

Quality assurance at SEK schools

The main priority of SEK schools is to provide a high-quality education through first-class and diverse educational experiences. This implies ongoing and continuous review of our learning, teaching, curriculum and assessment processes, and to ensure we have a solid structural and organisational basis for them to function effectively.

In order to maintain these high-quality standards, we manage and review our quality assurance providers regularly and we would therefore like to inform you about our current and future plans.

We currently engage with several external organisations and processes that guarantee the quality of our schools and ensure that they comply with standards established by the most demanding international and national education bodies.

In this letter, we would like to outline for you our main quality assurance processes and briefly mention a few others. The three main quality assurance providers are:

- The International Baccalaureate Organisation (IB)
- The Commission on International Education (CIE)
- The Spanish Ministry of Education

Quality assurance through the International Baccalaureate (IB)

The IB quality assurance process is long, comprehensive and leads to the improvement of the school in many areas. The two main stages that ensure the quality of the IB are authorisation and evaluation. Authorisation entails the initial quality verification, and evaluations are carried out through regular and continuous quality assurance processes. These processes are based on [rigorous and demanding IB Standards and Practices](#) which cover areas such as ethos, leadership, resources, curriculum, learning and teaching, assessment and professional development. Both stages require self-analysis, presentation of information and a visit from an IB team of external experts, who then prepare and provide the school with a detailed report that addresses all areas of the IB Standards and Practices. The authorisation process can take up to two years; and evaluations are carried out every five years. In SEK Education Group, our schools have currently participated in authorisations and evaluations for a total of 21 IB programmes, ensuring the highest standards of quality education.

A key requirement in the IB authorisation and evaluation process is the area of professional development, a crucial aspect of quality assurance. SEK schools invest significantly each year in the training of our teachers and leaders in IB programmes to ensure the quality of learning and teaching at our schools.

Another essential element of the IB quality assurance process is the participation of our students in the IB Diploma Programme exams and their ability to continue their studies at their chosen university. We are very aware that this is an important aspiration for parents and students. We have a record of outstanding results in the IB Diploma Programme exams and entrance to the best universities worldwide.

Quality assurance through international accreditation

As part of our current quality review, in April 2019 we decided to change our international accreditation provider to the Commission on International Education (CIE). The CIE has implemented a new accreditation process, through its international inspection agency NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges). The new CIE-NEASC accreditation protocol is called ACE and focuses on learning architecture, culture and ecology structures that foster the best learning and teaching at the school, ensuring that students receive the highest quality education.

The ACE process is approximately two years in duration and focuses first on the evaluation of five Foundation Standards and then on a more detailed analysis of ten Learning Principles. The Foundation Standards focus on the basic requirements for the operation of a quality school, which include: learning and teaching; governance and leadership; health, safety and security; finance, facilities and resources; and ethical practice. The Learning Principles process involves a more thorough and rigorous evaluation of all aspects related to learning and teaching, including curriculum, assessment, leadership, student agency (autonomy, self-direction), learning spaces and community involvement.

CIE-NEASC accreditation not only provides external quality assurance for our schools, but also includes a process of sustained reflection that aims to transform learning in our community. Both the Foundation Standards and Learning Principles processes entail self-analysis, the presentation of information, and visits from a team of external experts in international accreditation that provide the school with a detailed report on how to transform learning. After obtaining initial accreditation, the school must provide feedback on progress after one year and then start the general ACE process again after five years. This continuous cycle of quality assurance ensures the school's constant improvement and transformation. Four SEK schools have already obtained CIE-NEASC accreditation, and the remaining SEK schools will begin the process this year.

CIE-NEASC accreditation also allows us to offer a fully accredited US High School Diploma. In addition to our IB Diploma and LOMCE *Bachillerato* Diploma programmes, the US High School Diploma affords our students greater opportunities for success, as it provides an additional path to graduation, and the option of admission to universities in the USA or other countries where the US High School Diploma is accepted.

Quality assurance through Spanish national and regional inspections

As part of our guarantee of compliance with Spanish national and regional quality standards where each of our schools is located, we are subject to the legal requirements established by the education authorities of each autonomous region and we annually meet all those requirements.

It is worth noting that our students sit the ESO and LOMCE *Bachillerato* examinations in addition to the university entrance exams (EvAU). At SEK we are very aware that university entrance is an important aspiration for families and students, and we boast a strong track record of outstanding results in the ESO stage, the Spanish *Bachillerato* and the EvAU, in addition to our students gaining admission to the best universities in Spain and around the world.

Other quality assurance mechanisms

SEK schools are members of a broad spectrum of organisations that require compliance with a range of quality assurance processes. The following list includes a sample of other quality assurance mechanisms with which we comply:

- **Educational Collaborative of International Schools (ECIS):** the largest provider of professional development and training for international schools: all SEK schools have the highest level of ECIS membership; and SEK Education Group is recognized as an ECIS Regional Learning Hub in Spain.
- **Association of Private and Independent Schools - Circle of Educational Quality (CICAE):** dedicated to improving the quality of the best independent schools in Spain, SEK schools are active members of this group of first-class private Spanish schools.
- **Microsoft Showcase Schools:** A global community of schools engaged in innovative change to improve the quality of teaching and learning through the Microsoft Educational Framework: three SEK schools are Microsoft Showcase schools.
- **World Academy of Sports:** Offering learning opportunities to student athletes, through educational programmes that combine and balance academic studies with sports training: two SEK schools are World Academy of Sports schools.
- **Duke of Edinburgh's International Award (DofE):** The most important youth achievement award in the world: four SEK schools are authorised to offer this prestigious award.

SEK schools are also members of the Cambridge Examination Centres, the Goethe Institute, Alliance Française, Round Square, the International School Theatre Association (ISTA) and other educational organisations that ensure the quality of learning and teaching in various areas of our schools.

The reasons behind our change of accreditation provider

Three SEK schools have decided to change their international accreditation provider to CIE-NEASC, having previously used the Council of International Schools (CIS). This is because the CIE-NEASC process is better aligned with our quality assurance needs, and demands even higher standards of learning and teaching. However, we remain members of CIS and will continue to participate in their professional learning opportunities.

Concluding remarks

We are constantly reviewing and perfecting our quality assurance processes to remain at the forefront of educational innovation, transformation and performance. Through the processes mentioned in this letter, you can be assured that SEK is constantly improving its education programmes and meets the most demanding national and international quality standards.

We are confident that these quality assurance measures will lead to significant improvements in our schools and therefore will have an outstanding impact on student learning. If you have any questions regarding the quality assurance processes mentioned above, please contact the school Academic Secretary office and they will be happy to help you.