

## **Accreditation Report**

### **University of Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt**

#### **„Business with Europe“ (MBA)**

#### **I Procedure**

**Date of Contract:** January 27<sup>th</sup> 2016

**Receipt of self-evaluation report:** August 15<sup>th</sup> 2016

**Date of the on-site visit:** April 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> 2017

**Standing Expert Committee:** economics, law and social sciences

**Begleitung durch die Geschäftsstelle von ACQUIN:** Tobias Auberger

**Accreditation scheduled:** July 4<sup>th</sup> 2017, June 18<sup>th</sup> 2018

#### **Members of the Peer Group:**

- **Prof. Dr. Silke Finken**, International School of Management Dortmund, head of the study program „General Management“ (MBA)
- **Michelle Greene**, Freelance Educator, BusinessManagement / Marketing / International Business, Essen
- **Johan Riedlberger**, student of the study program „Wirtschaftsingenieurwesen / Internationales Management“ (M.Sc.) at the Technical University Ilmenau
- **Prof. Dr. Axel Schlich**, Hochschule Koblenz, department of economics, professor of international marketing
- **Prof. Dr. Beate Zimpelmann**, Hochschule Bremen, Head of India Study Centre

The **Evaluation Report** of the peer group is based on the self-evaluation report of the HEI and extensive discussions with the head of the study programme, staff representatives, students, alumni and employers.

**Evaluation Criteria** have been the Kriterien des Akkreditierungsrates für die Akkreditierung von Studiengängen“, the “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (ESG) in the actual official version. At the same time the national context, particularly the national rules regulating the establishment of study programmes, has been taken into account.

## **II    Ausgangslage**

### **1    Short Profile of the Higher Education Institution (HEI)**

The University of Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt was founded in 1971. Its history dates back 1807 as the university merged the predecessor institutions Balthasar-Neuman Polytechnic of the district of Lower Franconia, the Würzburg Commercial College and the Würzburg School of Applied Arts. Comprising two campuses in Würzburg and Schweinfurt the university is ranked third among the Bavarian universities of applied sciences; currently, approximately 9.000 students are enrolled in more than 30 study programs.

### **2    The programme in the faculty framework**

The study programme “Business with Europe” (MBA) is a joint programme offered by the department of engineering management in cooperation with the Christ University Bangalore, India. The three semester program comprises 90 ECTS credits.

### **III Evaluation**

#### **1 Objectives of the study programme**

The MBA-program “Business with Europe” is a postgraduate study program which is part of a broader strategic cooperation of the University of Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt (FHWS) with Christ University Bangalore. The courses of the program are taught in English which is the basis that the program can be extended to other partner university. It fits perfectly the internationalization strategy of the university which aims at attracting more international students and partner universities.

Up to now, the program focusses on Indian students while it is generally open for German students and further partners as well. The general aim of the program is to qualify Indian students for being able to hold executive positions in multinational companies, either in European companies being active abroad or working for foreign companies in Europe. Although precise data on the demand of respective companies is lacking, there can be no doubt that the Indian job market will be open for the graduates. This is backed by the number of students applying for the program with 30-35 students enrolled in each year. Future will show if the European market reacts positively. Up to now most of the students are planning to return to India after three semesters. As the students told the peers in the discussions during the on-site-visit there are only very few contacts to German companies which they wish to be extended further. The program title reflects generally its general aim; nevertheless the curriculum seems to lack European-specific content.

The structure of the program fosters the further personal development of the students and their intercultural competencies. The study programme has been designed as a program that has to be completed on both campuses: the first semester is spent in Bangalore, the second in Schweinfurt. For the third semester students can choose between the two universities. At any case graduates will get two separate degrees from the two institutions. Unfortunately, the students form a group at Würzburg-Schweinfurt University which is quite separate from other study programs and it provides only a few possibilities of getting into contact with German students – apart from a buddy program. Thus, German students should be integrated in the Program to a greater extent.

Generally speaking, it can be concluded that the attractiveness of the study programme under review results from a multicultural experience for students and its economic profile. Hence, the study programme fits to university’s mission statement and reasonably complements the existing degree programmes.

## 2 Concept of the study programme

### 2.1 Structure of the study programme

The study programme “Business with Europe” (MBA) has been designed as a three-semester post-graduate programme to be completed on two different campuses. In their first semester students are deepening their knowledge about main corporate functions, i.e. marketing, finance and accounting. As of today, the first semester takes place at Christ University, Bangalore. It consists of the modules “Financial Management & Accounting”, “Marketing Management”, “Managing IT & ERP-Systems”, “Innovation Management & Design Thinking”, “Entrepreneurship & Business Model Generation” and “Operations Strategy”.

The second semester has to be completed in Schweinfurt and has been designed to introduce students to doing business in Europe comprising the modules “Organizational Behaviour & Intercultural Communication with Europe”, “HR Management & Sustainable Leadership with Europe”, “Europe: Culture, History, Economy & Case Studies”, “Quality Management with Europe”, “Strategic Management with Europe” and “Academic Writing & Master's Seminar”. The third semester, which can be either completed at Christ University or in Schweinfurt, includes the Master thesis and two functional electives.

General topics about main corporate functions are complemented by classes focussing on the specific European approach to various topics though there seems to be some more potential for intensifying this focus during the second semester. Additionally, modern methods and approaches are integrated into the curriculum and the FHWS possesses a range of up-to-date facilities which are open for students of the program in the context of projects or master theses. In general, the workload seems appropriate and manageable for the students. As classes at Christ University during the first semester are partially taught by FHWS faculty, the consistency of the contents of the individual courses and the avoidance of redundancies seems to be appropriate for the programme.

Characteristic for the study programme under review is its attractiveness for Indian students resulting from a cross-cultural experience of studying in Germany. This benefit would be leveraged if the cohort at FHWS was mixed and not only composed of students from Christ University. Since the program addresses general management competencies in the first place, it is necessary to better match the title of the degree programme to the curriculum. This could be achieved for instance by focusing the Master thesis on issues related to Europe. Another European element of the curriculum could be the integration of guest lectures from European partner institutions based on an Erasmus Teaching Staff Mobility (TSM). Against this background the peers recommend also to extend the period in which the students are at FHWS. Additionally the students should be encouraged to take lesson in German language to a broader extent.

As generalists with an international background, graduates most likely will have a wide variety of opportunities either in subsidiaries of European companies located outside of Europe or non-European companies operating in Germany. All in all, it can be concluded that the attractiveness of the study programme under review mainly results from a cross-cultural experience for Indian students.

## **2.2 Modularisation, Teaching methods and Admission criteria**

The programme holds 90 ECTS credits consisting of modules with at least five ECTS credits. Generally, the teaching methods are appropriate for an MBA with a regional focus and especially regarding the differences in the education systems in Germany and India self-study times as well as class projects enrich the learning experience as well as the skill set of the Indian students in the program. Especially for the master thesis, support is guaranteed through courses such as the Academic Writing and Master's Seminar. Additionally, several further initiatives could be employed to improve the learning context: It is recommended to invite guest speakers from companies on a regular basis and to integrate projects and case studies in cooperation with European or German companies.

The study programme is open for all students who have completed a Bachelor with 210 ECTS and a grade of at least 2.5 or an equivalent degree in either business administration, economics, business engineering or engineering as well as at least one year of work experience which also includes part time work experience of at least 50% of full time equivalence. An interview with a faculty member of FHWS is conducted in India at Christ University before students join the program. Though the level of required work experience is comparatively low, it is also symptomatic for the Indian education system as students generally do not obtain extensive work experience before entering master or MBA programs. The quantitative target for the programme is about 33 students which has been met in the past two years. German language skills are not a qualifying criteria though they would significantly help in intensifying the immersion into the professional environment in Germany. Though they need not to be mandatory, opportunities and incentives for Indian students to acquire some German language skills should be intensified and potentially also a crash course offered at the beginning of the programme.

As students can enter the programme without any background in business administration and the current curriculum does not contain any basic classes on fundamentals of business administration, the programme needs to guarantee that students obtain some fundamental knowledge of business administration either prior to or at the start of the program. For this, also classes offered by partner universities can be used. While currently students can obtain this knowledge as part of their studies at Christ University – which are independent of the programme under review – this is not formally guaranteed.

### **3 Implementation**

#### **3.1 Resources**

The program in question is taught by both German and Indian professors who are staff members at the respective universities. Due to frequent exchange between locations, sufficient teaching personnel resource can be assured. Further to this, external associates are contracted to teach specialist areas. These associated are screened adequately in advance. Master thesis are tutored by Professors of FHWS only. There are sufficient professors for this task in the current constellation and size of cohorts. In both locations, qualified full-time academic staff is use and further capacities are available.

The course of study is intended to operate at a cost-covering level. This goal can be achieved with the current size of cohort, structure of programme and fee system. As such, the financial resources which are necessary for the successful operation of the course can be considered to be available from the perspective of FHWS. As the fee structure outlined in the sample contract covers the semester in Germany only, the above is applicable to the financial calculation of FHWS only. Due to the fact that students of this MBA course are recruited from a larger programme in India, it has been assured that the availability of resource at Christ University in India is secured.

Modules in this course of study are taught at the university location in Schweinfurt. Due to the limited group size and the structure of teaching activities there is no evidence of insufficient physical facilities for teaching. Students have full access to all facilities of the university such as canteen, library and online library. Further to this, particular attention is paid to accommodation facilities due to the fact that all students require lodgings. Due to a mixture of campus and private accommodation, there is sufficient scalability to cope with current student numbers.

#### **3.2 Organisation, counselling and cooperation**

A dedicated, full time administrated staff position is available to organise all issues related to the students and the operational running of the course of study. This is transparent and appropriate as students can also approach this persona individually and using English. The head of programme is the clear point of contact both internally and toward external stakeholders. As such there are limited but transparent points of contact for the course of study. Due to limited knowledge of the German language and the short term of stay at FHWS, the Indian students have limited opportunity to take part in normal student bodies or councils.

### **3.3 Examination system, Documentation and transparency**

Examination procedures as outlined in the university documentation appear adequate and appropriate. The frequency and structure of assessment is also appropriate. In the case of repeat assessment, the university pays particular attention to windows of mobility which are necessary for the Indian students.

Full documentation of modules and exam policy was provided in advance of the university visit. These documents were however in German. English language versions were provided on demand. Students confirm that they have access to documentation in English. Students also confirm that they have access to full information regarding the requirements and conditions for this course of study.

Indian students are recruited through Christchurch University directly. Based on the long-term relationship between FHWS and Christchurch, there is both full documentation and relevant knowledge available to consult potential students during the recruitment phase. Further to this a representative of FHWS is present during the final phase of applicant screening in India in order to provide information and answer questions.

The implementation of this course of study in its current structure and size is feasible at FHWS. The programme is supported by sufficient resource, systems and procedures. It would be of great benefit to the Indian students however to be enabled to take part in student bodies and councils to a greater extent.

### **3.4 Gender justice and compensation opportunities for disabled people**

Although no concept concerning gender justice is provided specific to the program, there appeared to be a fair number of women in leadership positions. The student admission process does not have separate quotas for males and for females. Diversity is taken into consideration during recruitment procedures. To support that FHWS should establish financial help to students coming from disadvantaged economic circumstances. Flexibility in the instructional activities for those students with permanent disabilities and lowered work capacity is provided by the study regulations. Some of these accommodations include tutoring on an individualised curriculum and individualised time table, and testing outside of the regular final exam period.

## **4 Quality Management**

The faculty takes part in the quality management system of university. Every study dean of FHWS is part of the committee for teaching quality, which is meeting twice a semester. Responsible for the quality of the MBA study program is the study dean of "Wirtschaftsingenieurwesen faculty". He oversees systematic evaluation of every study program. All modules who are offered no matter if in Germany or India are evaluated under the guidelines of SHWFs evaluation regulations. The

evaluation forms are written in English. They have been modified to fit the special needs of the program. Outcomes of the evaluation process are given to the study dean and the faculty council. They may take appropriate steps to assure programs quality. In overall systematic quality management of FHWS is well organized and documented.

The quality of the study program benefits also from its small number of students. Feedback given by students can be implemented very quickly. Students said, that their concerns are taken seriously and every staff member is open for feedback. The quality of the study program is moreover ensured through the management of the MBA program, who are taking every suggestion in consideration.

The evaluators appreciate the effort of quality insurance at FHWSs MBA program. No objections are found due to the split program in India and Germany, since all courses are quality managed by FHWS. At least also the students gave no indication of bad quality management. ...

## 5 Summary

The study programme "Business with Europe" (MBA) is a sound programme. The curricular concept of the programme is planned thoroughly and executed properly. Objectives are defined and can be reached with the proposed modular structure. The implementation of the study programme is based on an appropriate infrastructure, an efficient organisation and well-developed co-operations. Therefore, only two steps for a further development are seen necessary by the reviewers. On the one hand, the programme needs to guarantee that students obtain some fundamental knowledge of business administration either prior to or at the start of the program. On the other hand it is necessary to better match the title of the degree programme to the curriculum by focusing on issues related to Europe to a greater extent. All proposed steps for the improvement of the study programme can be evaluated by the university itself, since a quality management system is established, which guarantees the further development of the study programme.

## 6 Evaluation according to the „Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area“ (ESG) in the actual official version

The programme has been assessed on the basis of the *“Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area“ (ESG)*. The reviewers come to the conclusion that the standards 1.1 (Policy for quality assurance), 1.2 (Design and approval of programmes), 1.3 (Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment), 1.4 (Student admission, progression, recognition and certification), 1.5 (Teaching staff), 1.6 (Learning resources and student support), 1.7 (Information management), 1.8 (Public information), 1.9 (On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes) and 1.10 (Cyclical external quality assurance) are fulfilled.

## 7 Recommendation to the accreditation commission of ACQUIN

The group of experts recommends the following decision: **Accreditation with conditions**. The group of experts proposes the following **conditions**:

- The program needs to guarantee that students obtain some fundamental knowledge of business administration either prior to or at the start of the program
- It is necessary to better match the title of the degree program to the curriculum. This could be achieved for instance by focusing the Master thesis on issues related to Europe

## IV Decision of the ACQUIN Accreditation Commission

### 1 Decision

Based on the evaluation report of the expert group, the statement of the Higher Education Institution and the statement of the Standing Expert Committee, on July 4<sup>th</sup> 2017 the Accreditation Commission of ACQUIN took the following decision:

**The study programme “Business with Europe” (MBA) is for the first time accredited with the following conditions:**

- **The program needs to guarantee that students obtain some fundamental knowledge of business administration either prior to or at the start of the program**
- **It is necessary to better match the title of the degree program to the curriculum. This could be achieved for instance by focusing the Master thesis on issues related to Europe**

**The accreditation is valid until September 30<sup>th</sup> 2018.**

**After fulfilment of the conditions the study programme is accredited until September 30<sup>th</sup> 2022. The HEI has to submit the documents for the fulfilment of the conditions until April 21<sup>st</sup> 2018. In case of insufficient proof of fulfilment of the conditions the accreditation will not be extended.**

**After receiving a comment of the Higher Education Institution, the accreditation procedure can be suspended once for a period of not more than 18 months, if it can be expected that the HEI will remedy the defects within this period. A statement of the HEI requesting a suspension has to be submitted to ACQUIN by August 21<sup>st</sup> 2017.**

For the further development of the study programme the following recommendation is given:

- It is recommended also to extend the period in which the students are at FHWS to two semesters.
- Opportunities and incentives for Indian students to acquire some German language skills should be intensified and potentially also a crash course offered at the beginning of the programme.
- It is recommended to invite guest speakers from companies on a regular basis and to integrate projects and case studies in cooperation with European or German companies
- FHWS should monitor the job market for graduates by establishing graduate surveys systematically.
- FHWS should establish financial help to students coming from disadvantaged economic circumstances
- German students should be integrated in the Program to a greater extent to foster the development of intercultural competencies.

## 2 Fulfilment of conditions

The Higher Education Institution has submitted the documents that prove the fulfilment of the conditions in due time. These documents have been forwarded to the Standing Expert Committee with request for examination. The Standing Expert Committee came to the conclusion that the conditions are fulfilled.

Based on the statement of the Standing Expert Committee, on June 18<sup>th</sup> 2018 the Accreditation Commission of ACQUIN took the following decision:

**The conditions of the study programme “Business with Europe” (MBA) are fulfilled. The accreditation period is extended until September 30<sup>th</sup> 2022.**