

Swiss School of Management



SSM®
Swiss School of Management

Doctor of
Business Administration (DBA)

STUDENT HANDBOOK

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1. Doctoral Studies

1.1. Doctorates

Doctoral studies or doctorates of the DBA are academic research qualifications aimed at the contribution and to the extension of existing knowledge in specific subject areas. The objective is to provide scientific contributions through superior levels of academic empirical research relevant in the fields of economic sciences. This may comprise of; but is not limited to, the development and/or contribution to theory or to understand organizational practice, economics, decision-making, regulations, policies, and so on.

Students' DBA research and studies may adopt a fully theoretical orientation, but outstanding and evidence-based research in the understanding of applied sciences are equally accepted. However, if applied sciences are a major constituent, the scientific orientation still remains in the foreground of the doctoral research and its thesis.

1.2. Target Audiences

Swiss School of Management research program's mission is to educate its doctoral students in scientific research producing and delivering outcomes of empirically evidence-based improvement for sustainable progress of economics, but also for society. Consequentially they should have a particular focus on relevant issues within dynamic and challenging contemporary contexts. However, they represent a specifically targeted program of doctoral studies in economic sciences, which is driven by curiosity, and students' depth of critical thinking. It equally respects ethical and moral concerns guiding students' doctoral research within studies' scientific and academic orientation.

The Degree and the research objectives are aimed at candidates of whom have a good and cognate Master's Degree awarded by an acknowledged Higher Education Institution as a compulsory prerequisite for the admittance to these studies. Equally admitted, but subject to specific requirements, are graduates who have been awarded with a high-level Bachelor Degree of at least 240 ECTS credits or nationally equivalent credits.

Applications are equally welcomed from individual candidates or from individuals sponsored by their existing employers. The doctoral program can be studied full-time, but equally while candidates continue to pursue their professional responsibilities.

Swiss School of Management strictly follows internationally requested standards forming and constituting doctoral studies to support the widest international recognition of its doctoral degrees. It is emphasised that the Higher Education is part of the Process of Higher Education in Europe. Swiss School of Management therefore applies highest academic standards in all phases of doctoral studies with the support of a seasoned body of doctoral supervisors.

1.3. Program Structure and General Delivery

In the spirit of diagnostic oriented learning, the program will not overload you with coursework rather, we will take your initial research idea as the starting point. The first stage (coursework) consists of 5 modules, which are a highlight of the program and provides a fantastic opportunity for networking and collaboration with academics with fellow DBA students.

During this time, you will develop the skills required to undertake your own, supervised research. Online coursework and workshop training in the research process (including research design, literature review, and research methods), will equip you with the knowledge and skills that will not only underpin your studies but will equip you for a career in academic, public, or private sectors.

As your research progresses from idea to literature review, to methodology, to data collection, and to finally analysis; you will be guided in learning about the appropriate tools and techniques that you need. Guidance comes from your dedicated supervisor, your mentor, and from our network of experts.

The DBA program is structured as follows:

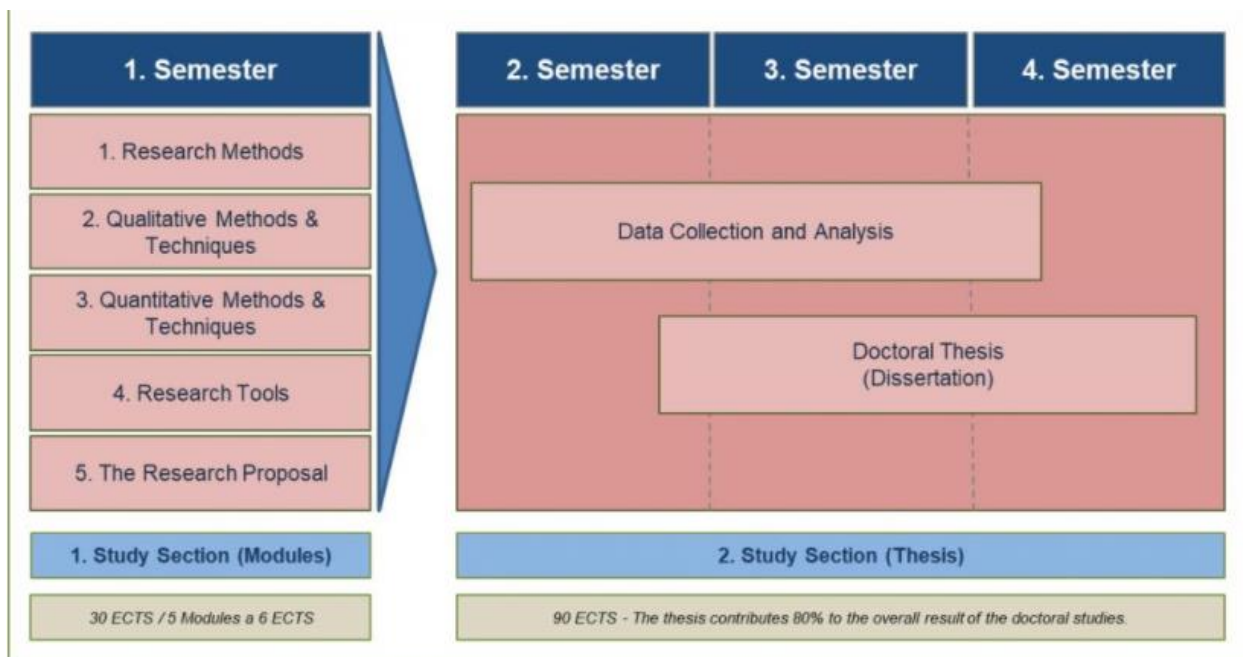


Figure: Time Frame Program Structure DBA

The second stage of your program (Data Collection and Analysis) usually takes 12 months to complete. Having developed your research proposal in consultation with your supervisor, you are ready to begin work on the actual research.

Finally, you will defend your thesis at the ‘viva’ to justify your assumptions, data, and outcomes. Your research may be suitable for publication, as journal articles or books.

The normal period of study is two years, based on full-time studies. If the research is progressing and contributing to the goals of the program, students can extend their studies. Tuition and supervision are charged per semester. Extending the duration of the program must be approved by your supervisor, and the Academic Director.

All elements and details of this program of studies are explained in detail in the relevant Program Outline being part of this Student Handbook.

2. Admission to DBA Studies

2.1. Prerequisite for Admission with a Master's Degree

For direct admission, candidates have to be in possession of a cognate Master's Degree; i.e., it has to be awarded by an officially acknowledged Higher Education Institution.

Equally admitted are Graduates who do not possess a Master's Degree, but another cognate Degree that is directly comparable to a Postgraduate Degree on equal level to a Master's Degree. This regulation acknowledges differences, which may exist internationally.

The additional, but not compulsory requirement, is that such Degree should be in the class of Merit or Distinction. Candidates with a higher Pass grade are equally invited to apply but may be invited to an initial personal interview (before the research interview) for assessing their qualification for doctoral studies in more detail.

2.2. Extended Admission

Candidates without a prior Master's Degree, but a Postgraduate Diploma or national Postgraduate equivalent (Distinction, Merit or equal on national level of issuance) are invited to apply equally.

Accepted for admission are extended Bachelor Degrees or similar nationally different Undergraduate Degrees equal to that of a Bachelor Degree. This regulation only applies, if the following requirements are fully met:

- The Bachelor Degree or national equivalent must have a minimum of 240 ECTS credits or comparable national credits (usually four years of Bachelor studies)
- Research methods have been part of these studies
- Compulsory part of such extended Undergraduate Degree had been a dissertation of significant theory-based nature, which has to be submitted together with the application for assessment (translation may be required)
- The candidate's Undergraduate Degree must be at the level of a First or Upper Second-Class Degree (or national equivalents). Lower Second-Class and Third-Class Undergraduate Degrees (or national equivalents) cannot be considered due to the superior level of expectations on this program of studies.
- These applications will be individually assessed regarding their acceptance, since it is SSM's obligation to meet regulatory requirements, but also to assure best possibly that students can be successful in their doctoral studies.

2.3. Acknowledgement of Prior Doctoral Studies

Students, who have started their doctoral studies with another University and wish to change are invited to apply with the University. Depending on the phase and quality of their research project, such previous studies may be acknowledged partly or in full. This

acknowledgement is part of an individual assessment for which the following regulations apply:

- The previous Higher Education Institution must be an acknowledged institution on the level of doctoral studies (Research Degree Awarding Powers).
- Due to international regulations and expectations on the level of doctoral studies, the previous supervisor must fulfil the criteria allowing them such supervision of doctoral studies. In specific circumstances, subject to individual and formal review, the prior supervisor may be accepted by SSM on a student's request and can continue with the student.
- The chosen research must have adopted a topic being relevant for social-economic sciences. There may be circumstances in which official regulations may not allow an acknowledgement.
- A letter of recommendation from the previous institution will be welcomed but is not compulsory. Other recommendations by academics having the right to supervise doctoral studies are also welcome.
- Further documentation in an applicant's interest of successful studies may apply.

Applicants may be asked to attend the Research Method modules, if their prior studies are not equivalent to those of Swiss School of Management.

Applicants should contact the Swiss School of Management for further advice and an in-depth assessment of their prior studies and/or research undertaken.

3. General Regulations

In the interest of successful studies and achievements on superior level, but also for good experience of all students, Swiss School of Management introduces general regulations and recommendations for its doctoral studies.

3.1. Orientation of the Doctoral Studies

It is expected that the intended doctoral research is relevant and related to the scientific field of economic sciences. Closely related subject areas are acceptable as well. Especially welcomed are

- cross-disciplinary research
- research addressing economics and society

Students can seek advice and guidance with a faculty member for doctoral studies of the Swiss School of Management, clarifying and orienting their intended research accordingly with reference to the objectives of this program of studies. This one-to-one consultation aims to facilitate the outline of the independent research project, in particular to make it feasible, relevant, and with informed focus on the extension of and contribution to existing knowledge in the subject area. It is highlighted that the superior expectations of studies on doctoral level must be met.

3.2. Standard Period of Studies

The normal period of study is two years, based on full-time studies. If the research is progressing and contributing to the goals of the program, students can extend their studies. Extending the duration of the program must be approved by your supervisor, and the Academic Director.

Such application has to be made in writing and accompanied by an explanation on how such extension contributes to improving their research and thesis.

An extension may also be granted, if a student cannot participate for genuine reasons in one of the blocks of the taught modules. The length of such extension will depend on the availability of the next taught block missed.

Professional reasons may justify an extension through serious affectation, as the length of these studies may not allow to foresee unexpected situations. In such cases written documentation has to be submitted, best supported by an employer's statement. In self-employed contexts a thorough explanation will be accepted, too.

3.3. Research Method Modules' Strategic Learning Objectives

The taught Research Method modules strongly encourage and develop student-centred learning. Cooperative Learning and Research-based Learning will be infused into the teaching-learning strategies.

In addition to these research-based and interactive lectures, research paper analysis, scientific work, and self-directed learning resources will be provided to support delivery and attainment of the intended learning outcomes beyond the presence time of these modules. Doctoral studies depend on individual learning enabling independent scientific research.

The modules will therefore progress significantly beyond the delivery of subject knowledge and will incorporate knowledge and learning, discourse and informed dialogue, and self-development. It should be noted that with particular regard to researching independently, the focus will be on facilitating knowledge rather than only teaching and, in this respect, the strategy is designed to facilitate the deep learning experience attributed to a personally more active participation of the learning process by students.

The delivery of these Research Method modules is explained in the relevant module descriptors. Please refer to the relevant Program Outline. All methods of teaching and learning are subject to the necessary number of contact hours (virtual/real), assessments, and the need for excellent student experience and progress.

3.4. Learning Support

A major objective of all efforts is to provide blended and online learning to students in addition to module tutors' facilitation. This is supported by:

- Induction to studies on doctoral level
- Course textbooks and research papers for each taught subject
- Online library (at an additional cost)
- Virtual Learning Environment

- Facilitation of Peer-to-Peer interaction and with faculty for formative and summative assessment and feedback during the whole time of these presence studies (including the time of elaboration of the individual Research Proposal)

In addition, students' attention is drawn to the research activities of the Swiss School of Management as significant mechanism for further support. DBA students are cordially invited to participate in the school's research activities and profit from its rich expertise. These academics are sources for improvement and can offer informative assistance for a student's doctoral research.

Further information on each module can be found in the single module's description (see program outline).

3.5. Attendance of Taught Modules

We strongly emphasize that consequent attendance is necessary on students' part as an essential element for successful studies. Consequently, the following requirements operate:

- Students are expected to attend all taught lectures.
- If a student cannot attend for any genuine reason (e.g. illness), they are expected to email the module tutor as soon as possible.
- Persistent non-attendance will require an explanation, in person, initially with the module tutor.
- Persistent no-attendance can lead to termination of studies, if not excused.

3.6. Additional Study Requirements

In addition to the formal contact hours, students are expected to engage in significant independent studies between the workshops, but also beyond. This is an essential part of study requirements facilitating learning outcomes and successful results. Wide reading is essential, which on this level of studies is not limited to textbooks alone. Researching research paper repositories and academic conference proceedings are of essential importance.

3.7. The Research Proposal

The Research Proposal is the central completion of the first phase leading to the Degree of the Doctor of Business Administration. It is implemented in lieu of a regular Master's Thesis. While it is a Research Proposal being strongly related to the following doctoral thesis, it is a scientific paper of a student's own and independent research in its own right.

Form and structure of the Research Proposal help students to thoroughly test their capabilities at this specific moment in their studies. A detailed explanation on content, form, and structure is found in the relevant Module Outline. However, the Research Proposal is directly linked to the topic of a student's doctoral thesis. It is not possible writing a different topic than that of the doctoral thesis.

The Research Proposal allows the Academic Board of Swiss School of Management to assess each student's readiness for the doctoral research. Therefore, strong academic criteria define the grading process in which a student's consistent research design and planning for gathering solid and robust data of scientific quality are paramount for

successful outcome and the admission to Phase 2 (data collection and analysis) of the doctoral thesis.

4. General Assessment Policies

Within the taught modules and the Research Proposal a consistent policy of assessment takes place. Grading policies are consistent for all assessments of the taught modules and the Research Proposal.

4.1.1. Taught Modules

The possible range of grades consists of:

Students, who have failed an assessment and/or module, are admitted to one retake only. The maximum grade awarded to retakes is a Pass at 60%.

To achieve consistent grading and as an implemented and proven control of quality all taught modules' examination papers and the Research Proposal are subject to the moderating approval of SSM's Examination Board. This process guarantees that students

Designation	Interpretation/Recognition	Percentage Range	Grade Point Value	
A	Excellent	94.5% - 100%	4.00	
A-		89.5% - 94.4%	3.67	
B+		86.5% - 89.4%	3.33	
B	Good	82.5% - 86.4%	3.00	
B-		79.5% - 82.4%	2.67	
C+		76.5% - 79.4%	2.33	
C		Satisfactory	72.5% - 76.4%	2.00
C-	69.5% - 72.4%		1.67	
D+	64.5% - 69.4%		1.33	
D	Poor but passing		59.5% - 64.4%	1.00
F			0% - 59.4%	0.00
P	Pass with Credit			
TC	Transfer Credits			
I	Incomplete			
W	Official Withdrawal			

will find an impartial, equal and fair grading process of best practice.

4.1.2. Reassessment Policy within Taught Modules

In the event students are required to take a reassessment,

they will receive formal notification of this in writing. Specific dates will be set for each reassessment (taught modules). It is reminded that only one reassessment per module is allowed but the Research Proposal is also possible. Should the reassessment fail then the student will be requested to repeat the respective module or the Research Proposal. This may lead to substantial loss of time.

Failing two of the taught modules results in the termination of studies. Failing the same module twice, results in the same outcome. No continuation of these studies will then be possible.

For the Research Proposal a formal reassessment follows the same regulation. Should a student fail their second attempt they will be awarded with a Postgraduate Certificate in Research accompanied by the respective Transcript.

4.2. Submission of Work

4.2.1. Submission

All assignments of the modules and the Research Proposal have to be submitted latest on the due day by 18:00 hours (GMT).

4.2.2. Duration of the Grading Processes

Assignments of Taught Modules

Assignments will be graded within four weeks after submission. Holidays and public or bank holidays do not count to this period and may extend the period of grading. For reasons of quality assurance second gradings may be practiced, but is not necessarily compulsory. This may lead to third gradings, if there is a significant discrepancy between the first and the second grade, which cannot be resolved by internal moderation.

Assessment of the Research Proposal

The Research Proposal will be graded within six (6) weeks after submission.

4.2.3. Mitigating Circumstances

Should a student find that he/she is unable to meet submission deadlines due to serious and justifiable personal circumstances and affectations, they should consider applying for mitigating circumstances. This application is made with SSM's Research Center. Students should be aware that evidence for the causes has to be provided.

Among acceptable reasons are especially illness and serious family reasons. Work-related issues during the taught modules can only be brought forward in very specific cases, since students are expected to plan their time for all assessments in the first stage of their studies accordingly. During the stage of the doctoral thesis work-related issues are acceptable, as it is impossible to foresee all events during such long period. However, the reasons must be serious and supported by evidence, too.

Generally counts that only evidence-based requests for mitigating circumstances will be considered.

4.2.4. Extension Request Procedures

Requests for extensions must be submitted to the Swiss School of Management academic senate a minimum of 10 days prior to the set submission deadline, unless unforeseeable circumstances apply. Only one extension is allowed for each module.

Supporting evidence has to be in writing and be submitted together with the application.

If the request is accepted, then it is normal for an extension of one week to be granted, unless serious reasons (e.g. illness) apply.

For the Research Proposal an individual extension will be granted depending on the application's reasons and the time of affectation.

4.2.5. Late Submission

In the case of late submission (taught modules and Research Proposal) the following regulation applies:

- Up to 48 hours late: Maximum grade of Pass at 60%
- More than 48 and up to 96 hours late: Fail, reassessment
- More than 96 hours late: Loss of the module

4.3. Grading of Assignments (Taught Modules and Research Proposal)

4.3.1. Grading

The possible range of grades consists of:

Designation	Interpretation/Recognition	Percentage Range	Grade Point Value
A	Excellent	94.5% - 100%	4.00
A-		89.5% - 94.4%	3.67
B+		86.5% - 89.4%	3.33
B	Good	82.5% - 86.4%	3.00
B-		79.5% - 82.4%	2.67
C+		76.5% - 79.4%	2.33
C	Satisfactory	72.5% - 76.4%	2.00
C-		69.5% - 72.4%	1.67
D+		64.5% - 69.4%	1.33
D	Poor but passing	59.5% - 64.4%	1.00
F	Failing	0% - 59.4%	0.00
P	Pass with Credit		
TC	Transfer Credits		
I	Incomplete		
W	Official Withdrawal		

Students, who have failed an assessment and/or module, are admitted to one retake only. The maximum grade awarded to retakes is a Pass at 60%. This regulation of capped grading also applies to the Research Proposal.

To achieve consistent grading and as an implemented and proven control of quality all taught modules' examination papers are subject to the moderating approval of the Examination Board. This process guarantees that students will find an impartial, equal and fair grading process of best practice.

4.3.2. Grading Criteria

Excellent (> 89,5%)

Work of outstanding quality, which incorporates and integrates both original or primary and secondary sources at highest standards of scientific argumentation and demonstrates extensive critical discussion. The work meets the outline/research objective beyond full extent; e.g., by making initial own contributions to the related field of knowledge and/or provides findings meeting the criterion of research impact. In addition, such work is publishable without significant improvement and amendments.

A dense argumentation demonstrates the full understanding, analysis, and judgment of the core complexities involved. There is best practice of controversial and critical discussion balanced with a profound reflected selection and structure of empirical evidence being accompanied by consequential and defensible logic of justification regarding adopted arguments.

Excellent use and causal application of the relevant theoretical body is consistently evident and leads to already defensible conclusions. There is superior evidence and depth of extensive reading, which is consistently and precisely referenced following the Referencing Style. The intellectual argumentation is outstanding, significant, and

applies rigorous and controversial discussion, which is critically evaluated, argued, and, where relevant, extended and considered in the wider context of theoretical contexts.

Good (79,5% to 89,4%)

Work of high quality, which incorporates and integrates both original or primary and secondary sources at a high standard of argumentation and critical discussion. The work meets the outline/research objective to full extent.

A dense argumentation demonstrates an in-depth understanding, analysis and judgment of the core problematic involved. There is best practice of critical discussion balanced with in-depth reflected selection and structure of empirical evidence being accompanied by a plausible and consequentially logic justification of the adopted arguments.

Excellent application of the relevant theoretical body is evident and leads to stringent conclusions. There is high evidence and depth of wide reading, which is precisely referenced following the Referencing Style. The intellectual argumentation is significant and applies rigorous and contrasting discussion, which is critically evaluated, applied and, where relevant, adapted and considered in the wider context of relevant organisational or theoretical environments.

Detailed, realistic and deduced or abducted conclusions and recommendations are thoroughly in line with the paper's analysis.

Satisfactory (69,5% to 79,4%)

Argumentation and discussion both are logical and academically solid to a satisfactory extent. The submitted work correctly addresses a majority of key issues. However, these may not be fully explored and/or linked with each other to provide a complete demonstration of the issue(s) to be analysed and critically discussed.

The assessment outline/research question has been understood, despite that some sections might not be fully considered for the constitution of a fully comprehensive answer in academic/scientific understanding. The application of academic underpinning and the application of theoretical and/or – if applicable – practice-oriented material may nevertheless be limited or provides only partial consideration of the essential analysis.

The evaluation and assessment of the issue is satisfying, but may be more descriptive, instead of being of interpretative or explanatory nature. The work demonstrates limited evidence of wide reading and/or literature, which is academically not solid or outdated. Concepts and argumentation are referenced in an adequate referencing style, although some of the detail might not be fully correct.

In some parts of the argumentation the work may also need further discussion and evaluation of essential factors, which are not fully explored or the work is missing a necessary broader perspective and consideration of constituting elements.

Poor but passing (59,5% to 69,4%)

The answer is acceptable and correctly addresses those issues being part of the assessment, but may not consider all of these. In addition/or, these may not be sufficiently elaborated and/or explored to provide a wider demonstration of knowledge on the issue to be discussed.

The brief/research question has been applied, despite that a number of factors might not be fully considered to constitute a comprehensive answer. The application of academic underpinning and the application of theoretical and or practice-oriented material may be limited or provides only limited consideration of the issues.

The analysis is generally acceptable, but may be overly descriptive, lacks critical analysis and demonstrates limited evidence of wider reading. Consistency of argumentation, criticality and depth will need further improvement. The bibliographic elements and use of underpinning literature may not be fully correct.

The submitted work identifies and applies theoretical frameworks but utilization and critique remains restricted. Conclusions and recommendations generally follow the brief, but lack depth and/or detail. The use of theory and/or empirical data is limited and/or conclusive argumentation may not be fully explored.

Fail <59,4%

The work contains errors, omissions or has poorly developed argumentation and/or the discussion remains fundamental. The assessment brief is not met to a sufficient extent, either as a whole or in significant parts.

The submission lacks an adequate theoretical and/or conceptual base thereby failing to identify essential key issues and may demonstrate a misunderstanding of the brief. The structure is not consistent or lacks significant elements.

The student's own lack of understanding may be evident. Arguments are not consistently developed and/or chapters or paragraphs may not be adequately connected and explained. Assumptions may prevail instead of evidence-based argumentation. There is no sufficient evidence of wider reading. Sources used are inappropriate or are poorly referenced.

The paper contains a number of unsupported observations and fails to reach informed conclusions and recommendations. The quality of the form of expression is such that meaning is impaired in places.

4.3.3. Final Regrade

These grading criteria are binding elements for all assessments, which also includes the Research Proposal.

4.4. Academic Misconduct

4.4.1. Referencing

Students are asked to note the regulations on academic dishonesty. In particular, this addresses the inclusion in their work of any un-attributed or not referenced material

adopted from other sources. In addition, external support by, e.g., any external writer (so-called ghost writer) is strictly forbidden. Students are assured that every effort will be taken to deal with them fairly, but should remember that there are strict rules concerning any form of cheating.

Students, who are presenting work in module assessments and/or the Research Proposal, which is not their own work or do not reference all contributions from third parties partly or in full will be informed in writing that doubts exist about the origin of his/her work. These doubts can be accompanied by a report, such as turn-it-in or alike.

4.4.2. Other Third-Party Contributions

It is clearly regulated that any (further) third party contribution of which extent and/or length ever, must be fully declared. It is also stated that an explanation does not necessarily constitute the legality or legitimacy of such contribution. Students must be aware of the extremely limited allowance of using others' contributions.

The use of a ghost-writer, editor or similar is strictly forbidden and will lead to the immediate exclusion of any student. The use of a translator or other party supporting the quality and standards of the language must be explained in writing together with the declaration that such support is restricted to the language (grammar and spelling) of the thesis only and that no other contributions beyond language corrections took place.

4.4.3. Process of Academic Misconduct

If suspicions are raised on specific parts of any submitted student work or are assumed or detected, the student will be invited to explain the situation and to provide evidence that those doubts raised are unjustified. The process of a student's justification can either be in writing or by a personal hearing.

Should the student not be able to invalidate the suspicions about the originality of their work, a formal Cheating Committee will take place. This committee will consist of three academics, which will carefully evaluate the case presented in full detail.

The decision of the Cheating Committee is binding and may result in the loss of a particular or more modules and in severe or repeated cases in the student's exclusion from the doctoral studies. The process will be fair and respect alleged students' interest, but students should be aware of the seriousness of such allegation and the high risk for their outcome.

4.5. Supervision of the Research Proposal

An individual supervisor will be allocated to each student based on the supervisor's expertise in the chosen subject area of the Research Proposal.

It is the task of the student to request supervision sessions and to arrange these with the allocated supervisor. The supervisor will not unnecessarily delay the request for supervision and will provide guidance for the student as facilitator for his/her independent research. However, students should note that a supervisor's task is to provide guidance only. A supervisor can and will not interfere in the independent nature of the Research Proposal. This also means that a supervisor's support is not unlimited, which counts for supervision time, too.

The supervision process must be reasonable. Students should be aware that supervisors' support is guidance only and no meticulous ongoing correction of their work. That means that the usual process is limited to one review per part of their work through the allocated supervisor. A second, quick review may be possible, but is not part of the standard process. A third review is excluded, except a final review of the completed paper, which is strictly limited to format and structural elements.

Supervision sessions can be personal, by video calls, email, chat forums or other means on which supervisor and student mutually agree.

4.6. Complaints Procedure

If a student feels unfairly treated, disadvantaged or not supervised according to the regulations, he/she has the right to complain to the **Academic Senate** of the Swiss School of Management. (A comparable procedure applies to individual module assignments).

A member of the **Academic Senate** will contact the supervisor and discuss the issues raised. The intention is to achieve a moderation in which the student's concerns are intensively considered and discussed to achieve mutual understanding in the effort of a solution by consent.

Should the reasons of complaint be so serious that it will not be appropriate for the student to continue with the allocated supervisor, the Academic Director can allocate a different supervisor. The loss of time will then be compensated accordingly and the deadline for submission extended.

The decision of the Academic Director will carefully respect a student's rights and not act against these, but the decision is final.

4.7. Conclusion

Other relevant regulations may additionally apply as set out in the chapters before or explained in the DBA Program Outline.

5. The Thesis

The process on requests and scientific expectations of the independent research for the thesis is explained in detail in the thesis descriptor of the DBA Program Outline. This outline contains essential details of requirements and needs for successful thesis writing. Of central support there is guidance and advice by the allocated supervisor.

Students are reminded again and should be aware that the expectation for a doctoral thesis is on superior level of independent research in which students demonstrate their scientific knowledge to deal with, organize, and structure complex material in the effort to make sense of it and to produce meaningful and defensible empirical results. This also means that it is not the task of the supervisor to actively look after a supervisee, but that it is the task of the student to seek for their supervisor's support.

The allocated supervisor will provide guidance and support only. They will not directly interfere into the research. This is an essential element of a student's evidence of his/her worthiness of being awarded with the intended doctoral degree.

For successful progress in students' interest, the Research Center assists students through a number of further tools being published on the intranet for doctoral studies.

Participation in additional research-centred activities is not compulsory, but highly recommended. These activities include, e.g.:

- Part-publication of the doctoral research in academic journals and other academic publications
- Attendance of academic conferences, especially those providing sessions for doctoral students for achieving peer-feedback and that of other academics
- Gaining academic teaching experience through guest lectures on their topic of research
- If applicable, attending professional and organizational forums

However, as part of the level of these studies and expression of their independent nature, it is the task of each individual student to personally engage in such additional activities. The Swiss School of Management will facilitate such activities on request, but not directly guide students.

5.1. Duration of the Thesis

The elaboration of the research until the submission of the thesis takes place within a period of twelve months as a standard period of stage 3 of the DBA program. This then is followed by three (3) months for assessment and corrections, and two (2) months for organizing the Viva.

In the case of unexpected interruption, illness or other serious affectations, you are invited to apply for mitigating circumstances. Applications for mitigating circumstances have to be accompanied by tangible evidence. The decision made by the board of examiners is final.

5.2. Doctoral Supervision Process

DBA candidates will be supported by an individually allocated doctoral supervisor. The supervisors are selected by their acknowledged expertise in the relevant subject area of the thesis. The supervisor will assist a DBA candidate during the whole duration of their thesis. Each supervisor will fulfil acknowledged academic standards and meets criteria for doctoral supervision:

- Own Doctoral Degree, DBA, which was awarded by an acknowledged University or a Doctoral Degree officially acknowledged in its country of origin as equal to a DBA Degree.
- The supervisor must be an active or retired academic with strong own research profile.
- The supervisor can be external to the Swiss School of Management, as long as the prior two conditions are met.

Students may recommend their own supervisor to SSM. SSM will carefully review such suggestion and is generally prepared to consider such external supervisors, provided that they are academically and scientifically meeting the formal criteria for doctoral supervision, which must be supported by adequate documentation.

Student and the supervisor will work closely together and meet each other by individual and mutually agreed ways and forms of communication in the supervision process. Supervision can take place by personal meetings and/or distance supervision using electronic communication channels supervisee and supervisor mutually agree on. Supervision sessions have to be documented by the supervisor through a short Progress Report.

5.3. Submission and Viva

5.3.1. Submission Prerequisites

The Thesis has to include the Declaration of Honour, in which the DBA candidate declares in lieu of an oath that their submitted work

- Is purely their own
- Has not been submitted completely or in parts to any other Higher Education Institution before
- Is not copied from any third party
- Nor written by a so-called ghost-writer of any kind
- That all use of third-party work is fully referenced by acknowledged standards of citation and referencing in Harvard style.

The Swiss School of Management will call an academic **Viva Board** of doctoral academics, of which two will individually assess the thesis before the Viva takes place. Both these reports have to recommend the submitted thesis for the Viva. The allocated supervisor will only be a supporting member of the Viva board, but can neither chair the Viva Board, nor assess the thesis before and during the Viva.

5.3.2. Formal Submission of the Thesis

The submission of the thesis is not bound to a specific hour or day, but subject to submission during the standard period of studies or the extension approved by the Swiss School of Management. In addition, within this timeframe, the exact date is subject to the personal agreement between a student and their supervisor and furthermore their consent to submission.

Students are informed that submission of a thesis is only possible together with the written permission of submission of the supervisor, which has to accompany the thesis. The supervisor will not refrain a student from submission for other reasons than the quality of their work done and/or written.

Should a supervisor not confirm a submission for reasons, which are not fully explained to the student, they should consider the complaints procedure.

5.4. Viva

Latest within five (5) months after submission, the Swiss School of Management will invite the DBA candidate to their Viva. In this Viva the DBA candidate will defend their thesis through a summarizing presentation. Following then the **Viva Board** will provide feedback on the DBA candidate's scientific and academic achievements. Clarifying questions may be asked by discretion of any member of the Viva Board at any time during the Viva.

The Viva Jury consists of a minimum of three academics of the Swiss School of Management and the student's supervisor, who only has a recommending, but not voting voice. The Viva is open to the public.

The class of the awarded Degree will be achieved by majority of the voting jury members. For their vote the members of the Viva Jury will take into consideration

1. The written assessments before the Viva
2. The student's performance during their Viva

DBA candidates not successful (fail) or are requested to make improvements or amendments to their first thesis attempt will be granted an extension by the Viva Board of up to six (6) months maximum for necessary improvements. This period may vary by respecting the amount of improvements to be done. A second Viva will take place then, which will follow the same regulations and process.

For only minor amendments the Viva Board will decide, whether a second Viva will have to take place or whether the final acceptance of the thesis can be decided by Chair's action. Such decision mainly depends on the requested extent and level of quality improvements of amendments to be made.

Should a student fail again to achieve the acceptance of their thesis, no further attempt exists and the student will have to finish their studies without the intended DBA Degree.

5.5. Grading of the Doctoral Thesis

5.5.1. General Grading Criteria (Acceptance of the Thesis)

For the doctoral thesis no individual grade in the form of a percentage is awarded. Instead, the grading process consists of two stages:

1. Two independent assessments in form of a written report recommending a candidate's thesis for the Viva (or not recommending it); both votes by reports have to be positive.
2. The Viva itself, in which the candidate presents and defends the research of their thesis in front of the Swiss School of Management's Academic Senate

Assessments can result in

- The acceptance of the thesis
- The acceptance of the thesis with minor amendments
- The acceptance of the thesis with amendments
- The rejection of the thesis

In the case of requested amendments assessors of the written report or the Viva jury will grant extra time for making the requested amendments depending on their extent. The maximum period granted will comprise six (6) months.

The thesis, hence the Doctoral Degree is awarded in four categories, which are

- Doctor of Business Administration Summa cum laude
- Doctor of Business Administration Magna cum laude
- Doctor of Business Administration
- Fail

The thesis is assessed by majority of votes of the Doctoral Viva Board.

Particular reference is made to further regulations in the Thesis Outline for fails and in addition to the DBA Student Handbook.

5.5.2. Specific Acceptance Criteria

Summa cum laude

Work of outstanding quality, which incorporates and integrates both original or primary and secondary sources at highest standards of scientific argumentation and demonstrates highest standards of empirical research.

Essential criteria of this class are:

- Contribution of research impact to the field of knowledge addressed
- Extension of the existing body of knowledge
- The work is publishable without significant improvement and amendments; acceptance is expected on the level of an indexed academic journal at three- or four-star level.

Excellent use and causal application of the relevant theoretical body is consistently evident and leads to fully defended conclusions. There is superior evidence of empirical research undertaken. The intellectual argumentation is outstanding, significant and applies rigorous and controversial discussion being fully supported by a rich body of consistent and conclusive empirical data.

The adopted body of existing literature is rich, logic, fully relevant, and meticulously referenced. Argumentation is exceptionally critical and logic.

Magna cum laude

Work of best quality, which incorporates and integrates both original or primary and secondary sources at high standards of scientific argumentation and demonstrates excellent standards of empirical research.

Essential criteria of this class are:

- Significant contribution to the field of knowledge addressed
- Providing additions of importance to the existing body of knowledge
- The work is publishable without significant improvement and amendments; acceptance is expected on the level of an indexed academic journal at three-star level.

Superior use and causal application of the relevant theoretical body is consistently evident and leads to strongly defended conclusions. There is high level of evidence of empirical research undertaken. The intellectual argumentation is excellent, important, and applies rigorous and controversial discussion being fully supported by a rich body of consistent and conclusive empirical data.

The adopted body of existing literature is rich, logic, fully relevant, and meticulously referenced. Argumentation is exceptionally critical and logic.

Doctor of Business Administration

Work of high quality incorporating and integrating both original or primary and secondary sources at significant standards of scientific argumentation and demonstrates accepted standards of empirical research.

Essential criteria of this class are:

- Contribution to the field of knowledge addressed
- Providing additions of good quality to the existing body of knowledge
- The work is publishable without major improvement and amendments; acceptance is expected on the level of an indexed academic journal at a minimum of two-star level.

Very good use and causal application of the relevant theoretical body is consistently evident and leads to convincingly defended conclusions. There is essential level of evidence of empirical research undertaken. The intellectual argumentation is of high quality, essential, and applies rich and controversial discussion being fully supported by a significant body of consistent and conclusive empirical data.

The adopted body of existing literature is rich, logic, fully relevant, and excellently referenced. Argumentation is highly critical and logic.

Fail

Theses, which do not meet the above criteria to the full extent and which the Viva Jury rejects. Essential additional criterion is that the Jury does not conclude that extensions and or amendments will lead to the necessary improvements for acceptance within the allowed period of time for such circumstances.

5.6. Process of the Viva

The Viva is public. That means that other students, academics or members of the public are admitted to a student's Viva.

The purpose of the Viva is assessing and testing a student's submitted research by academic standards in a fair process. This test is subject-oriented and respects criteria of moral, ethics, and transparency. Therefore, the Viva has the character of a public hearing.

After the Viva the Board will discuss and evaluate the written work and the oral statements of the student made during their Viva. This discussion will exclude both the student and the public. The vote for the final degree will be made by simple majority among the members of the Jury. The supervisor has the right to speak and to express a recommendation, but has no voting right.

After the Board has reached an agreement on the class of the Doctoral Award, the public will be reconvened and the student will be officially informed about their result. The Board's vote is binding, but does not limit the student's rights of appeal as explained in this Handbook and the relevant Program Outline.

5.7. Complaints Procedure (Doctoral Research)

If a student feels unfairly treated, disadvantaged or not supervised according to this regulation during the process of their doctoral research, they have the right to complain to the Dean/Director of the Swiss School of Management.

The Dean/Director will contact the supervisor and discuss the issues raised. The intention is to achieve a moderation in which the student's concerns are intensively considered and discussed to achieve mutual understanding in the effort of solution by consent. The process of moderation will lead to the student's personal involvement in the effort to find a solution for the issue(s) raised supporting the continuation of the doctoral research by resolving the issue(s) through mutual agreement between all involved parties.

Should the reasons of complaint be very serious or consent cannot be possible (in serious cases only) to the extent that it would not be appropriate for the student to continue with the allocated supervisor, the Dean/Director can allocate a different supervisor. The loss of time will then be compensated accordingly.

The decision of the Swiss School of Management will carefully respect a student's rights and not act against these, but its decision is final.

6. General Regulations

6.1. Testimony of Doctoral Studies

Students, who wish to terminate their studies before completion of their full doctoral studies, can obtain a written confirmation stating their present level of achievement.

An additional report of a student's supervisor will can be added explaining level and extent of the doctoral research at the moment of termination.

6.2. Academic Misconduct (General Guidelines and Summary)

6.2.1. Referencing

Students are asked to precisely note the regulations on academic dishonesty. In particular, this addresses the inclusion in their work of any un-attributed or not referenced material adopted from other sources. Students are assured that every effort will be taken to deal with them fairly, but should remember that there are strict rules concerning cheating.

Students, who are presenting work in submitted paper, which is not their own work or do not reference all contributions from third-parties partly or in full will be informed in writing that doubts exist about the origin of his/her work. These doubts can be accompanied by a report, such as turn-it-in or alike.

6.2.2. Other Third-Party Contributions

It is clearly regulated that any (further) third party contribution of which extent and/or length ever, must be fully declared. It is also stated that an explanation does not necessarily constitute the legality or legitimacy of such contribution. Students must be generally aware of the extremely limited allowance of using others' contributions.

The use of a ghost-writer, editor or similar is strictly forbidden and will lead to the immediate exclusion of any student. The use of a translator or other party supporting the quality and standards of the language of a thesis must be explained in writing together with the declaration that such support is restricted to the language (grammar and spelling) of the thesis only and that no other contributions beyond language corrections took place.

6.3. Students' Appeals

Students may appeal against any decision, including those of the Board of Examiners or the Board of the Viva by presentation of any new evidence or other essential submission for consideration.

Appeals shall be initially evaluated by the relevant Chair, and the Board shall be reconvened where there is a substantial reason to allow a reconsideration of its decision. All decisions of the Board of Examiners/Viva are subject to the appeals procedure.

A student has a right to appeal against the recommendations of such Board where:

- There has been a mistake or irregularity in the conduct of assessments or the Viva which may have affected the recommendation
- A student's achievement was adversely affected by illness or other factors which they were unable to communicate or for valid reasons unwilling to divulge before the relevant Board made its recommendations
- There has been a substantial administrative error, or where the examination or assessment was not conducted in accordance with the current regulations, or where some other material irregularity has occurred

- The Board of Examiners/Viva has recommended that a student should be penalized for cheating or plagiarism. Here the student may appeal against the Board's conclusion that cheating or plagiarism has occurred and against the penalty recommended.

Disagreement with the academic judgement of a Board of Examiners/Viva in assessing the merits of an individual piece of work or in reaching a decision on a student's progression or on the final level of award, based on grades, grades, and other information relating to the candidate's performance cannot in itself constitute reasons for an appeal.

When a student concludes that there are reasons for an appeal it is their responsibility to request a reconsideration by the relevant Board in writing to the Academic Senate of the Swiss School of Management not later than fourteen days after receiving confirmation of the recommendation. The written request must:

- Specify the reasons on which the student is exercising his or her right of appeal;
- Include all information such as medical certificates or other documentary evidence which the student wishes to be considered in support of his or her appeal;
- Identify any person(s) considered by the student as having information pertinent to the appeal.

In receipt of the student's written request SSM reconsiders the recommendation of the Board of Examiners/Viva and shall:

- Determine whether or not the reasons for appeal are permissible under the rights above. When it is determined that there are no reasons for appeal, SSM shall write to the student to inform him or her that the appeal has been rejected
- Convene a meeting of the relevant Board's appointed Review Group where an appeal is permissible and provide it with
 - The student's written request together with any supporting information
 - A copy of the Minutes of the relevant Board
 - A written statement from the Chair of the Board
 - Any written statement submitted by a person or persons identified by the student as having information pertinent to the appeal.

The appointed Review Group shall determine, whether or not it can proceed to consider the case solely on the basis of the written submissions or whether or not it wishes to interview any or all of the parties involved. The appointed Review Group will consider all of the evidence pertinent to the case and may recommend to the Board of Examiners that:

- The appeal should be rejected;
- The Board of Examiners/Viva be reconvened to reconsider its decision
- The case is so serious that the Academic Board should annul the decision of the Board by taking any action necessary for it to receive a revised recommendation including, if necessary, the establishment of a new Board or the appointment of new members

- If there is evidence, which raises doubts about the competence of or the standards being applied by the Board and that the Academic Board should authorize a full and proper investigation as a matter of urgency.

If the Revision Group concludes that a student's rights were affected, the unjustified prior decision will be revoked and SSM will apply appropriate means and mechanisms within its regulations correcting the false decision appropriately and accordingly in favour of the complaining student.

Should the Revision Group that the decision made was justified, it will inform the complaining student in writing about the reasons for such conclusion.

7. Final Regrade

This Student Handbook is the valid regulation of and for SSM's DBA studies. Alterations and adaptations may be made at any time. It is assured that students being already on the program will not be affected negatively. Information about changes will be published on SSM's website.

Bellinzona, 9th December, 2021

8. Misconduct

8.1. Prohibited Conduct

Academic Misconduct:

- **Cheating:** Cheating includes using unauthorized sources of information and providing or receiving unauthorized assistance on any form of academic work or engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by the instructor in the course syllabus or class presentation.
- **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism includes the copying of language, structure, images, ideas, or thoughts of another, and representing them as one's own without proper acknowledgment and is related only to work submitted for credit. Disciplinary action will not be taken for academic work in draft form.
- **Unauthorized possession or disposition of Academic Materials:** Unauthorized possession or disposition of academic materials includes the unauthorized selling or purchasing of examinations, class notes, term papers, or other academic work; stealing another student's work; and using information from or possessing exams that an instructor did not authorize for release to students.
- **Falsification:** Falsification encompasses any untruth, either verbal or written, in one's academic work.
- **Facilitation of any act of Academic Misconduct:** Facilitation of any act of academic misconduct includes knowingly assisting another to commit an act of academic misconduct.

Damage:

Any threatened, attempted, or actual damage or destruction of school property or

the property of others

Discriminatory Harassment:

Threats, intimidation, coercion, bodily harm, or other unwelcome behavior, through any method of communication directed at an individual or individuals on the basis of sex, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, genetic information, race, creed, color, national origin or ancestry, sexuality, age, religion, pregnancy, or disability that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive such that it has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a person's academic or work performance, or a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's programs, services, opportunities, or activities, when viewed through both an objective and subjective standard.

Abusive Behavior:

- Threatening or inflicting bodily harm upon any person or animal, or acting in a manner that creates a risk of bodily harm to any person, including oneself, or an animal.
- Threats, intimidation, coercion, or other unwelcome behavior, through any method of communication directed at an individual or individuals that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive such that it has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a person's academic or work performance, or a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's programs, services, opportunities, or activities, when viewed through both an objective and subjective standard.
- Any form of abusive behavior (as listed above) specific to current or former intimate partners.
- Hazing, which includes any action that endangers the mental, physical, or emotional health or safety of a student, or which destroys or removes

Disruptive Behavior:

- Engaging in behavior that disrupts or interferes with teaching, classroom, or other educational interactions, residential communities, research, administration, governmental functions, or disciplinary proceedings.
- Engaging in behavior that disrupts or obstructs the right of free speech or expression of any person on campus.
- Leading, inciting, or participating in any on-campus or off-campus demonstration, riot, or activity that disrupts the normal operations of the school, freedom of movement or safe passage and/or infringes on the rights of other members of the school community.
- Behavior that is considered lewd by a reasonable person including (but not limited to) voyeurism, public urination/defecation, and public exposure of intimate body parts.

False Information:

- Knowingly furnishing false information to any school official, instructor, office or organization, or on any applications.
 - Intentionally initiating or causing to be initiated any false report.
 - Use or possession of false identification.
- public or private property, for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in a group or student organization, or participating in, condoning, encouraging, requiring, or allowing an opportunity for hazing. A hazing violation may occur even when the victim expressed or implied consent.

Misuse of Alcohol:

- Use or possession of alcohol as prohibited by law or School policy.
- Manufacturing or distribution of alcohol as prohibited by law or School policy.
- Operating any vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or while impaired by the use of any intoxicating substance.
- Excessive use of alcohol resulting in a state of intoxication that endangers oneself or others.

Misuse of Drugs:

- Use or possession of illegal drugs (under federal or state law) including but not limited to marijuana, methamphetamine, cocaine, opiates, LSD, mushrooms, heroin, designer drugs such as Ecstasy and GHB, or other controlled substances or any substance used for an intoxicating effect.
- Use or possession of prescription drugs other than by the person prescribed or for use other than the prescribed purpose and/or dosage.
- Manufacturing or distribution of illegal or prescription drugs.
- Possession or use of drug paraphernalia including but not limited to equipment, products, and materials used to cultivate, manufacture, distribute, or use marijuana or other illegal drugs.
- Operating any vehicle under the influence of drugs or while impaired by the use of any intoxicating substance.
- Use of drugs results in a state that endangers oneself or others.

Non-Compliance:

- Failure to comply with the verbal or written directions of any School officials acting in the performance of their duties and in the scope of their employment, including failure to identify oneself to these persons when requested to do so.
- Failure to comply with the verbal or written directions of any law enforcement officers acting in the performance of their duties and in the scope of their employment, including resisting or obstructing law enforcement officers or failing to identify oneself when requested to do so.

- Violating the terms of any interim measure, no contact order, or exclusionary order imposed by the school.

Retaliation:

Any form of abuse, threat, intimidation, bullying, coercion, harassment, or attempt to influence or interfere with another individual or group who submits a report, cooperates with any investigation or acts as a witness in relation to an alleged violation of the Student Conduct Code, School policy, or any federal or state law or local ordinances.

Sexual Misconduct:

Any actual or attempted non-consensual behavior of a sexual nature including (but not limited to):

- Intentional and unwelcome touching, kissing or coercing, forcing, or attempting to coerce or force another to touch a person's intimate parts.
- Sexual intercourse without consent, such as penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral sex, without the consent of the victim.
- Taking, sharing, or posting of videos or photographs/images of a sexual nature without consent.
- Deliberate observation of others for sexual purposes without their consent.
- Exposing one's genitals in non-consensual circumstances.
- Viewing, placing, or posting pornography in public venues; possessing, distributing or viewing illegal pornography.
- Sexual harassment that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment for another.
- Any act of sexual misconduct in violation of state or federal law or school policy.

Stalking:

Engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person or persons that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others, or suffer substantial emotional distress. Course of conduct means two or more acts, including, but not limited to, acts in which the stalker directly, indirectly, or through third parties, by any action, method, device, or means, follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, or communicates to or about a person, or interferes with a person's property.

Theft:

Theft, attempted theft, or other unauthorized possession of School property or the property of others.

Unauthorized Use:

- Unauthorized use, entry, or occupation of another person's property or of

School facilities, property, or vehicles.

- Any unauthorized possession, duplication, or use of School keys or access devices.
- Unauthorized removal or misuse of any School document, record, data, nonpublic information, identification, educational material, or property (including forgery or alteration).

Violation of Law or School Policy:

Evidence of a violation of any federal or state law, or local ordinance, or School policy.

Violation of School Rules, Contracts, or Agreements:

- Violation of any rules, contracts, or agreements governing residence in or use of School owned or controlled property, or at athletic or other authorized special events.
- Violations of any rules, contracts, or agreements governing recognized student organizations.

Weapons:

Illegal use or possession of firearms or other weapons such as blades larger than pocket knives; ammunition or explosives; dangerous chemicals, substances, or materials; bombs or incendiary devices; or simulated weapons; or any weapon prohibited by law or School policy. Use of any such item, even if legally possessed, in a manner that harms or threatens others is prohibited.

In the case of suspected gross misconduct, the Director or the Dean will convene a Disciplinary Board meeting, and the student will be placed on interim suspension until the meeting has convened. The disciplinary board will be composed of members of SSM management.

The disciplinary board will make a recommendation to be reviewed and implemented by the Centre Director. Should a student be found guilty of gross misconduct, then she/he will be expelled. If, however, the offense is one of misconduct, the student will be issued a warning letter.

The school holds the right to immediately call the police in case of gross misconduct and dangerous behaviors towards SSM staff, management, guests or students.

8.2. Warning Letters

Misconduct offences lead to the issuing of a warning letter and may (in some extreme cases) result in the student being suspended from lectures and dismissed from the school.

Copies of warning letters will be sent to the student's parents, sponsor, or guardian. In serious disciplinary circumstances, or if a student has already received one warning letter at any point in their time at the Swiss School of Management, a final warning letter will be issued. This will inform the student that any subsequent break of the Swiss School of Management policies will lead to dismissal. No participant may hold an official post in the Swiss School of Management after receiving a warning letter in that term.

9. GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Swiss School of Management is committed to providing equal access to education to all, regardless of race, color, gender, religion, national and ethnic origin, or age.

SSM reserves the right to impose probation on any participant whose conduct is unsatisfactory. The school further reserves the right, subject to procedures outlined in this document, to require a participant to withdraw at any time.

Admission of a student that is based upon inaccurate or false statements or documents is null and void upon discovery of the fraud, and academic credit previously earned by the participant is voided. Upon suspension or dismissal from the school, there will be no refund of tuition and fees. In the event that fees are not fully paid, the balance will immediately become due.

Admission of a participant to the Swiss School of Management for any academic year does not imply that such participant will be re-enrolled in any succeeding academic year.

The Swiss School of Management makes every effort to assure completeness and accuracy in the marketing process (catalog, ads, homepage, etc.). Inevitably, due to the changing nature of listings and policies, possible errors, misprints or omissions may occur for which the school shall not be held liable.

For any disputes, the applicable laws of Italy, Region of Lazio, Domicile Rome shall apply.

The provision of this handbook should not be considered as an irrevocable contract between the student and SSM. The Swiss School of Management reserves the right to change any provision or requirement, including fees, contained in this handbook at any time with or without notice.

9.1. Tuition, Fees & Cost Structure

Tuition and fees are set in Euros. They will be periodically adjusted for exchange rate purposes and inflation. SSM reserves the right to adjust tuition and other fees as the need arises. However, no such changes will apply to the semester (six months) or session in progress and every effort will be made to maintain the same fees throughout any given academic year. SSM will make and announce changes as far in advance of the effective date of change as is feasible.

The respective tuition fees have to be paid by the participants no later than four weeks before the start of each academic year. The tuition fees for all undergraduate and graduate programs include books, handouts and course material. In order to meet the graduation requirements, participants should have no financial obligations to SSM.

Payments through DD Demand-Drafts or Bank Drafts by foreign students, have to be first cashed-in by SSM before arrival. If installments are agreed and confirmed, SSM holds the rights to postpone the handing-out of the stay-permit until all the financial commitments are met.

Every payment has to be made on time, regardless of school holidays or vacation!

9.2. Not included in the above amounts

Public transportation, laptops or any other computer, any living expenses, fees for visas and permits, diskettes, extracurricular activities, pocket money, or personal clothing.

This list is not exhaustive and any unused services such as meals, clothes, school supplies and benefits included in the fees are nonrefundable.

Additional Costs:

Degree Attestation:

Country	Modus	Cost
Bahrain	Apostille	€1,500
Qatar	Legalization	€2,500
Saudi Arabia	Legalization	€2,500
Kuwait	Legalization	€2,500
Oman	Apostille	€1,500
Lebanon	Legalization	€2,500
Jordan	Legalization	€2,500
Sudan	Legalization	€2,500
India	Apostille	€1,500
Pakistan	Legalization	€2,500
Syria	Legalization	€2,500
Egypt	Legalization	€2,500
Yemen	Legalization	€2,500
South Africa	Apostille	€1,500

Graduation Participation:

Status	Guests included	Cost
Graduate	2	€100
Enrolled students	0	€60
Professor	0	Free
Partner	0	€50
Extra guests	-	€50

***Non-Graduates can bring up to 2 guests if they pay the €100 graduate price. Caps and gowns are provided for the ceremony and student will receive their official transcript and certificate if graduates have completed the program successfully including their thesis projects and their tuition fees have been paid in full. For those that have not done the above, but would like to participate in the ceremony, they will receive a temporary degree. ***

Transcripts and Certificates:

Document Type	
Certificate with hologram stamp (1st copy)	Free
A3 Symbollic Certificate	€30
Official Transcript (1st copy)	Free
Certificate with hologram (reprint)	€100
Electronic Transcripts	Free

WES & Degree Verification

Students who would like to have their degree sent to WES or any other degree verification, there is a flat fee of **€100** for each verification.

Rotaract

To become a member in the Swiss School of Management Rotaract Club, there is a one time fee of **€100** per student.

The Swiss School of Management Rotaract club organizes a variety of projects and activities, depending primarily on the interests of the club members.

However, within the Rotaract program, all clubs undertake three types of activities in varying degrees: professional development, leadership development, and service projects.

Together, these three areas ensure a balanced club program and provide important experience and opportunities for the personal development of each Rotaractor.

Online Library Services

The Swiss School of Management offers an online library service through Ebsco. The library service has an additional cost of €100 per user. This account must be renewed yearly in order to maintain access.

9.3. Advanced Fees and Deposits

The application fee is due before the application can be processed. It is non-refundable.

The tuition deposit or the prepayment of the tuition fees due upon acceptance, is required before the SSM visa letter can be held (in the case of non-European residents) and before your place in the school can be held (in the case of all students). This advance deposit will be credited against the final tuition bill. The tuition deposit is non-refundable in case of cancellation, withdrawal, suspension or dismissal from the school. In case of deferral, it may be applied to the next term's tuition. Any prepayment (except application fee) is fully and immediately refundable in case of not getting the entry visa from the Italian Embassy.

9.4. 15.5. Refund Policy

Application and Registration Fees: Nonrefundable

Course Materials: Students may acquire at their own decision and cost SSM online class materials used throughout the program. These class materials may include notes, presentations, case studies, and sample assessments exclusive of any external copyrighted textbooks. This is a one-time payment charged to students immediately upon joining their first class. If a student desires to have physical copies of such class materials, they must pay an additional shipping charge which will vary depending on destination point (as quoted by the shipping agent). Once the material has been downloaded by students and/or shipment has been dispatched, then, no refund can be claimed.

Tuition Enrollment Fee: For students who desire to start their classes online from their home country, the following refund policy governs the enrollment fee. This refund structure does not apply to the first, second, or third installment payments. SSM finalizes its contracts with all teaching constituents in the second week of the start of the academic year and accordingly commitments become formal and non-irrevocable.

Week after paying the tuition	Percentage refunded from the
--------------------------------------	-------------------------------------

enrollment fee	tuition enrollment fee
1 st week (start of classes)	75%
2 nd week	50%
3 rd week	25%
4 th week	0%

Disclaimer: Students are responsible for all bank charges and transfer fees. For students who choose to leave the country and continue their studies at a different SSM Center location, the above refund policy may not apply unless the student provides evidence that they need to return to their home country due to extenuating circumstances and thus obliged to discontinue classes.

For students who receive a study visa through the Swiss School of Management, in the case of withdrawal from the program, students must report their withdrawal to the local authorities (immigration department, home office, etc.) which will then cancel their student visa.

9.5. Additional Comments and Regulations:

If a student commences studies at the Swiss School of Management and then withdraws for any reason, discontinues the course, is dismissed for continuous unexcused non-attendance of classes of more than 3 consecutive days of any subject, or is dismissed from the Swiss School of Management for reasons of misconduct or gross misconduct, **ALL fees if the participant is enrolled in the Doctor of Business Administration program are forfeited.**

10. 16. WITHDRAWAL & DISMISSAL POLICY

A student who wishes to withdraw from the Swiss School of Management for any reason must first meet the Academic Director or approach the management and discuss the matter thoroughly. After that, the participant must write a letter clearly outlining the reasons for the request and schedule a meeting with the School's Director. The request will be reviewed as quickly as possible, and granted, if reasonable. Requests written to other parties (agent, parents, other participants, etc.) are not accepted.

The student must produce his/her stay-permit at the time the request is granted. **Final permission will not be granted until the stay-permit is received by the administration for forwarding to the police.** Having received permission, the participant must then withdraw from the country according to the host countries' official immigration laws and procedures. In the case of rare exception, the administration will clearly specify the amount of time permitted for the student to close out all affairs and depart the country as long as it is done in accordance to the host countries immigration laws and procedures. In case of dismissal for reasons of gross misconduct, the period of time allowed to leave the country may be urgent. This limit may be imposed by local Authorities.

Students are financially responsible for courses for which they are registered after the last day of the drop/add period.

11. Good Financial Standing

Students will be considered to be in good financial standing at the end of each term when all accounts are cleared with the Business Manager and the Library and with all other services offered by SSM. Students not in good financial standing will not be issued grades or transcripts and may be refused re-enrollment at the school.

12. Privacy and Data Collection

The Swiss School of Management will only use your personal data on a lawful basis to fulfill a legitimate interest of the Swiss School of Management. The Swiss School of Management may use information collected from your visit to this website to:

- Manage and improve the user experience and preferences associated with this website and Swiss School of Management communications;
- Track how often people gain access to or read the Swiss School of Management e-library content and publications;
- Foster further communications and manage your subscription(s) to Swiss School of Management publications;
- Invite and/or register you (upon request) to events that may be of interest to you;
- Optimize and personalize your online interactions with the Swiss School of Management;
- Fulfill your online requests for goods or services;
- Conduct online research, education, training, or surveys;
- Identify anomalies in web traffic in order to help protect personal and Swiss School of Management institutional information; and
- Exercise the Swiss School of Management's legal rights, defend against legal claims, or respond to subpoenas, court orders, or other legal processes.

The collection and use of personal information for any other purpose than described herein requires supplemental and more specific notification or consent. Please see Swiss School of Management website for specific examples.

Disclosure or Sharing of Information

The Swiss School of Management may use third party service providers and suppliers to facilitate this website or the services the Swiss School of Management provides. Those providers and suppliers may have access to the information the Swiss School of Management collects in order to fulfill their obligations to the Swiss School of Management. For full details please see our websites below:

<https://www.iubenda.com/privacy-policy/13761172>

<https://www.iubenda.com/privacy-policy/13761172/cookie-policy>

Collection Methods

The Swiss School of Management may use various technologies such as cookies, applets, scripts, server logs, custom URL parameters, tracking images, information and correspondence, or web analytics to collect information. Depending on your browser you may be able to disable certain collection methods. This may limit your ability to use some features of this website.

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The Swiss School of Management may provide links on this website to other non- Swiss School of Management websites. The Swiss School of Management may also partner with third parties to place Swiss School of Management related ads on non- Swiss School of Management websites. Your use of non- Swiss School of Management websites is subject to the terms and conditions or privacy statements of the providers of those websites.

Data Protection

The Swiss School of Management strives to protect information through measures described in the websites below:

<https://www.iubenda.com/privacy-policy/13761172>

<https://www.iubenda.com/privacy-policy/13761172/cookie-policy>

Additional Rights You May Have Regarding Your Data

Applicable laws may give you additional rights to request access to, or to request the erasure, correction or transfer of, your data. For example, the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (EU GDPR) provides certain rights to persons who were/are residing in the European Union when data were/are collected. If the EU GDPR applies to your data then you may ask to see your data or request, to the extent allowed by law, to have your data corrected or erased. You may also object to or request restrictions on how your data will be processed. You may ask that your data be forwarded or transferred to another organization. Finally, to the extent allowed by law, you may withdraw consent you have given to certain data processing, without penalty. If you do decide to withdraw consent at a later date, your withdrawal will not affect the legality of the processing of your data up to that point.