

# **Regulation Diploma Medical Affairs shqa**

Version December 16th, 2025

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The Board of Directors of the Swiss health quality association (shqa) has issued the following regulations:

## **1 General**

### **1.1 Sponsorship**

shqa is sponsor of the *Diploma Medical Affairs shqa*.

shqa exercises this sponsorship with effect for the whole of Switzerland.

### **1.2 Purpose of the Diploma**

The diploma thesis builds on the certificate of the *shqa Medical Affairs Certificate Program*. It provides information on the actual level of learning and performance as well as the transferability into the daily routine of the graduates of the certificate course.

### **1.3 Languages**

The Diploma program can be written in English.

### **1.4 Approval**

Admission to the Diploma thesis is granted to those who (cumalatively):

- a) fulfill the admission requirements,
- b) have registered in due time and form,
- c) have paid the fees within 30 days of receipt of the confirmation of admission.

### **1.5 Admission requirements**

The admission requirements are:

- Completion of the entire *shqa Medical Affairs Certificate Program* (modules A - F).
- At least two years of professional experience in the pharmaceutical industry (RX or OTC) or a medical technology company.

### **1.6 Registration**

The registration must be made within 12 months of completing the Medical Affairs Certificate Program by shqa.

The registration form must be completed in full. The following documents must be enclosed:

- a) CV (short version)
- b) Proof of at least two years of professional experience in the pharmaceutical industry (RX/OTC) or a medical technology company (e.g. job references).

shqa will reject applications that are incomplete or contain false information.

### **1.7 Fees**

Diploma fees are based on the fee regulation valid at the time of application.

## **2 Organization**

### **2.1 Course management**

The preparation, implementation and monitoring of the *Diploma Medical Affairs shqa* is the responsibility of the course management. Tasks like advertisement, registration, admission, billing and issuing of diplomas might be delegated to shqa staff.

The course management is made up of the shqa President, the shqa Vice President and the shqa Managing Director.

The course management is quorate if the majority of members are present. The Vice President is responsible for deputizing for the President. The course management decides by a simple majority of those present. In the event of a tie, the President of the shqa has the casting vote. Circular resolutions are passed if all members of the course management agree.

### **2.2 Tasks of the course management**

The course management has the following tasks, in particular:

- a) Deciding on the admission of diploma candidates to the diploma program.
- b) Monitoring the correct implementation of the diploma.
- c) Compiling the pool of main supervisors from shqa academy lecturer pool.
- d) Handling objections.
- e) Report on activities to the shqa board.

### **2.3 Main supervisor and co-supervisor**

The course management determines the pool of main supervisors for the *Diploma Medical Affairs shqa*. The Diploma candidate chooses his/her main supervisor from the pool and obtains written approval from the chosen main supervisor.

The diploma candidate also looks for a co-supervisor. If possible, the co-supervisor should come from the course participant's company (e.g. line manager, division manager, technical expert). Members of the course management cannot act as co-supervisors.

### **2.4 Tasks of the main supervisor**

He accompanies and supervises the diploma candidate for the duration of the *Diploma Medical Affairs shqa* and evaluates the diploma thesis as well as the final presentation in accordance with the articles of these regulations.

### **2.5 Tasks of the co-supervisor**

The co-supervisor advises the candidate on the choice of topic from a company perspective and participates in the assessment of the thesis and the final presentation in accordance with the articles of these regulations. He shall refrain from any form of advice or collaboration in the preparation of the thesis and the final presentation.

### 3 Requirements

#### 3.1 General

The *Diploma Medical Affairs shqa* includes the preparation of a **written diploma thesis** and a final **oral presentation**.

The written diploma thesis deals with a specific problem from the everyday working life of the candidate. The candidate develops an independent solution for this problem. In doing so, he applies the theories, methods and concepts learned in the *shqa Medical Affairs Certificate Program*. In the final oral presentation, the candidate demonstrates his/her ability to present the key findings and the implications of the thesis for practice and to respond to in-depth questions from the main supervisor relating to the topic of the thesis. Overall, the candidate demonstrates that he/she is an expert on the subject and has acquired in-depth and practice-oriented knowledge by completing the *shqa Medical Affairs Certificate Program*.

#### 3.2 Structure, scope and layout of the thesis

a) The thesis is to be structured as follows:

- Cover page
- Table of contents
- Summary/abstract (brief overview of the most important aspects of the work)
- List of figures, tables and abbreviations (as required)
- Main section of the paper consisting of:
  1. Introduction, problem statement and objectives
  2. Theory
  3. Main part
  4. Conclusions and recommendations for practice
- List of sources
- Appendices
- Declaration of independence (signed)
- Blocking notice pursuant to Art. 9

- b) the main section of the thesis (introduction, theory, main part, conclusion) comprises a minimum of 22 and a maximum of 28 pages.)
- c) shqa provides a Word template for the thesis. Participants are free to use it as they wish.

The following applies to the page layout:

Indent left:                approx 3.2 cm

Indent right:              approx 2.2 cm

The calculation is based on the outer edge of the page. Indents can be set in Word under Layout -> Margins-> User-defined margins

Header/Footer:            approx 1.25 cm (text with sufficient spacing)

For the text, a legible font such as Times New Roman or Arial in size 11 should be used. A larger font size can be used for chapter headings and font size 10 should be used for footnotes. The line spacing should be between 1.2 and 1.5, and the distance after a paragraph should be 6 pts.

Sources / references should be cited in the text and listed in the appendix of the document. The citation style can be chosen freely, but must be consistent throughout the document. We recommend using a citation app/program such as Endnote or Zotero.

Figures and tables must also be given a title and a source. If a figure and/or table is developed by the candidate, the source must be indicated as "Own presentation".

Examples of the citation style can be found in the template for the written transcript of records.

### **3.3 Content requirements for the diploma thesis**

a) A written thesis is characterized by a theory- and/or model-based solution to a practical problem as well as appropriate technical language and good spelling and grammar. The practical problem is dealt with in a systematic, structured and holistic manner. The practical problem is solved using own, self-developed solution approaches, considering the *shqa Medical Affairs Certificate Program* content. Illustrations and tables visualize important aspects and are labeled. Sources/references are cited consistently, and the overall layout of the work is clean and appealing.

All sources used directly or indirectly in the creation of the transcript of records must be cited in the text and in the list of sources. Failure to declare sources (ideas, texts or illustrations) is considered intellectual theft and makes the work plagiarized. This will lead to failure of the *Diploma Medical Affairs shqa*.

## **4. Final oral presentation**

### **4.1 Date and attendees**

The final oral presentation takes place within 4 weeks of notification of the grade of the written thesis by the course management. The exact date will be set by the main supervisor in consultation with the co-supervisor and the candidate. The final oral presentation takes place as part of a virtual meeting.

### **4.2 Structure and form of the oral presentation**

The oral presentation takes place in a virtual format (the candidate is organizing the meeting in MS Teams, Zoom, or any other suited platform) and consists of two parts. First, the candidate presents the core results of his thesis. The main supervisor then asks in-depth questions about the content of the presentation.

Specifically, the final oral presentation is structured as follows:

a) Presentation of the core results (max. 15 minutes):

The candidate briefly presents the topic and objective(s) of his/her written diploma thesis. They explain how and with which theories, models and methods they arrived at

the solution to the research question. The main part of the final oral presentation is the presentation of the central results, conclusions and recommendations for practice. Finally, the participant briefly reflects critically on their approach and gives an outlook on the next steps in practice.

b) In-depth questions (max. 15 minutes):

Following the presentation, the main supervisor asks in-depth questions about the content presented.

By answering the questions correctly, shows that he/she has internalized the topic and can apply the knowledge gained from the *shqa Medical Affairs Certificate Program* in a solution-oriented manner. The candidate also proves that he/she has written the thesis himself, that he/she is an expert on the subject and that he/she has a profound wealth of knowledge.

The candidate chooses the format for the final presentation by him-/herself (e.g. PowerPoint, mind map, mural). If required, he/she may also submit a handout for the main supervisor and co-supervisor before the presentation.

Sources used must be cited appropriately.

## **5. Choice of supervisor, processing and supervision process**

### **5.1 Choice of main and co-supervisor**

The candidate selects his or her main supervisor from the pool of lecturers from the *shqa Medical Affairs Certificate Program* and appoints a co-supervisor.

After final confirmation of admission by shqa, the candidate contacts the chosen main supervisor and arranges a telephone or virtual meeting with them. The preliminary meeting serves to determine the topic of the thesis and the procedure to be followed.

In view of the preliminary discussion, the candidate agrees on the topic of the thesis with the co-supervisor and draws up a disposition. This contains a brief description of the title, problem, objectives and planned approach for the thesis (1-2 pages). He/she sends the disposition to the main supervisor by e-mail at least two working days before the joint appointment and informs him/her about the person of the co-supervisor and his agreement to the chosen topic.

### **5.2 Enter thesis title and supervisor**

Once the candidate and the main supervisor have agreed on the topic and the procedure, the participant sends the written agreement to shqa, stating the title of the diploma thesis and the names of the main supervisor and co-supervisor.

### **5.3 Diploma thesis processing time**

shqa informs the candidate of the official processing time of 3 months (from start date and until the last possible submission date). The official processing period begins when shqa has issued a letter of acceptance stating the last possible date of submission.

### **5.5 Elaboration of the diploma thesis**

The candidate works independently on the diploma thesis within the 3-month processing period. While working on the thesis, the candidate can obtain necessary feedback and

recommendations for specific questions from the main supervisor at any time. Interim meetings can also be arranged if required. In principle, the candidate is responsible for proactively contacting and involving his main supervisor if necessary. The candidate can attend a maximum of two interim meetings with the main supervisor. In addition, minor questions can be asked by e-mail.

### **5.6 Submission of the diploma thesis**

The thesis, including a signed declaration of independence, must be submitted digitally in PDF format to shqa by the deadline, at the latest on the last possible submission date. shqa confirms receipt of the diploma thesis to the candidate. shqa forwards the thesis by e-mail to the main supervisor and the co-supervisor for assessment and grading in accordance with the articles of these regulations.

### **5.7 Preparation and supervision process for the final oral presentation**

The candidate prepares independently for the final oral presentation. As part of the preparation, the candidate can discuss questions regarding the structure and content and any uncertainties regarding the procedure and assessment with the main supervisor.

## **6. Assessment, passing and repetition**

### **6.1 General**

a) The diploma thesis and the final presentation are graded using the Swiss grading scale from 1 to 6 (6 (very good), 5 (good), 4 (satisfactory), 3 (adequate), 2 (fail), and 1 (not assessable)). Grades of 3 and above are considered sufficient.

b) The thesis is assessed and graded by the main supervisor. He considers the assessment of the co-supervisor regarding the following three criteria: 1) correctness of the company-related explanations, 2) feasibility of the solution in practice and 3) independence of the participant in developing the solution.

The final presentation is assessed and graded by the main supervisor.

c) The thesis is assessed and graded within four weeks of submission to the course management. The main supervisor and co-supervisor shall agree on the deadline for the assessment by the co-supervisor.

d) The main supervisor informs shqa of the assessment and grading of the diploma thesis for the attention of the course management. The course management shall formally review the assessment and grading.

e) The main supervisor informs shqa of the assessment and grading of the final presentation for the attention of the course management. The course management shall formally review the assessment and grading.

f) The course management informs the candidate about the grades of the diploma thesis, the final presentation and the overall grade or the pass/fail grade.

### **6.2. Evaluation of the diploma thesis**

The thesis is assessed based on content and formal aspects according to A. Bänisch: *Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten. Seminar- und Diplomarbeiten, München/Wien: Oldenbourg 1992, S. 71-74* (see appendix). The content aspects are weighted much more heavily. A thesis that only fulfills the formal aspects is unsatisfactory.

### 6.3. Evaluation of the oral presentation

The final presentation is assessed based on content and formal aspects.

Specifically, the following criteria are evaluated:

- **Presentation skills:**

The presentation style is confident and self-assured. The language is technically correct. The content presented is visualized in a clear and appealing way and the visualization supports the content conveyed. The handling of the VC platform (Zoom, Teams, Webex etc.) is professional.

- **Structure and content of the final presentation:**

The structure of the presentation is logical and coherent. The content is presented in a factually correct and complete manner and the sources used are cited appropriately. Theory, models and methodology for answering the problem are presented and the most important findings are presented concisely in clear key messages. The in-depth questions from the main supervisor and co-supervisor are answered correctly and purposefully. Overall, the candidate demonstrates that he is an expert on the topic and has a profound wealth of knowledge.

### 6.4 Passing

In order to obtain the diploma, the diploma thesis must be assessed with a grade of at least 3 and the overall grade must be at least 3. The grades in both the “written thesis” part and the “oral presentation” part may not be lower than 3 each.

The grade for the thesis counts for 70% of the overall grade and that for the final presentation for 30%.

### 6.6 Repetition

Students who have not passed the *Diploma Medical Affairs shqa* may repeat the thesis once. The final presentation can also only be repeated once.

If the diploma thesis was assessed with a grade below 3, the diploma thesis must first be repeated and then the final presentation will take place.

If the thesis was graded at least 3 and the grade for the oral part is below 3, only the final presentation must be repeated.

The candidate registers for a retake using the registration form. Beforehand, the candidate obtains feedback from the main supervisor to understand why the thesis or final presentation was assessed as unsatisfactory. Together with the main supervisor, the candidate determines which parts of the thesis and/or the final presentation should be improved.

While working on the thesis, the candidate can obtain necessary feedback and recommendations for specific questions from the main supervisor. The candidate can attend a maximum of two interim meetings with the main supervisor. In addition, minor questions can be asked by e-mail. The additional costs for further supervision and the second assessment are to be borne by the student. The fees for the retake are set out in the fee regulations.

## 7. Deadlines

### 7.1 Start and end of deadline

Time limits that are triggered by a notification shall begin to run on the following day. If the end of the deadline falls on a Saturday or Sunday, it ends on the next working day.

### 7.2 Compliance with the deadline

The deadline is deemed to have been met if the action is taken no later than the last day of the deadline. In the case of electronic transmission, the deadline is met when the date the email arrived in the recipient's mailbox is before or the last day of the deadline.

An extension of the deadline for the submission of the thesis is only possible in justified exceptional cases (e.g. illness, accident, death in the immediate family, unforeseen military, civil defense or civilian service, etc.) and with the consent of the main supervisor and the course management of shqa.

### 7.3 Deadline extension

The course management may extend deadlines upon request.

### 7.4 Missed deadline

If the candidate has missed a deadline, the course management / shqa will set a grace period. This may not exceed five days.

## 8. Graduation and title

After successfully passing the written thesis and the final oral presentation, the student receives a diploma certificate with the overall grade. He is entitled to use the following title protected by shqa:

- Diploma Medical Affairs shqa (Dipl. MA shqa)

The certificate will be issued in English.

Example:

Swiss health quality association (shqa)  
awards

Ms / Mr FIRST NAME / SECOND NAME / LAST NAME

from CITY, born DATE OF BIRTH

rights and degree of the

**DIPLOMA MEDICAL AFFAIRS shqa**

having demonstrated his/ her academic ability by means of the written thesis

“TITLE OF THE THESIS”

and by passing the oral examination, and having obtained the final grade

GRADE (NUMBER)

Zug, DATE

SIGNATURES



## **9. Blocking note (confidentiality agreement) and archiving**

As the thesis might contain internal and confidential data of a company, the thesis may not be made accessible to third parties, except for the main and co-supervisor and the course management, without the express consent of the company and the author. Reproduction and publication of the thesis without express permission, even in part, is not permitted.

shqa archives the files for 10 years.

## **10. Objection**

The candidate has the option of lodging an objection with the course management if the diploma is not awarded. Only the candidate who is directly affected by a decision is entitled to lodge an objection. The objection must be submitted in writing by the candidate to the shqa office for the attention of the course management. The time limit for saving is 30 days after notification of failure to pass the diploma. The course management shall inform the candidate of its decision in writing, stating the reasons for its decision.

## **11. Entry into force**

These regulations shall enter into force upon their adoption; the same shall apply to any amendments thereto.

Zug, December 16th 2025

swiss health quality association (shqa)

Roman Käser, President shqa

Judith Gembler, Vice-President shqa