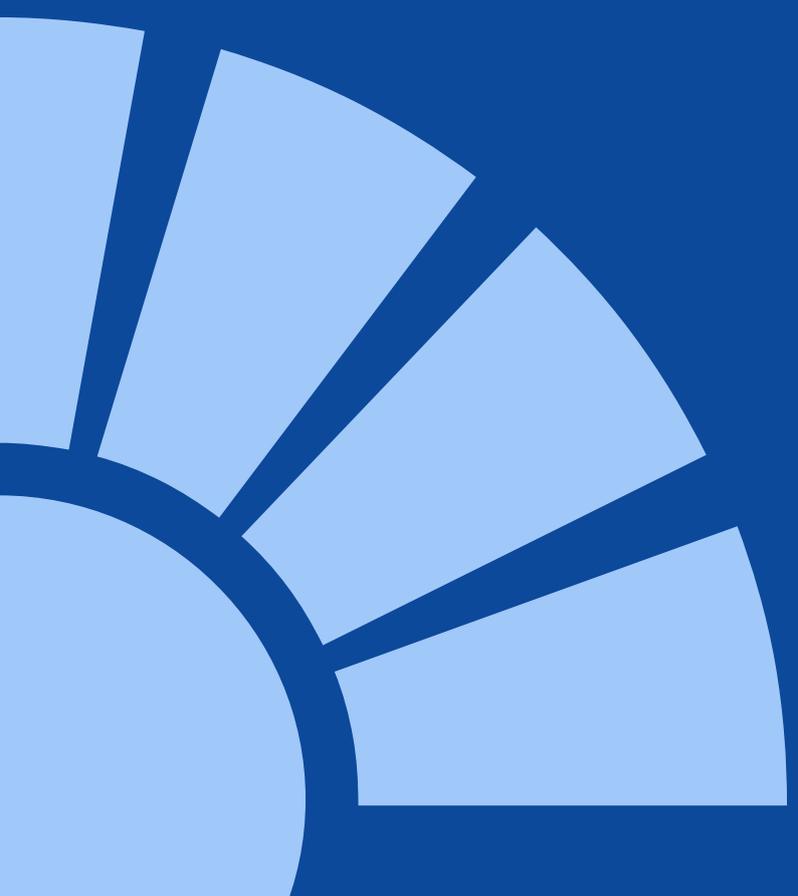


Input from the Quality & Learning
Assurance Committee

Version 2.0, November 2021

Quality Assurance Strategy



The IMD quality assurance strategy supports the pursuit of the purpose of the institution and its continuous improvement towards fulfilment of that purpose: *Challenging what is and inspiring what could be, we develop leaders who transform organizations and contribute to society.*

Historical & Legal Context

The **Bologna Process meetings of 1999** established as a policy goal that institutions be required to demonstrate quality assurance systems to earn accreditation. In 2000, this concept gained institutional backing with the creation of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. The quality assurance concept was officially elaborated at the 2005 Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education in Bergen, Norway in a document titled **European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG)**. Those standards were later updated by ministerial authorities in Yerevan, Armenia in 2015.

Over the past two decades, the Bologna reforms have prompted the development of systems across Europe that credit institutions that fulfil quality assurance standards aligned with the ESGs, with the accreditation systems increasingly extending oversight to private higher education institutions.

Switzerland is a signatory to the Bologna Process and European Higher Education Area (EHEA) reforms,

including the ESGs, with the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research, and Innovation being the governmental body that represents the Swiss national authority in high-level EHEA ministerial meetings.

As an element of the early Bologna quality assurance movement, the Swiss Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education (OAQ) was established in 2001. One year later, Switzerland's first accreditation protocols were established. These initial Swiss accreditation protocols required public universities to present quality assurance strategies and documentation.

In 2011, the Swiss Higher Education Act (HEdA) updated Switzerland's accreditation protocols. The Act came into force in 2015 with specifics delineated in the Higher Education Act Accreditation Ordinance of 2015 and responsibilities for institutional accreditation assigned to a Swiss Accreditation Council (CSA), the legal body, and the Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ). AAQ is the successor to OAQ and carries out institutional accreditation reviews under the CSA's legal authority.

Institutions that demonstrate strong quality assurance meet European ambitions and Swiss institutional accreditation requirements in the Higher Education Accreditation Ordinance.

IMD is pursuing Swiss institutional accreditation under the standards and procedures in the Higher Education Accreditation Ordinance.

Definition of Quality Assurance

“The concept of a quality assurance system refers to all the procedures and practices for documenting and improving the quality of the activities. It requires a complete, coherent and dynamic set of rules, mechanisms and processes designed to: the achievement of objectives by implementing selected strategies; the implementation of actions arising from the objectives and strategies, and their evaluation; the introduction of corrective mechanisms, if necessary; and the continuous improvement of the activities and adaptation to changes in its environment. The resources deployed for the quality assurance system are proportional to the goals sought.”

Definition of Quality

Quality is “in accordance with [an institution’s] type, mission and its specific characteristics.”

– AAQ, <https://aaq.ch/en/>

Source: The Swiss Agency of Accreditation & Quality Assurance

Accreditation Standards

Area 1: Quality Assurance Strategy

Standard 1.1 The higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector shall define its quality assurance strategy. This strategy shall contain the essential elements of an internal quality assurance system aimed at ensuring the quality of the activities of the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector and their long-term quality development as well as promoting the development of a quality culture.

Standard 1.2 The quality assurance system shall be incorporated into the strategy of the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector and efficiently support its development. It includes processes verifying whether the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector fulfils its mandate while taking account of its type and specific characteristics.

Standard 1.3 At all levels, all representative groups of the higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector shall be involved in developing the quality assurance system and in its implementation, in particular students, mid-level faculty staff, professors and administrative and technical staff. Quality assurance responsibilities must be transparently and clearly assigned.

Standard 1.4 The higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector shall periodically analyse the relevance of its quality assurance system and make the necessary adjustments.

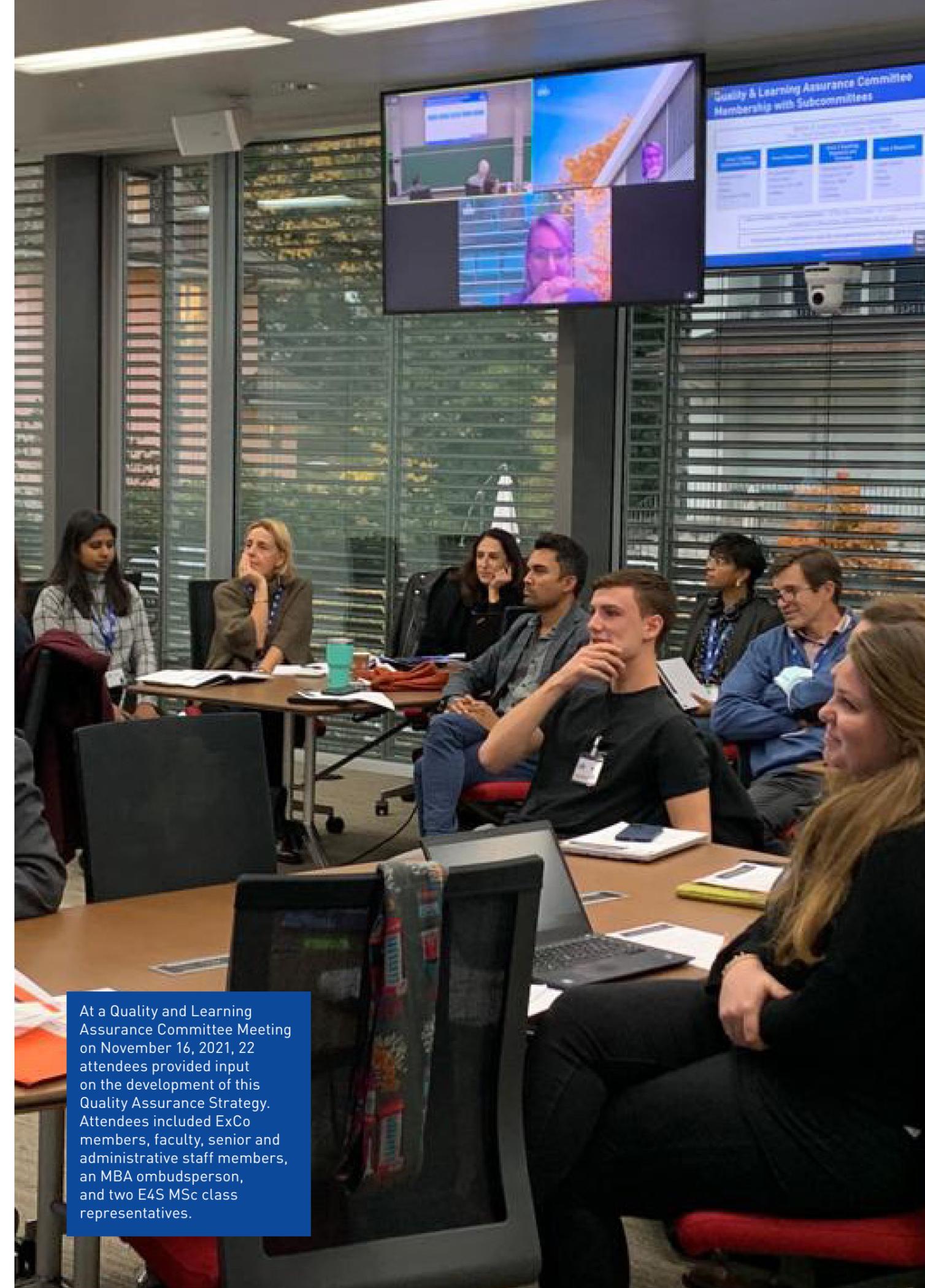
Standard 1.5 The higher education institution or other institution within the higher education sector shall make public its quality assurance strategy and ensure that the provisions corresponding to quality assurance processes and their results are known to employees, students and if necessary external stakeholders.

Aims of IMD's Quality Assurance Strategy

To be eligible for accreditation under the HEdA Act, institutions must prove that they have systems and strategies in place to provide quality in the short-term and to improve quality in the long-term. Institutions' quality assurance systems are to delineate how the institution's policies, processes, and practices promote quality and quality improvement across the dimensions of teaching, research, and services.

IMD's quality assurance system and strategy uniquely belong to the institution and reflect the unique characteristics of the institution's mission and history. In accordance with European principles of quality assurance, IMD's quality assurance strategy:

- Guarantees the quality of teaching, research, services, and operations at the institution.
- Is self-reinforcing and contributes to a virtuous cycle of strengthening of its five pillars: (1) Governing with excellence; (2) Structuring high performance; (3) Monitoring and maximizing learning; (4) Leveraging data for organizational action; and (5) Valuing external reviews and feedback.
- Provides a platform for the achievement of the strategic priorities of the institution as they are formulated by the Executive Committee with faculty and staff input and agreed to by the Foundation and Supervisory Boards.
- Provides a foundation for doing better, with a goal of continuous quality improvements towards excellence.
- Contributes to strengthening the culture of quality among faculty, staff, and responsible parties.
- Expresses the institution's commitment to transparency to its constituencies and the broader public, taking into account the school's profile as a private and legally autonomous Swiss foundation.
- Demonstrates to external stakeholders, including future prospective degree program and lifelong learning participants, that the institution has quality systems and strategies in place to deliver high-level teaching & learning, research, and operations & services now and for years to come. This supplements external validations well-known by external stakeholders.
- Meet the school's education and social responsibilities to the national Swiss authority as a Swiss-based, Swiss-supported, and Swiss-rooted institution of higher education.
- Fulfil the requirements of accreditation standards 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 5.1.



At a Quality and Learning Assurance Committee Meeting on November 16, 2021, 22 attendees provided input on the development of this Quality Assurance Strategy. Attendees included ExCo members, faculty, senior and administrative staff members, an MBA ombudsperson, and two E4S MSc class representatives.

Principles

The following principles and definitions are the foundation for the five pillars of IMD's quality assurance strategy:

1 Quality assurance is strengthened by procedures and practices.

AAQ defines a quality assurance system as consisting of "all the procedures and practices for documenting and improving the quality of the activities" and a "quality assurance strategy" as the "global vision for quality assurance [that] allows connections to be made between different processes and development objectives." An institution's "quality assurance strategy" is essentially to be understood as the principles and basic structures that guide the institution's practices and protocols to promote quality, innovation, and continuous improvement.

2 Inclusivity and consideration of diverse views enhance quality.

All internal constituencies—board members, faculty, staff, students/participants, and alumni—are invited to provide input and feedback on quality assurance strategy development. Quality and quality improvement are everyone's responsibility.

3 Quality assurance strategies are to be periodically reassessed.

The institution's quality assurance strategies and their representation are to be monitored and periodically revisited and updated. Periodic analysis promotes long-term quality development.

4 Real learning is the foundation for real impact.

The learning that matters the most is that which is sustained beyond the classroom and inspires individuals to act in ambitious, innovative, and enlightened ways yielding positive impacts for society.

5 Building on the success of Swiss universities.

The best quality assurance strategy for IMD is one informed by the successful quality assurance models of other institutions, particularly in Switzerland and especially from public institutions with years of history in quality assurance development and reporting.

6 A dynamic, subjective vision of quality.

Quality is a subjective concept. There is no single objective vision of quality, and quality is to be understood as existing in tension between varying viewpoints. Different perspectives on quality are held by different stakeholders. As one example, faculty members, who may have one vision of quality teaching and learning, must recognize and acknowledge the expectations of participants with their own perspectives on quality teaching and learning.

7 Quality is engrained through culture.

A key ambition of a quality assurance strategy is to contribute to the strengthening of a quality culture. A quality culture is enhanced when all internal constituencies are involved in the pursuit of quality and excellence.

8 External validation of this quality assurance strategy.

Feedback from external experts helps to strengthen the legitimacy and credibility of internal processes and informs adjustments and modifications. External feedback on IMD's quality assurance strategy, including from expert reviewers assigned by AAQ, is to be leveraged to improve IMD's quality assurance strategy and systems.

Strong quality assurance enables real learning and real impact.

The Five Pillars of IMD Quality Assurance

- 1 Governing with Excellence
- 2 Structuring High-Performance Work
- 3 Monitoring & Maximizing Participant Learning
- 4 Leveraging Data for Organizational Action
- 5 Valuing External Reviews & Benchmarks

Quality Assurance Strategy

Purpose

Challenging what is and inspiring what could be, we develop leaders who transform organizations and contribute to society.

Identity: IMD is an independent academic institution with Swiss roots and global reach.

Five Mechanisms for Assuring Quality For Today and The Future

<h1>1</h1> <p>Governing With Excellence</p> <p>The independent foundation structure optimizes alignment between governance, decision-making, and actions.</p>	<h1>2</h1> <p>Structuring High-Performance Work</p> <p>Policies and practices promote the high performance and development of faculty and staff.</p>	<h1>3</h1> <p>Monitoring & Maximizing Participant Learning</p> <p>Real learning is measured and maximized. <i>Real Learning, Real Impact</i></p>	<h1>4</h1> <p>Leveraging Data For Organizational Development</p> <p>Data-informed decision-making drives excellence.</p>	<h1>5</h1> <p>Valuing External Reviews & Benchmarks</p> <p>External reviews and heedfulness of the institution's external reputation accelerate continuous enhancement.</p>
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Teaching & Learning MBA | EMBA | E4S SMT MSc | Executive Education

Research 75+ Faculty Experts | Global Research Centers

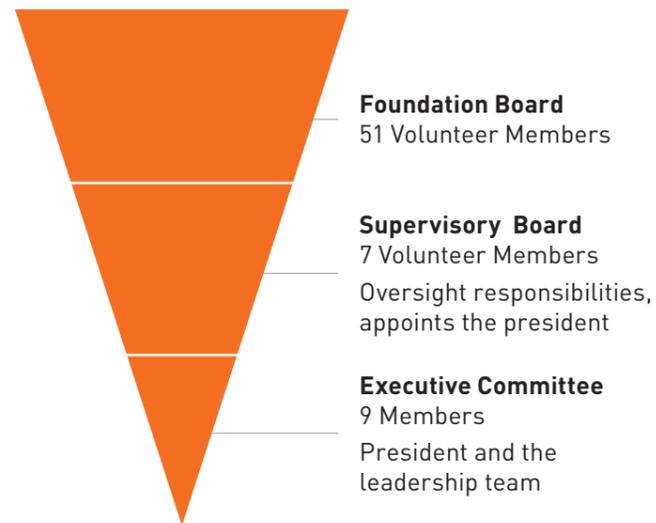
Operations & Services 300 Staff | Lausanne Campus | South East Asia Executive Learning Center

Quality & quality improvement are everyone's responsibility.

ONE IMD | Board Members | Faculty & Researchers | Staff | Students & Participants | Partners | Alumni | Volunteers

Governing with Excellence

IMD's independent foundation structure optimizes alignment between governance, decision-making, and actions.



- The shared mission--challenging what is and inspiring what could be, we develop leaders who transform organizations and contribute to society—came out of a participatory process involving all faculty, staff, and board members in 2019. This shared mission forms a consensus for aligned mission-driven work. This **unity of purpose** makes the school uniquely focused on creating value—real learning, real impact—for current and future executives, teams, organizations, and society.
- The school's strategy formulation and budget setting processes are formulated and validated via processes governed by the statutes and regulations and involving a Foundation Board, Supervisory Board, and Executive Committee. Executive decisions involve series of Executive Committee, Faculty & Senior Staff, and all Community Meetings. As a

result of these mechanisms, the resulting **strategy has high consensus and legitimacy**. The alignment and legitimacy are powerful and a key to quality and rigorous implementation at IMD.

- Executive Committee meetings held weekly enable continuous review of processes to ensure alignment with needs. Modifications can be made agilely to advance efficiency and positive participant experiences.

Structuring High-Performance Work

Policies and practices promote the development and high performance of faculty and staff.

- **The four values of Open, Collaborative, Pioneering, and Brave**, which emerged from participatory processes involving all faculty, staff, and board members in 2011-2012 with a revisiting in 2018-2019, form a platform for teamwork, cooperation, and innovation.
- Faculty and staff have **defined responsibilities** within the organizational scheme and management system for which they are accountable with annual reviews for faculty and, for staff, annual performance-based evaluation. Performance-based incentives for faculty and staff promote productivity and quality.
- **Inclusive workplace measures** with attention to equal opportunities, social sustainability, diversity, and gender equity foster productive and creative work. The measures attract competitive talent with diverse work experiences, industry backgrounds, nationalities, and life experiences.
- **Rigorous recruitment procedures** onboard new faculty and staff who excel in their positions and meet the institution's needs in the areas of teaching, research.
- **Talent development offerings**, career growth opportunities, and a line manager community contribute to improved capabilities of workforce members.
- **Employee care benefits** contribute towards retaining talented faculty and staff and a virtuous cycle of satisfied and productive staff. Benefits include meals, mindfulness programming, coaching opportunities for eligible staff members, and fitness classes.
- **The school's identity** as an academic institution with Swiss roots and global reach sets expectations for excellence and diversity.

Monitoring & Maximizing Participant Learning

Real learning is measured with an aim towards maximizing learning impact.

- **Robust impact surveying of participants and alumni is paramount:**
 - 1) Surveying during programs.
 - 2) Surveying upon immediate program completion.
 - 3) Surveying approximately four months following completion.
 - 4) Surveying approximately twelve months following completion.
- The results from the surveys are analysed and inform faculty members' pedagogical planning and teaching. The survey results also guide program development decisions and service modifications.
- **A Learning Assurance Committee**, composed of eleven members from the faculty and staff communities, monitors direct assessment of learning in the degree programs in biannual meetings informed by AACSB assurance of learning protocols.
- **Faculty development days and faculty professional development** ("Moving Ideas" sessions) are guided by the impact surveying and focus energies on research-based pedagogy to maximize learning and impact (see also pillar #4).
 - Example: A 37-page guide profiling "Virtual Tools to Use in liVe Programs" was developed for distribution to faculty. It was informed by faculty members' experiences with many of the profiled tools.
- Communications, marketing, and sales efforts ensure that participants and client organizations are aware of program content, learning objectives, typical participant profiles, and intended impacts to promote **best fits between participants and programs**.

Leveraging Data for Organizational Action

Data-informed decision-making drives excellence.



- **Plan-do-act-check cycles** assure continuous process improvements and foster a culture of quality and immediate intervention and action towards excellence.
 - Example: Analyses of past enrollments inform future scheduling decisions.
 - Example: Social media statistics and Google Analytics inform decisions on what is of interest to readers in IMD's network. This information shapes decisions on what research and thought leadership is shared and amplified.
- **Quarterly President's Reports** facilitate structured progress monitoring on conditions and the impact of decisions.
- **A Research Outputs Dashboard** enables faculty members and others to track and analyse research outputs data over time and by various criteria. A yearly *Research & Thought Leadership Publications* booklet presents all annual outputs with aggregated data.
- **Regular surveys** of employees, clients, and users of internal services, such as the Information Center and the restaurant, provide data that informs resourcing, operational, and strategic decisions.
- **Data-driven on-demand reporting** of programmatic, enrolment, and financial information in a single platform containing all enterprise resource planning and customer relationship management (CRM) functionality supports day-to-day operations and decision-making.
 - Example: MBA applicant data resides in Salesforce and applicant processing happens within one integrated system.
- **Regular meetings** by the cross-functional Process Excellence Steering Committee, Data Protection Committee, Learning Assurance Committee, Spirit Ambassadors, YMD Committee and department and faculty teams foster deliberation, inclusive change, and implementation excellence.

Valuing External Reviews & Benchmarks

External reviews and heedfulness of the institution's external reputation seed ideas that are leveraged for continuous enhancement and innovation.

- **International business school accreditation standards (AACSB, EFMD EQUIS, AMBA) set high standards for IMD quality.** The commitment to maintain the triple-crown, the world's gold standard in business education, necessitates high quality and continuous innovation.
- **External assessments and reviews from accreditation and other certification bodies (EcoVadis, ISO 27001, EFMD BSIS) hold IMD to international best practices in the areas of teaching, research, and services.** They are organizational learning exercises that prompt institutional reflection and improvement, notably the articulation of development activities towards continuous quality improvements.
- **External rankings, often weighted heavily by the results of alumni surveying, invite IMD to meet the highest levels of international quality** in educational programming, research, and institutional fundamentals.
- **On-going discussions with business school peers, monitoring of the business school and executive education landscapes, and operating in the highly competitive executive education sector** inform faculty and staff of best practices and prompt innovations, continuous improvements, and attention to excellence.
- **Robust internal coordination enables robust external communications.** Platforms include *I by IMD*, social media channels, Leading in Turbulent Times webinars, and podcasts.

Accreditation Partners



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Real Learning Real Impact

