



Part XXXII: Accreditation Data Analysis and Sector Report Compilation Standards

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

Applicable Scope: The IQA Office; the Research Working Group of the Quality Accreditation Committee; and accredited institutions participating in data submission and analysis.

Preface

Data are the lifeblood of quality assurance, and analysis is the eye of continuous improvement. Within the IAPUC-IQA Accreditation System, every accreditation review, annual report and assessment of learning outcomes generates valuable quality data. If those data remain confined to files, they resemble minerals buried underground: valuable, but unrealized. Systematically consolidating, analysing and presenting these dispersed data can provide an evidence base for improvement of the IQA Accreditation System and an empirical picture of quality across private higher education worldwide.

These Standards are intended to elevate data from an "accreditation by-product" to an "accreditation strategic asset." They establish collection standards, an analytical framework and reporting mechanisms for IQA accreditation data, and on that basis define the compilation model for the annual sector report entitled *Global Private Higher Education Quality Review*. The annual report is not only a major vehicle for IAPUC's external knowledge production, but also a core instrument through which the Association demonstrates to members, governments and the public the effectiveness of the IQA Accreditation System and progress in the quality of private higher education.

These Standards align with the *Guidelines on Annual Information Disclosure and Reporting of Material Changes by Accredited Institutions* at the data-collection level; with the *IQA Accreditation Records and Data Retention Rules* in relation to data retention and confidentiality; and with the strategic goals for knowledge production and thought leadership set out in the *IAPUC Strategic Development Plan (2026-2031)*. Through implementation of these Standards, IAPUC expects data to become a true driving force in the evolution of the accreditation system and development of the sector.

Chapter I General Provisions

Article 1 Purpose and Basis

These Standards are intended to:

- (1) establish standardized processes for collecting, consolidating and analysing data within the IQA Accreditation System, ensuring data quality and comparability;
- (2) establish a mechanism for compiling a sector annual report based on accreditation data and regularly publish observations on the quality of private higher education for members and the public;
- (3) provide data support and an empirical foundation for continuous improvement and strategic decision-making within the IQA Accreditation System; and

(4) promote data sharing and benchmarking among accredited institutions and advance the data-driven transformation of the quality culture in private higher education.

These Standards are formulated on the basis of:

- the strategic goals concerning knowledge production and annual reports in Chapter IV of the *IAPUC Strategic Development Plan (2026-2031)*;
- the requirements of the *IAPUC-IQA Accreditation Manual* concerning data-driven decision-making and continuous improvement;
- the provisions of the *Guidelines on Annual Information Disclosure and Reporting of Material Changes by Accredited Institutions* concerning institutional data reporting; and
- the standards in the *IQA Accreditation Records and Data Retention Rules* concerning data retention and security management.

Article 2 Scope of Application

These Standards apply to:

- (1) the consolidation, analysis and reporting by the IQA Office of data submitted by accredited institutions;
- (2) the compilation and publication of the sector annual report by the Research Working Group of the Quality Accreditation Committee;
- (3) the standards used by accredited institutions when submitting accreditation-related data; and
- (4) any organization or person authorized to use aggregated IQA accreditation data.

Article 3 Basic Principles

IQA accreditation data analysis and sector report compilation shall follow these basic principles:

Principle	Core Meaning
Data Minimization	Only data necessary for accreditation quality assurance and sector analysis shall be collected, avoiding unnecessary reporting burdens.
Quality First	Accuracy, completeness and comparability take priority over data volume. Inaccurate data shall not enter the analytical process.

Principle	Core Meaning
Privacy Protection	All publicly released sector data shall be aggregated and shall contain no information that identifies an individual institution, person or group. Encryption and access controls shall apply throughout data storage and transmission.
Improvement-Oriented	The ultimate purpose of data analysis is quality improvement, including improvement of the accreditation system and enhancement of institutional quality.
Transparent Sharing	Subject to privacy protection, analytical results shall be shared transparently with members, researchers and the public.

Chapter II Data Collection and Integration

Article 4 Data Sources

Sources of IQA accreditation data include:

- (1) the quantitative sections of annual quality monitoring reports submitted by accredited institutions;
- (2) key quantitative data in accreditation self-evaluation reports and re-accreditation reports;
- (3) data on conformity with standards from peer review reports, using structured evaluation dimensions;
- (4) process data generated by the IQA Office in administering accreditation, including application volume, accreditation cycle length and the distribution of accreditation outcomes; and
- (5) supplementary survey data collected with institutional consent, such as surveys of student learning experience and employer satisfaction.

Article 5 Basic Framework for Data Collection

Data collected by IQA from accredited institutions shall cover the following dimensions:

- (1) Basic institutional data:
 - student enrolment, classified by degree level;

- number of full-time faculty members and student-faculty ratio;
- number of degree programmes and distribution by field of study; and
- number and geographic distribution of campuses.

(2) Teaching quality data:

- student retention and graduation rates;
- number of degrees awarded, classified by degree level;
- distribution of graduate destinations, including employment, further study, entrepreneurship, seeking employment and other destinations; and
- aggregated results of major learning-outcome assessments in each discipline.

(3) Faculty development data:

- distribution of faculty by academic qualification;
- proportions of faculty by category, including scholarly academic, teaching, practitioner and adjunct/visiting faculty; and
- annual participation rate in faculty professional development activities.

(4) Quality assurance data:

- coverage and operation of the internal quality assurance organizational structure;
- coverage and cycle of curriculum review; and
- operation of the learning-outcomes assessment system, including completion of Assurance of Learning (AoL) systems across programmes and timeliness of assessment data submission.

(5) Internationalization and diversity data:

- proportion of international students and distribution by region of origin;
- proportion of international faculty; and
- overview of transnational education activities.

Article 6 Data Collection Cycle and Methods

(1) Routine data shall be collected once each year through institutions' annual quality monitoring reports. Collection shall take place during the consolidated processing period following the annual reporting deadline for all institutions.

(2) Data from other sources, including self-evaluation reports and review activities, shall be extracted and integrated by Accreditation Affairs Officers of the IQA Office after the relevant activity is completed.

(3) The IQA Office shall prepare a uniform *Annual Data Collection Template*, defining each data item, its calculation method and reporting instructions, and distribute it to the Quality Representatives of all accredited institutions.

Article 7 Data Quality Control

- (1) After data are consolidated, the IQA Office shall conduct a data-quality review. The review shall include identification and treatment of outliers and missing values, checks on consistency of definitions across institutions, and longitudinal consistency comparisons against historical data.
- (2) Where an anomaly or inconsistency is identified, the IQA Office shall issue a data confirmation request to the submitting institution. The institution must verify the data and respond within fifteen working days after receiving the request.
- (3) Where an institution has persistent data-quality problems, the IQA Office may note the matter in its annual report and communicate with the institution's Quality Representative as appropriate.

Chapter III Data Analysis

Article 8 Analytical Dimensions and Framework

Analysis of IQA accreditation data shall address the following dimensions:

- (1) Accreditation coverage and trend analysis: trends in the number and distribution of accredited institutions; the number and characteristics of new applicants and newly accredited institutions; distribution of accreditation levels; and the average period required for advancement between levels.
- (2) Institutional quality profile analysis: the overall profile and changing trends of accredited institutions in teaching quality, faculty development and learning outcomes; and the distribution of conformity ratings across standards domains and their change during the accreditation cycle.
- (3) Sector comparison and benchmarking: comparative analysis by institutional size, region or field of study; and international comparison of key indicators for accredited institutions.
- (4) Improvement effectiveness analysis: post-accreditation improvement trends in key institutional quality indicators; and quantitative evidence from exemplary improvement cases.
- (5) Accreditation-system effectiveness analysis: efficiency indicators for accreditation processes; review consistency and institutional satisfaction; and data signals indicating whether the accreditation standards themselves require revision.

Article 9 Analytical Methods

- (1) Descriptive statistical analysis, used to portray the overall quality profile of accredited institutions.
- (2) Trend analysis, used to track the direction of change in key indicators over time.

(3) Comparative analysis, used to make stratified comparisons by accreditation level, institutional size, region and other dimensions.

(4) Correlation analysis, used to explore associations among different quality dimensions.

(5) Case analysis, combining qualitative and quantitative analysis of notable examples of improvement.

Every analytical method must have a basis in the literature or recognized methodology. Limitations of the analysis, including small sample size or bias arising from voluntary data reporting, must be stated expressly in the report.

Article 10 Ethics of Analysis

(1) All publicly released data-analysis results must ensure that individual institutions cannot be identified. As a general rule, disaggregated results based on fewer than five institutions shall not be published, although they may be used for internal research.

(2) No analysis shall contain disparaging or discriminatory commentary concerning any particular institution.

(3) Before public release, an analytical report must be reviewed by the Quality Accreditation Committee to ensure that its conclusions are supported by data and are expressed accurately and cautiously.

Chapter IV Compilation of the Sector Annual Report

Article 11 Positioning of the Sector Annual Report

The *Global Private Higher Education Quality Review* is an annual publication compiled by IAPUC on the basis of accreditation data and sector research, and is a flagship product of the Association's external knowledge production. Its core purposes are to present the overall picture and changing trends of quality in global private higher education; document the development and effectiveness of the IQA Accreditation System; provide accredited institutions with benchmarks and inspiration for improvement; and communicate empirical information about quality assurance in private higher education to governments, international organizations and the public.

The annual report is not a ranking of accredited institutions and shall not order institutions or judge their relative merit.

Article 12 Structure and Content of the Annual Report

The annual *Global Private Higher Education Quality Review* shall use the following standard structure:

Part I: Opening and Overview

- message from the Editor-in-Chief;
- annual executive summary presenting the principal findings from the accreditation-system data for the year; and
- about this report, including data sources, analytical methods and acknowledgements.

Part II: Trends and Special Topics

- overview of developments in global private higher education;
- in-depth annual quality analysis focusing each year on one or two topics closely related to quality in private higher education, such as quality assurance in distance education, quality governance in transnational provision, credit recognition or the credibility of degrees, with specific topics determined by the Quality Accreditation Committee at the beginning of the year; and
- accreditation trends and findings, including analysis of quality characteristics and changing trends among accredited institutions during the year.

Part III: Observations on the Accreditation System

- overview of annual operation of the accreditation system;
- review findings and improvement developments, including the distribution of conformity across standards domains and common areas for improvement; and
- innovation and exemplary cases in accreditation practice.

Part IV: Data Summary

- summary statistical tables of accreditation data for the year; and
- data notes and methodological annotations.

Article 13 Annual Report Compilation Process

Stage	Timing	Principal Tasks
Topic Selection and Planning	January each year	The Quality Accreditation Committee determines the annual special topic, and the IQA Office prepares the annual report compilation plan.

Stage	Timing	Principal Tasks
Data Collection and Cleaning	February to March each year	Consolidate institutional reporting data from the preceding year and complete data-quality review and cleaning.
Data Analysis and Special-Topic Research	April to June each year	Complete quantitative analysis and in-depth research on the special topic.
Report Drafting	July to August each year	Complete first drafts of all sections of the annual report.
Internal Review	September each year	The Quality Accreditation Committee reviews the report and proposes revisions.
External Expert Review	October each year	Independent external experts conduct academic review, focusing on methodological rigour and the caution exercised in conclusions. The IQA Office responds to and addresses each expert comment.
Design, Layout and Publication	November to December each year	Complete design and layout and multilingual translation, giving priority to at least an English edition, and publish the report on the official IAPUC website.

Article 14 Quality Assurance for the Annual Report

- (1) Data in the annual report must be cross-checked by at least two persons to ensure statistical accuracy. The review shall cover both source data and analytical results.
- (2) Analytical conclusions in the annual report must be supported by data or cases and shall not make inferences extending beyond the scope of the evidence.
- (3) Before publication, the annual report must undergo professional review by the Quality Accreditation Committee, and at least one independent external expert must be invited to conduct an academic review. The expert's name and institutional affiliation shall be acknowledged in the report if the expert agrees to be identified.
- (4) Where a case involving a particular institution is cited in the annual report, the institution's written consent must be obtained in advance. The institution may choose anonymous or attributed presentation.

Chapter V Data Publication and Use

Article 15 Data Publication Channels

- (1) The sector annual report shall be published on a dedicated page of the official IAPUC website, with a PDF version available to the public free of charge. An English edition and translations into other languages may be released concurrently.
- (2) A news release presenting the annual report's key findings may be issued concurrently to extend its reach.
- (3) Subject to the minimum aggregation threshold in Article 10, anonymized aggregated accreditation statistics may be updated periodically on the Association's official website.

Article 16 Authorization for Data Use

- (1) Aggregated IQA accreditation data, meaning anonymized data not attributable to a single institution, shall be available for use by all IAPUC members and accredited institutions; academic researchers authorized by the IQA Office; and other organizations or persons authorized by the Quality Accreditation Committee.
- (2) Any person or organization citing IQA accreditation data must identify the source as "IAPUC-IQA Accreditation Data Analysis," state the relevant year and include a link to the official website.
- (3) A third party shall not use aggregated IQA accreditation data to rank or rate particular institutions, or for any other commercial activity intended to disparage institutions or distinguish relative merit, without IAPUC's express written authorization.

Article 17 Protection of Source Data

(1) Source data for individual institutions submitted by accredited institutions shall not be released publicly. Sensitive information concerning a particular institution may be used only by Accreditation Affairs Officers of the IQA Office and the Research Working Group of the Quality Accreditation Committee where necessary for analysis.

(2) All research and analysis involving institutions' source data must be conducted in a designated controlled environment. Every person granted access to such data must sign a specific confidentiality undertaking.

Chapter VI Supplementary Provisions

Article 18 Relationship with Other Regulatory Documents

Document	Relationship with These Standards
<i>Guidelines on Annual Information Disclosure and Reporting of Material Changes by Accredited Institutions</i>	Data collection under these Standards shall be based on the annual reporting data prescribed by these Guidelines.
<i>IQA Accreditation Records and Data Retention Rules</i>	The retention period for annual reports and their underlying data shall be governed by the provisions of these Rules concerning long-term records.
<i>IAPUC Public Relations and Media Communications Measures</i>	News releases and external communications concerning the annual report shall be subject to the approval requirements of these Measures.
<i>IAPUC Strategic Development Plan (2026-2031)</i>	The annual sector report is a vehicle for achieving the Plan's strategic goal of "Knowledge Production and Thought Leadership."

Article 19 Definitions

Term	Definition
Aggregated Data	Summary data produced through statistical analysis of data from multiple institutions, from which no individual institution can be identified.

Term	Definition
Anonymization	The process of deleting or generalizing information in data that could identify a particular institution or individual.
AoL	Assurance of Learning, a closed-loop system for systematically assuring and improving student learning outcomes.
Sector Annual Report	The annual <i>Global Private Higher Education Quality Review</i> compiled and publicly released by IAPUC on the basis of accreditation data and sector research.

Article 20 Interpretation and Amendment

(1) These Standards shall be interpreted by the IAPUC Quality Accreditation Committee.

(2) Any amendment to these Standards must be approved by the IAPUC Board of Directors.

Article 21 Entry into Force and Transition

These Standards shall enter into force on the date of approval by the IAPUC Board of Directors. Work on the first *Global Private Higher Education Quality Review* shall begin in an appropriate year after the IQA Accreditation System has been officially launched and a sufficient body of accredited institutions has been established.

Appendix A: Annual Data Collection Template

The template should cover an institutional basic-information table; teaching-quality data tables disaggregated by degree level; faculty-development data; quality-assurance data; internationalization and diversity data; and instructions for data completion.

Appendix B: Sector Annual Report Structure Template

The template should cover the standard framework for all parts and chapters; examples of principal charts and tables; and guidance on the visual style of data presentation.

Document Approval

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

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