

HSBA Academic Year 2023/2024 

ANNUAL QUALITY REPORT

Benchmarking Business
Education Standards



Preface



Quality and excellence in teaching are at the centre of everything we do at HSBA. The continuous development of our academic programmes, the close integration of theory and practice and the excellent relationships with our partner companies are key success factors of our dual study model.

The positive feedback from our students, graduates, lecturers and partner companies confirms this approach. At the same time, we are aware that standing still is not an option. Therefore, we will continue to focus on the ongoing improvement of our quality standards in teaching, research, and service.

A particular highlight of the past year was the successful review as part of the system reaccreditation and the completion of our institutional reaccreditation.

These developments underscore our ambition to rank among the leading dual universities in Germany.

My heartfelt thanks go to everyone who contributes to the development of HSBA through their commitment, expertise, and passion – our students, lecturers, staff, and partner companies. Let us continue working together to offer young talents the best possible education and career prospects.

I wish you an informative read!

With best regards

Prof. Dr. Tim Goydke
President of HSBA

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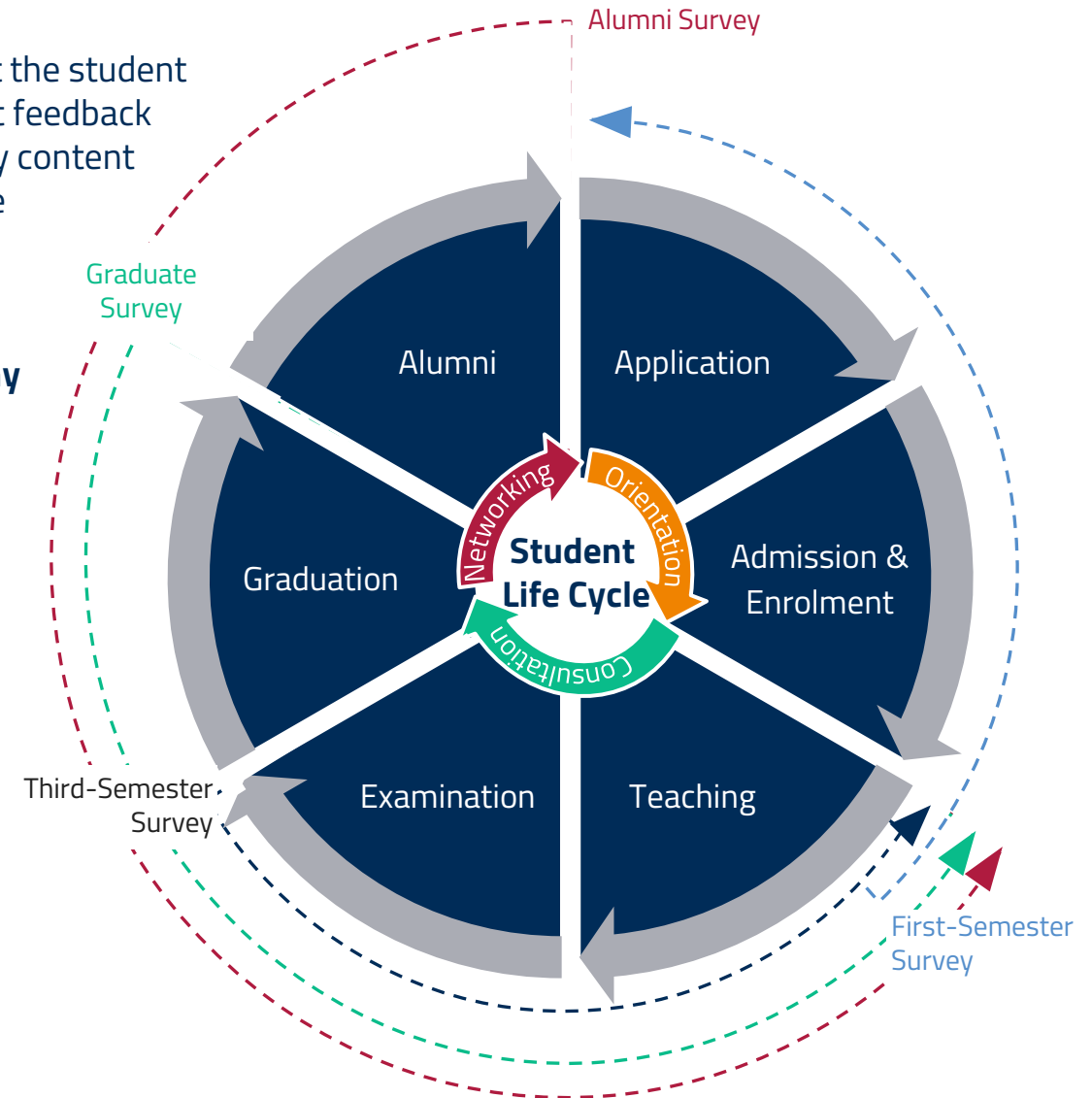
Quality Assurance

To continuously improve study conditions, various surveys are conducted throughout the student life cycle. The **First-Semester Survey** captures pre-study experiences and study start feedback to optimize onboarding. The **Third-Semester Survey** assesses satisfaction with study content and its connection to professional practice. The **Graduate Survey** evaluates the entire course of study and the transition to employment, while the **Alumni Survey** analyzes long-term career development and perceptions of the university.

Additionally, **Lecturer Surveys** assess quality from the teaching perspective. **Company Surveys** provide feedback from partner companies on the qualifications and employability of dual students.

The collected data is analyzed, optimization measures are derived, and their effectiveness is checked through further surveys. Adjustments are made based on these results, ensuring continuous improvement.

This iterative process ensures quality assurance along the student life cycle and long-term optimization of study conditions.



Surveys

First-Semester Survey 2023/24



Field Times:

A-Track: 06.11. - 19.12.2023

B-Track: 08.03. - 08.04.2024

Response Rate: 42%

Notes: Carried out every two years within first 2 months after semester start

Third-Semester Survey 2023/24



Field Times:

A-Track: 07.11. - 12.12.2023

B-Track: 26.02. - 19.04.2024

Response Rate: 35%

Notes: Since 2013 annually in 2nd year of study within first 2 months after semester start

Graduate Survey 2024



Field Time:

17.10. - 26.11.2024

Response Rate: 28%

Notes: 2024 mostly comparable with 2023, with previous years only limited due to changes in response categories

Lecturer Survey 2024



Field Time:

29.8.24 - 25.9.24

Response Rate: 46%

Notes: conducted every two years, 2024 fundamental changes to questionnaire

Company Survey 2024



Field Time:

13.11. - 12.12.2024

Response Rate: 21%

Notes: conducted every two years



Focus Topic: Accreditations

Accreditations play a key role in quality assurance and the continuous development of HSBA. They not only ensure academic excellence but also the university's competitiveness. In 2024, the scheduled review as part of the system reaccreditation, as well as the institutional reaccreditation, took place. At the same time, HSBA has decided to embark on the path towards international accreditation.

System Accreditation



As part of the reaccreditation process, the quality assurance systems and processes were reviewed by **FIBAA (Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation)**. The Report of the peers not only confirms compliance with high-quality standards but also recognises the university's efforts to continuously strengthen its position as an outstanding business school.

Institutional Accreditation

The **German Science Council (Wissenschaftsrat)** reviews, on behalf of the federal states, the university status of private higher education institutions by evaluating their performance in teaching and research, as well as the resources provided for these purposes. HSBA meets the requirements of a university of applied sciences. In addition, all conditions from the previous procedure were successfully fulfilled, leading the Science Council to grant reaccreditation.

International Accreditation



HSBA is pursuing accreditation from AACSB (**Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business**), one of the most prestigious quality seals for business schools worldwide. HSBA is working intensively to meet the AACSB's rigorous criteria in order to establish its academic programmes and research activities at an international level and gain access to a global network of leading business schools.



Focus Topic: Accreditations

Continuous Development as a Strategic Focus

HSBA strategically leverages external evaluations to further develop its structures and offerings. The following recommendations are currently being addressed and implemented:

Research Promotion

An area of development identified during the reaccreditation processes lies in research. Targeted, project-based research activities and enhanced collaboration with external academic institutions are considered key areas for action.

Measures already implemented include the restructuring of the Research Office into an **HSBA Research Centre**, the appointment of a research associate, and the introduction of a new incentive system for research activities.

Complaints and Conflict Resolution Procedures

To further ensure quality assurance, a structured complaints and conflict resolution procedure is to be developed for the accreditation process.

Stronger Involvement of External Expertise

It is also recommended to strengthen the integration of external experts from academia and industry into the evaluation and accreditation processes. This aims to ensure a more objective and comprehensive assessment.

Separation of Commercial and Academic Interests

Additionally, it was recommended that the separation between commercial and academic interests be defined more clearly. In response, the university is in the process of revising its statutes to establish a clearer distinction.

Support for International Students

Another recommendation concerns the expansion of support services for international students. To address this, HSBA plans to enhance its advisory and support structures, including the addition of a new position in the International Office, which is currently being filled, as well as fostering closer cooperation with partner universities worldwide.

Process Design & Communication

The university's internal accreditation structure was acknowledged as well-established; however, it was recommended that the processes be made more transparent. In response, HSBA is working on creating clearer documentation and improving the accessibility of procedures for all stakeholders. Additionally, the suggestion to implement a more systematic approach to using and communicating evaluation data is already being partially addressed through this **Annual Quality Report**.



Application Phase

① Top4 Reasons for Choosing HSBA¹



Convincing Combination of Theory and Practice



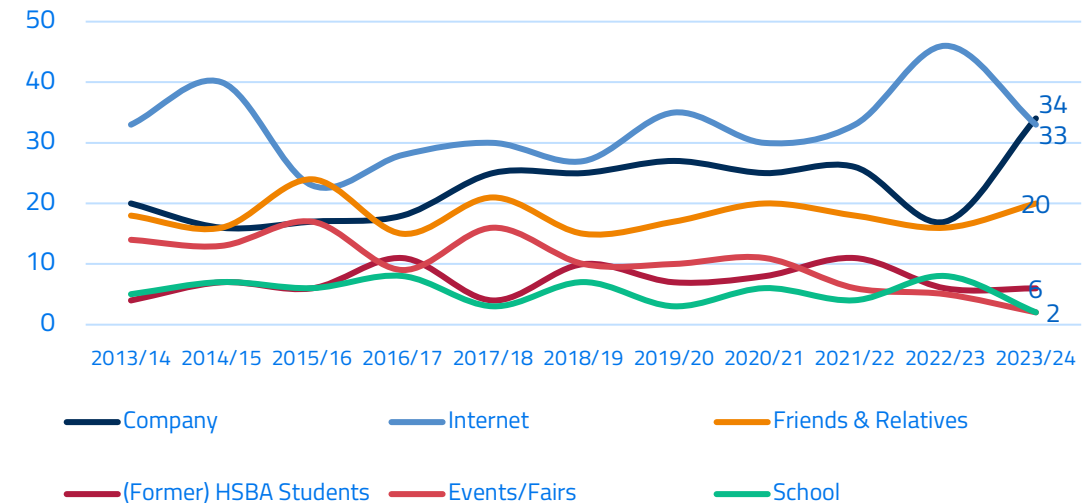
The start of studies at HSBA is successful for most students. Over time, a stable situation has emerged, with partner companies gaining increasing importance in students' choice of programme. The most common reason for choosing HSBA remains the combination of theory and practice, although its significance slightly decreases in the long term. Similarly, there is a slight decline in the relevance of the study content, while the attractiveness of the partner companies continues to gain importance ①.

Corporate Contacts Increasingly Important



Around 30% of students come into contact with HSBA through the internet, while another third are introduced via companies, with the latter trend continuing to grow. However, the HSBA website remains the most important source of information ②. A notable trend is the increasingly short-term decision-making for studying at HSBA: more than 30% of students apply less than six months before the start of their studies. Additionally, half of the students only need to submit one or two applications.

② First Point of Contact (in %)¹

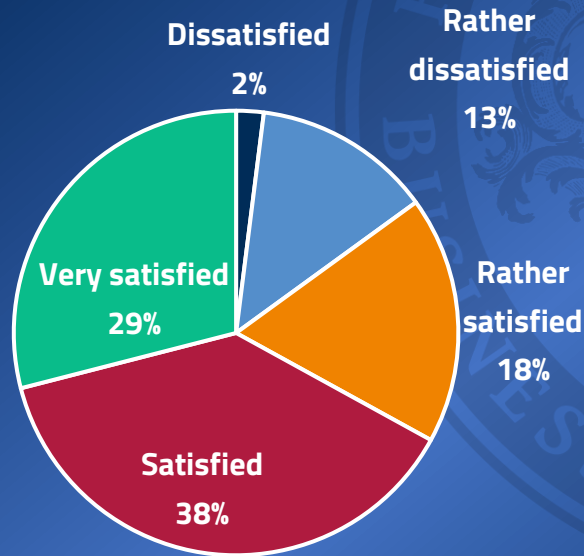


Study Start

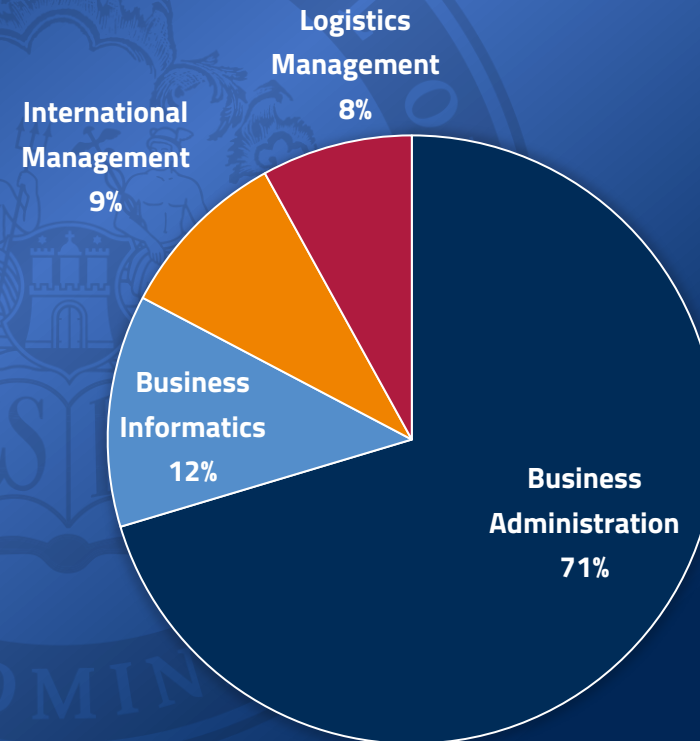
Overall, **students** report high levels of satisfaction with their integration at HSBA ①. Most feel well-integrated, particularly within their **study groups**, and experience a positive reception at their **partner companies**.

While the overall dissatisfaction rate is low (around ten percent), there are isolated cases of higher dissatisfaction. To improve this, HSBA plans to enhance student support, expand feedback and dialogue formats, and strengthen collaboration with partner companies, all aimed at optimising the integration process further.

① Satisfaction with Integration at HSBA¹



First-year Bachelor students by degree programme (in %)



87%

of students feel well integrated from the beginning of their studies at HSBA¹

86%

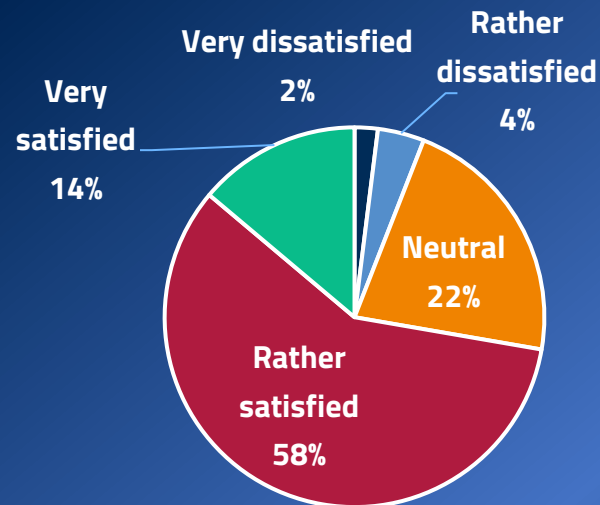
of students feel well received in their companies as well¹

Lasting Contentment

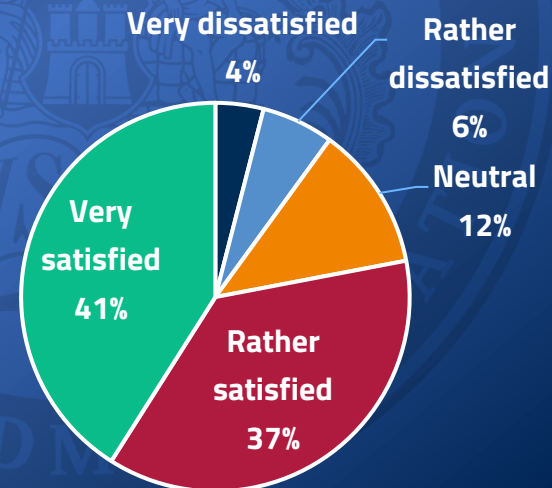
The results of the **third-semester survey** indicate consistently high levels of student satisfaction ①. Feedback regarding partner companies is also consistently positive ②.

Around half of the students express a desire for an even closer link between their studies and professional practice. To further strengthen professional relevance, the university is implementing various measures: in addition to regularly reviewing course content and updating module descriptions, practical projects and case studies are being integrated into teaching. Furthermore, the exchange with partner companies will be intensified. HSBA also places greater emphasis on ensuring that lecturers explicitly highlight practical relevance in their sessions and incorporate current developments from the business world into their teaching concepts.

① Satisfaction with Studying at HSBA¹



② Satisfaction with Partner Company¹



72%

of students in
their third semester
are basically satisfied
with their studies¹

78%

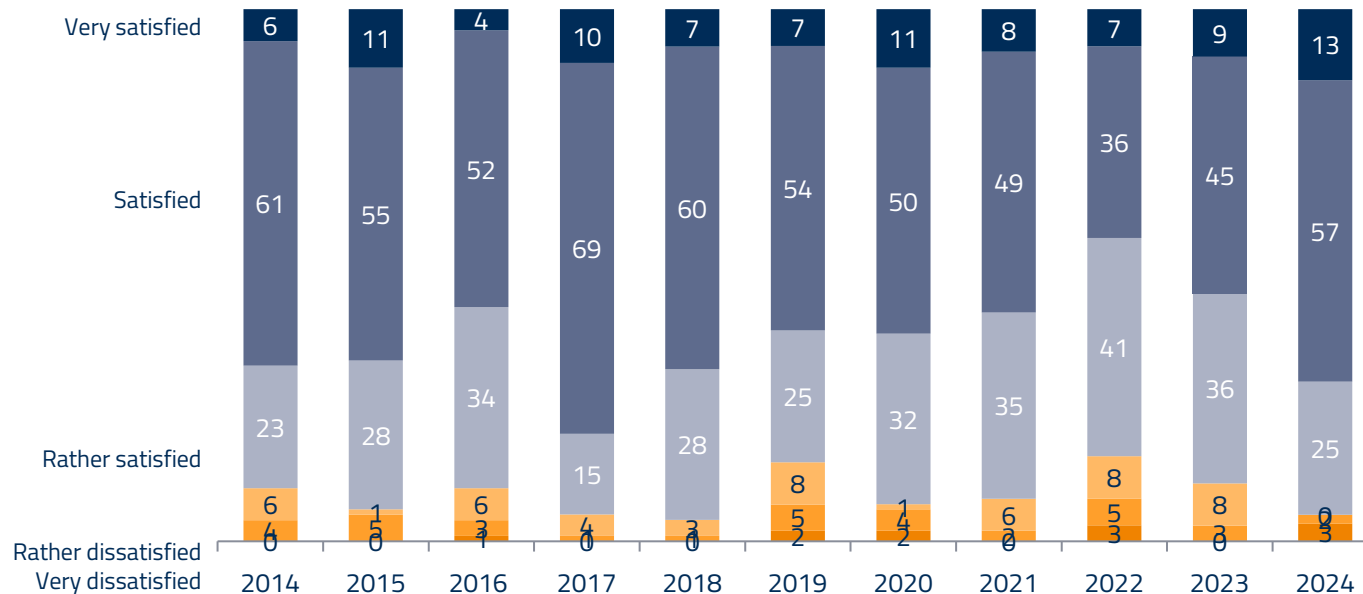
of third semester
students are satisfied
with their partner
company¹

Studying with Satisfaction

The overwhelming majority of **graduates** (2024: 95% of respondents) look back on their studies at HSBA with satisfaction. Overall, a positive trend can be observed, although this cannot yet be clearly confirmed due to fluctuations caused by small sample sizes ①.

Particularly valued are the **interaction with lecturers, the learning atmosphere, and the support provided by the Service Office**. Additionally, the compatibility of studies with professional commitments and the range of extracurricular activities are being rated increasingly positively.

① Study Satisfaction in Retrospect^{1,2}



¹ 2024 Graduate Survey

² Comparability before 2017 limited due to scale adjustment



Convincing Curriculum

Graduates rate the curriculum positively overall, though there is room for improvement in electives and practical reports. The perceptions of the learning environment vary, while some find the infrastructure sufficient, others point to issues such as limited access to literature and difficulties in finding study spaces.

In addition to the on-campus library, students benefit from partnerships with the ZBW – the world’s largest specialist library for economics & management – and the Commerzbibliothek, providing extensive access to databases and media. Efforts are being made to promptly address any remaining gaps in resources.

HSBA has designated additional study spaces beyond the lounge and library. Students can also book unused rooms for study purposes, though this option is not always widely known and will be better communicated.



92%

of graduates are
satisfied with the
overall study
structure¹

83%

of graduates rate
the compatibility
of job and studies
positively¹

75%

of graduates
value the
extracurricular
offerings¹

82%

of graduates are
convinced by the
labour market
orientation¹

Competencies for Success

Self-Organisation and Teamwork

Graduates consider the development of **self-organisation skills** to be a standout feature of studying at HSBA. The acquisition of **teamwork abilities and specialist knowledge** is also perceived positively. However, the development of competencies in areas such as methodologies, networking, foreign languages, and leadership skills is assessed more variably. The ability to **think entrepreneurially, take on responsibility, and connect theory with practice** remains a unique hallmark of the HSBA study experience.

Career Start: High Retention Rate and Rising Salaries

The vast majority of graduates receive a job offer from their partner company immediately after graduation, accept it, and remain in Hamburg, typically in full-time, permanent positions. The proportion of graduates with a starting salary exceeding €50,000 has increased significantly since 2023 and now stands at around half. When offers from partner companies are declined, common reasons include higher salary expectations, competing offers, or the decision to pursue a master's degree.

"I had an amazing time at HSBA with great professors, a fantastic community, and real solidarity... The programme at HSBA is incredibly well-structured, and overall, you have far more opportunities than you would at any other university."

Quote from the 2024 Graduate Survey

84%

of graduates receive
an offer from their
partner company¹

85%

accept the job
offer of the
partner company¹

93%

of graduates work
in the greater
Hamburg area¹

80%

of graduates are
in permanent
employment¹

Teaching with Freedom

Lecturers report consistently high levels of **satisfaction** with their teaching roles at HSBA ①. Many appreciate the creative **freedom** they are given, along with the extensive support provided. They feel welcomed and valued within the institution.

A strong sense of identification with the **HSBA spirit** is fostered through shared events, which encourage personal interaction, strengthen the sense of community, and contribute to the ongoing development of HSBA's unique teaching and learning culture.

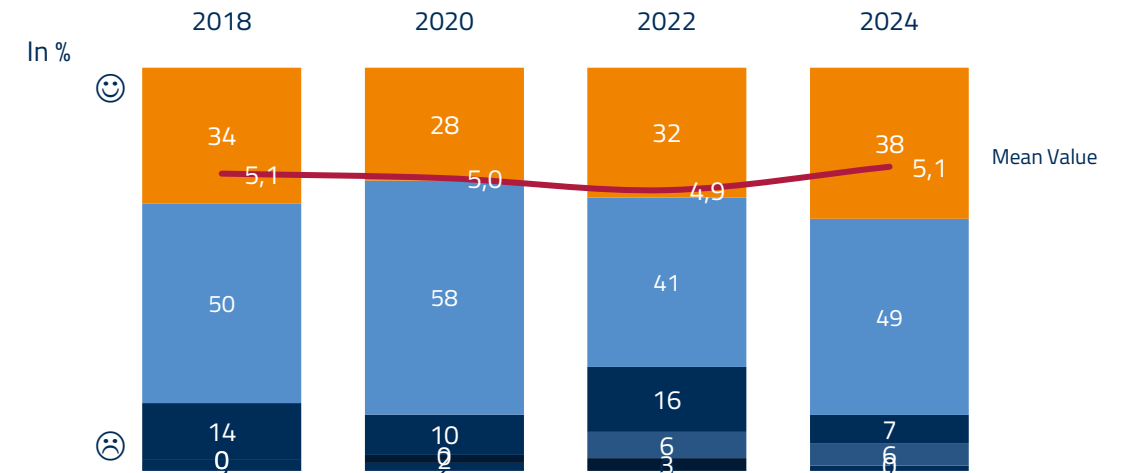
The vast majority of lecturers would recommend HSBA both as a place to study and, in most cases, as a **teaching environment**.



"Other universities are much more poorly organised (schedules, teacher absences, planning, facilities, technology). As a lecturer, I really appreciate the good organisation at HSBA. The students probably don't even realise how good they have it."

Quote from the 2024 Lecturer Survey

① Satisfaction with Teaching¹



86%

of lecturers
would recommend
teaching at
HSBA¹

83%

of lecturers
receive the
support they
need¹

96%

see an optimal
combination of
theory and
practice¹

Between Autonomy and Support

While many lecturers appreciate their personal creative freedom and the institutional support at HSBA, one-third of respondents would like greater recognition for their commitment. There is a need for measures to make their contributions more visible and to acknowledge them more prominently.

Additionally, there is a desire for increased exchange and coordination. New formats for dialogue—both general and related to specific teaching sessions—are planned to address this need.

Approximately half of the lecturers express interest in training on artificial intelligence (AI), and around a quarter would like to pursue further training in didactics. HSBA has already established an internal training platform focused on digitalisation and AI and will continue to expand these offerings through additional exchange formats.



"Compared to the other universities where I teach, HSBA is the university with the highest standards and the most motivated students."

Quote from the 2024 Lecturer Survey

Motivations for Accepting a Teaching Assignment^{1,2}



² Most Commonly Cited Reasons



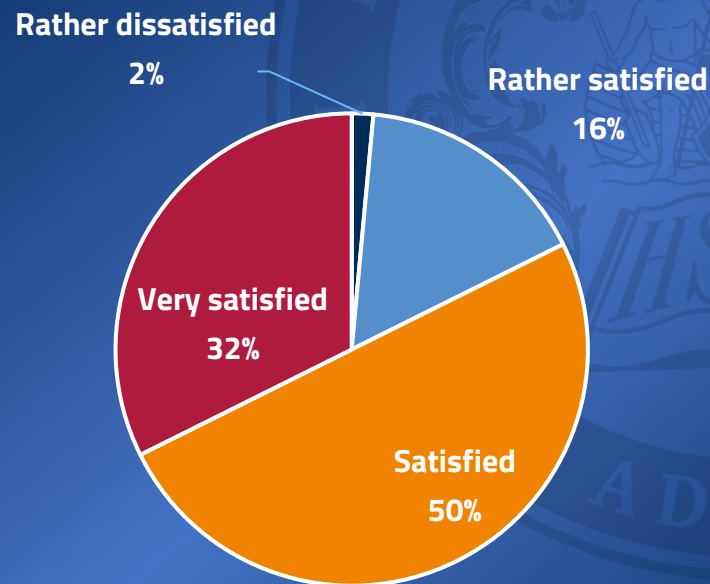
Companies Value Practical Relevance

The **company survey** reveals an overall highly positive picture of the collaboration between participating companies and HSBA. Satisfaction with the dual study programme remains consistently high ①, with notable improvements in **support and service levels** reported in 2024.

For companies, the most important criteria for partnering with HSBA are the **practical relevance** of the study programmes and the ability of students to **critically evaluate knowledge**.

The consistently high approval ratings and minimal criticism indicate that HSBA is well-positioned, from the perspective of its partner companies, to educate the skilled professionals of tomorrow.

① Satisfaction with HSBA¹



89%

of companies
would recommend
HSBA to others¹

99%

of companies are
overall satisfied with the
Bachelor programmes¹

94%

of companies believe
that theory and practice
are optimally linked¹

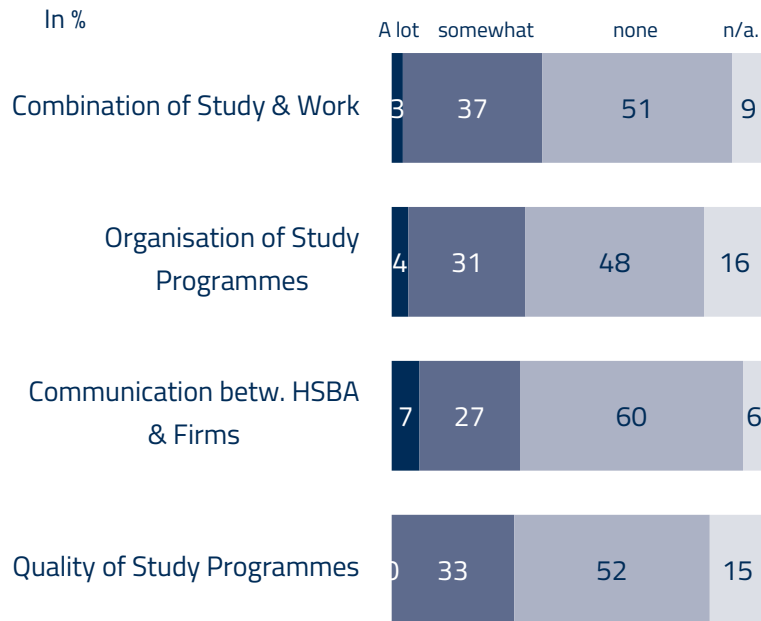
94%

of companies
are satisfied with
the relevance of
the final theses¹

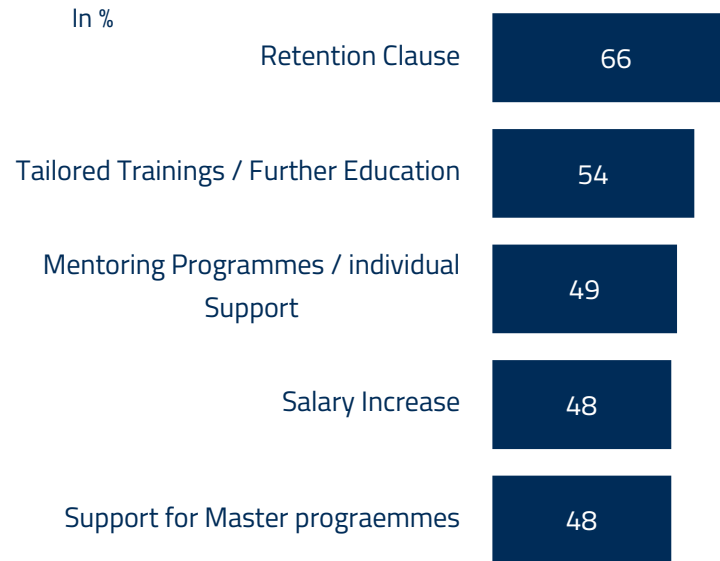
Utilise Potentials

Around one-third of **companies** see potential in further improving the integration of studies with **professional practice, the organisation** of the study programme, and **communication** from HSBA ①. Additionally, many companies express a desire for a stronger focus on teaching **digital and AI competencies**.

① Potential for Improvement¹



② Binding Measures^{1,2}



² Top 5 Choices, Multiple Answers Allowed

A key tool for retaining students remains the **retention clause**, though companies are increasingly focusing on offering individual development opportunities ②. The most common reason cited for not offering more dual study placements is **a lack of resources and capacity**.



Results at a Glance



Successful completion of institutional reaccreditation and review as part of the system accreditation



The attractiveness of partner companies is particularly decisive for studying at HSBA



High satisfaction among students with both their studies and partner companies



Graduates consistently rate study structure and career preparation positively



Vast majority of lecturers enjoy teaching at HSBA but would appreciate more recognition of their commitment



Almost all companies are satisfied with Bachelor education and praise close integration of theory and practice



Contact



Sascha Fahrendorf

Quality Manager
QM & Accreditation

☎ +49 40 822 160-984

✉ sascha.fahrendorf@hsba.de



Michaela Lindner

Quality Manager
QM & Accreditation

☎ +49 40 822 160-987

✉ michaela.lindner@hsba.de

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