



**Personnel
Certification**

Swiss Association for Quality

SAQ Swiss Association for Quality
Personnel Certification

Certification “Business & Corporate”

Certification programme

Certified PR and Communication Expert SAQ

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Non-gender specific wording has been used throughout.



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1. Overview

1.1 Objective and purpose

The “Certified PR and Communication Expert SAQ” certification programme specifies the required learning content and defines the requirements for first and recertification. The following certification guidelines are based on the requirements of the SN/EN ISO standard IEC 17024:2012.

1.2 Target audience

The “Certified PR and Communication Expert SAQ” certification is intended for individuals with a main position/role in the field of public relations/communication who have already taken on the qualified tasks in this field.

1.3 Advantages and benefits

The personnel certificate “Certified PR and Communication Expert SAQ” shows the personal skills and knowledge required for a qualified participation in the field of public relations/communication. In addition, the recertification provides confirmation of further training and the necessary professional experience, so that certificate holders can meet the constantly increasing and changing demands on their professional profile.

2. Learning topics

The learning topics are an integral part of the certification programme and form the skills base for certificate holders.

Topic	Sub-topic
01. Fundamentals of economics and business administration	01.1 Functions and rules of the economy 01.2 Interrelationships and processes of the economy 01.3 Economics in relation to strategic development of corporate and marketing communication 01.4 Economics, business administration and entrepreneurial thinking 01.5 Business models 01.6 Corporate objectives and strategies 01.7 Environment and markets of a company 01.8 Opportunities and risks of a company's strategic direction 01.9 Organisational and operational structure of a company 01.10 Project management including budgeting
02. Fundamentals of operational management and processing	02.1 Corporate policy and management processes 02.2 Basic concepts of organisation theory 02.3 Decision-making methodology for problem solving 02.4 Facts and information about your own area 02.4 Business processes and results 02.5 Financial considerations 02.6 Criteria for employee management 02.7 Leadership situations in conflict situations



Topic	Sub-topic
03. Fundamentals of marketing and market research	03.1 Marketing strategy and concept 03.2 Marketing instruments 03.4 Forms of market and communication research 03.5 Communication with market research institutions 03.6 Data acquisition systems
04. Communication strategy	04.1 Briefings 04.2 Gaps in information, clarifications and situation analysis 04.3 Stakeholders and their needs 04.4 Sociological and psychological factors of stakeholder groups 04.5 Communication strategies according to objectives and specifications 04.6 Communication tools and channels 04.7 Optimisation of communication strategies or measures
05. Corporate communication	05.1 Reputation, change, issues and crisis communication 05.2 Internal communication 05.3 Public affairs 05.4 Investor relations 05.5 Ethics, CSR and governance/compliance 05.6 Success, opportunities and risks 05.7 Advising, coaching and supporting management 05.8 Optimising ongoing activities
06. Corporate identity	06.1 CI principles 06.2 Corporate design, behaviour, communication, wording 06.3 Brand management 06.4 Publications / corporate media in accordance with CI
7 Communication concepts	07.1 Concepts for corporate or commercial communication 07.2 Live communication concepts 07.3 Sales promotion / dialogue marketing concepts 07.4 Digital presence concepts 07.5 Online and offline publications 07.6 Communication measures
08. Media and channels	08.1 Media briefing 08.2 Media strategy and concept for online and offline media 08.3 Cross-media campaigns 08.4 Distribution/media budget 08.5 Campaign analysis 08.6 Social media channels and areas 08.7 Media relations, including media conference
09. Implementing communications	09.1 Briefing for a creative team 09.2 Creativity techniques for implementation 09.3 Creative approaches 09.4 Texts/content development, ghostwriting 09.5 Channel-adapted content
10. Media and communication law	10.1 Communications and media regulations 10.2 Industry-relevant legal regulations



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Topic	Sub-topic
	10.3 Legality of implementation and presence 10.4 Communication law & PR codes 10.5 Principles of ethics and integrity
11. Critical success factors	11.1 Identifying critical success factors 11.2 Interplay of critical success factors 11.3 Possible solutions in the event of mistakes/critical feedback
12. Presentation technique	12.1 Types of presentation 12.2 Argumentation techniques 12.3 Visualisations 12.4 Presentation techniques

3. First certification

3.1 Admission requirements

The following persons are eligible for the certification “Certified PR and Communication Expert SAQ”:

- Persons of full age and professional activity in Switzerland
- At least 5 years of professional experience in a main role¹ in the field of public relations/communication

A training qualification recognised by SAQ (see separate list on the website) must also be presented which:

- is no more than 24 months old at the time of application. (See option for full-time studies²)
- covers at least 75% of the list of learning topics.
- has examined technical and methodological skills in a final test / assignment.

SAQ may contact the training provider and the employer for further information.

Candidates must have a main role/position¹ in the field of public relations/communication at the time of application for certification. Candidates are responsible for providing evidence of compliance with these requirements.

3.2 Application

The certification application must be completed in full, signed and submitted to SAQ. In addition, the required documents must be sent with the application:

- Training qualification diploma (not older than 24 months)
- Proof of current job and main role/position¹, as well as of 5 years of professional experience (reference/confirmation of employment)

¹ Main role: at least 60% of workload spent in the field of public relations/communication

² In the case of a full-time degree (university/university of applied sciences), a degree dating back up to 72 months (6 years) can be recognised. For this purpose, the recertification component “Further training” (section 4.2) with 30 learning hours must be completed during the maximum six year period after graduation.



4. Recertification

For recertification, evidence must be provided before the date of expiration of the certificate. The evidence relates to the components “Work experience” and “Further training”. Certificate holders shall prove to the certification body that they have kept their specialist knowledge and practical expertise in the field of public relations/communication up to date during the validity of the certificate. Recertification is only possible for the certification programme of the first certification and may only be obtained if the certificate holder is working or has worked in the field of public relations/communication. The certificate holder is responsible for the timely completion and submission of the recertification measures recognised by SAQ.

4.1 Requirements

The following conditions must be met for recertification:

- Valid certificate “Certified PR and Communication Expert SAQ”.
- Completion of recertification measures amounting to 50 learning hours. The two components “Work experience” and “Further training” must have been covered.
- The recertification measures were completed during the validity of the certificate.
- Application for recertification submitted to the SAQ before expiry of the valid certificate.

4.2 Recertification measures

For recertification, measures amounting to 50 learning hours must be completed during the validity of the certificate. A distinction is made between the components “Work experience” and “Further training”. Evidence must be provided of a minimum number of learning hours for both components.

Component	Requirements / learning hours
Work experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Five learning hours are credited per 6 months of professional experience in a main position/role in the public relations/communication sector.• The total working time in months can be apportioned to one chunk or over the validity of the certificate.• Partial months that are not part of a bundle of six months cannot be partially counted.• Evidence must be provided of at least 15 learning hours for the component “Work experience”.• Evidence for the component “work experience” requires a reference or confirmation of employment showing the role, duties and period of time.
Further training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participation in measurable/verifiable classroom-based training and/or digital self-study learning methods/modules (or combination) with a focus on relevant skills/competencies of the certification programme.• Only learning hours from “Further training” courses that are recognised by SAQ are credited. The current list is available on the website of SAQ.• SAQ defines the learning hours per recognised “Further training” course in advance.• Evidence must be provided of at least 20 learning hours for the component “Further training”.• The “Further training” courses must be completed and evidence of completion must be provided (diploma, certificate, confirmation of attendance or similar)



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4.3 Application

The filled out certification application must be signed and submitted to SAQ (by e-mail or post). Evidence of the recertification measures must be enclosed with the application. The application for recertification can be submitted at the earliest 3 months before the current certificate expires.

5. General guidelines

5.1 Certificate and title

The certificate is issued physically and is valid for 3 years. The validity period is shown on the certificate. The certificate holder may use the following title during this period of validity: "Certified PR and Communication Expert SAQ".

5.2 Validity

The validity of the certificate is limited to 3 years. This is followed by periodic recertification.

5.3 Dispatch

The certificate will be sent by post together with the invoice for the certificate costs. Unless otherwise instructed by the candidate, the certificate will be sent to the address mentioned in the application. The certificate holder may provide the employer with a copy of the certificate.

5.4 Language

In principle, the certificate is issued in the language of the qualification. However, one of the following languages can be chosen on request: German, French, Italian, English

5.5 Property/fraud

The certificate remains the property of SAQ and may be withdrawn from the holder, either completely or temporarily, invoking significant grounds, without reimbursement of the certificate costs. Significant grounds are:

- Reasonable suspicion of misuse by certificate holder
- Violations of the certification programme
- Certificate costs are not transferred on time

In the event of suspected misuse or evidence of false information provided by the certified person, the SAQ is authorised to check the information provided and to investigate any cases of misuse.

The participant undertakes to provide SAQ with truthful information at all times. If violations of the guidelines of this certification programme are identified during the certification application or during the certification period, the certification will be suspended.



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5.6 Surrender/return

If the certificate or its renewal is surrendered, the original document must be returned. If the certificate is surrendered, it can no longer be reactivated at a later date. If the certificate holder no longer fulfils the conditions for a certificate within the period of validity of the certificate, they must inform the certification body in writing and return the certificate to the certification body.

5.7 Appeals

A written appeal against a negative certification decision can be submitted to the Programme Committee within 30 days. The costs of an appeal will be reimbursed in the event of approval. Further information can be found in the appeal application.

5.8 Archiving

The certification documents are archived electronically or in paper form. The retention period is based on the statutory requirements. All documents will be treated confidentially.

5.9 Duty of disclosure and data protection

SAQ undertakes to use the personal data of certified persons exclusively for the purposes of certificate administration (e.g. recertification requests), for the purposes of carrying out checks and monitoring misuse (e.g. providing information on validity to third parties, preventing forgeries of certificates) and for the purposes of quality assurance.

Furthermore, SAQ undertakes to apply the provisions of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) with regard to privacy by design (i.e. technical and organisational measures) and privacy by default (i.e. the scope and use of the data collected).

5.10 Certificate costs

First certification	CHF 290.00
Recertification	CHF 200.00
Copies of certificate / certificate in another language	CHF 100.00
Appeal*	CHF 200.00

All prices are VAT free. Prices valid from 1 March 2022

* Possible if certification application is rejected by SAQ Swiss Association for Quality.