



Swiss Association for Quality and
Management Systems (SQS)

Product regulation

Swiss Assessment

SWISS 
assessment



1. Introduction

The regulations for SQS services and guarantee marks contain the general terms and conditions, as well as the rights and obligations, defined by SQS in relation to its services, namely auditing, evaluation, certification and training. In this document, SQS sets out the regulations for the specific process and the conditions to obtain and maintain Swiss Assessment certifications. This product regulation applies in conjunction with the regulations for SQS services and guarantee marks.

2. The Swiss Assessment certification process

2.1 Aims and basic concepts

The Swiss Assessment certification process confirms the quality of the assessment center method (AC method) of the members and supports its further development. The requirements to achieve this are a membership of the Swiss Assessment Association and a successful certification procedure, which is confirmed by the Swiss Assessment SQS certificate. Successful certifications will be included in the external communications of the association.

This Swiss Assessment certification process ascertains and evaluates the quality of the AC method. This takes place by using random samples, based on defined checkpoints and representative examples. The assumption is that a company with high level of quality awareness will also provide high quality services. The statutes of Swiss Assessment and the AC standards (quality standards) form the basis for the evaluation. In addition to the evaluation of the AC method, whereby requirements are either met or not met, the process is meant to stimulate further quality development. This is the aim of the periodical audits, including the renewal of the Swiss Assessment certification.

The audit takes place in collaboration with subject experts from the University of Zurich (UZH). Specialists are engaged by the Swiss Assessment Association. They support the lead auditor in the certification process. Companies which do not meet the minimum requirements will be informed about the existing deviations from the standards and will receive recommendations on how to proceed. The procedure, including the submission and review of potential proofs of amendments made, must be completed within three months after the certification audit has been carried out. Should the documents not be submitted or the follow-up audit not be successfully completed, the procedure cannot be restarted within a period of at least twelve months.

2.2 SQS Assignment

On behalf of the Swiss Assessment association, the Swiss Association for Quality and Management Systems (SQS) carries out the audits in accordance with the provisions of this product regulation.

2.3 Certification process

Initial certification

Recertification

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Information to member company (MC) documents folder | Swiss Assessment | Agree on deadline, share information with the member company (MC) before the certificate expires | SQS / MC / UZH |
| Registration | MC / Swiss Assessment / SQS | Preparatory documents for the audit | MC / SQS / UZH |
| Agree on deadline | SQS / MC / UZH | Prepare for the audit | SQS / UZH |
| Prepare for the audit with preparatory documents | SQS / UZH | Carry out audit, attend AC on site | SQS / UZH / MC |
| Carry out the audit and attend the AC on site | SQS / UZH / MC | Record and review the outcome / apply for re-certification | SQS / UZH / MC |
| Record and discuss the outcome / apply for initial certification | SQS / UZH / MC | Information to Q-Commission Swiss Assessment and MC | SQS / Q Commission / Swiss Assessment |
| Information to Q-Commission Swiss Assessment and MC | SQS / Q-Commission / Swiss Assessment | Print and deliver certificate | SQS |
| Print and deliver certificate | SQS / MC | | |

2.3.1 Implementation

The SQS auditor, with the support of the UZH specialist, carries out the audit based on the Swiss Assessment quality standards and on the established checkpoints (checklist). Should any extraordinary situation arise, such as insufficient preparation of the company for the audit, the further procedure will be reviewed with the Swiss Assessment Quality Committee and the audited company. Should the company refuse to hand-over the necessary documents, the auditor can cancel the audit. In this case, the company will have to bear all the costs relating to the audit.

For recertifications, the audit must be carried out before the existing certificate expires. SQS will contact the company at least 3 months before the certificate expires to agree on deadlines.

2.3.2 Decision to issue the certificate

If the outcome of the audit is positive, the leading SQS auditor, in conjunction with the UZH expert, will request that the issue of the Swiss Assessment SQS certificate. Based on the outcome, they can include reservations which must be addressed before the certificate is issued. In cases which are doubtful, the Swiss Assessment Quality Committee will be involved in the process and will have the casting vote.

If any deviations from the standards are found, the company will only once be granted a period of a maximum of 3 months to address them. The auditor will decide on a case-by-case basis whether the amendments to the deviations can be proven by submitting a relevant documentation, or whether a follow-up audit is required, which will have to be paid for.

The Swiss Assessment Quality Committee receives information about the issue and/or revocation of labels.

3 The Swiss Assessment SQS certificate

3.1 Statement of a Swiss Assessment SQS certificate

The Swiss Assessment SQS certificate attests that the assessment center provider in question fulfils the AC quality standards and the relevant standards.

3.2 Period of validity

The Swiss Assessment SQS certificate is valid for 3 years and must be renewed ahead of its expiration. The Swiss Assessment SQS certificate expires upon leaving the Swiss Assessment association.

Should the association Swiss Assessment or SQS terminate the agreement on the Swiss Assessment certification procedure, the respective individual contractual relationships (certification mandates of the customers) between the holders of Swiss Assessment SQS certificates and SQS will continue until the respective certificates have expired, and the provisions of these product regulations will remain valid until such time.

3.3 Use of the Swiss Assessment-SQS certification mark

While holding a valid Swiss Assessment-SQS certificate, the holder can use the Swiss Assessment-SQS certification mark as set forth by this product regulation. The certification mark may not be changed.



4. Rights and obligations

4.1 Use of the Swiss Assessment-SQS certification mark

The provisions of the regulations for SQS services apply.

The use of the Swiss Assessment-SQS certificate and of the certification mark Swiss Assessment-SQS for business purposes is regulated under point 3.3.

4.2 SQS rights and obligations

The provisions of the regulations for SQS services apply.

5. Dispute settlement

Should differences arise in connection with the issue of certificates, a detailed report needs to be sent to the Swiss Assessment Quality Commission. Further decisions will be made by the Quality Commission in conjunction with the SQS-EC (SQS Expert Commission).

6. Registration

The registration request is submitted through the Swiss Assessment Association using the SQS registration form. The association will forward the registration request to SQS, which triggers the ordinary certification process.

The documents required for the preparation of the audit need to be submitted to the responsible SQS auditor and to the UZH expert 14 days before the audit. In case some relevant documents are missing and they cannot be submitted within a reasonable period of time, the audit will not be carried out.

7. Fees

7.1 Application fee

The application fee for association members is part of the Swiss Assessment certification or re-certification. The amount is determined by the Swiss Assessment association. The application fee is to be paid to the Swiss Assessment association.

7.2 Costs of the SQS certification process (without UZH)

The current SQS fee schedule applies to the basic SQS fee and to the audit services, including expenses.

The same conditions apply to the printing of certificates, as for ISO 9001 certified companies according to the "SQS price list for in-house printing". The following guidelines apply for the preparation and execution of the audits:

- Preparation for an audit approx. 2 hours
- The audit includes an on-site visit
- Assessment center on site lasts approx. 8 hours
- Finalising the work approx. 30 min
- Administrative work approx. 1 hour

The SQS invoice is sent to the Chief Financial Officer of the Swiss Assessment association. The costs of the experts are billed separately by the UZH.

7.3 Additional costs due to insufficient audit preparation by the company

Should SQS incur additional effort caused by insufficient documentation submitted or should a follow-up audit be necessary, the resulting additional hours will be charged in addition to the above.