



Executive Summary

Renewal of Institutional Licensure Strathclyde Business School (SBSU) Dubai

25 - 28 March 2024

An External Review Team (ERT) visited Strathclyde Business School UAE (SBS UAE) from the 25th to the 28th of March 2024 to evaluate its *Self-Study* for the Renewal of Institutional Licensure (hereafter, the *Self-Study*). The exit briefing was held on 28 March 2024.

Founded in 1948, the University of Strathclyde Business School (SBS) is a pioneering, internationally renowned academic organisation that shapes and develops the business minds of tomorrow. SBS is one of four faculties forming the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow. The school is known for innovation in business and management education, pioneering, amongst other things, the study of Marketing; introducing new methods of study for the Strathclyde MBA in the UK and taking it into many new countries; and initiating cross-disciplinary studies. SBSU has been operating in the UAE since 1995, with the MBA programme being offered in the UAE for 28 years. In 2020 SBS took a strategic decision to invest in the branch campus in Dubai as a hub for expanded delivery while continuing SBS's flagship MBA delivery.

The ERT is pleased to commend SBS UAE in several areas:

1. SBS UAE is recognized for its strong brand presence in the UAE, attributed to its longstanding operation in the region, which enhances its appeal to students. In particular, the SBSU Community exhibits great pride in the quadruple accreditation status of SBS, along with its outstanding global ranking and profile in teaching and learning, research, and community impact.
2. The SBSU Community, from the Campus Head to faculty and staff, exhibits great commitment to SBS and the University of Strathclyde. The leadership demonstrated by the Campus Head is notably commendable, particularly the commitment to managing campus responsibilities effectively.
3. The SBSU students are greatly appreciative of their teaching and learning experiences, particularly the flexibility offered by the hybrid model, along with the opportunity to learn from SBS Academic teams, and the contextualized support provided by local counsellors.
4. The SBSU alumni are thankful for the quality of education received, which enabled them to develop the requisite skills to build an impactful career in the public and private sector. The alumni appreciate the focused efforts by the center to build and nurture a sense of community through the various alumni network units. They also greatly benefit from the opportunity for continuous learning, such as through the options for enrolling in three elective subjects post-graduation.

Areas in which the ERT sees opportunities for improvement include the following:



1. Enhancing the connection with the home campus is crucial, especially in relation to strategic planning, quality assurance processes, and program development, to ensure alignment and consistency across operations. There is a need to make explicit the supporting strategies, goals and objectives at the branch campus and how they align with the institutional level Strategy (in line with Supplementary guidelines for Institutional Licensure published by CAA, February 2024).
2. Provide evidence of how the central QA systems and offices on the home campus support the operation, with analysis of SBSU-specific performance data across academic and non-academic units that serve to continuously improve programs and services.
3. SBSU is required to clarify to the ERT how the current organisational reporting structure works to achieve the goals of student experience, learning enhancement and research, while also facilitating academic career progression.
4. While the long-term strategic plan seems like the right step going forward, the ERT needs confirmation on how the significant risk posed by the declining numbers will be addressed through the implementation of the university's risk management system. SBSU is required to maintain a risk register pertaining to the local operations. Besides internal risks relating to financial sustainability, quality assurance, student recruitment and retention, and reputational risk, SBSU is required to consider external risks associated with being situated in the context of the Arab Middle East.
5. There is a need for greater clarity regarding the strategic direction of the Dubai campus, including a defined strategy for the future portfolio of programs, and related investments, to guide long-term development and growth. The ERT expects SBSU to be explicit about what their business model is.
6. The ERT has significant concerns regarding research and scholarly activities at the SBSU campus. Despite the institution's commitment to research at an institutional level, there is a notable absence of detailed plans for faculty engagement in research activities, and no plans for building a research culture, which is discrepant from expectations for a higher education branch campus.

The ERT makes its recommendations in a spirit of constructive engagement, with the aim of ensuring that the *Standards* are met, and to aid SBSU in its desired objective to renew the licensure of the institution.