



Swiss Association  
for Quality and Management  
Systems (SQS)

Product Regulation

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# 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.

The following definitions apply in this Product Regulation:  
Assessment Centre: An assessment center is a multiple, group or individual diagnostic procedure based to a large extent on systematic behavioural observations.

Assessment center service: Assessment center services are defined as the development, implementation and evaluation of assessment centers.

Assessment center provider: An assessment center provider is a company or a corporate unit offering assessment center services.

### 2. The Swiss Assessment certification procedure

#### 2.1 Aims and basic concepts

The Swiss Assessment Certificate distinguishes those assessment center providers and members of Swiss Assessment who are particularly committed to the scientific quality of their assessment center services. To obtain the certificate, providers must be members of the Swiss Assessment Association and successfully complete the certification process. This leads to the Swiss Assessment-SQS Certificate, which confirms that the certified company runs high-quality assessment centers.

As part of the Swiss Assessment certification process, assessment centers are assessed against the requirements of the Swiss Assessment Statutes of the and Swiss Assessment Quality Standards. The minimum requirements to be met for an assessment center to be certified are defined in a checklist. This checklist forms the basis for the certification procedure.

To obtain a Swiss Assessment certificate, an assessment center provider must successfully pass a certification audit (initial certification). To retain the certificate, an assessment provider must be regularly audited and recertified every three years (recertification). Each audit is based on the Swiss Assessment checklist. Furthermore, each audit will take place in cooperation with experts from the University of Zurich (UZH) from the Chair of Work and Organisational Psychology. The experts will be contracted by the Swiss Assessment Association and will assist the SQS lead auditor (see 2.2 below) during the certification process.

In addition to the evaluation of the Swiss Assessment Quality Standards (minimum requirements met: yes/no), the certification procedure aims to encourage continuous quality development through the regular audits.

The association will publish the outcome of successful certifications.

#### 2.2 Mandate of the SQS

SQS carries out the Swiss Assessment audits on behalf of the Swiss Assessment Association and in accordance with the provisions of this Product Regulation.

**2.3 Certification procedure**

A certification consists of the registration, conformity tests I-III, evaluation of the test results and the issue of the certificate.

The following applies to initial certifications: the entire certification procedure, including submission and verification of any proof of amendments, must be completed within three months of conformity test III (see 3.1 below). If the documents are not submitted or the post-audit is not successfully completed, the procedure can be restarted no sooner after a period of twelve months.

The following applies to recertifications: the entire recertification procedure, including submission and verification of any proof of amendments, must be completed within six months of the expiry of the certificate's validity period (see 4.2 below). Members will have to restart the initial certification process if they exceed this time limit.

Initial certification		Recertification	
Info to member company (MC) Document folder	Swiss Assessment	Appointment and information to member company (MC) before expiry of certificate	SQS/MC/UZH
Registration	MC/Swiss Assessment/SQS	Preparatory documents for audit	MC/SQS/UZH
Appointment	SQS/MC/UZH	Audit preparation	SQS/UZH
Audit preparation with preparatory documents	SQS/UZH	Conducting the audit and inspection of the AC on site	SQS/UZH/MC
Conducting the audit and inspection of the AC on site	SQS/UZH/MC	Record and discuss results/apply for recertification	SQS/UZH/MC
EN Record and discuss results/apply for initial certification	SQS/UZH/MC	Information to Q-Committee, Swiss Assessment and MC	SQS/Q-Committee/Swiss Assessment
Information to Q-Committee, Swiss Assessment and MC	SQS/Q-Committee/Swiss Assessment	Certificate printing and dispatch	SQS
Certificate printing and dispatch	SQS/MC		

**2.3.1 Procedure for the initial certification**

To register for the initial certification, providers must submit the SQS registration form to the Swiss Assessment Association, who will then forward the application to the SQS. This triggers the ordinary certification procedure.

The SQS auditor, with the assistance of an expert from the University of Zurich, will carry out the audit by following the certification checklist. The current version of the checklist can be accessed by all assessment center providers at any time on the website of the Swiss Assessment Association.

The documents required for the preparation of the audit must be submitted to the SQS auditor in charge and to the expert of the University of Zurich 14 days before the audit is due to take place. The documents must be prepared and sorted according to the checkpoints (see the certification checklist). If necessary, the auditors may request additional documents before the start of the audit.

A certification must always include the conformity tests I, II and III, listed under 2.3.2 below.

### 2.3.2 Conformity Tests

Test stages	Type and content of the test
Conformity Test I	<p>Document analysis: examination of the submitted documents covering the procedures (e.g. instructions for the management and, if applicable, for the procedures), processes (descriptions of procedures and schedule), personal qualifications (training and additional qualifications relevant to the aptitude diagnostics) and any other documentation required.</p> <p>The Conformity Test I takes place externally. The auditors will inform the assessment center provider directly about the interim results and any necessary additional requirements or adjustments to the documentation.</p> <p>A successful Conformity Test I is the prerequisite for the next two test stages.</p>
Conformity Test II	<p>An on-site audit will be carried out to verify the described methodology, qualifications, processes and procedures.</p> <p>A successful Conformity Test II is the prerequisite for the next test stage.</p>
Conformity Test III	<p>The test will be carried out by directly observing an assessment center on site. This will allow to verify the methodology, process and approach of the assessment center.</p> <p>Usually, the Conformity Tests II and III will take place on the premises of the assessment center provider. The auditors will directly inform the assessment center provider about the interim and final results, as well as any additional requirements, adjustments or a potential follow-up audit.</p>

Should extraordinary situations arise (e.g. inadequate preparation of the applicant for the audit, refusal to hand over necessary documents), the audit will be interrupted and the further procedure will be discussed between the Swiss Assessment Quality Commission and the assessment center provider.

#### 2.3.3 Recertification procedure

A recertification audit is mandatory for providers to remain certified beyond the date shown on the certificate (validity period). This must take place before the certificate expires. The Quality Commission will contact the assessment provider six months before the certificate expires, in order to arrange the necessary appointment.

For recertification, up-to-date evidence must be provided, following the certification checklist. The documents must be prepared and sorted according to the checkpoints (see the certification checklist). In addition, the documents must include all changes made for each checkpoint since the last certification. The documents must be submitted to the auditors of SQS and to the University of Zurich 14 days before the audit is due to take place.

A recertification always includes at least the Conformity Tests I and II listed under 2.3.2. For every second recertification (i.e. every six years), the recertification must also include the Conformity Test III. This means that the observation of an assessment center (Conformity Test III) will take place every six years.

Should a recertification be carried out more than six months after the expiry of the certificate, it will be handled like an initial certification, i.e. the Conformity Test III will be a mandatory component of the audit.

Once the conditions for the extension of the certificate are met, both in terms of content and timeliness, the certificate will be renewed by SQS for another three years.

#### 2.3.4 Decision on the awarding of the certificate

If the outcome of the audit is successful, the auditors will submit a request to award or to extend the Swiss Assessment SQS certificate. Based on the results, the auditors may express reservations, which must be addressed before the certificate can be granted. If necessary, the Swiss Assessment Quality Commission will intervene and make the final decision.

Should there be any deviation from the required standards, the assessment center provider will be granted a single extension of no more than six months to rectify the issues. The auditors will decide on a case-by-case basis whether proof of the rectified deviations is to be provided in writing or whether a follow-up audit is necessary, which will have to be paid for.

The Swiss Assessment Quality Commission will be kept informed about the issuing and/or withdrawal of a quality label.

#### 2.3.5 Decision on the recognition of the certificate

The Swiss Assessment SQS certificate can be withdrawn at any time if the assessment center provider

- violates the Swiss Assessment certification standards regarding the preparation, design, implementation, evaluation and follow-up of assessment centers (according to the certification checklist)
- uses the label in connection with services that do not meet the certification standards or do not fall within the scope of the certificate,
- makes any changes to the design, shape and/or content of the certification label.

Once the Swiss Assessment Quality Commission is informed about the aforementioned violations or deficiencies, it will start the process to withdraw the certificate. If, in the course of a special audit by the Quality Commission (see 3.4 below), a complaint is made regarding one of the above-mentioned conditions for the withdrawal of the certificate, the assessment center provider will be informed accordingly by the Quality Commission and will be given no more than six months to make the necessary amendments. Should the issues not be remedied within this time period, the certificate will be withdrawn immediately.

If deficiencies other than those mentioned above are found in a certified service (e.g. violations of other checkpoints on the certification list), the assessment center provider will be requested in writing by Swiss Assessment to rectify these. The Quality Commission will decide whether the deficiency is a serious or a minor one. The assessment center provider will have to provide evidence of the rectification of these deficiencies within a maximum time period of six months.

Should these issues not be remedied within this time period, the Quality Commission will decide about the further procedure or the withdrawal of the certificate.

### 3. Types of tests

#### 3.1 Conformity Test I (review of the documentation)

The review of the documentation by an SQS auditor and a technical expert from the University of Zurich (UZH) will be the basis to determine whether the description of the «Assessment (Center)» service meets the quality requirements for assessment centers according to the Swiss Assessment Quality Standards. Should the Conformity Test I conclude that the documentation does not meet the requirements, the certification process shall be terminated. In the event of an aborted Conformity Test I, the costs already incurred shall be borne by the assessment center provider.

#### 3.2 Conformity Test II (audit covering the review of the documentation and additional questions to the assessment center provider)

During an audit, an SQS auditor and a technical expert from the University of Zurich (UZH) will review the processes, approaches and qualifications described in the documentation, to assess whether they are suitable for a duly provision of the assessment center in accordance with the certification checklist.

Should the audit not result in a satisfactory outcome, the assessment center provider will be informed immediately. The scope of additional measures to meet all outstanding requirements shall then be agreed between the certification body and the assessment center provider. Should the assessment center provider be unable to implement the required measures, the certification process shall be terminated. In the event of an aborted Conformity Test II, the costs already incurred shall be borne by the assessment center provider.

#### 3.3 Conformity Test III (audit to observe an assessment center)

During an on-site observation of an assessment center, the auditors will review whether the processes, approaches and qualifications described in the documentation and in the audit are duly implemented in accordance with the certification checklist.

Should the on-site visit of an assessment center not result in a satisfactory outcome, the assessment center provider will be informed immediately. The scope of additional measures to meet all outstanding requirements shall then be agreed between the certification body and the assessment center provider. Should the assessment center provider be unable to implement the required measures, the certification shall be terminated. In the event of an aborted Conformity Test III, the costs already incurred shall be borne by the assessment center provider.

#### 3.4 Special audit

A special audit is only carried out by a justifiable request by Swiss Assessment, if the Swiss Assessment Quality Commission comes to the conclusion that a certified provider does not meet or does no longer meet the quality requirements.

The nature and scope of a special audit (e.g. submission of evidence, repetition of a Conformity Test, etc.) are determined by the Swiss Assessment Quality Commission in consultation with the auditors in each individual case.

The expert will inform the Swiss Assessment Quality Commission of the result of the special audit in an audit report. The Swiss Assessment Quality Commission will inform the assessment center provider in writing about the outcome of the special audit. The Swiss Assessment Quality Commission will decide on a case-by-case basis, and by taking into account the recommendation of the subject matter expert, whether sufficient evidence of the remedied deviations has been provided or whether the quality label will be withdrawn.

Should the assessment center provider not be agreeable to remedy the identified deficiencies, or should it not be able to do so within a maximum of six months from the date of receipt of the written notification of the identified deficiency, the special audit will be closed with a negative decision (see 2.3.5 above).

Should deficiencies be identified during a special audit, the assessment center provider shall bear the costs of the special audit procedure.

#### 3.5 Certification report

SQS will inform the assessment center provider of the final result of the (re-)certification in a certification report, to be sent to the assessment center provider in electronic format.

The certification report includes the certification checklists, which are completed by the SQS auditor and the subject matter expert from the University of Zurich.

### 4. The Swiss Assessment SQS Certificate

#### 4.1 Statement of a Swiss Assessment-SQS certificate

The Swiss Assessment-SQS certificate attests that the assessment centers of the certified assessment center provider meet the Swiss Assessment Quality Standards.

#### 4.2 Period of validity

The period of validity of the Swiss Assessment-SQS certificate is 3 years; the certificate must be renewed before this period expires. The Swiss Assessment-SQS certificate expires upon resignation from the Swiss Assessment Association.

Should the Swiss Assessment Association or the SQS terminate the agreement for the Swiss Assessment certification procedure, the respective individual contractual relationships (certification mandates of the clients) between the Swiss Assessment-SQS certificate holders and the SQS shall remain in force until the expiry of the respective certificates and the provisions of this product regulation shall remain valid.

### 4.3 Use of the «Certified Assessment Center Quality» certification mark

The right to use the certification mark «Certified Assessment Center Quality» is granted with the issue of the corresponding certificate.

While the Swiss Assessment SQS certificate is still valid, the holder may use the certification mark «Certified Assessment Center Quality» within the framework of these principles.

The certification label may only be used in connection with services that meet the certification standards and that fall within the scope of the certificate, and not for assessments that do not meet the definition of an assessment center.

The design or the content of the certification label «Certified Assessment Center Quality» may not be altered in any way.



## 5. Rights and obligations

### 5.1 Rights and obligations of the audited assessment center provider

The provisions of the regulations for SQS services apply.

The use of the Swiss Assessment-SQS certificate or of the certification mark Swiss Assessment-SQS for business purposes is regulated under 4.3 above.

The assessment center provider is obliged to inform SQS and Swiss Assessment immediately of any changes which impact the requirements for certification. Swiss Assessment will decide in consultation with SQS and the experts of the University of Zurich, Chair of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, whether and to what extent a special audit is needed in accordance with section 3.4 above. The resulting report is forwarded by the assessor to the Swiss Assessment Association.

Furthermore, the assessment center provider is obliged to notify without delay any changes of the formal records (e.g. change of company name, address).

The assessment center provider must ensure, by carrying out appropriate quality assurance measures, that the service aspects attested in the certification are maintained.

### 5.2 Rights and obligations of the SQS

The provisions of the regulations for SQS services apply.

### 5.3 Rights and obligations of Swiss Assessment

The Swiss Assessment Association is responsible for the compliance with the product regulations. It verifies the proper handling of the certificate label by the certified members. To this end, the Swiss Assessment Association will appoint a Quality Commission.

The Quality Commission of Swiss Assessment advises and assists the assessment center provider through the entire certification process and is available for clarification of quality issues ahead of the Conformity Tests I-III.

The Quality Commission of Swiss Assessment is also tasked with the investigation of any complaint regarding certified assessment center services (e.g. by candidates or clients), and is required to respond promptly to any discrepancies in connection with the use of the «Certified Assessment Centre Quality» certification mark. During the term of the certificate, it will ensure as necessary that the services are still carried out in conformity with the certificate, by carrying out the special audit listed above under 3.4.

## 6. Dispute resolution

A detailed report must be submitted to the Swiss Assessment Quality Commission should any disagreement arise from the certification process. A decision on the dispute will be made by the Quality Commission together with the expert commission of the SQS.

## 7. Fees

### 7.1 Application fee

The application fee for association members is an integral part of the Swiss Assessment certification and recertification process. The amount of the fee is determined by the Swiss Assessment Association and is payable to the Swiss Assessment Association.

### 7.2 Costs of the SQS certification procedure (excluding the University of Zurich)

The up-to-date SQS tariff is applicable for the SQS basic fee and audit service, including expenses.

With regards to the printing of the certificates, the same conditions apply as for ISO 9001 certified companies according to the «SQS in-house printing price list».

The following guidelines apply with regard to the preparation and execution of the audits by an SQS auditor:

Conformity Test I:	approx. 3 hours
Conformity Tests II and III:	approx. 8 hours for both
Completion of the audit:	approx. 1 hour
Administrative work:	approx. 1 hour

SQS invoices are sent to the Chief Financial Officer of the Swiss Assessment Association.

The costs of the experts from the University of Zurich are invoiced separately. They are not shown in this SQS product regulation, as the experts are commissioned directly by the Swiss Assessment Association and not by SQS.

### 7.3 Additional costs due to insufficient audit preparation by the company

Should the SQS or the technical expert of the University of Zurich incur any additional costs due to an inadequate documentation or to a necessary follow-up audit, the arising additional hours must be invoiced separately.