

# Decision of the FIBAA Accreditation and Certification Committee



8<sup>th</sup> Meeting on 30 November 2022

## CERTIFICATION

Project Number: 19/041

Higher Education Institution:

Thinking School Switzerland AG

Course:

Global Leadership Development Program (GLDP)

with specialisation in

- Global Strategy
- Supply Chain Management

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

According to § 7 (2) in conjunction with § 10 (1) in conjunction with § 10 (2) in conjunction with § 10 (4) of the “Special Conditions for awarding the FIBAA Quality Seal for Continuing Education Courses”, the continuing education course is certified with one condition.

Period of Certification: 30 November 2022 – 29 November 2027

Condition:

TS CH elaborates a didactical concept that also takes into account the specific requirements of an online programme such as the use of media as teaching methods and support for participants (answering their questions and giving advice). TS CH will adequately define its didactical concept in accordance with the internationally common understanding of expressions such as blended learning, digital learning, distance learning and/or e-learning.

Proof of meeting this condition is to be supplied by 29 August 2023.

The FIBAA Quality Seal is awarded.

## Assessment Report

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**Institution:**

Thinking School Switzerland AG, Aarburg, Switzerland

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**Continuing Education Course:**

Global Leadership Development Program (GLDP)

with specialisations in:

- Global Strategy
- Supply Chain Management

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**Intended Level According to European Qualification  
Framework (EQF):**

Level 7

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

Thinking School Switzerland AG (TS CH) as a private company is planning to offer the Global Leadership Development Programme (GLDP) with specialisations in Global Strategy and Supply Chain Management as further and extra-occupational education in Vietnam, based on Swiss law. For this purpose TS CH concluded a shareholder agreement with Thinking School Vietnam (TS VN).

In general, the GLDP is a non-academic and non-consecutive programme belonging to tertiary education which is offered in Switzerland and Liechtenstein as a measure of advanced training, mainly for persons with university degree or with relevant professional experience. It consists of four semesters with an overall workload of 60 ECTS credits. This two-year programme is fully delivered in the English language and offered in two alternative tracks: Global Strategy or Supply Chain Management. Most classes will be held in online-sessions during weekday evenings and on weekends<sup>1</sup>, except from an offline bloc, which consists of a seven-day residential week (RW) in Thailand or another destination in Southeast Asia. Graduates are awarded the Master of Advanced Studies (MAS). A substantial part of the programme consists of self-paced asynchronous online content.

MAS degrees will be awarded by TS CH under Swiss law. They are not recognised for regulated professions.

TS CH intends to start the programme in 2023.

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**Date of opening of the procedure:**

June 7, 2019

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

January 3, 2022

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**Date of online conference:**

June 21 and 22, 2022

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**Type of certification:**

Initial certification

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**Mode of study:**

Part-time

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**Initial start of the Programme:**

Not yet fixed

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**Capacity load:**

25 - 30

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**No. of ECTS points assigned to the GLDP programme degrees:**

MAS: 60 ECTS credits

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**Hours (workload) per Credit point:**

25

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<sup>1</sup> During the online conference TS CH and TS VN mentioned that the courses will normally be conducted on Fridays and Saturdays. During the rest of the week (except Sundays), participants will attend their job duties.

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

Level 7

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**Date of the Meeting of FIBAA-Certification Commission:**

November 30, 2022

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**Resolution:**

Panel recommendation: The certification of the course is subject to one condition and is valid for five years.

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**Duration of Certification:**

November 30, 2022, until November 29, 2027

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**Project Manager:**

Dr. Birger Hendriks

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**Panel Members (in alphabetical order):****Prof. Dr. Klaus Harald Holocher**

Jade Hochschule Wilhelmshaven / Oldenburg / Elsfleth,  
University of Applied Sciences, Germany  
Professor of European Transport Economy and Port Management

**Niels Hagen Kirschke**

RWTH Aachen, Technical University, Germany  
Student of Business Administration (B.Sc.)

**Ilja Kogan**

Wayfair GmbH, Berlin, Germany  
Senior Product Manager  
(Global Operations, e-Commerce, Project Management)

**Prof. Dr. Andreas Müller**

Hochschule Kempten, University of Applied Sciences, Germany  
Professor of Human Resources Management

**Dr. Nhat Vo Dai**

Ho Chi Minh University of Technology (HCMUT), Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam  
Acting Vice Head of Testing and Quality Assurance

# Summary

The panel's assessment takes into account the self-assessment report (SAR), the annexes and the results of the online assessment conference as well as the statement of the Thinking School Switzerland AG to the assessment report dated September 1, 2022.

The Global Leadership Development programme with specialisations in Global Strategy and Supply Chain Management (GLDP) of the Thinking School Switzerland AG fulfils the FIBAA quality requirements for certified continuing education courses and can be certified by the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) under one condition. The GLDP leading to the degree Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) meets the demands of level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF).

The panel members identify need for action regarding the following aspects: Logic and transparency of teaching and learning methodology (see chapter 3.4). Therefore, they recommend the accreditation on condition of meeting the following requirements:

**Condition** (see chapter 3.4):

TS CH elaborates a didactical concept that also takes into account the specific requirements of an online programme such as the use of media as teaching methods and support for participants (answering their questions and giving advice). TS CH will adequately define its didactical concept in accordance with the internationally common understanding of expressions such as blended learning, digital learning, distance learning and/or e-learning.

Proof of meeting this condition is to be documented by August 29, 2023.

Furthermore, the panel members identify development potential for the programme regarding the following:

- Conducting internal meetings of the teaching staff members more often to coordinate and to improve the internal tuning of the courses (see chapter 4.1).

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

Moreover, quality requirements are exceeded in:

- Multidisciplinary qualifications and skills (see chapter 3.3);
- Skills for employment / Employability (see chapter 3.5).

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

## Details on the Institution

Thinking School Switzerland<sup>2</sup> (TS CH) was founded in 2019 as a Joint Stock Company (AG) under Swiss law. It intends to offer the programme Master of Advanced Studies in Global Leadership Development (GLDP) with specialisations in Global Strategy and Supply Chain Management in Vietnam as further and extra-occupational education, based on Swiss law. For this purpose TS CH concluded a shareholder agreement with Thinking School Vietnam (TS VN), founded in 2018 under Vietnamese law. The Vietnamese company belongs 100 % to the Fashion Garments 2 Co. Ltd (FGL).

The agreement stipulates that TS VN is one out of four shareholders of TS CH. Moreover, in another contract both companies agreed upon their cooperation in this programme of further education dating June 15, 2022. This agreement stipulates that TS VN provides support on a defined division of labour for the implementation of the programme. Moreover, inter alia details of the application process, of governance and management structure as well as responsibilities and duties of each company have been fixed.

The GLDP shall enable students to gain the higher education title Master of Advanced Studies (MAS). All titles shall be awarded by TS CH under Swiss law. The GLDP is object of the certification procedure at hand. TS CH intends to start the programme in the first quarter of 2023.

In general, the Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) is a non-academic and non-consecutive degree belonging to tertiary education which is offered mainly in Switzerland and Liechtenstein as a measure of advanced training, mainly for persons with a first university degree such as Bachelor or with relevant professional experience. The MAS degree is allowed by Swiss federal law but not recognized for regulated professions. Other than a Master of Science (M.Sc.) or a Master of Arts (M.A.), the MAS in Switzerland does not give access to further education at universities nor does it enable a graduate to start a following PhD. Thus, the MAS degree awarded by a private company will be a private-sector degree.

**The descriptions and assessments on this report are based on TH CH's self-assessment report (SAR) and the annexes as well as on the online conference and the TS CH comments on this draft report.** In this context, also the Diploma of Advanced Studies (DAS) and the Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) had been mentioned as degrees of further training in the SAR. As part of the GLDP the Diploma of Advanced Studies (DAS) and the Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) were included as opt out possibilities for participants. When commenting on the assessment report TS CH informed that it will no longer offer a Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) and a Diploma of Advanced Studies (DAS) as options in the GLDP. While referring to its website<sup>3</sup> TS CH added that it has changed its homepage and relevant documents accordingly, **among them the “Confirmation of Registration” letter, “general Terms and Conditions for the Master of Advanced Studies(MAS)”, “Program Regulations for the MAS Global Leadership Development Program”, descriptions of the “Academic Council” and of the “Student Association / Board of Study (BoS).** Consequently, the descriptions and assessments of CAS and DAS or of its elements mentioned in this assessment report are obsolete. But for clarity reasons they are still mentioned in some parts.

As far as the legal side of further education in Vietnam is concerned, TS CH and TS VN mentioned during the online conference that the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam (MOET) may allow programme courses such as MAS, DAS and CAS but requires a certification.

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<sup>2</sup> The spelling is used differently, in some documents it is written as “Thinkingschool”, e.g. in the company register of canton Aargau, Switzerland.

<sup>3</sup> <https://thinkingschool.ch/switzerland/master-of-advanced-studies-in-global-leadership-development/>, last call September 25, 2022

## Further development of the course and statistical data

As the GLDP has not yet started there are no statistical data about applicants, students and success / drop-out rates available. But **Thinking School CH's GLDP is a further development of the Certified Leadership Development Program (CLDP)** designed and delivered by TS VN and the Fashion Garments 2 Co. Ltd (FGL). The CLDP served as the pilot programme for the GLDP. The panel had the opportunity to talk to participants of this pilot course to receive feedback from them.

According to TS CH<sup>4</sup>, based on the results of pilot programme CLDP and lessons learnt, the company decided to design, develop, and implement the GLDP with the following process:

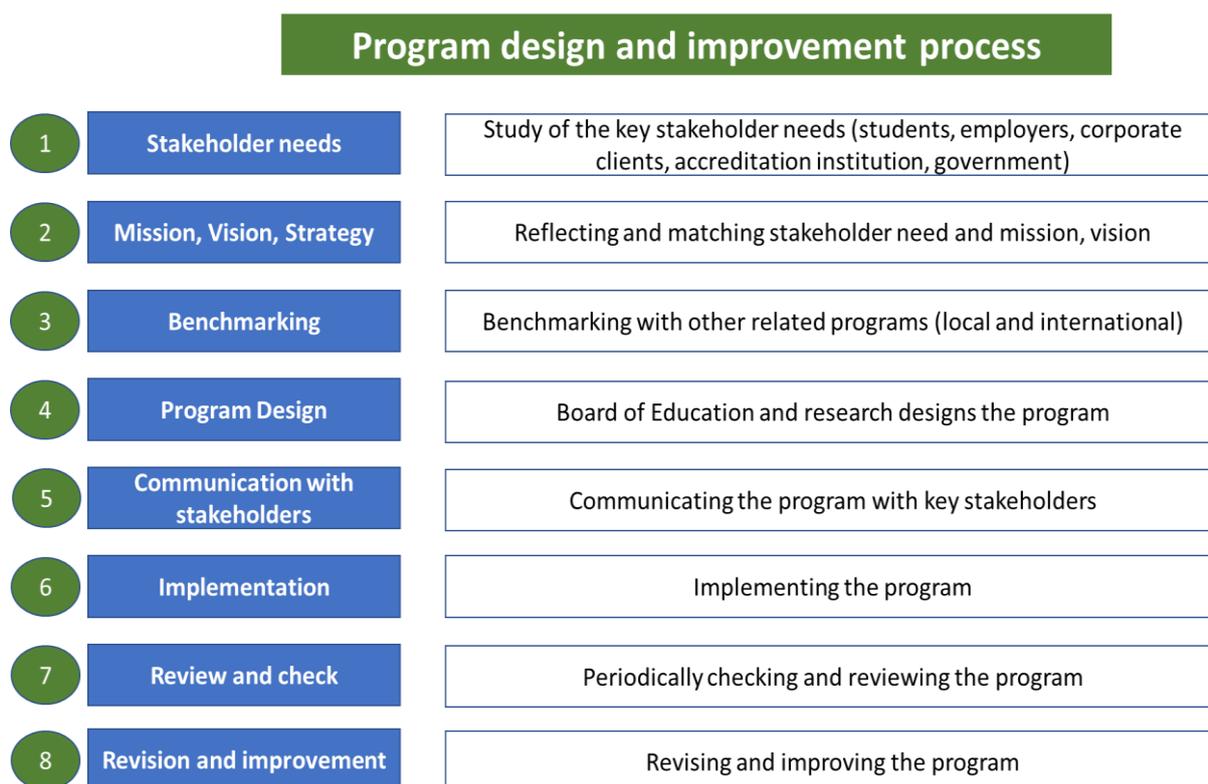


Table 1: GLDP design and improvement process

Moreover, the following lessons have been learnt from the pilot programme CLDP:

- The operational relationship between TS CH and TS VN ran smoothly because the roles were clearly defined.
- On the training side a stricter regime must take place, e.g., providing full documentation in time and clearly defined format for the Thesis.
- Contents and mode of delivery met the needs and expectations of the students, who have been quite satisfied.

As for the governance structure, formal structures have been created by TS CH and TS VN to manage the GLDP: a Board of Directors, two Programme Directors, and an Academic Council.

The Board of Directors (henceforth: Board) is made up of the four shareholders of TS CH. Reporting to the Board are the Program Director, the Co-Program Director and the Academic Council.

<sup>4</sup> See self-assessment report (SAR) p. 10 f.

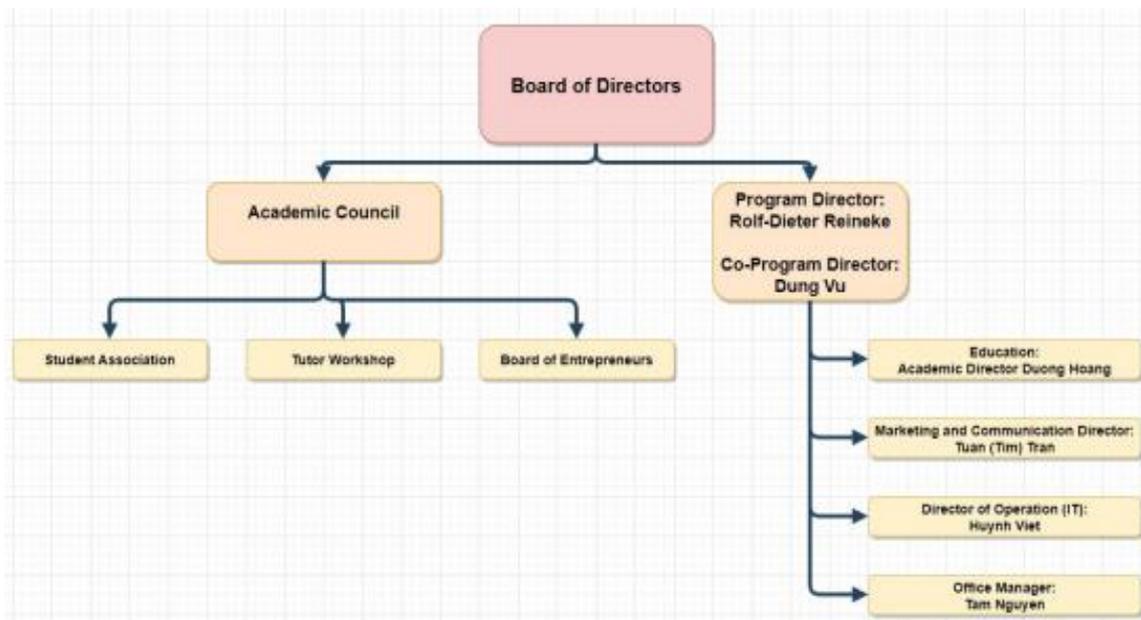


Table 2: Governance Structure

The Board is responsible for establishing all rules, roles, and procedures of the entire organization. It elects a chairperson (President of the Board) for the duration of one year. Furthermore, the Board appoints the Programme Directors and takes full responsibility for all the activities of the operational team as well as for decisions that are taken by the Programme Directors and Academic Council.

**The focus of the Board’s activities is that of strategy and the budget. Strategy and budget proposals** are discussed at Board meetings. The Programme Directors set the Board meeting agenda along with the chairperson of the Board, although all members of the Board are invited to contribute. The budget is made by the Programme Directors and is submitted for approval to the Board once a year, along with an end of year report covering both the administrative and academic activities of the programme.

The Academic Council takes care of the programme design, subject contents, and quality aspects of the programme. The Chairperson is appointed for the duration of two years. The Academic Council is responsible for the quality of the programme. It defines the curriculum and the academic criteria for the e-learning courses and the residential modules. Also, included are the criteria for the final thesis for the MAS degree. It sets standards for the faculty involved in the programme. The Academic Council must also develop and implement quality standards for the programme and exam regulations, as well as setting the standards for the admission of individual students to the programme.

The Academic Council has no budget per se, but if expenditure is required, then the Board will be asked for financial resources. The Chairperson of the Academic Council must report their activities and proposals to the Board. The Board may over-rule certain decisions of the Academic Council if they conflict with the overall goals of the programme. The members of the Council are appointed by the Board based on their academic credentials.

The Academic Council Chairperson focuses on the didactical issues while the Programme Directors are responsible for the implementation.

Next to the Programme Directors and the Academic Council, two more bodies contribute to quality control at the programme level, namely, the Student Association and the Tutors.

The Student Association refers to the student group. The Student Association elects two representatives who are responsible for chairing the Student Association meetings and collecting

ideas and proposals from their fellow students. The representatives then meet during the residential week with the Academic Council Chairperson and the Programme Directors to discuss course and residential week evaluations, as well as present proposals from the Student Association.

### Rating:

The panel notes that the GLDP can lead to the MAS degree of further education, mainly accepted in Switzerland and in general also in Vietnam. It also notes that the training programme requires an first university degree such as Bachelor or an equivalent practical experience. The panel welcomes that the management structure for the programme has been well established.

# Description and appraisal in Detail

## 1 STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

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

TS CH describes the GLDP as a blended learning programme and bases its learning goals on the Dublin Descriptors (DD) that are related to five general learning competencies: Knowledge and Understanding, Applying Knowledge and Understanding, Making Judgements, Communication and Lifelong Learning Skills. For each DD TS CH defined a programme learning goal (programme objective):

DD	DD explained	Programme Objectives
DD 1: Knowledge and understanding	Provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing or applying ideas often in a research context	Students can identify and interpret global opportunities in the international business environment
DD 2: Applying knowledge and understanding	Problem solving abilities applied in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multi-disciplinary contexts)	Students can draw upon deep functional knowledge and perspectives to analyze and solve global business challenges
DD 3: Making judgments	Ability to integrate knowledge and manage complexity, and formulate judgments with incomplete data	Students can assess and make responsible and inclusive decisions for all relevant stakeholders
DD 4: Communication	Communicate the conclusions, the underpinning knowledge and rationale (restricted scope) to specialist and non-specialist audiences	Students can effectively communicate their conclusions to superiors, peers, subordinates and external stakeholders within a multi-cultural context
DD 5: Lifelong Learning	Study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous	Students can contribute both creative and sustainable solutions to genuine business problems

Table 3: Dublin Descriptors and Programme Objectives

Oriented at these programme objectives TS CH defined learning objectives aiming at measuring the learning outcomes for each course. These learning objectives are then used as guide for the course assessments. Obviously, each assessment measures different competencies and this will be reflected in the assessment rubrics used which are fine-tuned to each course.

By using rubrics in form of DDs TS CH intends to provide students with more focused feedback and to have an overview of how well they are achieving the learning goals at a course level but also amalgamated at the programme level.

According to the World Economic Forum (WEF 2018), 53% of Vietnam workforce will need to be **reskilled in the years to come**. WEF's Vietnam profile provided the list of emerging skills for future of jobs in Vietnam which includes:

- Analytical thinking and innovation
- Creativity, originality, and initiative
- Critical thinking and analysis
- Leadership and social influence
- Complex problem-solving.

The GLDP will be offered in English language although aiming at the Vietnamese market. According to TS CH<sup>5</sup> this seems to be reasonable because the further education is addressed at people like expatriates and foreign managers who are working in Vietnam. This means the programme addresses individual learners living in Vietnam and the ASEAN region as well as corporate customers - Vietnamese and multinational companies that pay tuition fees for the employees they are sending to the GLDP. Moreover, TS CH estimates that people who work for NGOs or the Vietnamese Government may also be interested in the programme<sup>6</sup>.

TS CH wants to address this workforce and orientates the programme objectives at these skills as well **which also aims to further develop the participant's personality.**

### Rating:

The qualification objectives of the programme are explained and convincingly presented in relation to the target group. They embrace academic proficiency, comprehensive employability, as well as the development of **the individual student's personality.**

The course objectives are based on subject-specific and generic learning outcomes which are in line with the academic principles and the level of the qualification to be awarded on completion. The course takes into account the requirements of the European Qualification Framework in terms of Dublin Descriptors.

As the programme has not started yet TS CH was not able to take into account the findings of alumni-tracking studies when defining the learning objectives.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1.	Strategy and Objectives					
1.1*	Logic and transparency of course objectives			X		

## 1.2 International orientation of the course

The programme pursues an international objective by explicitly aiming at providing training beyond regional and national frameworks. The international orientation of the programme is the result of the following various aspects:

The programme will initially be in English with the aim of offering it in the Vietnamese language at a later stage<sup>7</sup>. With its blended learning approach, the programme aims to recruit students from

<sup>5</sup> See SAR p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> See SAR p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> This would require a further certification of the programme at hand.

Vietnam and around Southeast Asia. To enhance international and multinational perspective, students are offered one residential week (RW) in a foreign country outside Vietnam. The course contents were developed by competent international faculty. The TS CH Academic Council consists of international tutors<sup>8</sup> and other qualified academics.

## Rating:

On the basis of the international orientation of the course (for the implementation [see chapter 3.2.3](#)) the programme intention is to sustainably promote the employability of graduates.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality re-quirements	n.r.
1.	Strategy and Objectives					
1.2	International orientation of the course			X		

## 1.3 Positioning of the course

For offering the GLDP in Vietnam TS CH wants **to use the “Swissness”** (Swiss national umbrella brand) of the programme for marketing purposes in terms of a unique selling point. According to TS CH, there are international programmes offered in Vietnam but none from Switzerland.

Moreover, TS CH takes into account the strong orientation of Vietnam and of the MOET<sup>9</sup> at improving the higher education of the country:

- Access to higher education has more than doubled since 2000, and about 54 percent of the current two million tertiary education students are female<sup>10</sup>.
- Progress is to be seen in the qualification levels of academic staffing: the share of university lecturers with Master and/or PhD degrees increased from 47 percent in 2007 to 72 percent in 2015.
- The number of joint programmes and internationally accredited academic programmes has increased.
- In terms of research output, the number of citable documents in per capita terms has almost tripled in the past 10 years. Vietnamese universities now appear in the global university rankings: Vietnam National University-Hanoi (VNU-Hanoi), Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City (VNU-HCMC) and Hanoi University of Science & Technology (HUST) are in the top 1000 on either QS World University Ranking or the Times Higher Education ranking.

Vietnam's labor market has a large scale with more than 56 million, accounting for 57.4% of the total population. The country has more than 600,000 active enterprises, of which there are 17,000 foreign direct invested enterprises with approximately five million employees. Only one out of ten employees has university and post-graduate degrees, with a total of almost six million people. This rate is low compared to other countries in the world. Therefore, the demand for skilled workers in Vietnam is high.

Around one third of the Vietnamese GDP is generated by State-Owned Enterprises (SOE). Ten years back the percentage stood at around 50% of GDP. Foreign governments support Vietnam in its

<sup>8</sup> TS CH uses the expression “tutor” for lecturer or teacher.

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam

<sup>10</sup> See SAR p. 16., apparently based on figures of the World Bank, see [www.statista.com](http://www.statista.com)

effort to privatize (equitize) through their development agencies such as Agence Française de Développement (AFD). To implement this transformation process it needs senior executives with a more market-oriented leadership style than in previous SOE times. Leadership training, especially critical thinking, is a crucial element in this transition which TS is aiming to provide. These newly privatized former SOE must compete in a globalized world and the leaders of these companies must formulate competitive strategies to survive in a free market economy (Global Strategy is one of the two programme specializations). The most influential technological changes in the labor market over the next years, globally and in Vietnam, come from automation and information technology. Topics such as industry 4.0, enterprise resource planning are part of the second specialization: Supply Chain Management.

The GLDP is the only product that TS CH is offering right now.

**Rating:**

The panel gained the impression that with the described profile and the qualification objectives the programme is competitive on the education and job markets.

The course **programme’s qualification objectives correspond to the institution’s concept and strategic planning.**

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality re-quirements	n.r.
<b>1.</b>	<b>Strategy and Objectives</b>					
1.3	Positioning of the course					
1.3.1	Positioning of the course in the education and job market, and the professional field (“Employability”)			X		
1.3.2	Position of course within the institution’s overall strategy			X		

**2 ADMISSION**

Based on the “Regulations for the MAS Global Leadership Development Program”<sup>11</sup> which also cover admission aspects, all potential candidates for the programme must submit an application that will be checked by the Programme Directors. If the application appears sufficient the Programme Directors will then interview the potential candidate via phone.

The Academic Council sets the admission standards. As the objectives of the study programme **focus on the participants’ skills and competences**, the following conditions for a formal qualification apply to admission to the GLDP programme:

- University degree (Bachelor or other university degree) and at least three years of appropriate professional experience as a rule.
- Applicants not holding a university degree may be admitted if they demonstrate their ability to participate in the programme by submitting an essay and other evidence. In addition, they need to have appropriate professional experience and achievements of not less than five years as a rule. Evidence can be provided by means of documents such as a certificate of

<sup>11</sup> Issued by TS CH

employment, official documents, presentations, description of professional activities or reports, the curriculum vitae, certificates of continuing education, or a higher professional examination / university entry exam.

- Additional conditions for admission to the MAS programme are: potential to achieve the objectives of the study programme and an appropriate motivation for postgraduate studies or suitable career goals pursued by the candidate as aligned to the course objectives.

As part of the admissions process, all candidates are interviewed by the Programme Director who also assesses their English skills during the interview. If the Programme Director feels that their level is not sufficient, then the candidate will be asked to complete the TOEFL or other tests. In this case, a minimum score of e.g., 210 (computer based TOEFL test) will be required, or a corresponding score for an internet-based test. Failure to reach this minimum level will lead to rejection of the candidate.

IELTS 6.0	TOEFL CBT 210	TOEFL IBT 78	TOEFL paper 547	Cambridge Advanced Certificate B 2
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TS CH decides on admission to the course which will be documented with the reasons being stated. Admission itself is done by the Programme Director.

Once the application is successful, an Offer Letter is sent to the candidate. The candidate then decides to accept or decline the offer. When the offer is accepted, the candidate officially becomes enrolled in the GLDP.

The yearly intake shall be between 25-30 students on average. However, students may start the programme at two different entry points per year. New students join the ever-running programme and study alongside students that may already have taken some e-learning courses. The total number of students during the year may sum up to 50 to 60.

Upon acceptance the student receives a “Confirmation Letter” that **refers to the “Study Regulations” as well as to the “General Terms and Conditions for the Master of Advanced Studies (MAS).”** The latter stipulate aspects such as procedures for registration and paying fees, conditions for disenrollment and absence of the participant and the cancellation of courses. They also include the respective consequences for the reduction of fees. It also mentions that the participant will take part in a programme that follows Swiss law and (in the case of success) will be awarded with a Swiss degree. The exclusive place of jurisdiction is Aarau in Switzerland. Clarified are consequences for cases such as: a participant cannot take part in courses in cases of illness or pregnancy; a participant performs insufficiently or runs out of money.

Moreover, the participant receives a document **called “Student Offer – Acceptance form.”** This paper includes information about personal details, course information with the number and title of the courses that the applicant wishes to accept, and the dates of the first course, moreover the other aspects such as recognition of prior learning. The applicant must sign this paper as well as the confirmation letter before enrolment, so they become parts of the contract between TS CH and participant.

In this context TS CH communicates the following clarification on its website<sup>12</sup>: **“The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) allows you to seek acknowledgment of academic achievements when applying for enrolment in other international programs. MAS is awarded by Thinking School Switzerland AG under Swiss law.”**

<sup>12</sup><https://thinkingschool.ch/switzerland/master-of-advanced-studies-in-global-leadership-development/> (last seen August 12, 2022).

The programme is taught by 13 tutors from different countries plus five tutors from Vietnam who will partly be working together with the other ones in team-teaching or replacing them. All of them are on **TS CH's payroll**. The contract between TS CH and the tutor contains provisions about the **content of courses, remuneration as well as "General Terms and Conditions"** about tutor obligations of both sides, data protection, property rights.

Control of the institutional income is in the hands of the Board of TS CH. Therefore, the Board decides the remuneration of tutoring, and budget for the Residential Week. TS VN decides on salaries for non-teaching staff.

Agreements, in the form of Service Agreements between TS CH and TS VN are in place. TS VN serves as the leading party for operational staff and IT support. TS VN has five full-time employees working on the programme. They have employment contracts according to Vietnamese law. All contracts comply with the relevant Vietnamese labor regulations.

## Rating:

The course aims at specific target groups, which are defined on the basis of previous appropriate professional experience and knowledge as well as of the educational level. The choice of the specific target groups is based on the strategic objectives of the certificate course<sup>13</sup>.

The admission conditions and requirements have been defined and are coherent. They take into account the specific characteristics of the target groups. They support the achievement of the course objectives. This also includes the language requirements given the fact that all courses will be conducted in English.

The contracts between TS CH and the participants as well as between TS CH and the teaching staff and the administrative staff – the latter with integration of TS VN - are set down and documented. Rights and obligations of both parties have been established and are known to all relevant parties. Transparency and legal certainty exist.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality re-quirements	n.r.
2.	Admission					
2.1*	Focus on the target group			X		
2.2*	Admission conditions			X		
2.3*	Legal relationship			X		

## 3 IMPLEMENTATION

### 3.1 Structure

The GLDP is a 60 ECTS credits programme with a duration of 24 months that consists of 18 months for courses and six months for the thesis. Individually, the whole timeframe might be shorter if a participant can finalise the thesis in less than six months. Currently, two areas of specialisation will be possible: Global Strategy and Supply Chain Management. For achieving a MAS degree, every participant must take 15 courses, all of them have a workload of 3 ECTS credits each. The whole

<sup>13</sup> See above chapter 1.1

programme will be conducted online, except the residential week (RW) and course examinations. The programme will be fully delivered in English language. The online classes will be held during weekday evenings, but mostly on weekends<sup>14</sup>. The seven-day residential week (RW) will take place in Thailand or another destination in Southeast Asia. TS CH is responsible for the curriculum of the GLDP, in close partnership with TS VN.

In the SAR TS CH had presented a programme overview of the full GLDP curriculum that included three components: The first component provided a foundation of leadership, including self-leadership skills, team/organisational leading and problem solving. The second component equipped students with knowledge of global strategic management or supply chain management. The last component, the Master Thesis, provided students with an opportunity to apply theories and research methodology to their business practice. According to a graphic, the whole structure was oriented at a period of three semesters, including the specialisation courses.

In its comments on the draft report TS CH introduced a deviating programme structure like the previous one but now with four foundation components for a period of four semesters (see graphic below). With this design, the graduated students will be expected to have gained leadership skills and strategic management understanding with a global business perspective.

The course curriculum is designed based on the survey of potential students and business managers and benchmarked against other higher education programmes in the US and Europe. TS CH nominates as examples the United International Business Schools with six campuses in different European countries, offering inter alia an MBA on Global Leadership, and the Topica Edtech Group in Vietnam which is a multinational educational technology company that provides online education solutions that offers Bachelor programmes and short courses on Business accounting, law and IT.

### Master of Advanced Studies proposed schedule

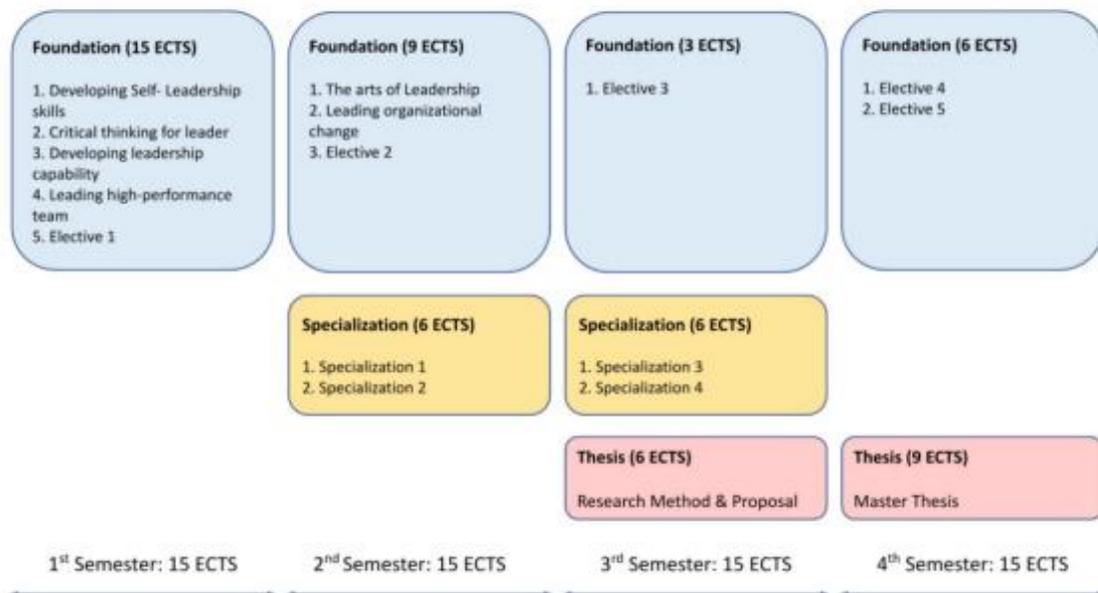


Table 4: Full GLDP structure with MAS degree<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> During the online conference TS CH and TS VN mentioned that the courses will normally be conducted on Fridays and Saturdays. During the rest of the week (except Sundays), participants will attend their job duties.

<sup>15</sup> Designed by TS CH and included in its comments on this report.

To be qualified to graduate, students must accumulate at least 60 ECTS. The curriculum comprises approximately 55% foundation (core and elective) courses, 20% of specialised ones and the remaining 25% for the thesis. The students must choose five out of the six elective courses.

Course block	Number of ECTS	Percentage
Foundation	33	55
<i>of that: Required</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Electives</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>25</i>
Specialisation	12	20
Thesis	15	25
<i>of that: Research method and project work</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Thesis</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>15</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5: Statistics of ECTS of each kind of course blocks

According to the SAR<sup>16</sup>, TS CH ensures academic quality by applying strict controls over educational activities. The Masters level learning indicates a high degree of autonomy and room for own initiative, as well as a solid knowledge of scientific methods. These skills are addressed throughout all courses. Masters level learning also means that experience can be used to improve study results on the one hand, and to enrich the study experience on the other hand. By having the students work together in groups and letting them apply the knowledge they are expected to be working on practical cases, all of their diverse backgrounds and working experiences are combined for the best learning experience possible.

Beside course work, the MAS participants have to attend an obligatory residential week (RW) in another country (e.g. Thailand). As an assessment for the RW, students must do a presentation on a living case study for which they receive a pass or fail. In terms of credits, by now the RW has not been included into the curriculum.

Whilst the functional areas of leadership are covered in the e-learning courses, the face-to-face nature of the RW offers the opportunity of developing soft skills. During the residential week students receive a practical training in the following areas:

- Influencing / interaction skills
- Problem Solving in teams
- Coaching skills
- Emotional intelligence

These soft skill trainings give students the opportunity to discover and develop their personal strengths as well as to be aware of their own weaknesses. Given that soft skills should be practiced and experienced rather than studied, insofar participants are not being assessed. Attendance of these skills classes is compulsory.

All courses have a workload of three ECTS credits. They are explained in the course descriptions. Three ECTS credits are equivalent to 75 hours, out of which 48 hours are directed towards self-study and 24 hours are contact hours plus a three-hour exam. Out of the 24 hours self-study, approximately four hours are required for reading journal articles, ten hours for working through the lecture notes including textbook and ten hours for reflection. As far as the contact hours are concerned TS CH did not explain in the SAR in which way the class instructions as part of the study programme are conducted. When commenting on the draft report TS CH informed that now in the newly developed course descriptions the contact hours are conducted as webinars.

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<sup>16</sup> See p. 20.

The course descriptions contain information about intended learning outcomes, learning content, teaching and learning methods, the language, about recommended reading (mainly one book or article as **”core reading”** and **additional** journals) and the information on the formative assessments, corresponding to the requirements of the [ECTS Users’ Guide](#).

For the GLDP, TS CH provides a Certificate Supplement that documents the courses and the associated qualifications in a transparent and coherent manner.

**The “Program Regulation for the MAS Global Leadership Development Program”** includes requirements for assessments and for the final thesis. The academic calendar, which includes the examination schedule, is published online at the start of each semester and the final examinations are communicated to students at the beginning of each course.

The assessment of the participants' performance to be demonstrated in the credit records is affected in accordance with the Swiss grading system 6.0 to 1.0, whereby 6.0 is the best grade and half grades are permitted. With grades between 6.0 and 4.0 a credit record is deemed to have been passed, with grades between 3.5 and 1.0 a credit record is deemed to have been failed. The current graduation year and the two previous years are used as a basis for calculating the relative grade.

Participants can make a second attempt for examination. This applies to any credit record and the Master Thesis. After failing to succeed the second attempt, the participant must repeat the whole course with the next intake, with the course’s **full tuition to be charged**. If a new intake has not been launched, the lecturing part of the course may not be guaranteed. The time limitation within which a student must repeat and to pass a course (including the Master Thesis) is 24 months since the last lecturing date of his/her intake.

Most courses will have graded Forum participation as part of the overall assessment. Forum contributions stretch over the whole duration of a course.

The competencies or learning outcomes defined in the course descriptions are examined and assessed by means of credit records. A continuously updated transcript of records documents the performance of the participants by itemizing the courses or modules completed, the credit points attained, and the marks awarded.

As far as the feasibility of the study-workload is concerned a three-credit course with 72 hours (plus three hours exam) takes four weeks which translates into an average workload of 18 hours per week.

## Rating:

The panel has the view that the course's structural elements are convincingly described and motivated. The course structure serves to promote the objectives and the students' acquisition of knowledge and competences in line with the given objectives.

The panel realized that the RW, although being a compulsory part of the programme, was not included in the curriculum and the calculation of the workload. When commenting on this report TS CH informed the panel **that it wants to avoid this problem and will now teach the course “The Art of Leadership” offline during the Residential Week in physical meetings and workshops**. This has been included into the respective course description. The panel members welcome this programme modification because it offers an at least brief opportunity for a training of leadership and interpersonal and social skills in presence. It also includes the RW into the workload calculation.

The following ECTS elements: credit points and workload specifications, have been implemented. The programme includes courses rather than modules. The guidelines for workload calculation are clearly and understandably deduced. The course descriptions provide detailed descriptions of intended learning outcomes and the information defined in the **ECTS Users’ Guide**. The column **“recommended reading”** gives the participants the chance to dig deeper into the subjects.

A Certificate Supplement documents the GLDP and the associated qualifications for the MAS in a transparent and coherent manner.

There are legally binding study and exam regulations which are orientated towards the principles of study regulations in higher education. **The course's characteristic structural features have been implemented.**

The panel has the view that the feasibility of the programme workload is in general ensured by a suitable curriculum design, by an adequate number and frequency of examinations, by appropriate support services as well as academic and general student counselling. However, the calculation of the workload also depends on the way of instruction during a contact hour: They can consist of e.g. tutorials, a practical, laboratory courses or seminars. Therefore, the panel in its first report draft had recommended that TS CH describes "contact hours" in more detail at an adequate place. As TS CH has **now clarified what the terms "Contact hour" and "Self-Study hour" mean** with reference to the newly developed and presented course descriptions this recommendation is obsolete.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Implementation</b>					
3.1	Structure					
3.1.1	Structure of the course			X		
3.1.2*	Application of the „European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)“ and modularisation			X		
3.1.3*	Study and examination regulations			X		
3.1.4*	Feasibility of study workload			X		

## 3.2 Content

Based on the programme objectives<sup>17</sup> which are aligned with the Dublin Descriptors (DD) learning objectives have been developed for each course. The respective and responsible tutor must define them. Assessments are broken down in DD rubrics and measure the learning outcomes.

TS CH has given a sample for course learning objectives and their assessments including weights given for an individual assignment in marketing management<sup>18</sup>:

<sup>17</sup> See above chapter 1.1.

<sup>18</sup> See SAR p. 25 f.

Individual Assignment Marketing Management			Weight
Dublin Descriptors	Associated programme (GLDP) Learning Goals	Learning Objectives fined-tuned to the course	
<b>DD1: Knowledge and Understanding</b>	Students can identify and interpret global opportunities in the international business environment	Students can identify the necessary tools and resources needed to write a marketing plan	
<b>DD2: Application of knowledge</b>	Students can draw upon deep functional knowledge and perspectives to analyze and solve global business challenges	Students can apply marketing tools	
<b>DD3: Judgment</b>	Students can assess and make responsible and inclusive decisions for all relevant stakeholders	Students can make recommendations for a given marketing problem that are consistent and relevant	50.00%
		Students can predict how their market landscape might change in future and adapt	
<b>DD4: Communication</b>	Students can effectively communicate their conclusions to superiors, peers, subordinates and external stakeholders within a multi-cultural context	Students can reference their work accurately and clearly	
		Students use correct English spelling and grammar	
		Students can write and present in a convincing and logically structured manner	50.00%
<b>DD5: Self-Direction</b>	Students can contribute both creative and sustainable solutions to genuine business problems	Students can collect their own data and/or research papers to support their recommendations.	
		Students provide creative and original solutions to marketing issues	

As one can see, the participants get assessed in DD3 and DD4 (with equal weight) in their individual assignment. According to the course description the individual assignment accounts for 40% of the overall grade. The final exam (50%) assesses in particular DD1 and DD2, but also DD5. Forum contributions (10%) assess DD4. Adding up the assessment weights gives an overview which DDs are assessed in which course and an overall average.

As for the GLDP (MAS), the list of core courses<sup>19</sup> show they are thematically focused on leadership whereas the list of elective courses opens the chance to the participants to dig into diverse subjects. The following electives are planned: Managerial Economics; Managerial Accounting and Corporate Finance; International Marketing; Cross-Cultural Communication; Creative Problem Solving; Coaching and Mentoring.

<sup>19</sup> See above chapter 3.1.

The specialisations on Global Strategy and on Supply Chain Management contain courses that reflect distinct aspects of these subjects.

In the course, theory and practice are systematically linked. Thinking School uses:

- Case studies, practical applications, discussion about job problems from the students,
- Capstone projects, with practical problems from companies, and input from managers,
- Guest speakers

As to international and intercultural contents of the courses international textbooks are used compulsorily to design syllabus and content. Intercultural aspects are reflected in the case studies gathered from more than 20 multinational companies with genuine business cases and situations. English as a language of education and international business is the key language to lecture and learn. The academic staff includes international faculty members who were graduated from universities in different countries with PhD. Also, faculty members and guest speakers come from diverse countries such as the USA, Switzerland, and Vietnam. TS CH uses an international online library to offer learning material and reference for students. The field trip (RW) abroad adds to the international dimension of the programme.

As outlined above, the programme follows the Dublin Descriptors. Conveying methodological competencies finds expression in course design as well as student assessments.

The MAS programme requires students to undertake the module Research Methods and Proposal in preparation of the thesis. It consists of the course Research Method and a Final Capstone Project, each with three ECTS credits<sup>20</sup>. Each course shall provide an opportunity for participants to establish or advance their understanding of research through critical exploration of research language, ethics, and approaches.

The Research Method course introduces the language of research, ethical principles and challenges, and the elements of the research process within quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method approaches.

The Capstone Project, which students have six months to complete, is connected to the Research Method course. The objectives are to evaluate, select and apply concepts, frameworks and theories learned throughout the course to identify problems and creatively generate alternative solutions.

Assessments are designed to measure how students accumulate learning outcomes of the programme and courses. For the courses there are several types of formative assessments used but – except from the mid-term and final exams - not graded:

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<sup>20</sup> See above chapter 3.1.

No.	Activities
01	Watch clips, read course materials
02	Read, watch, analyse
03	Quizzes
04	Individual assignment
05	Group assignment
06	Individual, group presentation
07	Role play
08	Group discussion, debates
09	Games: Kahoot, Quizlet,
10	Peer-to-peer feedback
11	Teacher feedback
12	Mid-term, final exams

Table 6: Types of assessment

All courses are credited with three ECTS lasting 75 hours each. A course translates into four weeks e-learning.

The summative assessment is described in the course description and done in form of a final exam. Solely basing the course grade on a final exam may not reflect the true performance of a student because s/he may suffer from general exam phobia or just having a difficult day. Therefore, a second assessment in form of an Individual Assignment (IA) has been added. The IA stretches over the duration of the whole course (four weeks). Since peer learning is an important part of constructivist pedagogy a third assessment criterion has been added in form of discussion board (forum) contributions. Without grading forum contributions students simply would not participate in an orderly and timely manner. Depending on the course the weights of these three criteria can vary. There are courses that lend themselves more to discussions than others. For example, marketing topics give more room for discussions than managerial accounting. The types of exams and the assessment weights for a typical course are:

- Individual Assignment: 40%
- Discussion Board: 10%
- Final exam: 50% (3-hour examination)

The decision whether to include Discussion Board as an assessment criterion or not is left to the tutor. It should not exceed 10%.

IA and Forum Discussions are delivered online<sup>21</sup>. Final exams are always in a physical (offline) setting, supervised by a trusted staff member. The exams will be partly conducted during the RW or closely supervised at designated locations. Locations will be at Hanoi, Danang and Ho Chi Minh City. Other locations are possible, depending on the place where students live. Start of the exam is always at the same time in all locations. The final exams are described in the Course descriptions in format and content to ascertain the intended learning outcomes.

The Master Thesis of the MAS programme is intended to show that the students are able - based on the course of studies attended - to deal with the subject independently, competently, in an appropriate form, intelligibly, on an academically sound basis and with practical applicability. TS CH has elaborated binding “**Master Thesis Guidelines**” as well as “**Program Regulations for the MAS Global Leadership Development Program**” that inter alia describe the procedure and the

<sup>21</sup> Additional information from TS CH.

requirements for the MAS thesis. The Master Thesis must be written in English and is assessed and graded by the two supervisors.

There are two types of theses that students may select: a Business Consulting Project or an Entrepreneurial Project. These projects typically require a broad research approach.

The business consulting project gives the students the opportunity to research real organisational issues with an eye to forming concrete recommendations. These projects typically take a more functional approach, focusing on specific activities within the organisation. Conclusions and recommendations are in terms of identifying where problems lie and developing solutions to these problems. It is essential that participants consider at least two functional areas of the organisation and make a clear link to the organisation's strategy.

The entrepreneurial project is aimed at participants who want to set up their own business. The project is a business plan of how to bring a new product to the market. The "entrepreneurial" thesis emphasizes the empirical analysis but also relies upon theoretical concepts. The analysis must reflect an in-depth understanding of the issues related to the project under development.

Workshops are organised to help students with the thesis.

**The final thesis's length** for the MAS shall be approximately 50 pages (strictly no more than 20.000 words), excluding tables, figures, appendices. It starts with a 100-word abstract followed by a 1,500 word (3-4 pages) executive summary specifying the topic, methodology, empirical analysis and final recommendations. Both abstract and executive summary should also be submitted in separate documents (electronic version only).

The final thesis may only be submitted once the supervisor agrees that it is complete and sufficient to pass. The thesis must be submitted two months before the date of defense. Once submitted, it will be sent to the second reader (a member of the Academic Council). The second reader must also accept the thesis and provide a grade. If the thesis is rejected, it must be improved before resubmission. The assessment of the Master Thesis is documented in a written report drawn up by the supervisor and put on record.

The Master Thesis is to be presented and defended in the framework of a 20–25-minute colloquium held in English.

Should students feel that they have been unfairly graded, they may submit a complaint to the Academic Council. All appeals should be done in writing and submitted first to the Programme Directors who will then submit the appeal to the Academic Council. Given that the Academic Council meets only once a year, the Chairman of the Academic Council has the authority to take decisions on its behalf.

The GLDP MAS is deemed to have been successfully completed if:

- all required credit records have been achieved,
- the RW was attended,
- evidence is given of attendance in at least 70 % of all teaching sessions,
- the required Master Thesis has been assessed as passed.

Successful students will receive:

- the corresponding degree with the title of "Master of Advanced Studies – Global Leadership Development Program,"
- a document stating the performance attained (Transcript of Records),
- and a Certificate Supplement

## Rating:

The panel has the view that the curriculum adequately reflects the qualification objectives of the course. The contents of the courses are well-balanced, logically connected and oriented towards the intended learning outcomes. The lectures and seminars on offer cover the contents necessary for achieving the qualification objectives and are outcome-oriented.

In the programme, theory and practice are systematically linked. Career-integrated methods (case studies, scientific projects) are part of the course. Knowledge delivery and practical contributions **complement each other to develop the students' competences.**

The international orientation of the programme can be seen in the international composition of the teaching staff, the international and/or intercultural contents and the lectures being held in the English language. The practical training of intercultural aspects contributes **to the students'** capacity to act in an intercultural environment.

The acquisition of methodological competences on the defined level the Dublin Descriptors is assured. It is set down as a learning objective in the module descriptions.

The ability for academic work is proven through the Research course and a capstone project, which relate to the national and/or European qualification framework for the intended qualification level. The ability for academic work is set down as a learning objective in the course descriptions. Proof of science-based teaching within the course has been provided.

As for the MAS, the requirements are in accordance with the desired qualification level 7.

The learning outcomes that must be proven are described. In the newly presented course descriptions TS CH has now defined the exams for the courses **which are** oriented at these intended learning outcomes.

Moreover, the panel welcomes that TS CH has developed guidelines for the Master Thesis (MAS) which creates transparency and reliability.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Implementation</b>					
3.2	Content					
3.2.1*	Logic and conceptual coherence			X		
3.2.2	Integration of theory and practice			X		
3.2.3	International and intercultural contents			X		
3.2.4	Methodological competence			X		
3.2.5	Academic work and science-based teaching			X		
3.2.6*	Examinations			X		

### 3.3 Multidisciplinary qualifications and skills

TS CH intends to foster **the participants'** creative thinking beyond a single functional area by diverse methods, such as encouraging them to imagine new scenarios to produce innovative solutions. Also, participants learn in online role plays and discussions or debates public speaking as well as online communication. Moreover, they are trained in cooperation and conflict handling in group work. The participants can use these skills in the society and the workplace.

#### Rating:

The students acquire communication and public-speaking skills as well as cooperation and conflict handling skills in accordance with the qualification objectives. This is supported by means of suitable didactical and methodological measures.

Participants are enabled to acquire multidisciplinary qualifications and knowledge, as well as trained in using practice-oriented methods (e.g. role-playing, simulation, virtual elements).

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Implementation</b>					
3.3	Multidisciplinary qualifications and skills			X		

### 3.4 Didactics and Methodology

The GLDP has not started yet. The operational planning of the blended learning courses<sup>22</sup> (schedules, dates, etc.) will take place about nine to twelve months prior to the start of the actual course to facilitate long-term planning for the students studying while in employment.

As far as the teaching and learning methods are concerned TS CH wants to use case studies, individual assignments, individual and group presentations, group discussions, debates, games, quizzes and peer assessment. These methods are stereotyped included in the course descriptions.

<sup>22</sup> See above chapter 1.1.

Thinking School has not yet developed course materials because the programme will start as late as 2023. Thinking School will prepare and develop its materials based on the so-called ADDIE model: **Analysis → Design → Development → Implementation → Evaluation, then repeat**. The core of this procedure is a systematic coordination of the development of materials especially for digital teaching and learning.

According to TS CH the course materials will be available online.

## Rating:

The panel welcomes that TS CH courses are systematically oriented towards the learning objectives and that they will be conducted based on student centred learning as shown in chapter 3.2.

The panel notes that TS CH announced **the GLDP as a “blended learning” programme**<sup>23</sup>. This would require conducting a combination of learning via electronic and online media on one hand and in-person teaching and learning on the other. But TS CH intends to conduct the programme totally online, except for the Residential Week and final exams in presence<sup>24</sup>, which means a teaching/learning ratio online to presence about 60 to 1. When commenting on the draft report TS CH takes the view that it understands blended learning as the combination of different methods and media, such as face-to-face instruction in physical encounters (such as in the RW) and e-learning face-to-face webinar via the learning management system CARROT. The mixture of formal and informal learning (both online) would also fall under the term blended learning – according to a widespread opinion.

The panel members do not share this opinion. As there is a strong development towards the use of digital learning the expression “blended learning” may be defined in different ways. But still in a common understanding the essential elements are internet and digital media combined with established classroom teaching which to a substantial time requires the physical co-presence of teacher and students<sup>25</sup>. Against this background the panel has the view that when using the label blended learning for its didactical concept TS CH will have to check in which way the physical face-to-face teaching can be widened. Otherwise, the programme should not be characterised as “blended learning”.

The panel members have the view that for a didactical concept it is not sufficient to describe stereotyped elements in the course descriptions. The didactical concept for the online programme must also include online elements such as the use of media during the courses (presentations, video etc.) and how to support communication with participants when they have questions or need advice (whether per e-mail or online).

Therefore, the panel recommends the certification on **condition**:

- TS CH elaborates a didactical concept that also takes into account the specific requirements of an online programme such as the use of media as teaching methods and support for participants (answering their questions and giving advice). TS CH will adequately define its didactical concept in accordance with the internationally common understanding of expressions such as blended learning, digital learning, distance learning and/or e-learning.

The panel is convinced that accompanying course materials (such as lecture notes, readers, recommended literature etc.) will be oriented towards the intended learning outcomes and correspond to the required qualification level. They will be electronically accessible for the participants.

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<sup>23</sup> See SAR p.2. and above chapter 1.1.

<sup>24</sup> See above chapter 3.2.

<sup>25</sup> See for example the German Rector's Conference (HRK) ([www.hrk.de](http://www.hrk.de)) and the Swiss Rector's Conference ([www.swissuniversities.ch](http://www.swissuniversities.ch)), both with numerous references.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality re-quirements	n.r.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Implementation</b>					
3.4	Didactics and methodology					
3.4.1*	Logic and transparency of teaching and learning methodology				Condition	
3.4.2*	Course materials			X		

### 3.5 Skills for employment / Employability (Asterisk Criterion)

The study programme concept is based on qualification objectives, which are professional and interdisciplinary, especially in the areas of:

- Scientific ability
- Occupational qualification ("employability")
- Empowerment for social engagement ("democratic citizenship")
- Personality development.

Participants of the GLDP are part-time studying and full-time professionals. Their primary focus on choosing the GLDP is to enhance their career path in the future. Therefore, the programme is designed to be practical and reflects real cases of enterprises through lecturers, guest speakers and contents. The GLDP aims to create a level of career enhancement or employability that offers participants a range of possibilities as wide as possible. This is relevant in particular for the Vietnamese labor market<sup>26</sup>. Graduates can improve their employability with management and leadership skills as well as with special knowledge in subjects such as strategy or supply chain management.

TS CH intends to evaluate the careers of participants and graduates as soon as this will be possible.

#### Rating:

The course contents focus on achieving the qualification objectives and have a clear profile. Employability in accordance with the qualification objectives (see chapter 1.1) and the defined learning outcomes is promoted, adding a benefit for graduates in the respective occupational field.

In addition, the programme is systematically oriented towards meeting the anticipated requirements of a dynamic job market. For this purpose, the institution will use evaluation results (graduates, employees).

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality re-quirements	n.r.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Implementation</b>					
3.5*	Skills for employment / Employability			X		

<sup>26</sup> See above the description of the Vietnamese labor market in chapter 1.3.

## 4 RESOURCES AND SERVICES

### 4.1 Teaching Staff

As described above<sup>27</sup> the Academic Council takes care of the programme design, subject contents, and quality aspects of the programme. Moreover, the Academic Council is responsible for the quality of the programme. It defines the curriculum and the academic criteria for the e-learning courses and the residential training, as well as criteria for the Master Thesis. Furthermore, it sets standards for the faculty involved in the programme. The Academic Council must also develop and implement quality standards for the programme and exam regulations, as well as setting the standards for the admission of individual students to the programme.

Whereas the Academic Council Chairperson focuses on didactical issues the Programme Director is responsible for the implementation.

The Programme Director reports to the Board and to the Academic Council and is responsible for the implementation of the strategy, for day-to-day operations, and operational results. The Programme Director takes direct responsibility for academic activities within the programme. These include the thesis workshops, tutor coordination and student counselling. The Programme Director is also responsible for presenting the communication budget to the Board for ratification. The Co-Programme Director is responsible for the programme activities in Vietnam, in particular for the management of the operational team, whose tasks are especially communication, IT, and general administration.

TS CH has provided a faculty list of 18 academic staff members who will be teaching the course contents. 13 of them are from different countries and will be responsible for the didactics in this course. They will be working together with five members from Vietnam partly in team-teaching or alternatively. All of them are on **TS CH's payroll**.

For the core programme there are three teachers named, for the specialisation **“Global Strategy”** five teachers, for **“Supply Chain Management”** two teachers and for the elective courses four teachers. Four of the teachers are responsible for two, three or even five courses. In addition, the list contains the names of eight Vietnamese teachers for certain courses. All teachers will be working part-time. The staff is composed of teachers from different countries: Vietnam, Switzerland, Austria, Poland, Thailand, UK and Germany.

TS CH has developed a pattern of binding contracts that have been or will be concluded with each teacher. These patterns include all relevant aspects that are important for a reliable and responsible training.

The CVs of all international teaching staff members show that they have gathered experience in consulting, management, training and entrepreneurship in several countries and scientific experience as teachers at universities. Most of them added a list of scientific publications in their CVs.

As far as the internal cooperation of the teaching staff is concerned, the course tutors meet virtually to discuss educational issues in the programme once a year. The focus of these meetings is to exchange individual experiences regarding courses, to provide information on courses (in terms of content, cases etc.) and to develop better educational methods in the virtual learning environment. Tutors also receive training and updates on the use of DD (Dublin Descriptors) rubrics and the

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<sup>27</sup> See chapter „Details on the Institution”

virtual learning environment platform and are encouraged to give feedback on how it could be improved.

Also, course tutors meet once a year with Board and Academic Council of TS CH and TS VN. Moreover, Board and Academic Council have yearly meetings. These meetings have the purpose to discuss how to design and further develop the course programme as well as practical questions.

Each assignment evaluation comes with guidance on how to improve. DDs help to assess the overall performance of a student along DD1 to DD5 because it shows the average grade for each DD. Participants can always contact the Chair of the Academic Council, the Programme Director and their Tutor for help.

For each course, there is a Student Advisor assigned to provide advice (supported by the Administration Officer) and to help with programme progress such as for enrolment, individual course planning, international study opportunities, assessment and results, study support and assistance, student counseling on unit guides, student rights, special needs and graduation.

## Rating:

The qualifications and experience of the course management correspond with the requirements of **the course. The institution's course management is responsible for the academic quality of the course as a whole.**

The panel notes that all members of the academic staff will be working part-time. Nevertheless their structure and number correspond with the requirements of the courses. The academic qualifications of the teaching staff correspond to the requirements and objectives of the course. Special characteristics of the target group are incorporated.

The pedagogical and didactic qualifications of the teaching staff correspond with the requirements of the course. Special characteristics of the target group are taken into account, in particular with additional Vietnamese teachers.

The practical knowledge and experience of the teaching staff correspond with the requirements of the course. Special characteristics of the target group are taken into account. Teachers with a professional background are integrated into the course at a reasonable quantity.

The panel notes that the teaching staff cooperates internally for the purpose of tuning the courses towards the overall qualification objectives. There are regular meetings at least once a year of all those teaching in the programme among themselves and with Board and Academic Council also. However, taking into account that the teaching staff members are recruited from different countries the panel recommends conducting the internal meetings of the teaching staff members more often to coordinate and to improve the internal tuning of the courses.

Support of the participants is an integral part of the services provided by the teaching staff. It is offered on a regular basis and serves to help participants study successfully.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Resources and Services</b>					
4.1	Teaching Staff					
4.1.1*	Course management			X		
4.1.2*	Structure and number of teaching staff in relation to curricular requirements			X		
4.1.3*	<b>Teaching staff's academic qualifications</b>			X		
4.1.4*	<b>Teaching staff's educational/didactic qualifications</b>			X		
4.1.5	Practical business experience of the teaching staff			X		
4.1.6	Internal cooperation			X		
4.1.7*	Student support and coaching			X		

## 4.2 Course Management

As the programme courses are addressed to Vietnamese participants it is necessary to have the operational team in Vietnam although all courses are taught online. This team is divided into four activities: communication, support of training/education, IT and administration. It meets once every week in person at the office of TS VN to discuss issues and actions.

The Director of Operations (IT) oversees the ICT environment for administrative, educational and communication activities such as the maintenance and support of the virtual learning environment, as well as web design.

The Office Manager is responsible for the smooth functioning of the back office. The activities of the administration are the payment of invoices, bills, student fees, updating of the informational databases, travel arrangements, and providing the first level of contact for potential participants in co-operation with the Marketing and Communications Director.

The Marketing and Communications Director is responsible for the marketing and communication of the programme with following responsibilities:

- Develop a marketing and communication plan,
- Monitor the progress of marketing activities and analyse results,
- Prepare budget proposal,
- Market research and analysis,
- Provide in-depth information on the programme to individuals and handle tasks related to recruitment (information requests, follow-up prospects, information sessions).

The Director of Operations is also responsible for IT Quality assurance:

- *Incident management* - i.e., Helpdesk. First level support (help desk). Installation support. Application support. Students and staff can call by phone or send an e-mail.
- *Problem management* - i.e., Assisting participants installing e-Learning environment. Resolving problems due to spam, hacking, disk space usage. Reaction within two or eight hours depending on severity of the problem.
- *Change management* - i.e., Adding/updating IDs of participants; adding/updating databases for courses and residential weeks. Installing operating system, applications and

firmware patches. Creating users, creating databases (residential week, evaluations), printing Installation and user guides, installing learning environment, packaging laptops, and arranging transport to location, setting access levels for students, tutors and staff, adding participants to the residential week database, defining groups. Reacting to changes in the ICT infrastructure of host organization (TS VN).

- *Security management* - i.e., maintaining firewall, anti-virus software, anti-spam measures.
- *Service provider management* - maintaining agreements with external suppliers for hard- and software and environment.
- *Capacity management* - monitoring of the required capacity for running the e-learning system. Research on new hardware and system software (once every three years), including system analysis, capacity planning, and security.
- *Licenses management* - i.e., System software licenses
- *Availability management* - i.e., Daily check systems, performing backups, check for replication errors, dead mails, miscellaneous events, errors, attempt to messages, warnings, statistic events.
- *Team meetings and coordination*

Moreover, TS CH has established a Student Hub which shall serve as a one-stop-shop for every enquiry that students might ask. It is available 24/7 for participants, inter alia to give answers using a variety of methods including online /asynchronous tools in addition to 1:1 and face to face support.

TS VN as partner of TS CH developed its own Learning Management System (LMS) which is called 'CARROT.' The functionality is like other LMS such as Moodle. In CARROT students can find all information they need for their studies as follows:

1. Course sites with study progress, quizzes, assignments, grades, lecture videos, curriculum materials, exams;
2. Academic notifications/policies i.e., privacy policy;
3. **Personal student's files;**
4. Student dashboard;
5. A range of plug-in tools;
6. Access to units and courses including assessment items using tools such as discussions, quizzes, and the ability to submit assignments online;
7. Communication with teachers, student advisors and other students,
8. An e-Learning guide.

Moreover, students can curate and present their learning achievements in CARROT. They can also follow live streaming events, listen, and watch recordings from desktop or via a tablet or mobile device,

During the online conference participants of the pilot courses told the panel that CARROT LMS is user-friendly and easy to use.

As mentioned above<sup>28</sup>, TS CH provides a student advisor for each course.

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<sup>28</sup> See chapter 4.1.

## Rating:

The administrative Office Manager coordinates the activities of everyone involved in the course and ensures that the course runs smoothly in co-operation with the Communications Director and the Director of Operations.

Teaching staff and participants are supported by the administration in the organisation of the study programme. In terms of both quality and quantity sufficient staff is available, even if their involvement in other universities is taken into account, so that the processes described can be implemented appropriately. Decision-making processes, authority, and responsibilities are clearly defined. Teachers and participants are included in the decision-making processes where their areas of work are involved.

With the student advisor a main contact person for the participants will be appointed. The participants get informed in advance and in a comprehensive way on all relevant matters. The information is distributed in an understandable and user-friendly manner. A user-friendly access to facilities and materials is ensured. The availability of service staff is clearly determined, requests are dealt with promptly. In the periods requiring personal attendance (especially examinations), there is catering for the participants, or it is ensured that participants have the possibility to cater for themselves.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality re-quirements	n.r.
4.	Resources and Services					
4.2	Course Management					
4.2.1*	Programme Coordinator			X		
4.2.2	Process organisation and administrative support for students and teaching staff			X		
4.2.3	Service for participants			X		

## 4.3 Networking

As the programme has not started yet TS CH will install a structure that can serve for networking between participants and later on with graduates, also using the CARROT LMS.

## Rating:

Measures to create and maintain networks have not yet been provided.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality re-quirements	n.r.
4.	Resources and Services					
4.3	Networking					X

#### 4.4 Cooperation with academic institutions or enterprises (Asterisk Criterion for cooperation courses)

TS CH and TS VN are currently in cooperation with the following Vietnamese universities and institutions in the Erasmus+ Deep Digital Learning programme (hosted by University of Turku, Finland):

1. Hanoi National University of Education (HNUE)
2. Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)/ Management Unit of Enhancing Teaching Education Program (ETEP)
3. Danang University
4. Ho Chi Minh College of Economics
5. PHENIKAA University

The purpose of the project is to strengthen teacher education institutions to enhance teacher and principal effectiveness through improved continuous professional development.

Furthermore, TS is partnering with Vietnamese universities in the proposal for a HEI-ICI project organized by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. The project aims at transforming university pedagogy in Vietnam through experimentation and enabling social innovation in higher education.

#### Rating:

The scope and nature of cooperation with HEI and other academic institutions and networks relevant for the course are plausibly presented. The cooperation is actively pursued and has a clear impact on the conception and implementation of the course.

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

#### 4.5 Facilities

As the GLDP is an online training programme – apart from short examinations in presence and the RW - TS CH will normally not use own buildings and rooms for teaching purposes. Locations for final exams and for the RW can be hired.

Thinking School uses CARROT as a learning environment. CARROT up to now has 1,200 user accounts and its capacity can host up to 10,000 active users at any given moment. CARROT guides are available online 24/7.

As a rule, students are required to purchase the textbooks for their studies. TS CH intends to enable students to get access to library databases via Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh Central Library and through EMERALD Publishing, but during the online conference it was discussed up to now this has not been achieved.

In its comments on the draft of this report TS CH informed that “TS-VN students have access to the online library of Vietnam National University (VNU). TS CH covers costs for the Vietnam National University (VNU) library card, therefore, costs for students arise only if literature is needed that is not included in the comprehensive package that is provided by the VNU Online – Library. With Vietnam National University (VNU) library card students have access to all books and the databases listed on <http://www.vnulib.edu.vn/eng/index.php/online-databases>. Online course content, as posted in Carrot, will be part of the mandatory core readings.”

Special attention is paid to the ethical dimension of information search, especially in terms of the documenting of sources. The rules and norms of bibliographic reference are given in detail and information on professional sites to consult is provided. Faculty members are especially attentive to detecting plagiarism in student work.

## Rating:

The panel notes that for the GLDP as an online programme rooms for teaching purposes and laboratories are not necessary. Nevertheless, the teachers have to be equipped with the necessary media and IT facilities that have to meet the required standard. TS CH ensures that these facilities will be available.

The panel also notes that as a rule, participants have access to the literature that they need for their studies and possibly to digital media (e.g., electronic media, databases).

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.	Resources and Services					
4.5	Facilities					
4.5.1*	Quantity, quality, media and IT equipment of teaching rooms			X		
4.5.2*	Access to required literature			X		

## 5 Documentation

TS CH has a website (thinkingschool.ch) where the curriculum of the GLDP and all relevant information for the students can be found such as about the process and the requirements of admission and study and exams regulations.

Course information can be found on CARROT and student electronic handbook; and is maintained by the administration team.

**Documents supplied by students regarding their application are stored on CARROT’s database (if submitted electronically) or in the document data room after the verification process is completed. All hard copies shall be scanned and uploaded to CARROT’s database.**

Legal documents are exclusively available to the administrator team and relevant governments. All this information is kept separately in the document data room and only certain members of the administrator team can access.

The administrator team oversees maintaining the physical documents with regular maintenance.

## Rating:

The course's content, curriculum and examination regulation scheme have been suitably documented and published. TS CH intends to also publish and document other relevant information on the website and/or on the CARROT LMS.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality re-quirements	n.r.
5.* Documentation			X		

## 6 Quality Assurance

TS CH follows the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (the ESG). It also takes into account the Vietnamese Quality Framework<sup>29</sup>.

In this context TS CH is guided by the following four principles:

1. The primary responsibility for the quality assurance is with the Academic Council which includes faculty from renowned universities.
2. The quality assurance responds to the diversity of education systems, programmes and participants.
3. Quality assurance fosters a quality culture in our school.
4. Quality assurance takes into account the needs of students and other stakeholders (including society).

The formal institutional approval process of course content and learning outcomes is governed by the Academic Council that is also responsible for quality assurance. The Board appoints Council members based on their academic merits. Members of the Council need to demonstrate that they are competent researchers and experienced teachers. Therefore, the Board set as quantifiable qualification criteria a Google Scholar h-index of minimum ten or proof of comparable academic impact and a teaching experience at graduate level of at least 10 years. The four current Council members have h-indices between 17 and 21 with an average of 18.8. The teaching experience ranges from 16 to 30 years with an average of 25.5 years.

The GLDP programme will be reviewed and revised yearly by the Academic Council involving students and other stakeholders. Revised programme specifications are published after Board approval.

TS CH and TS VN use both indirect and direct measures to ensure the programme's **quality**. **Initially**, the indirect measures shall stem from evaluations by students. All students shall evaluate the courses they take and the Residential Week they participate in. After that, the Board reviews these evaluations and gives feedback to all tutors involved in the courses to discuss their evaluations.

Direct measures will be initiated by the Academic Council by consulting students through the student body. Representatives, such as the Student Association, do their own investigations and discussions on the programme. During Residential Weeks, the Programme Directors and chairperson of the Academic Council meet with students to discuss any issues there may be and to look for solutions. The Academic Council reviews courses and residential weeks and discusses plans for improvement.

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<sup>29</sup> According to the Decision No. 1982/QĐ-TTg dated October 18, 2016 by the Prime Minister of Vietnam.

Finally, tutor workshops are organised on an annual basis (online or hybrid format: face-to-face and virtual) where pedagogical methods and educational goals are discussed. The tutors also meet with the Academic Council members to discuss ideas and thoughts on the programme.

Regarding continuous improvement processes and the management of TS CH and TS VN, five areas in particular are targeted:

1. Programmes and development,
2. Faculty and research,
3. Dynamics of the international dimension,
4. Assurance of learning,
5. International branding.

In terms of quality assurance, TS CH aims to adapt its programmes continuously (nature of the offer, curriculum, design, content, associated services) to integrate and give coherence to corporate needs, advances made in research, and student expectations.

TS VN has elaborated a detailed description of a quality assurance process.

Evaluations on courses and teaching quality are conducted at the end of each course. Questionnaires are deployed online to participants. They can evaluate each course on a 1-4 scale. The questions cover competence of tutor, organisation, flexibility, student interaction, encouragement of the student, knowledge of the subject, clarity of content, course difficulty, fairness of grading and exams, general ratings and the feasibility of the student workload.

The results of the student evaluations will be presented to the Academic Council when it meets annually. The conclusions of the Academic Council regarding course evaluations are then sent to the respective course tutors. Tutors may receive letters complementing them on their work or they may receive a letter asking them to outline how they intend to deal with the issues arising from the student evaluations. Moreover, course evaluations and issues that arise in courses, are discussed during the annual tutor workshop.

The tutor workshop serves as communication platform to identify best practices and setting standards for teaching. The Program Director, who is part of the tutor workshop, wants to ensure that those best practices are adopted in all subjects.

Quality is also ensured by regular scrutiny by the Academic Council. It covers teaching quality, such as examination grades, external examiners' reports, teaching assessment reports and student evaluation of teaching.

Other key stakeholders of Thinking School are alumni, corporate clients, strategic partners, accreditation organisation, community, and government. In its comments on the draft report TS CH added the following information:

There will be regular internal and external evaluation from the beginning of the programme. A tool in the learning management system CARROT is used as the programme for online evaluations. TS CH will develop a questionnaire in advance also for the alumni surveys that will be conducted for the first time in 2025/26. All evaluations (students, teaching, exit interviews, alumni, companies, quality assurance by third parties) will be implemented in a catalogue of measures in the Academic Council but also in the Board. TS CH will adhere to the Deming Circle (Plan, Do, Control, Act). Corresponding task assignments and draft minutes have been elaborated for the Academic Council, the Board of Entrepreneurs and for the Student Association/Board of Study.

## Rating:

The panel welcomes that TS CH has elaborated a quality assurance and development procedure, which is aimed at systematically and continuously monitoring and further developing the quality of the programme with respect to its contents, processes, and outcomes. The panel also notes that the Academic Council has the main responsibility for the quality assurance system and processes. Also, sufficient staff resources are available, and the responsibilities are clearly defined. Teaching staff and participants take part in the respective committees to plan and assess the quality assurance and development procedures.

When commenting on the draft report TS CH informed the panel that the Academic Council will meet not only once a year but at least three times a year and even more often if necessary. This is now stipulated in a regulation on the structure and the assignments of this body.

Evaluation by the participants will be conducted on a regular basis and in accordance with a prescribed procedure; the outcomes are communicated and provide input for the quality development process.

Quality control by the teaching staff is carried out on a regular basis and in accordance with a prescribed procedure; the outcomes are communicated to the student body and provide input for the quality development process.

An external evaluation by alumni, employers and other stakeholders is intended on a regular basis and in accordance with prescribed procedures. The questionnaires will be developed on time.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Quality Assurance</b>					
6.1*	Quality assurance and development of course content, processes and outcomes			X		
6.2*	Instruments of quality assurance					
6.2.1	Evaluation by students			X		
6.2.2	Quality assurance by teaching staff			X		
6.2.3	External evaluation by alumni, employers and others			X		

# Quality Profile

## Institution:

Thinking School Switzerland AG

## Continuing Education Course:

Global Leadership Development Programme (GLDP) with specialisations in Global Strategy and Supply Chain Management with the degree Master of Advanced Studies (MAS)

Quality Ratings		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
<b>1.</b>	<b>Strategy and Objectives</b>					
1.1*	Logic and transparency of course objectives			X		
1.2	International orientation of the course			X		
1.3	Positioning of the course					
1.3.1	Positioning of the course in the education and job market, and the professional field (“Employability”)			X		
1.3.2	Position of course within the institution’s overall strategy			X		
<b>2.</b>	<b>Admission</b>					
2.1*	Focus on the target group			X		
2.2*	Admission conditions			X		
2.3*	Legal relationship			X		
<b>3.</b>	<b>Implementation</b>					
3.1	Structure					
3.1.1	Structure of the course			X		
3.1.2*	Application of the „European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)“ and modularisation			X		
3.1.3*	Study and examination regulations			X		
3.1.4*	Feasibility of study workload			X		
3.2	Content					
3.2.1*	Logic and conceptual coherence			X		
3.2.2	Integration of theory and practice			X		
3.2.3	International and intercultural contents			X		
3.2.4	Methodological competence			X		
3.2.5	Academic work and science-based teaching			X		
3.2.6*	Examinations			X		
3.3	Multidisciplinary qualifications and skills		X			
3.4	Didactics and methodology					

## Quality Ratings

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.4.1*	Logic and transparency of teaching and learning methodology				Condition	
3.4.2	Course materials			X		
3.5*	Skills for employment/Employability		X			
<b>4.</b>	<b>Resources and Services</b>					
4.1	Teaching staff of the course					
4.1.1*	Course management			X		
4.1.2*	Structure and number of teaching staff in relation to curricular requirements			X		
4.1.3*	<b>Teaching staff's academic qualifications</b>			X		
4.1.4*	<b>Teaching staff's educational/didactic qualifications</b>			X		
4.1.5	Practical business experience of the teaching staff			X		
4.1.6	Internal cooperation			X		
4.1.7*	Student support and coaching			X		
4.2	Course management					
4.2.1	Administrative course director			X		
4.2.2*	Process organisation and administrative support for students and teaching staff			X		
4.2.3	Service for participants			X		
4.3	Networking					X
4.4(*)	Cooperation with academic institutions or enterprises (asterisk criterion for cooperation courses)			X		
4.5	Facilities					
4.5.1*	Quantity and quality of media and IT Resources of teaching rooms			X		
4.5.2*	Access to required literature			X		
<b>5.*</b>	<b>Documentation</b>					
<b>6.</b>	<b>Quality Assurance</b>					
6.1*	Quality assurance and development of course content, processes and outcomes			X		
6.2*	Instruments of quality assurance					
6.2.1	Evaluation by students			X		
6.2.2	Quality assurance by teaching staff			X		
6.2.3	External evaluation by alumni, employers and others			X		