



Part XXIX Guidelines for Institutional Capacity Building and Development of Accredited Institutions

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Formulating Institution: Quality Accreditation Committee of the International Association of Private Universities and Colleges (IAPUC)

Applicable Objects: All private higher education institutions that have obtained IQA accreditation, as well as all full IAPUC members applying for or intending to apply for IQA accreditation

Preamble

Since its establishment, the IAPUC-IQA Accreditation System has upheld a core philosophy: accreditation is not an endpoint, but a new starting point for continuous quality improvement. The review and conferral of accreditation grades serve as an assessment and confirmation of an institution's quality status at a specific time point. Nevertheless, what fundamentally drives the continuous quality refinement of institutions is the internal quality culture cultivated and fostered by the accreditation system — an organizational ethos that internalizes self-reflection, evidence-based improvement, and the pursuit of excellence as institutional genes.

However, private higher education institutions vary significantly in resource endowments, school-running scale and quality assurance experience. Some institutions — especially those seeking initial accreditation — may face practical confusions and challenges in constructing quality assurance systems, enhancing self-evaluation capabilities, understanding accreditation standards, and fostering an evidence-based culture. If the accreditation system merely acts as a "judge" without providing necessary developmental support for institutions, accreditation risks being reduced to a simple screening tool, deviating from its fundamental mission of promoting quality improvement.

These Guidelines are formulated to address the above concerns. Adopting "development-oriented support" as the core philosophy, they establish a full-cycle capacity building support framework covering pre-accreditation, in-accreditation and post-accreditation stages for accredited institutions and accreditation applicants. Rather than imposing new standard requirements, these Guidelines provide institutional reference paths and resource support for institutions to understand standards, implement improvements and demonstrate outcomes based on existing accreditation criteria.

These Guidelines are interconnected with the *IAPUC-IQA Accreditation Manual*, *IAPUC-IQA Academic Accreditation Quality Standards Manual*, and *IQA Management Measures for Quality Representatives of Accredited Institutions*, jointly forming the dual-track framework of "evaluation and support" for the IQA Accreditation System. IAPUC expects that the implementation of these Guidelines will assist institutions — particularly those with limited resources and insufficient quality assurance experience — in better preparing for accreditation, participating in accreditation more fully, and benefiting from accreditation on a sustainable basis.

Chapter I General Provisions

Article 1 Purposes and Basis

These Guidelines are formulated for the following purposes:

- (1) To provide phased reference paths for the construction and improvement of quality assurance systems for accredited institutions and accreditation applicants;
- (2) To establish a development-oriented support service framework of the IQA

Accreditation System for member institutions, so as to enhance their self-improvement capabilities;

(3) To promote peer learning and experience sharing among accredited institutions centered on quality improvement;

(4) To identify and disseminate innovative practices and successful experiences of accredited institutions in quality assurance.

These Guidelines are formulated on the following bases:

- Framework provisions on the accreditation standard system and self-evaluation requirements specified in the *IAPUC-IQA Accreditation Manual*;
- Requirements for learning outcome assessment, continuous improvement closed-loop management and internal quality assurance organizations specified in the *IAPUC-IQA Academic Accreditation Quality Standards Manual*;
- Provisions on quality representative training and institutional accreditation affairs management specified in the *IQA Management Measures for Quality Representatives of Accredited Institutions*;
- Strategic objectives for member service optimization and accreditation system improvement specified in the *IAPUC Strategic Development Plan (2026-2031)*.

Article 2 Scope of Application

These Guidelines apply to:

- (1) Full IAPUC members that are applying for or intend to apply for IQA accreditation;
- (2) Institutions that have obtained IQA accreditation (including provisional accreditation, formal accreditation and full accreditation);
- (3) The IQA Office as a reference for planning and providing institutional development support services.

These Guidelines do not add new accreditation standard requirements. Institutions may voluntarily adopt the path suggestions and resource support specified herein based on their own operational conditions. Non-full IAPUC members may refer to these Guidelines for accreditation preparation after obtaining full membership qualification.

Article 3 Core Philosophies

These Guidelines adhere to the following core philosophies:

Philosophy	Core Connotation
Institutional Autonomy	Institutions are the primary responsible parties for their own quality improvement. Support provided by IQA is auxiliary in nature — it helps institutions better

	understand and implement quality assurance measures without replacing institutional judgment and efforts.
Development Orientation	The goal of support is to foster institutions' independent and sustainable quality improvement capabilities, rather than creating long-term reliance on external guidance.
Progressive Implementation	Capacity building for quality assurance systems is a gradual process. These Guidelines respect the varying starting points and development paces of different institutions and provide phased reference paths.
Peer Mutual Assistance	Experience exchange and mutual support among accredited institutions constitute a more effective capacity building approach than one-way external training.
Evidence-Based Practice	The contents and recommendations of these Guidelines are refined based on research findings in higher education quality assurance and proven successful institutional practices.

Chapter II Capacity Building in the Accreditation Preparation Stage

Article 4 Phasing of Accreditation Preparation

The accreditation preparation stage refers to the period from an institution's decision to apply for IQA accreditation to the formal submission of its self-evaluation report, normally lasting 12 to 24 months for first-time applicants. This stage is divided into three phases:

Phase 1: Understanding and Mobilization (1-3 Months)

- Core Tasks: Establish a basic understanding of the IQA Accreditation System, build internal institutional consensus on accreditation, and secure senior leadership support.
- Key Deliverables: Establishment of an institutional accreditation leading group and working team; completion of basic training on IQA accreditation standards and procedures by core staff members.

Phase 2: Self-Evaluation and Gap Analysis (4-10 Months)

- Core Tasks: Conduct systematic self-evaluation against accreditation standards, identify gaps between the existing quality assurance system and accreditation requirements, and formulate improvement plans.
- Key Deliverables: Systematic gap analysis report; list of priority improvement areas and corresponding improvement plans.

Phase 3: Improvement and Evidence Compilation (6-12 Months)

- Core Tasks: Implement improvement plans, collect and accumulate supporting evidence, and compile the self-evaluation report.
- Key Deliverables: Complete and fully evidence-based self-evaluation report.

Article 5 Support Services for the Preparation Stage

The IQA Office provides the following support services for institutions in the accreditation preparation stage:

(1) Accreditation Preparation Guidelines

The IQA Office releases the *IQA Accreditation Preparation Guideline Package*, including:

- Introductory guides to IQA accreditation standards and procedures;
- Operational suggestions for organizing self-evaluation work;
- Gap analysis methods and template examples;
- Self-evaluation report compilation guidelines and reminders of common pitfalls.

The guideline package is available on the official IAPUC website for free download by full IAPUC members.

(2) Thematic Seminars on Accreditation Preparation

The IQA Office holds at least one online or offline thematic seminar annually for accreditation applicants, covering the following topics:

- In-depth interpretation of the three pillar philosophies of IQA accreditation;
- Practical guidance on self-evaluation report compilation;
- Experience sharing and Q&A sessions with accredited institutions.

The seminars are open to all full IAPUC members, with priority participation granted to quality representatives and core working team members of applicant institutions.

(3) One-on-One Guidance for Self-Evaluation Initiation

After formally launching self-evaluation work and prior to submitting the self-evaluation report, institutions may apply for one free remote one-on-one guidance session from the IQA Office. Provided by IQA accreditation specialists or designated accredited trainers, the guidance covers:

- Resolution of confusions in understanding and applying accreditation standards;
- Advice on the organizational structure and timeline of institutional self-evaluation

work;

- Reminders of common problems and deficiencies in self-evaluation report compilation.

Each guidance session lasts approximately half a day. Each institution is entitled to one free one-on-one guidance service per accreditation application cycle. This guidance does not constitute pre-review of self-evaluation reports, nor does it imply any commitment or prediction of accreditation results. It is limited to explanations of standard interpretation and self-evaluation methodologies, excluding pre-judgment of institutional compliance status.

(4) Accreditation Standard Interpretation Resources

The IQA Office continuously maintains and updates an accreditation standard interpretation database, providing detailed explanations for each standard domain, including standard formulation intent, key assessment focuses, typical compliance evidence examples, and clarification of common misunderstandings. The database is accessible online to full members on a 24/7 basis.

Article 6 Role of Quality Representatives in Preparation

Institutional quality representatives undertake core organizational responsibilities during the accreditation preparation stage. In accordance with the *IQA Management Measures for Quality Representatives of Accredited Institutions*, their duties cover overall coordination of self-evaluation work, internal coordination of accreditation affairs, and dissemination of quality assurance awareness. During the preparation stage, quality representatives shall focus on:

- Organizing core team members to conduct systematic learning of accreditation standards, as in-depth standard understanding is the prerequisite for effective self-evaluation;
- Establishing internal institutional communication mechanisms to ensure the self-evaluation process covers all major academic units and administrative departments;
- Coordinating the collection and compilation of evidence materials to guarantee authenticity, relevance and traceability of supporting documents.

Chapter III Sustained Development During and After Accreditation

Article 7 Peer Support Network

(1) The IQA Office establishes a peer support network for accredited institutions to facilitate inter-institutional experience exchange and mutual assistance.

(2) Institutions may join the network on a voluntary basis. Network activities include:

- Peer observation: With mutual consent of both parties, accredited institutions may receive visits from preparing institutions and share practical experience in self-

evaluation organization and quality assurance system construction;

- Quality representative exchange communities: Regional or thematic quality representative groups for regular online or offline experience sharing.

(3) The peer support network adheres to the principles of voluntary participation, equality and mutual benefit, and confidentiality and respect. Participating institutions may share operational experience and practical challenges but shall not disclose non-public information of other institutions involved in exchanges. The IQA Office does not mandate participation but provides liaison and facilitation support for network establishment and operation.

Article 8 Quality Data Improvement Support

(1) To address institutional difficulties in systematic collection and analysis of learning outcome assessment data, the IQA Office provides the following improvement support:

- Release of the *Learning Outcome Assessment Methodology Guide*, including operational instructions on the application of direct and indirect assessment tools, data analysis and result utilization;
- Organization of regional assessment data application workshops when conditions permit, allowing institutions to conduct practical exercises and peer review with anonymized institutional assessment data.

(2) The above resources are open to all full IAPUC members, with priority access granted to institutions in the accreditation preparation stage.

Article 9 Post-Accreditation Consolidation and Enhancement

(1) Accredited institutions — especially those with provisional and formal accreditation — shall focus on consolidating quality achievements, implementing improvement plans, and preparing for higher-level accreditation after obtaining accreditation.

(2) The IQA Office provides the following sustained post-accreditation support:

- Improvement plan implementation guidance: Assisting institutions in translating review report improvement suggestions into actionable and trackable implementation plans;
- Upgrade preparation guidance: Providing targeted interpretation of core upgrade standards and preparation suggestions for institutions applying for higher-level accreditation, without making any commitment or prediction of upgrade results.

Article 10 Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination

(1) The IQA Office organizes or encourages the following knowledge sharing activities:

- Annual accreditation practice exchange conference: Held during the annual IAPUC conference or on designated occasions to invite accredited institutions to share quality assurance practical cases;

- Thematic in-depth seminars: Organizing targeted discussions and joint solution development for common challenges in accreditation practice (e.g., remote learning outcome assessment, multi-campus quality assurance coordination).

(2) With the consent of relevant institutions, the IQA Office may sort out outstanding practices emerging from accreditation practice in anonymized or credited forms and incorporate them into the IQA Best Practice Case Library for reference by all members. Cases are selected based on innovation, effectiveness and replicability, and shall be formally included after review and confirmation by the Quality Accreditation Committee.

Chapter IV Resource Center and Tools

Article 11 Online Resource Center

The IQA Office establishes an accreditation resource center on the official IAPUC website, accessible exclusively to full members. The center continuously maintains the following resources:

- Complete IQA accreditation standard documents and supporting interpretations;
- Self-evaluation tool and template library, including gap analysis templates, self-evaluation report structure templates, and evidence index sheet templates;
- Best practice case library categorized by standard domains and institutional characteristics, with expert comments;
- Thematic categorized FAQs updated regularly, covering standard interpretation, procedural operations and evidence preparation;
- Self-paced micro-learning online modules for institutions at different development stages.

Article 12 Tools and Templates

(1) The IQA Office provides the following reference tools and templates for institutions:

- Accreditation preparation self-assessment tools, helping institutions preliminarily diagnose the alignment between their internal quality assurance systems and accreditation standards and identify weak areas;
- Learning outcome assessment matrix templates for systematically matching program learning outcomes with assessment tools;
- Improvement plan tracking tools for monitoring the implementation progress and effectiveness verification of post-accreditation improvement measures.

(2) All tools and templates are for reference only. Institutions may adjust or independently design relevant materials based on their actual conditions. All tools and templates are designed to be concise and practical to lower institutional application barriers.

Article 13 Online Learning Modules

(1) The IQA Office will phase in and launch the following online learning modules when conditions are mature:

- *Fundamentals of IQA Accreditation*: An introduction to accreditation philosophies, standard frameworks and operational procedures;
- *Self-Evaluation Report Practice*: Step-by-step guidance on self-evaluation organization, gap analysis and report compilation;
- *Introduction to Learning Outcome Assessment*: Design of AoL systems, selection of assessment tools, and construction of data-driven improvement closed loops.

(2) Each module includes micro-course videos, supporting reading materials, self-assessment quizzes and extended learning resources. The continuously updated online learning resources are open to all full IAPUC members for self-paced independent learning.

Chapter V Implementation and Supervision

Article 14 Annual Work Plan

(1) The IQA Office formulates an annual institutional capacity building work plan at the beginning of each year and submits it to the Quality Accreditation Committee for review.

(2) The annual plan shall specify training sessions, seminars and exchange activities to be carried out within the year, as well as key update priorities for resource center contents.

Article 15 Service Effect Evaluation

(1) The IQA Office conducts regular effect evaluation on all institutional support services provided. Evaluation dimensions include service coverage and participation rate, institutional feedback on service practicality, and the actual contribution of services to accreditation preparation and subsequent institutional quality improvement.

(2) Evaluation results are incorporated into IQA internal quality review and serve as the basis for formulating the next year's capacity building work plan.

Article 16 Institutional Feedback and Continuous Improvement

(1) Institutions may submit formal suggestions or feedback on IQA support services through institutional quality representatives, or fill in experience feedback forms after participating in relevant activities.

(2) The IQA Office aggregates and analyzes all received feedback to identify service improvement opportunities and optimize subsequent support services accordingly.

Chapter VI Supplementary Provisions

Article 17 Connection with Other Regulatory Documents

As a developmental supporting document of the IQA Accreditation System, these Guidelines are interconnected with existing regulatory documents as follows:

Document Name	Relationship with These Guidelines
<i>IAPUC-IQA Accreditation Manual</i>	These Guidelines do not add or revise existing accreditation standards. The support provided herein aims to help institutions better understand and meet the standard requirements stipulated in the Accreditation Manual.
<i>IAPUC-IQA Academic Accreditation Quality Standards Manual</i>	The learning outcome assessment and continuous improvement support specified in these Guidelines are consistent with the objectives of the Standards Manual.
<i>IQA Management Measures for Quality Representatives of Accredited Institutions</i>	The quality representative duties specified in these Guidelines are fully aligned with the provisions of the Measures.
<i>IQA Management Measures for Accreditation Trainers</i>	All training activities specified in these Guidelines are undertaken by trainers qualified in accordance with the Measures.

Article 18 Interpretation and Revision

(1) The right of interpretation of these Guidelines resides with the IAPUC Quality Accreditation Committee.

(2) Revisions to these Guidelines shall be subject to approval by the IAPUC Council. The IQA Office may put forward revision suggestions in a timely manner based on institutional feedback and practical development needs.

Article 19 Effectiveness and Transitional Arrangements

These Guidelines shall come into force officially upon approval by the IAPUC Council. The IQA Office shall complete the basic framework of the online resource center within one year after the official effective date.

Appendix: Auxiliary Self-Evaluation Question List for Accreditation Preparation

Institutions may conduct preliminary self-diagnosis using the following auxiliary questions when launching accreditation preparation:

Standard Domain	Auxiliary Self-Evaluation Questions	Institutional Response and Gap Identification
Mission and Strategy	Does the institution have a clear and widely disseminated mission statement?	
Curriculum and Teaching	Is the institution's curriculum design clearly oriented toward defined learning outcomes? Are regular curriculum reviews conducted?	
Faculty Team	Is there a systematic evaluation mechanism for faculty qualifications? Are categorized faculty development plans in place?	
Learning Outcome Assessment	Have clear learning outcomes been defined for all degree programs? Is assessment data systematically collected and utilized?	
Continuous Improvement	Has a university-wide internal quality assurance organizational framework been established? Can the institution	

	demonstrate substantive improvement closed-loop practices?	
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Document Approval

Role	Name/Position	Date
Compiler	Institutional Development Working Group, IAPUC Quality Accreditation Committee	May 2026
Reviewer	IAPUC Quality Accreditation Committee	Pending
Approver	IAPUC Council	Pending

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