

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION



OF PRIVATE

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

Part XXXVII: IQA Accreditation Application, Accreditation, Annual and Site Visit Fee Implementation Rules

Document No.: IAPUC/IQA/FEE-2026-001

Version: 2.0

Effective Date: Pending Official Release

Formulating Institution: IAPUC Quality Accreditation Committee, International Association of Private Universities and Colleges

Applicable Scope: All private higher education institutions applying for or maintaining IQA accreditation, together with the IQA Office and the Treasurer.

Preface

A transparent, reasonable and sustainable fee system is the financial foundation of credibility in the IQA Accreditation System. Accreditation fees support operation and continuing development of the system and directly affect equitable and accessible accreditation services for private institutions of differing size and resources. A well-designed fee system must strike a prudent balance between recovering costs and assuring quality, on the one hand, and reducing barriers and encouraging participation, on the other.

IQA accreditation charges comprise four core fees. The Accreditation Application Fee is a one-time administrative review fee at the application stage. The Accreditation Fee is a one-time review and award fee payable after the accreditation decision. The IQA Accreditation Annual Fee covers continuing surveillance and services during the accreditation period. The Site Visit Fee covers costs actually incurred for the visit. The Accreditation Fee and Annual Fee are distinct in nature: the former is a one-time charge for the complete review process and award of accreditation, while the latter is an annual charge for post-accreditation surveillance and services. This distinction follows common international accreditation practice and ensures that the name and purpose of each fee correspond clearly.

These Rules translate the principles of non-profit operation, cost recovery and public transparency established by the *IQA Internal Financial Regulations* into clear, specific and operational fee standards and management procedures. Through their implementation, IAPUC intends fee management to become another demonstration of the professionalism and transparency of the accreditation system.

Chapter I General Provisions

Article 1 Purpose and Basis

These Rules are intended to:

- (1) establish the categories, rates, components and calculation methods of IQA accreditation fees;
- (2) clarify the distinction between the Accreditation Fee and the Annual Fee so that the name and purpose of each correspond clearly;
- (3) regulate procedures for collection, payment, accounting and refunds;
- (4) establish mechanisms for applying for and approving reductions or adjustments in special circumstances; and
- (5) safeguard transparency, fairness and predictability.

These Rules are formulated on the basis of:

- the provisions of the *IQA Internal Financial Regulations* concerning fee administration and refunds;

- the provisions of the *IAPUC Membership Standards and Membership Fee Regulations* distinguishing membership fees from accreditation charges;
- the provisions of the *IAPUC-IQA Accreditation Procedure Specifications* concerning the accreditation process and refund circumstances; and
- the provisions of the *IQA Site Visit Operations Manual* concerning visit organization and cost management.

Article 2 Scope of Application

These Rules apply to:

- (1) all private higher education institutions submitting an IQA accreditation application to IAPUC;
- (2) all institutions holding IQA accreditation during a valid accreditation period; and
- (3) the fee-management activities of the IQA Office and the Treasurer.

Article 3 Basic Principles of Fee Management

Principle	Core Meaning
Cost Recovery	Fees shall be based on the actual cost of providing accreditation services and shall not generate profit.
Public Transparency	Fee rates and calculation methods shall be published on the IAPUC website and remain subject to institutional and public scrutiny.
Reasonable Tiering	Rates shall correspond to institutional size, avoiding a disproportionate financial burden on small institutions.
Non-Profit Operation	Any surplus generated in a financial year shall remain in the dedicated IQA account for maintenance and development of the accreditation system.
Correspondence of Name and Purpose	Each fee shall clearly reflect its purpose: application review and eligibility; accreditation review and award; continuing annual surveillance and services; or costs specific to the site visit.

Chapter II Fee Categories and Rates

Article 4 Categories of Accreditation Fee

IQA accreditation charges include four regular categories:

- (1) Accreditation Application Fee: a one-time eligibility review and administrative admission fee paid when the institution submits its application;
- (2) Accreditation Fee: a one-time review and award fee paid when the institution completes review and is granted accreditation. It is the formal fee for awarding accreditation and is distinct from the Annual Fee;
- (3) IQA Accreditation Annual Fee: an annual fee for continuing surveillance and support services during the accreditation period; and
- (4) Site Visit Fee: a fee covering actual visit costs, including expert honoraria, travel, accommodation and on-site administrative coordination.

In specified circumstances, additional charges may arise for a supplementary site visit, special review or appeal hearing. An appeal hearing fee shall be administered under the *IQA Accreditation Appeals, Complaints and Dispute Resolution Measures*.

Article 5 Distinction Among Fees

Fee	Nature	Time of Payment	Frequency
Accreditation Application Fee	Application review and eligibility admission	On submission of application	One time
Accreditation Fee	Accreditation review and award	After receipt of the accreditation decision notice	Each accreditation / re-accreditation
IQA Accreditation Annual Fee	Continuing surveillance and services	Accreditation anniversary	Annually
Site Visit Fee	Actual site-visit costs	Advance payment before visit / settlement afterward	Per visit

The Accreditation Fee and IQA Accreditation Annual Fee are independent charges collected separately for different purposes. Payment of the Accreditation Fee formally

completes the award process, while payment of the Annual Fee supports continuing surveillance throughout the accreditation period.

Article 6 Relationship Between IQA Fees and IAPUC Membership Fees

All IQA fees and IAPUC membership fees are independent, collected separately and administered through separate accounts. An accredited institution that is also an IAPUC Accredited Member must pay both its Accredited Member membership fee under the *IAPUC Membership Standards and Membership Fee Regulations* and the IQA Accreditation Annual Fee. Notices may be issued together within the institution's annual payment cycle, but the amounts and purposes must be stated separately and accounted for separately. The Accreditation Fee is wholly independent of IAPUC membership fees and neither replaces nor includes them.

Chapter III Accreditation Application Fee

Article 7 Application Fee Rate and Payment

The Accreditation Application Fee is a fixed amount and is not tiered by institutional size:

Fee Item	Amount (USD)	Payment Deadline
IQA Accreditation Application Fee	5,000	One-time payment upon submission of the accreditation application

During the first three-year promotional period after official launch of the IQA Accreditation System, the Application Fee may be charged at 75% of the stated rate to encourage early applicants.

Article 8 Services Covered by the Application Fee

The Application Fee covers costs of the following preliminary services:

- initial eligibility and compliance review of application materials;
- creation of an accreditation file and system account for the applicant;
- process guidance and provision of basic materials after confirmation of candidacy;
- review of materials and remote guidance during self-evaluation, within the free guidance allowance under the *Accredited Institution Capacity-Building and Development Guidelines*; and
- format review after receipt of the Self-Evaluation Report.

Article 9 Refund of the Application Fee

- If the institution withdraws during eligibility review, the fee is non-refundable but may be credited against a renewed application submitted within twelve months.
- If the institution withdraws during self-evaluation, the fee is non-refundable.
- If the process cannot continue for a reason attributable to IAPUC, the fee shall be refunded in full.

Chapter IV Accreditation Fee

Article 10 Nature of the Accreditation Fee

The Accreditation Fee is a one-time review and award fee paid when an institution completes accreditation review and is granted accredited status. It recovers the cost of professional services from desk review through the accreditation decision and covers the administrative award of accredited status.

The core distinction between the Accreditation Fee and the Annual Fee is:

Dimension	Accreditation Fee	IQA Accreditation Annual Fee
Nature	One-time review and award fee	Continuing surveillance and service fee
Coverage	Administrative cost of desk review, site-visit organization, accreditation decision and award	Continuing cost of annual-report review, mid-term review, accreditation-status administration and support services
Frequency	Once per accreditation / re-accreditation	Annually throughout the accreditation period
Starting Point	After receipt of the accreditation decision notice	Each annual anniversary after accreditation takes effect
Refund	Generally non-refundable after decision	Annual fee already paid is non-refundable

Article 11 Accreditation Fee Rates

The Accreditation Fee shall be tiered by full-time-equivalent student enrolment, with the same rates for initial accreditation and periodic re-accreditation.

FTE Student Enrolment	Accreditation Fee (USD per review)
Less than 1,000	7,500
1,000-5,000	10,000
5,001-15,000	15,000
More than 15,000	20,000

FTE enrolment shall be based on official statistics for the most recent complete academic year at the time the Self-Evaluation Report is submitted. A multi-campus institution shall use the total across all campuses.

Article 12 Services Covered by the Accreditation Fee

The Accreditation Fee covers these costs at the review and award stages:

(1) Desk review:

- administrative coordination for formation and appointment of the review team;
- base professional honoraria for experts' desk-review work; and
- processing and distribution of desk-review materials.

(2) Accreditation decision:

- deliberation and determination by the Accreditation Decision Committee;
- formal issue of the decision and production and presentation of the certificate; and
- official publication and update of the Directory.

(3) Accreditation records and initial support:

- organization and archiving of the complete accreditation file; and
- initial institutional data entry and system setup.

The Accreditation Fee does not include:

- expert honoraria and travel for the site visit, which are charged independently under Chapter VI; or
- annual post-accreditation surveillance and services, which are covered by the IQA Accreditation Annual Fee under Chapter V.

Article 13 Payment of the Accreditation Fee

The Accreditation Fee shall be paid in full within sixty days after receipt of the accreditation decision notice. The IQA Office shall formally issue the certificate after payment. Full payment is one necessary condition for accreditation to take effect formally.

For periodic re-accreditation, the fee shall be paid within sixty days after the re-accreditation decision notice. No additional Accreditation Fee shall be charged when Provisional Accreditation is upgraded to Full or Comprehensive Accreditation, because an upgrade is not treated as a new award. At the institution's next periodic re-accreditation, the rate then in effect shall apply.

Article 14 Refund of the Accreditation Fee

- Once paid, the Accreditation Fee is generally non-refundable.
- If the decision is set aside by the Appeals and Arbitration Committee and the institution no longer holds any accredited status, the fee may be refunded.
- If the institution voluntarily relinquishes accreditation after payment but before issue of the certificate, the fee is non-refundable.

Chapter V IQA Accreditation Annual Fee

Article 15 Annual Fee Rates

The IQA Accreditation Annual Fee shall be tiered by FTE student enrolment.

FTE Student Enrolment	IQA Accreditation Annual Fee (USD per year)
Less than 1,000	2,000
1,000-5,000	3,500
5,001-15,000	5,500
More than 15,000	7,500

FTE enrolment shall be based on official statistics for the institution's most recent complete academic year. If enrolment changes sustainably into another tier, the institution may apply to pay at the new rate in the following year. A multi-campus institution shall use the total across all campuses.

Article 16 Use of the Annual Fee

The Annual Fee covers costs of continuing surveillance and institutional support, including:

- review and analysis of annual quality monitoring reports;
- organization and conduct of mid-term review;
- continuing administration of accreditation status and institutional information;
- maintenance and updating of accreditation standards and policies;
- support services for accredited institutions, including training, resource-centre maintenance and accreditation-preparation guidance; and
- internal quality assurance and review of the accreditation system.

Article 17 Payment and Refund of the Annual Fee

The first Annual Fee shall be paid within sixty days after the accreditation decision takes effect. Subsequent fees shall be paid before each accreditation anniversary. If accreditation takes effect part-way through the year, the first fee shall be prorated by the number of months from the effective date to the annual anniversary; full-year charges shall apply thereafter.

If payment is more than ninety days late, the IQA Office may suspend display in the Accredited Institution Directory and related accreditation privileges until payment is completed. Once paid, the Annual Fee is generally non-refundable. If accreditation status changes, the fee already paid for that year shall not be refunded or prorated.

Chapter VI Site Visit Fee

Article 18 Components of the Site Visit Fee

The Site Visit Fee shall be charged per visit on the basis of actual costs and shall include:

(1) Review expert honoraria

Expert Honorarium	Amount (USD)
Team Chair, per visit	3,000
Team member, per person per visit	2,000

Honoraria reasonably compensate experts for professional work during, before and after the visit.

(2) Review expert travel and accommodation

International or domestic round-trip travel, accommodation during the visit, working meals and ground transportation shall be reimbursed at actual cost. Travel shall comply with IAPUC travel policy and the principles of safety, convenience and economy.

(3) On-site coordination and administration

This component covers administrative coordination by the IQA Office, including pre-visit institutional communication and scheduling, remote coordination and support during the visit, and post-visit organization and archiving of materials.

On-Site Coordination and Administration Fee	Amount (USD)
Per institution per visit	1,500

Article 19 Advance Payment and Settlement

After the schedule is confirmed, the institution shall prepay the estimated total at least thirty days before the visit. Within forty-five days after the visit, the IQA Office shall provide an itemized statement and settlement account, refunding any balance or collecting any shortfall.

Article 20 Relationship Between Visit Mode and Fees

Visit Mode	Applicable Circumstances	Fee Basis
Routine Site Visit, 3-5 days	Most initial accreditations and re-accreditations	Full rates under this Chapter
Multi-Campus Extended Visit	Multi-campus or transnational institutions	Additional days and expert honoraria charged at equivalent rates
Supplementary Site Visit, 2-3 days	Supplementary verification required after the first visit	Actual expert honoraria and travel costs

Visit Mode	Applicable Circumstances	Fee Basis
Remote Visit Replacing Physical Visit	Review of a teaching site or distance-education programme	Coordination and administration at 75% of the standard rate; no travel costs; expert honoraria at 60% of standard rates

Article 21 Refund and Change of Site Visit Fees

If the visit is postponed or cancelled for a reason attributable to the institution, the IQA Office shall deduct actual non-recoverable costs and refund the remaining advance or retain it for a rescheduled visit. If the visit cannot proceed on schedule for a reason attributable to IAPUC, the fees paid shall be refunded in full.

Chapter VII Collection and Payment Administration

Article 22 Payment Methods

Fees may be paid by bank transfer, online payment platform or another electronic method recognized by IAPUC. The payment notice shall identify who bears transaction charges. Every payment must enter the dedicated IQA bank account and shall not pass through a personal account.

Article 23 Payment Notices and Receipts

Before each payment falls due, the IQA Office shall send a formal notice to the Quality Representative. The notice shall state separately the name, amount, deadline and payment method for each fee; fees of different nature shall not be combined as one amount. Within ten working days after receipt, the IQA Finance Office shall issue an official receipt or electronic voucher.

Article 24 Late Payment

If a payment is overdue, the IQA Office shall issue a reminder fifteen days after the deadline, allowing a thirty-day grace period. If payment remains outstanding after the grace period, Directory display may be suspended. If the amount remains unpaid sixty days after suspension, an accreditation-status review shall begin and the Accreditation Decision Committee may determine whether to maintain accreditation.

Chapter VIII Special Circumstances

Article 25 Fee Reduction and Case-by-Case Treatment

(1) An institution in a country designated by the United Nations as a least developed country may apply for reductions of 30%-50% in the Application Fee, Accreditation Fee and Annual Fee. The IQA Office shall determine the rate according to actual circumstances.

(2) An institution seriously affected by a major natural disaster, war or other force majeure may apply for a partial or full waiver of the current Annual Fee or for deferred payment.

(3) Every reduction or special arrangement must be reviewed by the Director of the IQA Office and approved by the Treasurer. A major reduction exceeding 50% of one institution's aggregate annual charges must also be filed with the Accreditation Decision Committee.

Article 26 Fee Disputes

An institution disputing a fee should first consult with the IQA Office. If no agreement is reached, the dispute may be handled through the procedure in the *IQA Accreditation Appeals, Complaints and Dispute Resolution Measures*. During the dispute, the institution must pay the undisputed portion on time to maintain valid accreditation status.

Chapter IX Supplementary Provisions

Article 27 Relationship with Other Regulatory Documents

Document	Relationship with These Rules
<i>IQA Internal Financial Regulations</i>	These Rules operationalize the fee principles and refund rules of those Regulations.
<i>IAPUC Membership Standards and Membership Fee Regulations</i>	These Rules clarify the independent relationship between the IQA Accreditation Annual Fee and IAPUC membership fees.
<i>IAPUC-IQA Accreditation Procedure Specifications</i>	Refund rules and deadlines are aligned with the Specifications.

Document	Relationship with These Rules
<i>IQA Site Visit Operations Manual</i>	Components and settlement of visit fees are based on the visit process in that Manual.

Article 28 Periodic Review and Adjustment of Rates

Every three years, the Treasurer shall comprehensively review rates and assess the need for adjustment in light of operating costs, inflation and institutional affordability. An adjustment must be reviewed and agreed by the Accreditation Decision Committee and approved by the IAPUC Board of Directors. It must be published on the IAPUC website at least six months before taking effect, with advance notice to all accredited institutions.

Article 29 Interpretation and Amendment

(1) These Rules shall be interpreted jointly by the IAPUC Quality Accreditation Committee and the Treasurer.

(2) Any amendment must receive dual approval from the IAPUC Board of Directors and the Accreditation Decision Committee.

Article 30 Entry into Force and Transition

These Rules shall enter into force on the date of approval by the IAPUC Board of Directors. Institutions already in the accreditation process shall be subject to the rates herein, but amounts already paid shall not be adjusted retrospectively. An accredited institution that has not paid the Accreditation Fee by the effective date must pay it within ninety days thereafter.

Appendix: Quick Reference Fee Table

Fee Type	Applicable Institution / Item	Amount	Payment Time
Accreditation Application Fee	All applicants	USD 5,000	On submission of application
Accreditation Fee	Less than 1,000 FTE	USD 7,500 per review	Within 60 days after accreditation decision notice

Fee Type	Applicable Institution / Item	Amount	Payment Time
Accreditation Fee	1,000-5,000 FTE	USD 10,000 per review	Within 60 days after accreditation decision notice
Accreditation Fee	5,001-15,000 FTE	USD 15,000 per review	Within 60 days after accreditation decision notice
Accreditation Fee	More than 15,000 FTE	USD 20,000 per review	Within 60 days after accreditation decision notice
IQA Accreditation Annual Fee	Less than 1,000 FTE	USD 2,000 per year	Accreditation anniversary
IQA Accreditation Annual Fee	1,000-5,000 FTE	USD 3,500 per year	Accreditation anniversary
IQA Accreditation Annual Fee	5,001-15,000 FTE	USD 5,500 per year	Accreditation anniversary
IQA Accreditation Annual Fee	More than 15,000 FTE	USD 7,500 per year	Accreditation anniversary
Site Visit Fee: Chair Honorarium	Per visit	USD 3,000	Advance payment 30 days before visit
Site Visit Fee: Member Honorarium	Per person per visit	USD 2,000	Advance payment 30 days before visit
On-Site Coordination and Administration	Per institution per visit	USD 1,500	Advance payment 30 days before visit
Travel and Accommodation	Actual cost	Reimbursed at actual cost	Settled after visit

Fee Type	Applicable Institution / Item	Amount	Payment Time
Appeal Hearing Fee	As provided in appeals rules	Under the <i>Appeals and Complaints Measures</i>	On submission of appeal

Document Approval

Role	Name/Position	Date
Drafted by	IAPUC Quality Accreditation Committee, Fee Standards Working Group	May 2026
Reviewed by	IAPUC Quality Accreditation Committee / Accreditation Decision Committee	Pending
Approved by	IAPUC Board of Directors	Pending

Copyright Statement

The intellectual property rights of this document and the IQA Accreditation Application, Accreditation, Annual and Site Visit Fee Implementation Rules contained herein belong to the International Association of Private Universities and Colleges (IAPUC). Without written authorization from IAPUC, no institution or individual may copy, modify or use this document for commercial purposes.