



Part XXV IAPUC Employee Handbook and Human Resources Management Policy

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Formulating Institution: Council of the International Association of Private
Universities and Colleges (IAPUC)

Applicable Objects: All full-time employees of the IAPUC Secretariat (including the
IQA Office)

Preamble

The International Association of Private Universities and Colleges (IAPUC) recognizes that a professional, dedicated, diverse and mission-driven team is the core strength for realizing the Association's strategic vision. As a global international organization dedicated to serving private higher education institutions, IAPUC employees are not only required to possess professional competencies for their positions, but also to deeply understand and consciously uphold the Association's core values — Rigor, Impartiality, Transparency, Diversity, Continuous Improvement and Social Responsibility.

This handbook is formulated to establish a fair, transparent and standardized institutional framework for IAPUC employee management. Designed with reference to prevailing human resource practices of international non-profit organizations and core labor standards of the International Labour Organization (ILO), it fully accommodates the special needs of IAPUC as a transnational and cross-cultural organization as well as the practical conditions of the Association in its initial development stage.

IAPUC is committed to fostering a respectful, growth-oriented and inclusive working environment, enabling every employee to gain a sense of belonging and accomplishment in the mission of advancing the quality of global private higher education.

This handbook sets forth the basic management framework of the Association as an employer in respect of probation management, salary structure and performance appraisal. Given that the Association is in its initial stage upon the release of this handbook, the Association may formulate supporting implementation rules for specific operational clauses (such as salary bandwidths and performance rating distribution), which shall have the same legal effect as this handbook. For specific operational details not stipulated herein, the Secretary-General may issue administrative guidelines for supplementation without violating the basic principles of this handbook. Such operational details include but are not limited to specific recruitment procedures and forms, approval authority for different amount ranges, and implementation rules for office software and code of conduct.

Chapter I General Provisions

Article 1 Purposes and Basis

This handbook is formulated for the following purposes:

- (1) To establish the basic management principles and values of IAPUC as an employer;
- (2) To clarify the rights, obligations and professional code of conduct of employees;
- (3) To build a full-cycle management system covering recruitment, onboarding, development, evaluation, compensation and resignation;

(4) To ensure fairness, safety, inclusiveness and professionalism in the workplace.

This handbook is formulated on the following bases:

- Provisions on Secretariat and personnel management stipulated in the *Constitution of the International Association of Private Universities and Colleges*;
- Team building objectives specified in the *IAPUC Strategic Development Plan (2026-2031)*;
- ILO *Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy*;
- Prevailing best practices in human resource management of the industry.

Article 2 Scope of Application

This handbook applies to all full-time employees employed by the IAPUC Secretariat (including the IQA Office). Interns, consultants, seconded personnel and independent contractors shall comply with the code of conduct and confidentiality clauses herein, while other clauses shall be implemented in accordance with their independent agreements signed with the Association.

Article 3 Basic Principles

IAPUC human resource management implements the following basic principles:

Principle	Core Connotation
Fairness and Impartiality	Recruitment, promotion, evaluation and salary decisions are based on job requirements and individual performance, free from discrimination based on race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, nationality, age, disability or other factors irrelevant to work.
Professional Development	The Association provides employees with continuous learning and growth opportunities to support their career development plans.
Diversity and Inclusion	The Association actively builds a diverse team and respects and values the contributions of different cultural backgrounds and professional perspectives.
Transparent Communication	Major policies and decisions affecting employees shall be fully communicated to employees within the scope of public disclosure.

Mission Resonance	The Association strives to attract and retain talents who identify with its mission and core values.
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Chapter II Recruitment and Onboarding

Article 4 Recruitment Principles

(1) Recruitment shall be based on actual job demands and conducted in accordance with the principles of openness, fairness, competition and merit selection.

(2) Vacant positions shall be preferentially filled by internal transfer and promotion of existing employees. External open recruitment shall be adopted if positions cannot be filled internally.

(3) No discrimination or differential treatment irrelevant to job requirements shall be imposed on any candidate during the recruitment process.

(4) The Secretary-General may initiate recruitment procedures for critical vacant positions. The approval authority for formal employment is specified as follows:

- Employment of ordinary employees shall be approved by the Secretary-General;
- Employment of department heads and above shall be nominated by the Secretary-General and approved by the President;
- The employment terms of the Secretary-General shall be approved by the Council.

Article 5 Recruitment Procedures

(1) Job Description and Publication: The Secretary-General shall approve recruitment plans based on work demands and budget authorization. Job responsibilities, qualification requirements and salary ranges shall be clarified prior to job posting. Recruitment information shall be released via the Association's official website and professional recruitment channels.

(2) Screening and Interview: A recruitment team appointed by the Secretary-General shall conduct resume screening and candidate interviews, which may be conducted on-site, remotely or in a hybrid format. Final candidates for key positions may be required to provide professional recommendation letters from previous employers.

(3) Background Verification and Employment: The Association shall verify candidates' academic qualifications, professional certifications and major work experience. Upon successful verification, employment shall be approved by the Secretary-General or the President in accordance with approval authority, and a formal employment letter shall be issued. The written employment letter shall confirm the position, salary, onboarding date and other key employment terms. After the issuance of the employment letter, the Secretary-General shall designate special personnel to communicate onboarding preparations with new employees.

(4) Kinship Recusal: Candidates who have spousal, parental, filial, sibling or other

close personal relationships with existing IAPUC employees that may affect impartial work shall take the initiative to declare during application. Employment of such candidates requires special approval from the Secretary-General; employment of candidates related to the Secretary-General shall be approved by the Council Chair. No kinship shall form a direct superior-subordinate reporting relationship within the same department.

Article 6 Onboarding Procedures

(1) Labor Contract Signing: Employees shall sign a written labor contract with the Association upon onboarding to clarify the rights and obligations of both parties. The contract covers position and responsibilities, salary and benefits, contract term and probation period, workplace and working hour arrangements, confidentiality obligations and intellectual property ownership.

(2) Onboarding Guidance: The Secretary-General or designated personnel shall arrange onboarding guidance for new employees in the initial stage of employment to help them understand the Association's organizational structure, management systems, workflow and team culture. Direct supervisors shall provide specific job guidance for new employees. New employees shall sign the official version of the confidentiality commitment letter within the first week of onboarding.

(3) Probation Period:

- A probation period may be agreed between the Association and employees. The probation period for ordinary employees ranges from three to six months, and that for management and key professional positions may be up to six months, commencing on the onboarding date;
- Prior to the expiration of the probation period, the direct supervisor and the Secretary-General shall complete a probation assessment. Employees with qualified assessment results shall be confirmed as formal staff; the Association may terminate the labor contract in accordance with the law for employees with unqualified assessment results;
- The specific duration of the probation period shall be specified in the employment letter and labor contract, and only one probation period shall be agreed for the same employee in the same position.

Chapter III Code of Conduct and Professional Ethics

Article 7 Basic Professional Code of Conduct

All employees shall comply with the following basic professional norms in work:

(1) Integrity and Professionalism: Perform job duties with honesty, integrity and professionalism, and safeguard the reputation and interests of the Association.

(2) Confidentiality Obligation: Assume strict confidentiality obligations for non-public Association information, confidential data of member institutions and personal

information of review experts obtained in the course of work. The confidentiality obligation survives the termination of the labor contract and shall not be automatically terminated due to partial disclosure of relevant information. The termination of confidentiality obligations for specific types of information requires written confirmation from the Secretary-General.

(3) Conflict of Interest Management:

- Employees shall not use their positions to seek improper interests for themselves, their relatives or affiliated parties;
- Employees shall submit a written declaration to and obtain approval from the Secretary-General before engaging in external activities that may give rise to conflicts of interest, such as serving as directors, consultants or owners of other organizations;
- Employees participating in decision-making or management activities related to IQA accreditation or IAPUC membership shall take the initiative to declare and recuse themselves if they have employment, kinship or other close personal relationships with the involved institutions;
- Employees shall not accept gifts, banquets, hospitality or benefits from applicant or accredited institutions, suppliers or other stakeholders, except for symbolic gifts with a market value of less than 25 US dollars, which shall also be properly recorded.

(4) Workplace Behavior:

- Respect the personal dignity and cultural differences of colleagues;
- Comply with the Association's regulations on working hours, attendance and remote work;
- Reasonably use and protect the assets and information resources of the Association.

Article 8 Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination

(1) The Association strictly prohibits all forms of harassment (including but not limited to sexual harassment, verbal insult, threatening behavior and bullying) and discrimination based on race, gender, religion, nationality, age, sexual orientation, disability or other protected characteristics.

(2) Employees who encounter or witness harassment or discrimination may file complaints through the following channels:

- Report to the direct supervisor or the Secretary-General (reports involving direct supervisors may be submitted directly to the Secretary-General or the President);
- Submit anonymous or real-name complaints via the dedicated complaint email established by the Association.

(3) The Association shall conduct timely, impartial and confidential investigations into all valid complaints. Confidentiality is limited to the reasonable needs of investigation, and the investigation team may access relevant information within the necessary

scope. Verified acts of harassment or discrimination shall result in disciplinary sanctions ranging from warning to termination of labor contracts based on the severity of the offense. The Association strictly prohibits retaliation against bona fide complainants.

Article 9 Social Media and External Statements

(1) Employees shall not claim to speak on behalf of IAPUC on personal social media accounts unless explicitly authorized by the Secretary-General.

(2) Employees shall not disclose confidential Association information, accreditation review details or internal discussion content via social media.

(3) The Association encourages employees to publicly share the Association's official research results and public event information in a professional manner.

Chapter IV Salary and Benefits

Article 10 Salary Principles

(1) The Association provides market-competitive salaries to attract and retain high-quality talents.

(2) Salary levels are benchmarked against similar international non-profit educational organizations, and reasonably determined based on the Association's financial status and employees' workplace locations. Salary ranges are formulated with reference to salary surveys of major accessible international organizations. The Secretary-General shall submit an annual salary competitiveness analysis report to the Council as the basis for salary adjustment decisions.

(3) Salary decisions are based on job value, individual competence and performance contributions to ensure internal fairness.

Article 11 Salary Structure

(1) Employee salary consists of the following components:

- Basic Salary: Determined by job rank and personal qualifications, paid on a monthly basis;
- Performance Bonus (if applicable): Paid based on annual performance appraisal results and the Association's financial status;
- Statutory Benefits: Social insurance, housing fund and other statutory welfare benefits paid in accordance with the laws of the employee's workplace.

(2) The Association implements a rank-based salary system with salary bandwidths for each rank. Bandwidths and rank definitions are specified in the separate IAPUC Salary Implementation Rules.

(3) Employee salary information is personal privacy. Employees may voluntarily

share their own salary information but shall not obtain or disseminate others' salary information without consent.

Article 12 Benefits

(1) Leave Entitlements: Employees are entitled to the following paid leaves:

- Annual Leave: 15 to 25 working days per year based on job rank and length of service;
- Sick Leave: Up to 10 working days per year (excluding cases with valid medical certificates);
- Public Holidays: Statutory public holidays of the employee's primary workplace.

(2) Insurance: The Association provides medical insurance, work injury insurance and other statutory insurance in compliance with local laws. A global medical insurance plan may be gradually launched for cross-border dispatched employees when international conditions permit.

(3) Retirement Plan: The Association establishes or participates in pension plans in accordance with local laws and industry practices.

(4) Professional Development Support: Subject to the annual budget, the Association provides financial and time support for employees to participate in professional training, academic conferences and continuing education. Employees applying for professional development support shall obtain prior approval from their direct supervisor and the Secretary-General. Beneficiaries of Association-funded projects are required to share learning outcomes with the team upon completion.

Article 13 Salary Adjustment

(1) The Association reviews the necessity of annual salary adjustments based on the Association's financial status and budget authorization, industry salary market changes, and individual employee performance.

(2) Salary adjustments include:

- Annual General Adjustment: Based on inflation levels and the Association's financial capacity;
- Performance-based Salary Adjustment: Based on annual performance appraisal results;
- Promotion-based Salary Adjustment: Triggered by job rank elevation.

(3) All salary adjustments shall be approved by the Secretary-General within the budget scope. Adjustments to the Secretary-General's salary shall be determined by the President and the Council.

Chapter V Performance Management

Article 14 Performance Management Principles

- (1) Performance management focuses on employee growth and organizational goal achievement, rather than punishment or ranking.
- (2) Performance appraisal is based on job responsibilities, annual work goals set at the beginning of the year, and the implementation of IAPUC core values.
- (3) Performance management is a continuous process including goal setting, regular feedback, mid-term review and annual evaluation, instead of a once-a-year form-filling exercise.

Article 15 Performance Management Procedures

- (1) Goal Setting: At the beginning of each year, employees and their direct supervisors jointly confirm annual work goals and professional development goals, which shall be aligned with the Association's overall objectives and departmental priorities.
- (2) Continuous Feedback: Direct supervisors shall maintain regular and open communication with employees to provide timely work feedback and guidance. Informal records shall be kept for notable positive performance or areas requiring improvement.
- (3) Annual Appraisal: Formal annual performance appraisal shall be conducted at the end of each year or the beginning of the subsequent year. Appraisal results are divided into four grades: Outstanding, Excellent, Qualified, and Needs Improvement. The results serve as the primary basis for annual performance bonus distribution and salary adjustment.

Article 16 Performance Improvement and Incompetence Management

- (1) For employees rated as "Needs Improvement" in the annual appraisal, the direct supervisor and the Secretary-General shall jointly formulate a written *Performance Improvement Plan* with clear improvement goals and supporting measures for a three-month improvement period. The Association may terminate the labor contract in accordance with laws and contractual terms if the employee fails to meet the standards upon the expiration of the improvement period.
- (2) Employees with consistently excellent performance shall be prioritized for promotion, salary increase and professional development opportunities. Promotion evaluation comprehensively considers performance records, competency readiness, job vacancies and the Association's strategic needs.

Chapter VI Training and Development

Article 17 Training and Development Principles

(1) The Association is committed to providing continuous learning and growth opportunities for employees, with training resources prioritized to support the Association's strategic priorities and employee competency improvement.

(2) Employees are primarily responsible for their own career development, while supervisors and the Association provide supportive resources and opportunities.

Article 18 Training Forms

Training and development opportunities provided by the Association include but are not limited to the following forms:

(1) Internal Training: Policy system training, professional skill training and experience sharing activities organized by the Association;

(2) External Training: Participation in industry conferences, professional seminars and certification training courses;

(3) On-the-Job Development: Competency enhancement through participation in key projects, cross-departmental collaboration and acting in higher-level responsibilities;

(4) Mentorship: One-on-one professional guidance and career advice provided by experienced colleagues or managers.

Chapter VII Working Conditions and Remote Work

Article 19 Working Hours

(1) The Association implements a standard working hour system. Specific working hours and rest arrangements shall be specified in the labor contract based on workplace location and job nature.

(2) Overtime work due to business needs requires prior approval from the direct supervisor. All overtime arrangements shall comply with statutory working hour limits and be compensated with corresponding compensatory leave or overtime pay.

(3) Flexible working hours may be applied to partial positions to adapt to the Association's transnational operations, provided that team collaboration and external response efficiency are guaranteed.

Article 20 Remote Work

(1) Remote work is recognized as a supplementary method to improve work flexibility and efficiency, subject to approval by the direct supervisor and the Secretary-General.

(2) Employees working remotely shall ensure their equipment and network meet work requirements, maintain workplace information security, and comply with the *IAPUC Digital Security and Privacy Regulations*.

(3) Remote work does not alter employees' job responsibilities or performance expectations. Direct supervisors shall maintain regular communication and feedback

with remote employees.

Chapter VIII Employee Relations and Communication

Article 21 Internal Communication

(1) The Association establishes multi-level internal communication channels to ensure timely transmission of work-related information to employees:

- All-Staff Meeting: Held at least quarterly by the Secretary-General to report on overall Association operations and key matters;
- Departmental Meeting: Regularly held by each department to discuss work progress and coordination matters;
- One-on-One Communication: Regular work communication between direct supervisors and subordinate employees.

(2) Employees may submit work opinions, suggestions and concerns to their direct supervisor, the Secretary-General or directly to the President. The Association shall respond to employee concerns within a reasonable time limit.

Article 22 Employee Disputes

(1) Employees with objections to work arrangements, performance appraisal, salary and benefits or working environment may resolve disputes through the following channels in sequence:

- Direct communication with the direct supervisor;
- Written application to the Secretary-General if unresolved;
- Appeal to the President or the Council if still unresolved.

(2) Constructive opinions on systematic or policy issues submitted by employees shall be reviewed by the Secretary-General and incorporated into improvement plans where appropriate. The Association shall generally provide a written reply within one month upon receiving formal disputes or appeals.

(3) The Association guarantees employees' right to submit opinions and disputes, and strictly prohibits retaliation against bona fide complainants.

Chapter IX Discipline and Labor Contract Termination

Article 23 Disciplinary Sanctions

(1) The Association may impose disciplinary sanctions on employees who violate the provisions of this handbook, commit major work errors or negligence, disclose confidential information, seek improper interests by taking advantage of positions, or engage in other serious misconduct.

(2) Disciplinary sanctions in ascending order of severity are: verbal reminder, written warning, demotion and salary reduction, and termination of labor contract.

(3) Employees shall be given the right to statement and defense before any written warning or higher sanction is imposed. Sanction decisions shall be delivered to employees in writing with clear reasons, and relevant documents shall be filed in the employee's personnel record.

Article 24 Labor Contract Termination

(1) Employee Resignation: Employees who voluntarily terminate the labor contract shall submit written resignation notices within the following notice periods, or negotiate with the Association for a shortened period:

- Ordinary Employees: 30 days;
- Management and Key Professional Employees: 60 days.

The Association may adjust the actual working period based on work demands during the notice period, but shall pay full salary until the original notice expiration date or the mutually agreed termination date.

(2) Association Termination: If the Association terminates the labor contract in accordance with legal provisions and contractual agreements, it shall specify the termination reasons and pay economic compensation (if applicable) in accordance with the law.

(3) Resignation Handover: Resigning employees shall complete work handover, return Association assets and settle financial accounts before departure. The handover checklist shall be confirmed and signed by the direct supervisor and the Secretary-General. The Association shall issue an employment separation certificate for departing employees.

Article 25 Non-Compete and Anti-Poaching Provisions

(1) The Secretary-General, Treasurer and employees with access to core accreditation information may be subject to a non-compete period of no more than six months after contract termination, for which the Association shall pay monthly compensation during the restriction period.

(2) No post-employment non-compete restrictions apply to other employees.

(3) Employees shall not induce or solicit other Association employees to terminate their labor contracts during employment or within one year after resignation.

Chapter X Supplementary Provisions

Article 26 Relationship with Other Regulatory Documents

Document Name	Relationship with This Handbook
<i>Constitution of the International Association of Private Universities and Colleges</i>	This handbook is formulated under the framework of the Constitution and serves as the detailed implementation of the Constitution's provisions on Secretariat personnel management
<i>IAPUC Digital Security and Privacy Regulations</i>	Employee information security and data protection codes of conduct shall be subject to this regulation
<i>IAPUC-IQA Academic Ethics and Code of Conduct</i>	Ethical codes for employees participating in accreditation activities shall be subject to this code
<i>IQA Internal Financial System</i>	The payment and management of employee salaries and benefits shall be implemented in accordance with this system

Article 27 Interpretation and Revision of the Handbook

- (1) The right of interpretation of this handbook resides with the IAPUC Council.
- (2) Revisions to this handbook shall be reviewed and approved by the IAPUC Council. The Secretary-General may formulate supporting implementation rules for operational needs.

Article 28 Effectiveness

This handbook shall come into force officially upon approval by the IAPUC Council.

Appendix A: New Employee Onboarding Checklist

1. Complete labor contract signing
2. Sign confidentiality commitment letter
3. Submit emergency contact information
4. Complete salary payment account information registration
5. Attend onboarding orientation session (Association overview, organizational structure, major institutional briefing, key contact introduction)
6. Allocate office equipment and system access permissions
7. Complete initial work goal communication with the direct supervisor

Appendix B: Annual Performance Appraisal Summary Form

1. Basic employee information
2. Annual key work goals and completion status
3. Implementation of core values (Rigor, Impartiality, Transparency, Diversity, Continuous Improvement, Social Responsibility)
4. Major achievements and contributions of the year
5. Areas for improvement
6. Development goals for the next year
7. Employee self-evaluation
8. Direct supervisor evaluation
9. Secretary-General approval

Document Approval

Role	Name/Position	Date
Compiler	IAPUC Council Human Resources Working Group	May 2026
Reviewer	IAPUC Council	Pending
Approver	IAPUC Council	Pending

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