approving, monitoring and periodical revision of programmes and levels exist and are partially implemented. Learning outcomes have been made for all study programmes. Resources are secured to some extent. Students are involved in quality assurance activities.</p>	<p>Mechanisms of approving, monitoring and periodical revision of programmes and levels are fully implemented. Learning outcomes are revised and improved. Adequate resources are secured for most of the activities. Students and other stakeholders are involved in quality assurance activities.</p>	<p>Feedback from all the stakeholders is regularly gathered and used for improving the quality assurance system (improving processes of approving, monitoring and periodical revision of programmes and levels). Adequate resources are secured for all the activities.</p>
<p><b>1.2.2. Scientific research and development</b></p>	<p>There are no formal mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the quality of scientific research and development, or its influence on society. New research methods are not used within teaching and studying processes.</p>	<p>Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the quality of scientific research and development, and its influence on society, are partially implemented. The efficiency of these mechanisms is not systematically followed. New research methods are starting to be used within teaching and studying processes.</p>	<p>Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the quality of scientific research and development, and its influence on society, are fully implemented. The efficiency of these mechanisms is not systematically followed. New research methods are used within teaching and studying processes, but their efficiency is not being evaluated.</p>	<p>The efficiency of implemented mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the quality of scientific research and development and its influence on society is being systematically followed and assessed. The efficiency of new research methods that are being used within teaching and studying processes is evaluated.</p>
<p><b>1.3. Student grading</b></p>	<p>There are no published criteria, regulations and procedures for assessing students' learning outcomes.</p>	<p>Criteria, regulations and procedures for assessing students' learning outcomes exist, but are only partially available to students and are not used consistently.</p>	<p>Criteria, regulations and procedures for assessing students' learning outcomes are published and used consistently, and students are well aware of them.</p>	<p>In accordance with the curriculum and learning outcomes, the procedures of grading the learning outcomes are continuously being improved.</p>
<p><b>1.4. Quality assurance of teaching staff and its interaction and influence on the society of knowledge, and contribution to regional development.</b></p>	<p>A minimum of teaching staff with appropriate scientific and professional qualifications is secured, according to the standards of teaching workload. Teaching staff is not actively involved in regional development.</p>	<p>Knowledge transfer skills and efficiency of teaching are evaluated only by means of student questionnaires. There is no systematic approach to professional development of teaching staff. Teaching staff is only partially involved in regional development.</p>	<p>Knowledge transfer skills and efficiency of teaching are evaluated by use of different methods. Mechanisms that allow for professional and scientific development of teaching staff are partially in place. Teaching staff is actively involved in regional development.</p>	<p>Feedback on quality and efficiency of the teaching process is used for the improvement of teaching staff competences. Results of scientific research from the area of teaching are included in systematic education of teaching staff. Teaching staff is actively involved in regional development.</p>



<b>1.5. Resources for study and student support</b>	QA system does not review student support resources. Resources allocated for student standard satisfy the minimum.	QA system reviews the existing resources for study that are somewhat available and adequate for individual study programmes. Resources allocated for student standard partially satisfy students' needs.	Resources for study are available and adequate for every individual study programme. Resources allocated for student standard mostly satisfy students' needs.	HEIs systematically monitor and improve the level of student support resources for every individual study programme. Resources allocated for student standard fully satisfy students' needs.
<b>1.6. Importance and availability of quality assurance system data</b>	Quality assurance does not provide any information on system and institution to the stakeholders.	There is no systematic gathering and processing of data. Data is only partially available to internal and external stakeholders. Use of information for planning and continuous development of QA system is unsystematic.	Relevant information is available to all the stakeholders and is used for planning and continuous development of QA system.	Quality assurance system is entirely transparent. There is a systematic exchange of relevant information between all the stakeholders/parts of HEI. Relevant information is the basis for planning and continuous development of QA system.
<b>1.7. Public information</b>	Institutions do not publish relevant, unbiased information on their programmes and educational levels.	Institutions only partially publish relevant, unbiased information on their programmes and educational levels.	Institutions mostly publish relevant, unbiased information on their programmes and educational levels.	Institutions publish relevant, unbiased information on their programmes and educational levels on regular basis.



## 5.2. Protocol of the site visit

**THE PROTOCOL OF SITE-VISIT TO THE  
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL AND BUSINESS STUDIES, CELJE  
26-27 March 2015**

**Day 1 – 26 March 2015**

09:00–09:50	Meeting with the management (dean, associate dean, director, representative of the Management Board)
10:00–10:50	Meeting with the Committee for Quality and Evaluation and Committee for Study Affairs
11:00–11:25	Meeting with student representatives in HEI bodies (Student Union, representative in Senate, Committee for Quality and Evaluation, Committee for Student Affairs etc.) and student tutors
11:30–12:10	Meeting with the students (representatives of each year and each study programme – approx. 10-15 students)
12:10–13:10	Meeting with the full-time teachers (incl. assistants)
13:10–15:00	<i>Working lunch of the Audit Committee</i>
15:00–15:40	Meeting with the external associates (contractual teachers)
15:45–16:30	Meeting with the external stakeholders (e.g. business community, local govt.)
16:35–17:10	Meeting with the alumni
17:10–17:20	Meeting with the ISSBS coordinator
17:20–21:00	<i>Internal meeting of the Audit Committee</i>

**Day 2 – 27 March 2015**

09:00–09:55	Tour of the HEI (classrooms, library, students' office, International Office, Career centre etc.)
10:00–10:40	Demonstration of NOVIS and MOODLE
10:45–11:15	Meeting with the professional/administrative/technical staff
11:20–14:00	<i>Internal meeting and working lunch of the Audit Committee</i>
14:00–14:15	Exit meeting with the management (dean, associate dean and director)



### 5.3. ISSBS Response to the ASHE Report on QA Audit of ISSBS and Plan of activities for the follow-up phase