

HSBA Academic Year 2024/2025 

ANNUAL QUALITY REPORT

Benchmarking Business
Education Standards



We strive for excellence!



Excellence in teaching, research, and academic administration is the benchmark guiding our actions at HSBA. This Annual Quality Report illustrates how we systematically advance this ambition while consistently strengthening the distinctive advantages of our dual study model.

A key driver of our quality development is the ongoing AACSB accreditation process. It supports us in further embedding quality standards, strengthening innovative teaching formats, advancing our research in a targeted manner, and enhancing the international visibility of HSBA.

Duality remains at the core of our study model. The very high level of satisfaction among our students with both their studies and their partner companies clearly confirms this approach. High retention rates and attractive entry-level salaries demonstrate that the dual education at HSBA provides excellent career prospects.

Last but not least, feedback from our alumni offers valuable guidance. Their high level of satisfaction, along with the sustained practical relevance of the competencies they have acquired, is a strong indication of the long-term impact of our study programmes.

My sincere thanks go to everyone who contributes to the quality and continuous development of HSBA—especially our faculty and staff, our students, as well as our alumni and partner companies.

Together, we are shaping a university that successfully combines academic excellence with practical relevance.

I wish you an informative and insightful read.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Tim Goydke

President of HSBA

Contents

Introduction

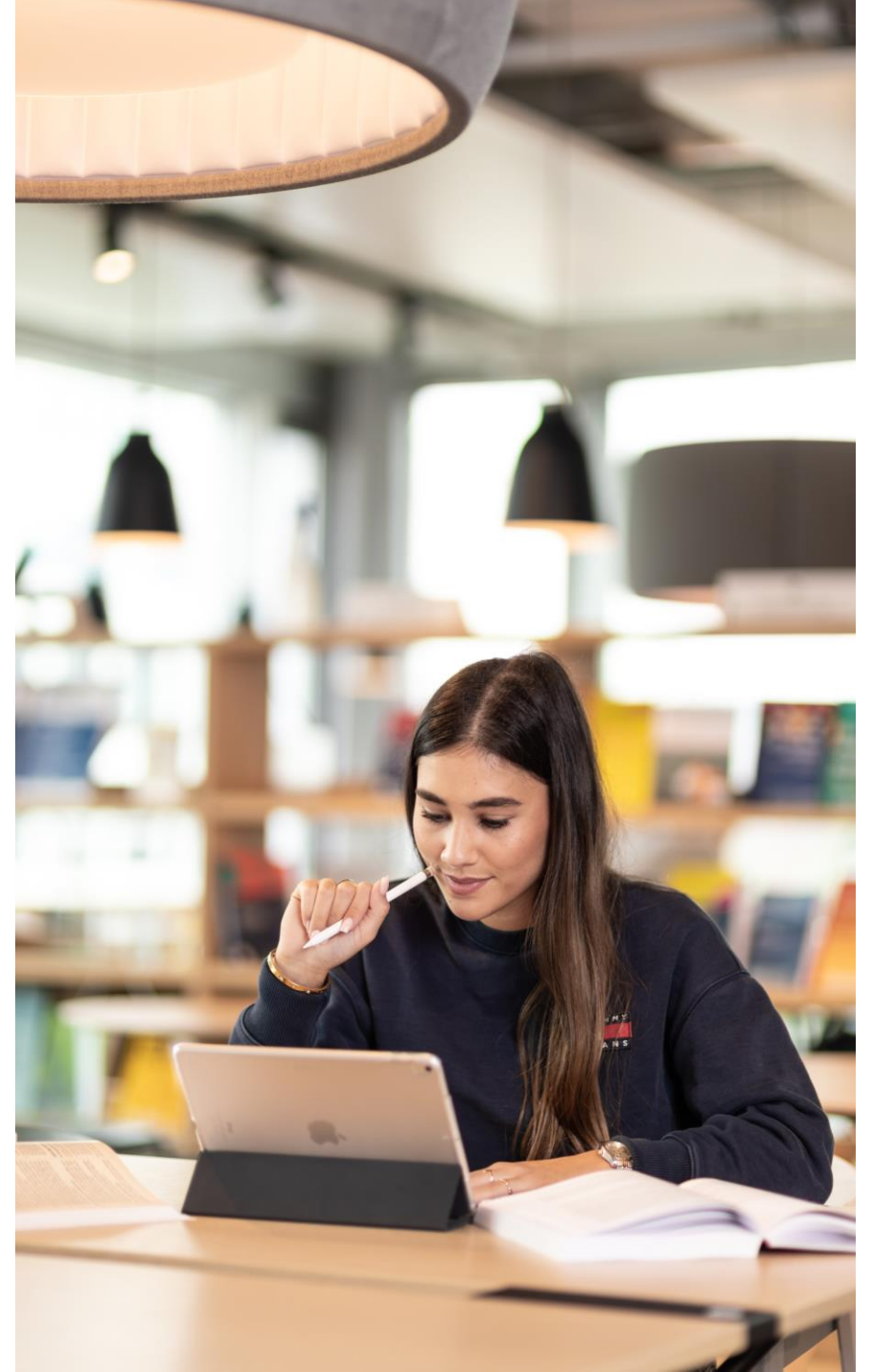
Focus: International Accreditation

Survey Results

Outlook

Summary

Contact & Legal Notice



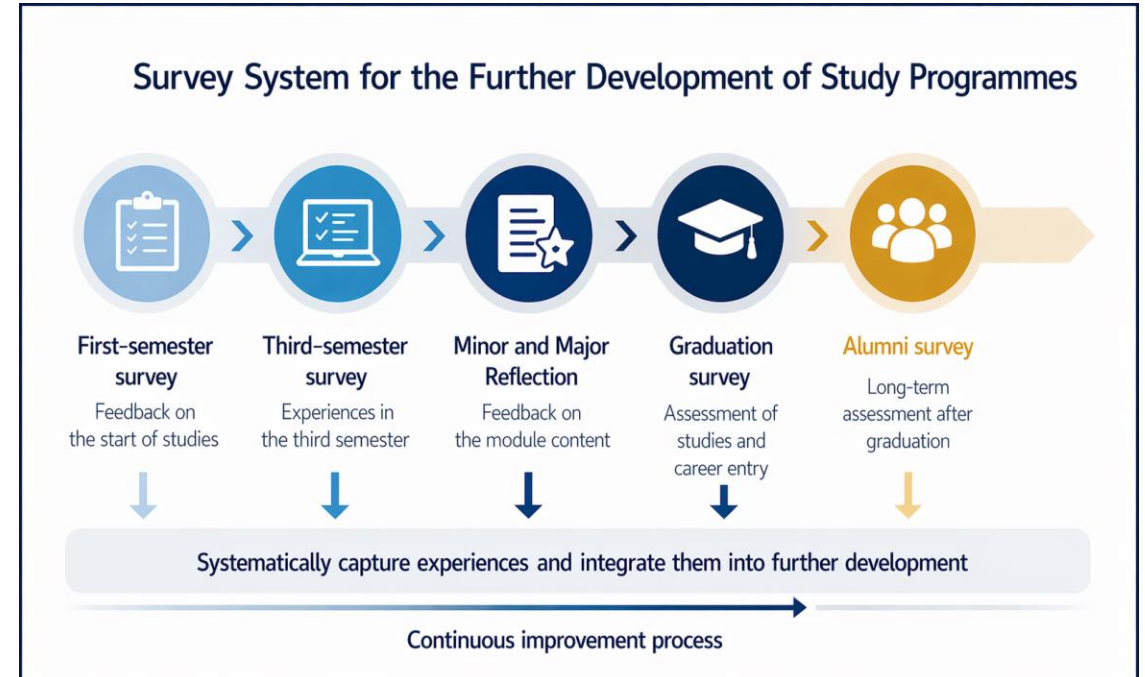
How we ensure Quality

To further develop its study programmes and teaching, HSBA uses a comprehensive survey system that covers different phases of the student lifecycle as well as the perspectives of graduates. In this way, experiences are systematically captured and incorporated into the continuous development of academic quality.

At the beginning of the programme, the **first-semester survey** provides valuable feedback on the pre-study phase and the start of studies. As students progress, the **third-semester survey** captures experiences from the initial semesters and offers insights into perceptions of course content as well as the integration of theory and practice. In addition, targeted feedback on the content and structure of modules is collected through the **evaluation of minor and major modules**.

At the end of the programme, the **graduation survey** enables a retrospective assessment of study experiences and the transition into professional life. Furthermore, the **alumni survey** provides insights into graduates' career development and offers a longer-term perspective on the relevance and impact of the study programme.

The results of these surveys are regularly analysed and systematically incorporated into the further development of study offerings, teaching formats, and academic administration. This supports a continuous improvement process that contributes to maintaining and enhancing the quality of the study experience.



How we do surveys

1 First-Year Student Survey 2024/25

Survey period:

A-Track: Nov 21 – Dec 7, 2024
B-Track: Feb 10 – Feb 23, 2025

Response rate: 33.22%

Remarks: Conducted annually within the first two months after the start of the semester

2 Third-Semester Survey 2024/25

Survey period:

A-Track: Nov 20 – Dec 13, 2024
B-Track: Jan 27 – Feb 12, 2025

Response rate: 15.71%

Remarks: Conducted annually in the second year within first two months after start of the semester

3 Minor and Major Reflection, Cohort 2022

Survey period:

Jul 3 – Jul 13, 2025

Response rate: 29.58%

Remarks: Survey of the first cohort completing the newly introduced minor-major system in the BSc Business Administration programme

4 Graduation Survey 2025

Survey period:

Sep 19 – Oct 12, 2025

Response rate: 32.95%

Remarks: Conducted annually at the end of the 6th semester or shortly before/after submission of the final thesis

5 Alumni Survey 2025

Survey period:

Jun 19 – Jul 10, 2025

Response rate: 16.67%

Remarks: Conducted every two years, 5–6 years after completion of the Bachelor's degree



Focus: International Accreditation

International accreditations are a key component of the strategic development of business schools. Against this backdrop, HSBA has initiated the AACSB accreditation process.

The AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) is one of the world's leading accreditation bodies and defines international standards for academic quality, research, and institutional development. HSBA's objective is to consistently align its study programmes and academic structures with these international benchmarks and to further strengthen its position within the global higher education landscape.

The accreditation process is not only understood as a quality seal, but above all as an instrument for the continuous and systematic development of teaching, research, and institutional structures. It is carried out in alignment with national regulations set by the German Council of Science and Humanities and the Accreditation Council.



Mission

AACSB evaluates business schools based on a clearly defined mission. Strategic objectives and academic activities are consistently aligned with this mission.



International Standards

Study programmes, teaching methods, and academic structures are aligned with international benchmarks, thereby increasing comparability for prospective students.



Institutional Development

The accreditation process itself already supports the long-term development of the university and enhances its international visibility.

Focus: International Accreditation

Quality and Impact as Core Principles



The accreditation process supports the long-term development of HSBA into an internationally visible business school with high academic quality and societal impact. The foundation for this is provided by the AACSB standards, which are globally recognised as a benchmark for quality in management education.

At the core of these standards lies a culture of continuous improvement. Business schools are evaluated not only based on individual metrics, but above all on how systematically they develop their study programmes, research activities, and institutional structures. The decisive factor is the close alignment of strategy, academic quality, and societal impact.

For HSBA, this particularly involves the further development of existing quality assurance processes. The following areas play a central role in the accreditation process:

Teaching as a Core Element

Within the AACSB standards, learning objectives for study programmes are clearly defined and regularly reviewed. Through structured evaluation and feedback processes (Assurance of Learning), it is assessed to what extent students acquire the intended competencies. The results are directly incorporated into the further development of teaching methods, curricula, and assessment formats.

Scholarly Contributions

A central AACSB criterion is the quality and relevance of scholarly contributions. Business schools are expected to conduct research that advances academic knowledge while also providing practical solutions to current economic and societal challenges.

Continuous Improvement

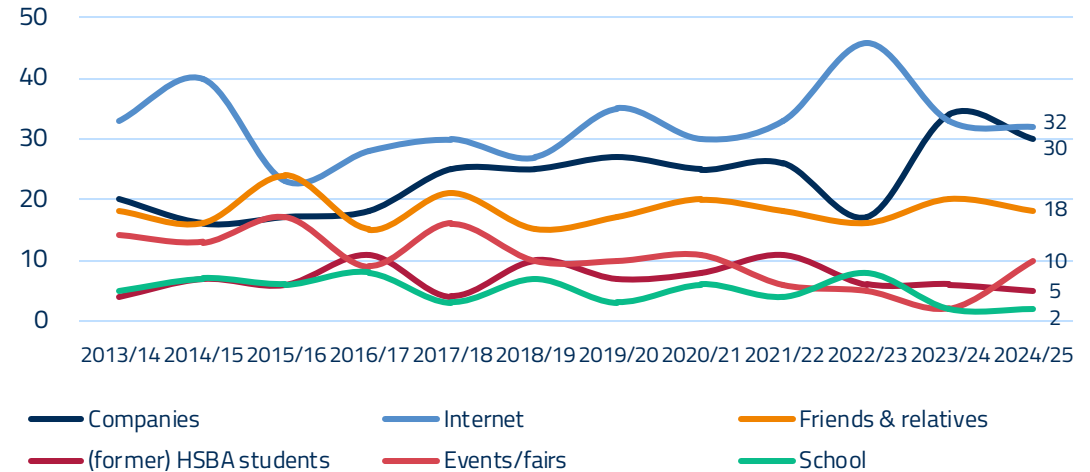
The continuous development of teaching, research, and organisational structures is a fundamental principle of AACSB. Regular evaluations, structured feedback processes, and strategic planning form the basis for deriving and sustainably implementing improvement measures.

Practical relevance and companies shape study choice

1 Top 4 Reasons for Choosing the Programme (%)*



2 Initial Points of Contact (%)*



Integration of Theory and Practice as Key Driver

Overall, the reasons for choosing a study programme show a stable pattern. The close integration of theory and practice remains the most important factor influencing students' decision to study at HSBA. At the same time, the attractiveness of partner companies has gained importance compared to the previous year and is becoming an increasingly relevant factor in the decision-making process. Career opportunities are mentioned slightly less frequently but remain an important consideration. Study conditions continue to play a complementary role and remain at a similar level as in the previous year 1.



Companies as Key Access Channel to HSBA

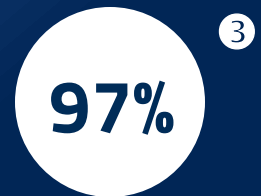
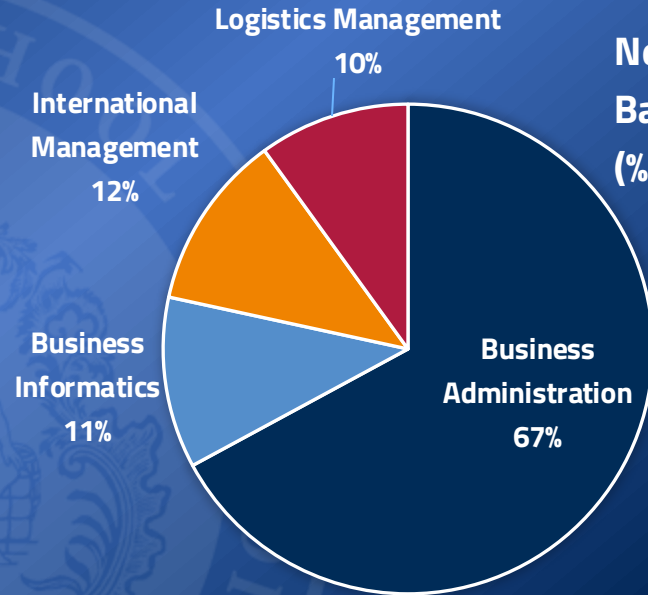
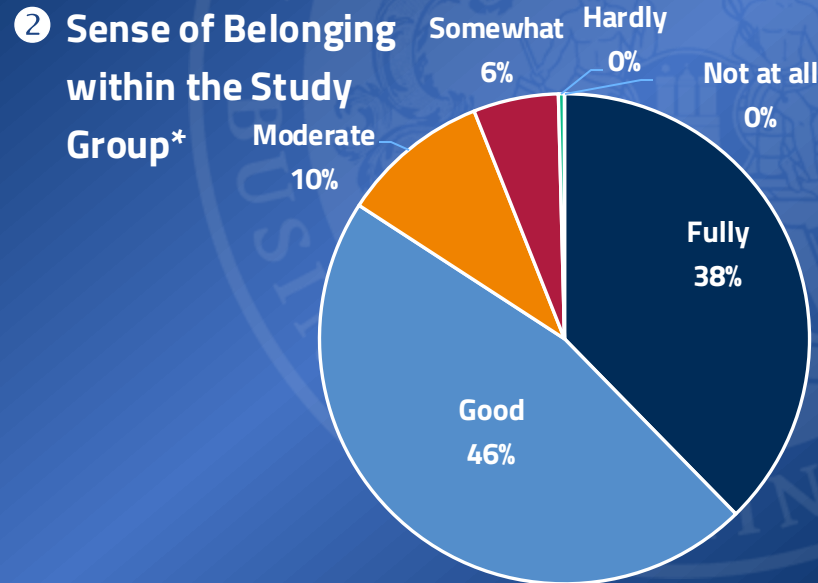
The internet remains a frequent first point of contact for prospective students. At the same time, companies continue to gain importance and represent one of the most relevant access channels to HSBA—many students first become aware of the programme through their company 2. Application behaviour also shows a clear pattern: the majority of applicants apply to only a small number of companies. 69% of respondents submit no more than four applications.

* First-Semester Survey 2024/25

Students start and integrate successfully

The start of studies at HSBA is very positive for the majority of students. A large proportion report a successful transition into university life already at the beginning of their studies ❶. A strong sense of belonging is also evident within study groups: the vast majority state that they feel well or fully integrated ❷.

The start within partner companies is perceived equally positively—almost all students feel well received there ❸. Building on these results, HSBA continues to further develop the campus as a place of learning while intensifying collaboration with partner companies, for example through increased company visits.



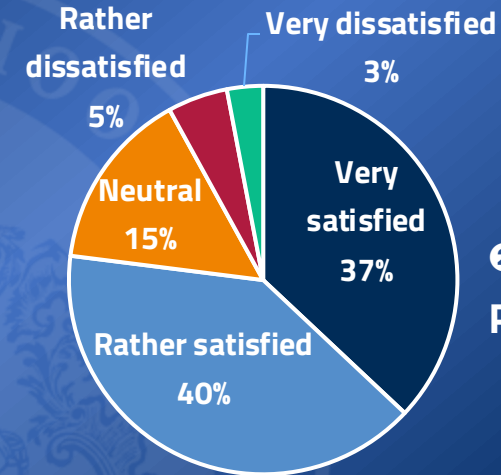
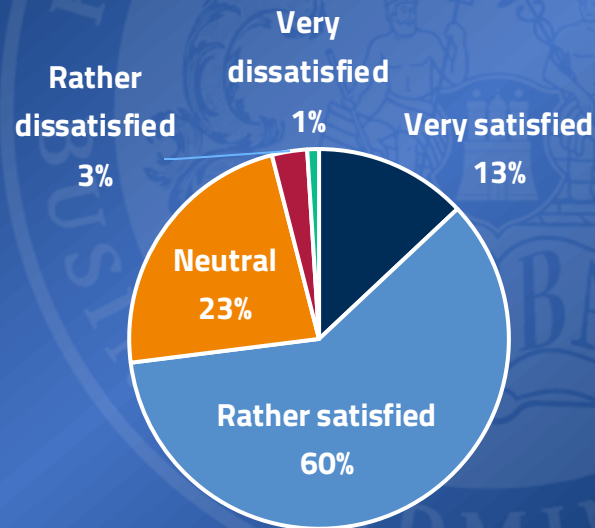
of students feel well received in their company*

Third-semester survey confirms high satisfaction

The results of the third-semester survey confirm a consistently high level of student satisfaction. Both the study programme at HSBA and collaboration with partner companies are rated predominantly positively ❶❷. Compared to the previous year, only minor changes can be observed. The relevance of the study programme for students' professional activities also continues to be rated very positively ❸.

Open-ended feedback from students highlights specific areas for improvement, particularly in study organisation and scheduling, as well as in certain aspects of teaching and general study-related conditions. These insights are systematically incorporated into the continuous development of the study programme.

❶ Satisfaction with the Study Programme at HSBA*



❷ Satisfaction with Partner Companies*



9 out of 10 third-semester students are satisfied with the relevance of their studies for their work*

Specialisation adds value

Individual Profiling in the Study Programme: The Minor–Major System in the BSc Business Administration

In the second and third year of study, the dual Bachelor’s programme in Business Administration offers the opportunity for individual specialisation: students choose either **one major** (36 ECTS) or **two minors** (18 ECTS each), which—depending on the combination—can also correspond to a major. This allows students to choose between a deeper specialisation in one field or two distinct areas of focus.

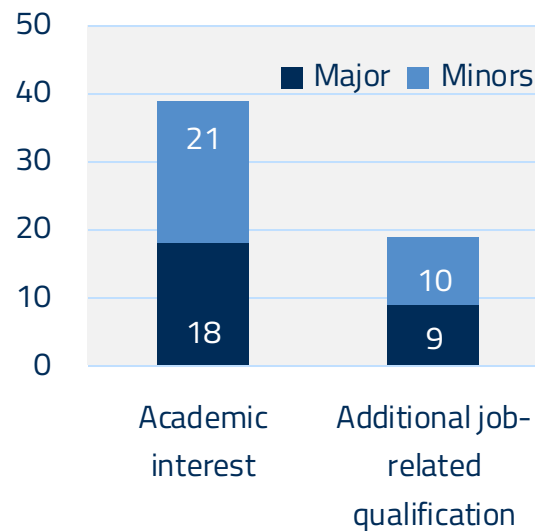
These specialisations enable targeted profile development. In some cases, partner companies already advertise study positions with a predefined specialisation. The system was introduced at HSBA in 2022 within the BSc Business Administration programme, and the experiences of the first cohorts were evaluated through a short survey.

Motivation and Acceptance: Why Students Choose Early Specialisation

Academic interest is by far the most important reason cited by students for choosing their major or minors. The desire to acquire additional job-related qualifications ranks second ❶.

On average, the surveyed students report that the modules they selected particularly contributed to the development of their methodological, social, and personal competencies. The perceived development of subject-specific and transfer competencies is slightly lower in comparison ❷.

❶ Main Reasons for the Decision (absolute numbers)*



❷ Competencies Acquired*

Methodological competence
(e.g., work organisation, analytical skills, presentation techniques)

79%

Personal competence
(e.g., independence, problem-solving skills, ability to learn)

79%

Social competence
(e.g., teamwork, communication skills, conversational skills)

77%

Transfer competence
(e.g., application of theoretical knowledge in practice)

72%

Subject-specific competence
(e.g., terminology, theories, models, subject-specific knowledge)

70%

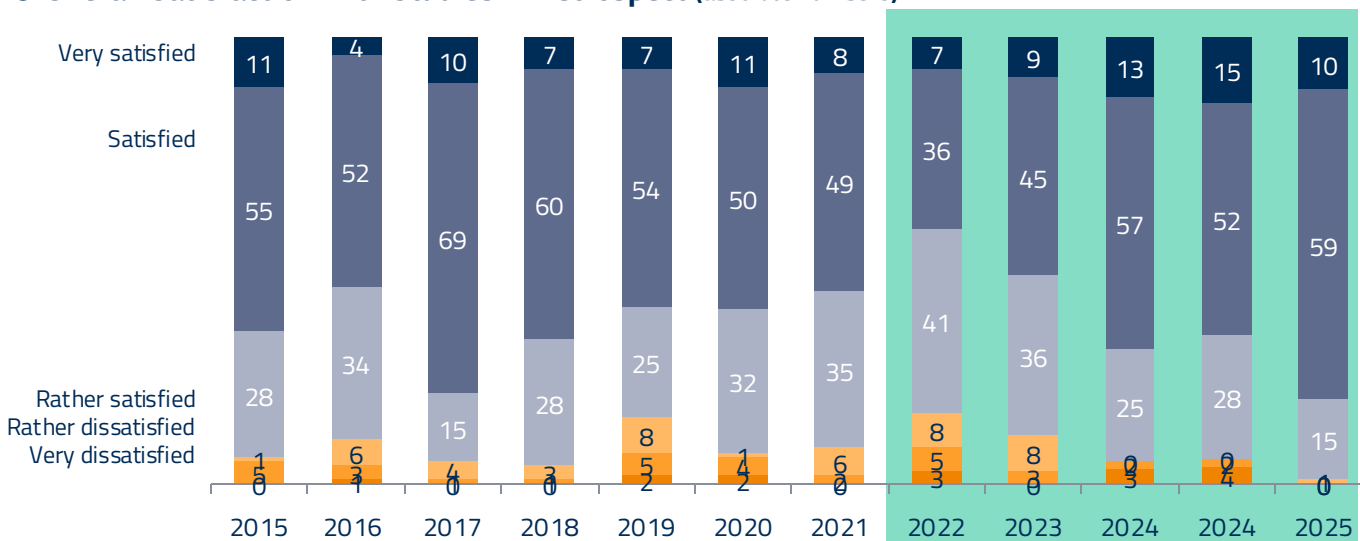


Graduates draw positive conclusion

The 2025 graduation survey once again shows a very high level of satisfaction among alumni with their studies at HSBA: 99% of respondents report being satisfied. Across multiple cohorts, satisfaction thus remains at a consistently high level. At the same time, a positive trend towards higher satisfaction levels can be observed from 2022 to 2024, particularly due to an increasing proportion of “very satisfied” graduates. In 2025, this overall very positive picture is confirmed, with a slightly more balanced distribution across satisfaction categories. Minor annual fluctuations should be interpreted in light of the relatively small sample sizes ❶.

In addition, 95% of respondents rate the integration of theory and practice positively. This once again highlights the key strength of HSBA’s dual study model and confirms the close collaboration between the university and its partner companies.

❶ Overall Satisfaction with Studies in Retrospect (absolute numbers)*



*Graduation Survey 2025

Comparability prior to 2017 is limited due to changes in the response scale.



Graduates enter career successfully

Competence Development during Studies

With regard to competence development, graduates most frequently report progress in the areas of self-organisation and presentation skills, while entrepreneurial competencies are mentioned somewhat less frequently this time. The bachelor's thesis is also rated positively overall: around two thirds of respondents state that they gained in-depth subject knowledge and insights into potential professional fields through their thesis. This was supported by generally positive supervision from both faculty and partner companies.

Successful Transition into the Labor Market

The transition of graduates into the labor market remains highly successful. Compared to the previous year, an even higher proportion of graduates receive a job offer from their partner company, and the acceptance rate of these offers has also increased further. The current retention rate is 91%, significantly above the average in dual study programmes of around 80% ([Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft e.V.](#)). The majority of graduates also remain in the region and start their careers there.

The employment conditions of graduates are overall very positive. Entry-level salaries are typically between €50,000 and €60,000 gross per year, with particularly strong growth at the upper end. HSBA graduates therefore earn above average (nationwide approx. €40,900; in Hamburg approx. €44,500; [Stepstone](#)) and have excellent prospects for a successful career start.

91%

of graduates receive a job offer from their partner company*

92%

accept the job offer from their partner company*

87%

of graduates work in the Hamburg metropolitan region*

73%

of graduates are in full-time employment*

What did you value most about your time at HSBA?

„The opportunity to gain valuable practical experience within a company during my studies and thereby have excellent career entry prospects. I also appreciated studying at a university with such a pleasant atmosphere.“

Quote from the Graduation Survey 2025 (translated from German)

Alumni in Focus

Competence Development: Alignment between Studies and Professional Requirements

Overall, there is a strong alignment between the competencies acquired during studies and the requirements of professional practice. In some areas, competencies are perceived as more developed than immediately required in the workplace; however, this gap is smaller than in previous surveys.

The greatest need for further development remains in the area of subject-specific knowledge. In contrast, cross-functional competencies—particularly social skills, leadership, IT skills, and problem-solving abilities—are perceived as key strengths. Notably, there is a very high alignment in presentation skills, where the competencies acquired closely match professional requirements.

1

86%

of alumni feel well prepared compared to graduates from other universities*

2

95%

of alumni are satisfied with their professional development since graduating from HSBA*

Comparison with Other Universities: Alumni Perspective

Alumni assess their education at HSBA positively compared to other universities: the vast majority feel well prepared in retrospect 1.

Particular strengths highlighted include the strong practical orientation, efficient working methods, direct links to companies, and solid foundations in business administration.

Overall, the feedback confirms a clearly practice-oriented profile of HSBA, which distinguishes it from more theory-driven universities.

Career and Educational Paths of Alumni: Satisfaction, Commitment, and Responsibility

Five to six years after completing their Bachelor's degree, alumni show a very positive overall career development. Almost all respondents report being satisfied with their professional development 2.

Around one third of employed alumni still work at the company where they completed their Bachelor's degree. At the same time, many alumni have already taken on managerial or leadership responsibilities: the proportion has increased significantly from 27% (2023) to 41%.

In addition, a large share of graduates continues their academic education. Around three quarters have pursued further studies, nearly all of them enrolling in a Master's programme.

*Alumni Survey 2025

Outlook: Surveys

To further strengthen quality assurance, the survey instruments will be systematically refined. The focus is on updating content, streamlining and clarifying student life cycle questionnaires, ensuring clearer target group-oriented communication, and establishing consistent language as well as modern, more flexible approaches to increase response rates sustainably.

Going forward, survey results will be used even more systematically to derive concrete measures, identify key areas for action, and define robust benchmarks. In addition, the measurement of competencies will be conceptually redesigned to further enhance the analytical value and steering relevance of the surveys.



Summary of Results



AACSB Within the accreditation process, HSBA is setting new impulses for excellence in teaching, research quality, and international visibility.



Dual Model Practical relevance and partner companies shape the choice of study programme and represent the most important access channel to HSBA.



Satisfaction Students report a very high level of satisfaction with both their studies and their partner companies.



Career Entry High retention rates, above-average entry-level salaries, and strong regional ties characterise graduates' transition into the labor market.



Specialisation Individual profile development and strengthened core competencies.



Alumni High satisfaction, strong career development, and practice-oriented competencies.



Kontakt



Michaela Lindner

Quality Manager
QM & Accreditation

For inquiries regarding surveys
T +49 40 822160-987
michaela.lindner@hsba.de



Sascha Fahrendorf

Quality Manager
QM & Accreditation

For inquiries regarding accreditations
T +49 40 822160-984
sascha.fahrendorf@hsba.de

Disclaimer & Copyright

HSBA strives to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of the information provided. However, no guarantee is given for the completeness, accuracy, or up-to-dateness of the content. Liability claims against HSBA arising from the use of incorrect or incomplete information are generally excluded. Any use of the content requires the prior written consent of HSBA.

Copyright © 2025 HSBA Hamburg School of Business Administration