



Part XXVII Public Relations and Media Communication Management Measures

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Formulating Institution: IAPUC Council

Applicable Objects: All full-time staff of the IAPUC Secretariat, Council members, members of the IQA Accreditation Decision Committee, members of the Quality Accreditation Committee, as well as all institutions and individuals who may speak on behalf of IAPUC externally

Preamble

In the contemporary era characterized by high information transparency and second-level communication speed, the reputation of an international organization is its most valuable intangible asset and also its most vulnerable shortcoming. For the International Association of Private Universities and Colleges (IAPUC), the Association's reputation is inseparable from the credibility of its internal quality assurance system (IQA).

Every external statement, every media response, and every public communication — whether positive publicity for accredited institutions or formal responses to quality crises — shapes and reshapes public perception and trust in IAPUC.

The management of public relations and media communication is not to confine the Association's voice to a small number of spokespersons, but to maintain positive, open and smooth communication between the Association and the external world while ensuring the authority and consistency of information release and preventing reputation risks.

These Management Measures are formulated to establish a clear institutional balance between "open communication" and "prudent management".

These Measures establish a hierarchical management system for IAPUC's external information release, standardized media relationship management, crisis communication plans and social media management guidelines. They are interconnected with the *IAPUC-IQA Accreditation Logo Usage and Brand Management Code* in terms of brand protection, consistent with the principles of authenticity and integrity specified in the *IAPUC-IQA Academic Ethics and Code of Conduct*, and complementary to the *IQA Measures for Accreditation Appeals, Complaints and Dispute Resolution* and the *IQA Interim Measures for Accreditation Risk Assessment and Management* in crisis response and reputation risk management. IAPUC expects that the implementation of these Measures will enable the Association's public relations and media communication to become a positive force for enhancing the credibility of the system, rather than a source of reputation risks.

Chapter I General Provisions

Article 1 Purposes and Basis

These Management Measures are formulated for the following purposes:

- (1) To establish the management principles and authorization system for IAPUC's external information release and media communication, ensuring the consistency and authority of external statements;
- (2) To build a mechanism for cultivating and maintaining media relations, so as to enhance the Association's positive image and industry influence;
- (3) To formulate crisis communication plans to ensure timely, accurate and prudent

external communication in the event of reputation risk incidents;

(4) To standardize the management of IAPUC official social media accounts and regulate staff's personal social media behaviors related to the Association;

(5) To ensure that all external communications conform to the Association's core values and ethical guidelines.

These Management Measures are formulated on the following bases:

- Provisions on the external representation of the Association specified in the *Constitution of the International Association of Private Universities and Colleges*;
- Chapter IV "Brand Building and Thought Leadership" of the *IAPUC Strategic Development Plan (2026-2031)*;
- Provisions on brand protection and public presentation specified in the *IAPUC-IQA Accreditation Logo Usage and Brand Management Code*;
- The identification and response framework for reputation risks specified in the *IQA Interim Measures for Accreditation Risk Assessment and Management*;
- Communication ethics of authenticity, accuracy and transparency specified in the *IAPUC-IQA Academic Ethics and Code of Conduct*;
- Provisions on staff's external speech and confidentiality obligations specified in the *IAPUC Employee Handbook and Human Resource Management System*.

Article 2 Scope of Application

These Management Measures apply to:

- (1) All full-time staff of the IAPUC Secretariat (including the IQA Office);
- (2) IAPUC Council members, members of the IQA Quality Accreditation Decision Committee, and members of the Quality Accreditation Committee when speaking externally on behalf of IAPUC or in occasions that may be interpreted as representing IAPUC;
- (3) Institutions and individuals authorized by IAPUC to conduct external communication on behalf of the Association;
- (4) The management and use of all IAPUC official social media accounts;
- (5) All major publications, press releases, official statements, speeches and public activities that may convey IAPUC information or positions to the public.

Article 3 Basic Principles

IAPUC's public relations and media communication shall implement the following basic principles:

Principle	Core Connotation
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Unified Voice	The release of major policy positions and sensitive information that may attract public attention must be authorized and subject to unified approval procedures. The core information and positions delivered by the Association shall remain consistent to avoid information confusion caused by disjointed external statements.
Authenticity and Accuracy	All external information shall be true, accurate and non-misleading. Unconfirmed information shall be withheld rather than released hastily, and any erroneous information shall be corrected in a timely manner once identified.
Timely Response	Legitimate media inquiries and public concerns shall be responded to within a reasonable time limit. Responses to crisis incidents shall be particularly timely.
Moderate Transparency	On the premise of ensuring accreditation information security and personal privacy, maintain openness and transparency in external communication. Specific details of accreditation cases and internal decision-making discussions are not within the scope of public disclosure.
Dignity and Restraint	All external communications shall be professional, dignified and restrained in tone and form. The Association shall not engage in meaningless public debates or make improper derogatory remarks about any institution or individual.

Chapter II Hierarchical Management of External Information

Article 4 Hierarchical Management Principle

IAPUC implements hierarchical management for external information release. Information of different levels corresponds to different release authorization and approval procedures. The hierarchical management rule is that the wider the influence scope, the higher the sensitivity, and the more likely the information is to be interpreted as the official position of IAPUC, the stricter the approval level and control measures shall be.

Article 5 Information Classification and Approval Authority

Information Level	Content Type	Approver	Publisher
Level I (Daily Operational Information)	Daily Association activity notices, member service information release, reposting and promotion of official publications and reports, non-sensitive work updates	Secretary-General or authorized representative	Authorized Secretariat staff
Level II (Policy Information)	Explanations on revisions to accreditation standards, official interpretations of accreditation policies, release of annual Association reports, official release of industry reports, official announcements of co-hosted or sponsored academic activities	Secretary-General	Secretary-General or authorized personnel
Level III (Positional Information)	Official Association comments on major industry events, joint statements or initiatives signed by the	President approval (major positions require review and deliberation by the Council)	President, Secretary-General or spokespersons designated by the Council

	Association, official speeches delivered by the Association at formal conferences and forums		
Special Level (Crisis Response Information)	Association statements on major quality scandals of accredited institutions, responses to public doubts concerning the credibility of the IQA accreditation system, public statements involving litigation or legal disputes	President + Council (in emergency situations, release may be approved jointly by the President and Secretary-General first, with subsequent filing to the Council)	President or spokespersons designated by the Council

Any publisher with doubts about the level classification of proposed information shall take the initiative to consult the superior approver for confirmation.

Article 6 Release Procedures for Press Releases and Statements

(1) All official press releases and public statements shall go through the following procedures before release:

1. Drafting: Drafted by the Secretary-General or designated drafter upon authorization;
2. Fact Verification: All cited data, facts and cases shall be independently verified and signed off by personnel other than the drafter;
3. Approval: Complete approval in accordance with the hierarchical provisions specified in Article 5 of these Measures;
4. Filing: All officially released press releases and statements shall be archived in the Association's file system within five working days after release.

(2) For press releases and statements involving IQA accredited institutions, the relevant institution may be consulted prior to release, with a consultation period of no less than three working days. IAPUC reserves the right to make final decisions on

content without violating confidentiality obligations. Factual corrections proposed by institutions shall be adopted in principle; wording adjustments for evaluative expressions shall be considered prudently by the Association before adoption.

Article 7 External Speeches and Public Presentations

(1) Staff or members delivering speeches or participating in discussions as IAPUC representatives at external conferences, forums or academic activities shall obtain prior approval from the Secretary-General. Speeches involving Level II and above information specified in Article 5 of these Measures shall be subject to corresponding level approval procedures.

(2) For formal speeches delivered on behalf of IAPUC, parts involving Association policies and positions shall complete fact verification and authorization approval before delivery and be filed for retention. Daily academic discussions and experience sharing are exempted from this requirement.

(3) Spokespersons may appropriately share personal views and reflections in speeches, which shall be clearly marked as "personal experience sharing" or "personal observation" to be distinctly separated from official IAPUC positions and avoid public confusion.

Chapter III Media Relationship Management

Article 8 Maintenance of Media Relations

(1) IAPUC actively establishes and maintains sound relationships with key higher education media, international education media, professional quality assurance media and education correspondents of major international news agencies.

(2) The Secretary-General oversees the daily maintenance of media relations, including but not limited to establishing and updating media contact lists, regularly releasing official Association information to higher education-focused media, and providing assistance or referrals for legitimate media inquiries regarding private higher education fields.

Article 9 Handling of Media Inquiries

(1) All official media inquiries shall be uniformly received and coordinated by the Secretary-General or designated personnel. Other staff receiving media inquiries shall politely refer them to the Secretary-General and shall not respond independently.

(2) Initial responses to media inquiries shall be provided within three working days, confirming receipt of the inquiry, informing the expected reply time, or disclosing available public information. For complex inquiries that cannot be fully responded to within three working days, preliminary notification shall be given within the time limit.

(3) Prudent handling is required for media inquiries involving the following matters:

- Quality doubts concerning specific accredited institutions;
- Doubts about the fairness of IQA accreditation standards or procedures;
- Ongoing accreditation appeal or complaint cases;
- Any matter involving potential legal disputes.

Responses to such inquiries shall be approved by the President, with legal consultation conducted when necessary. "No comment" shall not be adopted as a general rule. For legitimate inquiries, even if detailed information cannot be provided due to confidentiality or other legitimate reasons, meaningful responses shall be delivered.

Article 10 Prohibited Acts

(1) No staff may accept media interviews or release information to the media on behalf of IAPUC without authorization from the Secretary-General.

(2) When accepting media interviews, staff shall politely refuse and refer to the Secretary-General for questions involving the following content:

- Review details and decision-making processes of specific accreditation cases;
- Evaluative remarks on specific institutions or individuals;
- Any content that may be interpreted as disclosure of undisclosed Association information.

(3) The Association shall not provide improper economic benefits to media or journalists in exchange for news coverage or manipulated reporting. Reasonable transportation and accommodation arrangements provided for journalists participating in Association activities are exempted from this restriction.

Chapter IV Crisis Communication

Article 11 Applicable Circumstances for Crisis Communication

The crisis communication provisions of this Chapter apply to the following circumstances:

- (1) Accredited institutions encounter major quality scandals, regulatory penalties or widespread public criticism, which may negatively affect the credibility of the IQA accreditation system;
- (2) The IQA accreditation system itself is subject to severe public or media doubts, criticism or public controversy;
- (3) Improper conduct of Association governing body members or core staff is made public and causes substantial damage to the Association's reputation;
- (4) The IQA accreditation management platform suffers major data leakage or

security incidents that are exposed to the public or may trigger public concern;

(5) Other major reputation incidents recognized as crises by the Council or the President that require activation of the procedures specified in this Chapter.

Article 12 Emergency Response for Crisis Communication

(1) Upon the occurrence of a crisis, the Secretary-General shall report to the President and the Council within 24 hours and initiate the crisis communication emergency response. The basic emergency response procedures are as follows:

1. Establish a crisis communication team consisting of the President, Secretary-General, relevant business person-in-charge and legal counsel;
2. Rapidly verify core facts including the incident details, occurrence time and impact scope;
3. Evaluate public opinion trends including the scale and development direction of media reports and public reactions;
4. Determine communication strategies including the necessity of proactive statements, release channels and core information to be delivered;
5. Appoint a single designated external spokesperson;
6. Monitor public opinion responses and adjust communication strategies dynamically according to situational changes.

(2) External statements during a crisis shall be released immediately upon approval by the President. For responses requiring coordination with external institutions (e.g., involved institutions, regulatory authorities), IAPUC shall release statements as soon as possible after necessary communication with relevant parties, without indefinite delay pending final investigation results. Even if full information is temporarily unavailable, a preliminary statement shall be issued promptly after the crisis exposure to express attention and notify the public of subsequent follow-up explanations.

Article 13 Principles of Crisis Communication

(1) Timely disclosure to avoid information vacuum: A preliminary statement shall be issued within a reasonable time after a crisis to demonstrate the Association's attention and proactive response. Information vacuums are usually filled with speculation and rumors.

(2) Honesty and transparency without evading accountability: If the Association or accredited institutions are confirmed to have problems, sincere acknowledgment shall be made with clear improvement measures disclosed. Cover-up and evasion are proven to be major factors aggravating crises.

(3) People-oriented approach: Communications shall reflect care for students, victims and the public, rather than merely focusing on maintaining the Association's image.

(4) Distinction between internal and external communications: Internal notifications to accredited institutions, members and cooperative partners during crises may contain more detailed background and analysis, while public statements shall be concise, clear and public-oriented.

(5) Unified communication outlet: All external communications during crises shall be delivered by the designated spokesperson; no other personnel may make unauthorized public comments.

(6) Post-crisis review: Within one month after the crisis is resolved, the Secretary-General shall organize a crisis communication review to summarize experience and lessons learned, and optimize relevant systems and procedures when necessary.

Article 14 Crisis Diffusion on Social Media

If crisis information spreads or is distorted on social media, IAPUC may release official statements or clarifications via official social media accounts in a timely manner, which shall be consistent with the unified strategy of the crisis communication team and approved by the President.

Chapter V Social Media Management

Article 15 Official Social Media Accounts

(1) IAPUC official social media accounts (including but not limited to LinkedIn, Twitter/X, YouTube, WeChat Official Accounts, etc.) serve as important external communication channels for the Association.

(2) The establishment, modification and cancellation of official accounts shall be approved by the Secretary-General. Each official account shall be assigned at least two administrators to ensure continuous operation.

(3) Content released via official accounts shall be professional, rigorous, open and pragmatic, reflecting the Association's core values while maintaining affinity and timeliness.

(4) Content involving Level II and above information specified in Article 5 of these Measures released via official accounts shall be subject to corresponding approval procedures.

(5) Administrators may handle obviously false information and malicious attacks in comment sections in accordance with the following principles:

- Preserve and respond rationally to well-intentioned and rational criticisms and different opinions;
- Clarify and explain questions arising from obvious misunderstandings;
- Hide or delete comments containing personal attacks, hate speech or obvious false information.

Article 16 Staff Personal Social Media Conduct

- (1) Staff shall not claim to represent IAPUC in personal social media posts without explicit authorization from the Secretary-General.
- (2) When discussing topics related to Association work such as higher education quality assurance and private education on personal social media and mentioning their IAPUC employment status, staff shall clearly mark that "all opinions are personal and do not represent IAPUC's official positions".
- (3) Staff are prohibited from disclosing non-public Association information, accreditation review details or internal discussion content via personal social media.
- (4) The Association encourages staff to share official Association research results and public activity information professionally via personal social media platforms.

Chapter VI Supervision and Violation Handling

Article 17 Supervision Mechanism

- (1) The Secretary-General conducts continuous supervision over the Association's public relations and media communication activities.
- (2) All personnel may report potential problems or put forward improvement suggestions on the Association's external communication via formal channels to the Secretary-General or the Council.
- (3) Staff or members who make media communication errors or violate these Measures shall promptly report to the Secretary-General upon awareness of the violation.

Article 18 Violation Handling Measures

- (1) For Association staff violating these Measures, the Secretary-General shall impose verbal reminders, written warnings or other disciplinary sanctions according to the severity of the violation. Serious violations causing substantial reputation damage to the Association may result in legal termination of employment contracts.
- (2) For non-staff Council members, committee members or other personnel violating these Measures, the Council shall impose reminders, warnings, suspension of duties or recommendation of removal by the General Assembly according to the severity of the violation.
- (3) All violation handling decisions shall be delivered to the party concerned in writing with detailed reasons stated. Parties disputing the decisions may seek remedies in accordance with the appeal provisions specified in the *IQA Measures for Accreditation Appeals, Complaints and Dispute Resolution* or the *IAPUC Employee Handbook and Human Resource Management System*.

Chapter VII Supplementary Provisions

Article 19 Relationship with Other Regulatory Documents

Document Name	Relationship with These Measures
<i>IAPUC-IQA Accreditation Logo Usage and Brand Management Code</i>	Complementary in brand protection: the Logo Code standardizes visual brand presentation, while these Measures regulate information content and media communication channels.
<i>IAPUC-IQA Academic Ethics and Code of Conduct</i>	Serves as the basic criterion for the principles of authenticity and integrity in all external communications.
<i>IQA Measures for Accreditation Appeals, Complaints and Dispute Resolution</i>	Crisis communication provisions of these Measures apply to major appeals and complaints that may trigger public attention.
<i>IQA Interim Measures for Accreditation Risk Assessment and Management</i>	Governs the identification, assessment and response of reputation risks; these Measures provide operational guidelines for external communication after reputation risks occur.
<i>IAPUC Employee Handbook and Human Resource Management System</i>	These Measures refine and specify staff confidentiality and external speech obligations in the field of media communication.

Article 20 Term Definitions

Term	Definition
External Information	All texts, images, videos, audios and other forms of communication content that may be interpreted by the public as conveying IAPUC's positions, policies or work updates.
Press Release	Official written documents produced by the Association to announce major matters to the media and the public.
Crisis Communication	Organized external communication and response activities when the Association faces major

	reputation risk incidents.
Official Social Media Account	Social media platform accounts registered and managed in the name of IAPUC.
Crisis Communication Team	Temporary decision-making and execution team established after a crisis to coordinate all external communication matters.

Article 21 Interpretation and Revision

- (1) The right of interpretation of these Measures resides with the IAPUC Council.
- (2) Revisions to these Measures shall be subject to approval by the IAPUC Council.

Article 22 Effectiveness

These Measures shall come into force officially upon approval by the IAPUC Council.

Document Approval

Role	Name/Position	Date
Compiler	IAPUC Council Public Relations Working Group	May 2026
Reviewer	IAPUC Council	Pending
Approver	IAPUC Council	Pending

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