



# **Part Two: The Founding Philosophy & Authoritative Statement of the IAPUC Internal Quality Assurance System**

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# I. Founding Declaration

## 1.1 The Call of the Times: Why the World Needs an Exclusive Accreditation System for Private Universities

In an era where the popularization and internationalization of higher education are deeply integrated, private universities and colleges are playing an increasingly vital role. The number of private higher education institutions worldwide continues to grow. With flexible school-running mechanisms, acute market insight and innovative talent training models, they inject diverse vitality into the higher education ecosystem. However, a prominent practical dilemma has long existed: there is a lack of a comprehensive quality accreditation system worldwide that truly understands the school-running logic of private universities and is specifically designed for private higher education institutions.

The current global international accreditation landscape presents a structural imbalance:

- Business accreditation systems such as AACSB, EQUIS and AMBA enjoy great global influence, yet they are exclusively limited to business education and cannot meet the comprehensive quality evaluation needs of multi-disciplinary private institutions;
- Although IACBE features a flexible accreditation framework, its mission-driven and outcome-based evaluation model is still confined to the scope of business education;
- ACBSP's Excellence Accreditation System is formulated based on the Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria of the United States, covering leadership, strategic planning, stakeholder satisfaction, curriculum quality, faculty qualifications and teaching support, while its accreditation assessment is also exclusively targeted at business disciplines;
- Most national quality assurance systems of various countries take public universities as the benchmark, lacking in-depth understanding of the unique characteristics of private universities, including mission-driven development, governance models, resource structures and flexible innovation capabilities;
- Private universities are often at a disadvantage in scenarios such as cross-border degree recognition, international cooperation and ranking competitions due to the lack of appropriate quality endorsement.

Against this historical backdrop, the IAPUC International Quality Assurance System (IQA) has come into being. As the world's first and currently the only comprehensive international quality accreditation system led by the International Association of Private Universities and Colleges and exclusively tailored for private higher education institutions, it is not a simple superposition or imitation of existing accreditation

systems. Instead, it represents a systematic reconstruction of the quality evaluation model based on an in-depth insight into the inherent laws of private higher education and the integration of advanced international accreditation concepts.

## 1.2 Mission Statement

The mission of IAPUC-IQA is to promote sustainable quality excellence in private universities and colleges, highlight the unique value of private higher education, and meet the diverse needs of global learners and social development by establishing globally recognized internal quality accreditation standards.

This mission contains four core connotations:

- **Standard Leadership:** To establish a set of scientific, rigorous and operable accreditation standards;
- **Quality Empowerment:** To help private institutions build effective internal quality assurance mechanisms;
- **Value Highlighting:** To secure due recognition for the characteristics and advantages of private higher education;
- **Social Service:** To ultimately serve the growth of learners and social development.

## 1.3 Vision Statement

To become an authoritative benchmark for global private higher education quality accreditation, and make the IAPUC-IQA accreditation mark a global passport for the school-running quality of private universities and colleges.

## 1.4 Core Values

The IAPUC-IQA Accreditation System upholds the following six core values:

- **Rigor:** The formulation and implementation of accreditation standards must comply with strict academic norms and factual evidence, and any act of lowering quality standards is prohibited;
- **Fairness:** The accreditation process is independent and objective, treating all applicant institutions equally without improper interference from institutional scale, region, reputation, disciplines and other factors;
- **Transparency:** Accreditation standards, procedures and decision-making bases are fully disclosed to applicant institutions and the public, accepting social supervision;
- **Diversity:** Respect the diversity of school-running models, the richness of disciplinary fields and the differences in cultural backgrounds of private institutions, and allow diversified practices on the premise of unified standards;
- **Continuous Improvement:** Accreditation is a starting point rather than an

endpoint. The system encourages institutions to build a self-renewing and excellence-pursuing quality culture with the PDCA Cycle (Deming Cycle) as the core methodological foundation;

- **Social Responsibility:** Guide private institutions to incorporate social responsibility into their institutional development and give back to society through the power of education.

## II. Theoretical Framework of Three Pillars

The IAPUC-IQA Accreditation System is built on the theoretical framework of "Three Pillars". These three pillars thoroughly integrate the core concepts of mainstream international accreditation systems and achieve transcendence and innovation on this basis.

### Pillar One: Mission-Driven

**Conceptual Origin:** IACBE clearly defines mission-based and outcomes-oriented principles as the core tenets of its accreditation. IAPUC-IQA inherits and further optimizes this concept, extending its application from business education to all disciplinary fields.

**Core Connotations:**

- Each private institution defines "high-quality education" based on its own school-running mission and positioning;
- Accreditation does not measure all institutions by a single uniform standard, but evaluates whether institutions "articulate their missions, implement them in practice, and deliver excellent results";
- The self-defined goals and standards of institutions serve as the starting point and core reference for accreditation evaluation.

### Pillar Two: Outcomes-Based

**Conceptual Origin:** The latest global standards of AACSB emphasize student success, ideological leadership and social influence. IACBE requires institutions to establish outcome evaluation systems and adopt a variety of direct and indirect evaluation tools to measure student learning outcomes and the operational performance of teaching units. ACBSP also focuses on the verification of teaching and learning outcomes.

**Core Connotations:**

- The core of quality evaluation focuses on "what students have learned, what they are capable of doing, and what kind of professionals they become";
- Establish a systematic Assurance of Learning (AOL) mechanism, and collect evidence through multiple tools including direct assessments (such as standardized

tests and portfolio evaluation) and indirect assessments (such as employer satisfaction surveys and graduate tracking surveys);

- Accreditation decisions are based on "outcome evidence" rather than "input description".

## Pillar Three: Performance Excellence

**Conceptual Origin:** ACBSP's accreditation system is designed based on the Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria, covering leadership, strategic planning, stakeholder satisfaction, academic curriculum quality, faculty qualifications and teaching support. EQUIS accreditation focuses on the overall institutional quality including governance, internationalization level, industry connections, ethics, social responsibility and sustainable development.

### Core Connotations:

- Shift from "input guarantee" to "systematic excellence" — the evaluation focuses not merely on what resources an institution possesses, but on how it achieves excellence in a systematic manner;
- Adopt the systematic evaluation method of "Approach-Deployment-Learning-Integration (ADLI)" to examine the systematicness and maturity of quality assurance measures;
- Cover the whole-chain quality management of governance, strategy, resources, processes, outcomes and continuous improvement.

The three pillars form an organic whole: mission-driven orientation provides development direction, outcome-based evaluation provides verification methods, and performance excellence provides systematic guarantee.

## III. Guarantee Mechanisms for Independence, Impartiality and Authority

The authority of IAPUC-IQA is built on the following institutional arrangements:

| Guarantee Dimension        | Specific Mechanism                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Institutional Independence | The Accreditation Decision Committee is independent of the IAPUC Council, and accreditation decisions are free from the influence of the Association's commercial interests. |
| Standard Openness          | All accreditation standards, procedures and decision-making bases are fully disclosed on the official website.                                                               |

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Peer Review                  | The review team is composed of strictly selected international experts to ensure the professionalism and objectivity of the review work.                                                                                                             |
| Recusal System               | Strictly manage conflicts of interest between reviewers and evaluated institutions, and implement mandatory recusal and declaration systems.                                                                                                         |
| Multiple Checks and Balances | Accreditation decisions are cross-verified based on three dimensions: review reports, institutional self-evaluation evidence and on-site visit feedback.                                                                                             |
| Appeal Mechanism             | An independent Appeal and Arbitration Committee is established to protect the legitimate rights and interests of applicant institutions.                                                                                                             |
| Periodic Supervision         | Accredited institutions are required to submit annual quality reports and accept comprehensive re-accreditation every 5 to 7 years.                                                                                                                  |
| International Recognition    | Improve institutional construction in accordance with the accreditation standards of CHEA for accrediting bodies, laying an institutional foundation for future qualification recognition by international authoritative organizations such as CHEA. |

## IV. Strategic Positioning of Multi-Disciplinary Coverage

Different from AACSB, IACBE, ACBSP, EQUIS and other accreditation systems that focus solely on business disciplines or partial fields, IAPUC-IQA is the world's exclusive comprehensive accreditation system specially launched for private universities and colleges, covering all the following disciplinary fields:

- Business & Management
- Engineering & Technology
- Humanities & Social Sciences
- Natural Sciences
- Arts & Design
- Medicine & Health Sciences
- Education & Teacher Training

- Law
- Computer Science & AI
- Interdisciplinary & Emerging Fields

This multi-disciplinary coverage design is based on a core cognition: the school-running quality of private institutions is an integral issue that should not be evaluated separately by disciplinary boundaries. IAPUC-IQA is committed to comprehensively improving the overall quality of private institutions. Adopting a general standard framework as the core framework and disciplinary characteristic indicators as supplements, it realizes the dialectical unity of "unification and diversity".