



Part XXVIII IAPUC Guidelines for Managing Relations with Governments and International Organizations

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Formulating Institution: Council of the International Association of Private Universities and Colleges (IAPUC)

Applicable Objects: The IAPUC Council, Secretariat, Quality Accreditation Committee, and all personnel authorized to engage with government agencies and international organizations on behalf of the Association

Preamble

The mission of the International Association of Private Universities and Colleges (IAPUC) — to promote the quality improvement of global private higher education and establish an international accreditation system exclusively for private higher education institutions — cannot be fulfilled in isolation. Educational competent authorities of national governments serve as the primary regulators and policy-makers for private higher education, and their legal frameworks and accreditation recognition policies directly determine the feasibility of IQA accreditation recognition in various countries. International organizations including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) play pivotal leading roles in formulating global higher education quality assurance standards and facilitating credential recognition and cross-border higher education quality assurance.

Establishing constructive and professional relations with governments and international organizations carries three layers of strategic significance for IAPUC. First, legitimacy and recognition — legal registration and continuous regulatory recognition from the government of the place of registration are prerequisites for the Association's survival, while the understanding and recognition of IQA accreditation by educational authorities of various countries constitute the core foundation for the global promotion of the accreditation system. Second, knowledge cooperation and standard alignment — in-depth cooperation with international quality assurance organizations and professional networks enables IQA accreditation standards to keep pace with international best practices and lays a solid foundation for future qualification recognition applications from international accreditation bodies. Third, industry advocacy and voice — through participation in international quality assurance dialogues and policy discussions, IAPUC can incorporate the voices of private higher education institutions into the global quality assurance agenda.

Nevertheless, the management of relations with governments and international organizations faces unique challenges and risks. Government relations are essentially dialogues with asymmetric power — governments hold regulatory and recognition authority, while the Association responds with professional expertise and industry representativeness. Maintaining the Association's independence, professionalism and integrity is crucial in such asymmetric relationships. These Guidelines are formulated to establish a clear institutional balance between active communication and independent governance, and between pursuing external recognition and upholding institutional standards.

Chapter I General Provisions

Article 1 Purposes and Basis

These Guidelines are formulated for the following purposes:

- (1) To establish the basic principles and strategic framework for IAPUC to build and develop relations with national government agencies and international organizations;
- (2) To clarify the management authority and approval procedures for external relations at different levels;
- (3) To standardize the Association's participation in government consultations, international conferences, joint initiatives and cooperative projects;
- (4) To safeguard the independence, professionalism and integrity of the Association in external relations from impairment;
- (5) To provide strategic guidance for the Association to obtain recognition of the IQA accreditation system at national and international levels.

These Guidelines are formulated on the following bases:

- Provisions on the Association's mission and governance structure specified in the *Constitution of the International Association of Private Universities and Colleges*;
- Objectives of international mutual recognition and industry advocacy specified in the *IAPUC Strategic Development Plan (2026-2031)*;
- Requirements for government dialogue and regulatory environment assessment specified in the *IQA Guidelines for International Dual Accreditation and Mutual Recognition Agreement Negotiation*;
- Basic principles of integrity, transparency and social responsibility specified in the *IAPUC-IQA Academic Ethics and Code of Conduct*;
- Provisions on external communication authorization and crisis communication specified in the *IAPUC Public Relations and Media Communication Management Measures*.

Article 2 Scope of Application

These Guidelines apply to:

- (1) The IAPUC Council, Secretariat, Quality Accreditation Committee and other standing committees in their engagements with government agencies and international organizations;
- (2) All personnel formally authorized by IAPUC to conduct liaison, consultation, negotiation or cooperation with government agencies or international organizations on behalf of the Association;
- (3) International organizations, multilateral networks and intergovernmental initiatives that the Association participates in or applies to join.

These Guidelines do not apply to the daily business communication between the Association and accredited institutions or member institutions, which shall be governed by the *IQA Management Measures for Quality Representatives of Accredited Institutions* and other relevant documents.

Article 3 Basic Principles

IAPUC's management of relations with governments and international organizations shall adhere to the following basic principles:

Principle	Core Connotation
Compliance and Law Abidance	The Association shall strictly abide by local laws and regulations in all operational jurisdictions. All acts in government relations shall be premised on legal compliance and due process.
Independence and Autonomy	The Association maintains independence in organizational decision-making and accreditation standards. The development of government relations and international cooperation shall serve the Association's mission and strategic objectives, and shall not deviate due to external pressure or interest inducement.
Transparency and Integrity	In engagements with governments and international organizations, the Association shall present its positions, capabilities and limitations truthfully and accurately.
Respect for Diversity	Respect the diversity of national education systems and regulatory frameworks, and refrain from evaluating national policies based on a single unified model.
Long-term Development	Relations with governments and international organizations require long-term investment rather than short-term transactions. The Association earns trust through professional expertise and continuous dialogue, rather than position exchanges for individual events.

Chapter II Organizational Structure and Authority for Relationship Management

Article 4 Organizational Structure for Relationship Management

The management of IAPUC's relations with governments and international

organizations shall be implemented through the division of labor and collaboration among the following institutional bodies.

Article 5 Responsibilities of Each Body

(1) Responsibilities of the Council

1. To review and approve the overall strategy and annual work plans for the Association's relations with governments and international organizations;
2. To approve formal cooperation agreements, memoranda of understanding and other legally binding documents signed with government agencies;
3. To make decisions on government relation matters involving the Association's independence and major interests;
4. To authorize the President or Secretary-General to participate in high-level government meetings and international organization activities on behalf of the Association.

(2) Responsibilities of the President

1. To represent the Association in intergovernmental meetings, high-level international organization events and diplomatic occasions;
2. To sign government cooperation agreements and international organization documents approved by the Council;
3. To report major progress of government relations and international cooperation to the Council.

(3) Responsibilities of the Secretary-General

1. To formulate annual work plans for the Association's relations with governments and international organizations and submit them to the Council for approval;
2. To coordinate the Association's daily government liaison and participation in international organization affairs;
3. To maintain and update the contact lists of government agencies and international organizations;
4. To review official documents submitted by the Association to government agencies or international organizations;
5. To coordinate the professional participation of various committees in foreign-related affairs.

(4) Responsibilities of the Quality Accreditation Committee

1. To provide technical support in terms of accreditation standards for professional alignment with national quality assurance agencies;
2. To evaluate and propose suggestions on the alignment of the IQA accreditation system with international quality assurance criteria;
3. To participate in professional demonstration and standard equivalence

assessment in mutual recognition agreement negotiations.

Article 7 Prohibition of Unauthorized Representation

(1) Except for the institutions and personnel vested with relationship management authority specified in Article 5 of these Guidelines, no other institution or individual may conduct engagements with binding formal commitments with government agencies or international organizations on behalf of IAPUC. Staff participating in external activities in personal capacity shall report to the Secretary-General in advance if such activities may be interpreted as expression of IAPUC's positions.

(2) All official letters issued by IAPUC to government agencies or international organizations shall be issued in the name of the Association uniformly, reviewed by the Secretary-General, approved and signed by the President or the Council (depending on the level of the matter), and filed for future reference.

Chapter III Management of Relations with Government Agencies

Article 7 Classification of Government Relations

IAPUC's government relations are divided into the following levels based on interaction depth and core objectives:

Relationship Level	Core Objectives	Major Activity Forms
Basic Cognition Level	To enable educational competent authorities of target countries to understand the existence and basic framework of IAPUC and the IQA accreditation system	Letter introduction, official briefing submission, side-line exchanges at international conferences
Professional Dialogue Level	To conduct professional communication on the alignment of IQA accreditation standards with the quality assurance frameworks of target countries, and explore the possibility of mutual recognition of accreditation results	Professional seminars, standard comparative analysis, submission of official advisory opinions

Institutional Cooperation Level	To realize official recognition or institutional alignment of IQA accreditation in target countries through formal agreements or institutional arrangements	Negotiation of memoranda of understanding, signing of cooperation agreements, establishment of joint working mechanisms
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Article 8 Relations with the Government of the Place of Registration

(1) The Association shall maintain compliant and transparent relations with the state and federal regulatory authorities of its place of registration (Colorado, USA). The Association shall submit annual reports and other necessary documents to state or federal regulatory authorities in accordance with local laws.

(2) The Secretary-General shall be responsible for the daily management of government relations in the place of registration, including timely legal declaration, response to regulatory inquiries and handling of administrative affairs.

(3) Government relations in the place of registration constitute the legal foundation of the Association. Continuous compliance shall be maintained and shall not be interrupted or neglected for any reason.

Article 9 Relations with Educational Competent Authorities of Target Countries

(1) In the process of global promotion of the IQA accreditation system, IAPUC may take the initiative to establish connections with educational competent authorities of target countries.

(2) All proactive liaison activities shall be subject to the approval of the Secretary-General. The first formal liaison shall be fully prepared, with clear and professional Association profiles and accreditation system introduction documents submitted to the counterpart — all documents shall truthfully present the positioning, standards and international references of IQA accreditation, without exaggeration or false promotion.

(3) The following core information shall be clearly conveyed in communications with educational competent authorities of target countries:

- The mission, legal status and international positioning of IAPUC;
- The basic philosophy, standard framework and accreditation procedures of the IQA accreditation system;
- International references and mutual recognition progress of IQA accreditation;
- The potential value of the accreditation system for improving the quality of private

higher education in target countries.

(4) Prior to the official recognition of IQA accreditation by government authorities, the Association shall not imply or claim official recognition from any country in external publicity materials.

Article 10 Response to Government Consultations and Regulatory Investigations

(1) Upon receiving official consultations or initiating regulatory investigations from government authorities, the Secretary-General shall report to the President and the Council within five working days. The Association's responses shall be submitted within the statutory or required time limit, with truthfulness, accuracy and completeness guaranteed.

(2) For consultations involving professional content of accreditation standards, the Quality Accreditation Committee shall provide technical support, and the Secretary-General shall coordinate the compilation of response documents.

(3) If regulatory investigations involve the Association's legal liabilities or major interests, the President may decide to engage professional legal counsel for response assistance. Legal counsel fees shall be approved in accordance with the Association's financial system.

Article 11 Government Grants and Donations

(1) The Association may accept project grants or donations from national governments that are consistent with its non-profit educational mission, subject to the following conditions:

- The grants or donations have clear purposes consistent with the Association's mission;
- Grant conditions shall not impose any direct or indirect restrictions on the independence of the Association's accreditation standards and accreditation decisions;
- Any single grant or annual cumulative grants from a single government source shall be approved by the Council and controlled within a reasonable proportion of the Association's total annual revenue to prevent excessive reliance on a single funding source.

(2) The Association shall not accept any government grants attached with conditions requiring the Association to revise accreditation standards to conform to specific national policy preferences, or to grant exceptional treatment to specific institutions or countries in accreditation decisions.

(3) All accepted government grants shall be publicly disclosed in the Association's annual financial reports in terms of funding sources and purposes.

Chapter IV Management of Relations with International Organizations

Article 12 Classification of International Organizations

Organization Category	Representative Organizations	Relationship Positioning
Global Education Governance Bodies	UNESCO, OECD Education Directorate	Standard alignment, policy dialogue, credential recognition promotion
Quality Assurance Professional Networks	INQAAHE, ENQA, CHEA	Professional exchanges, best practice learning, preparation for qualification recognition applications
Regional Education Cooperation Organizations	Regional higher education networks, regional quality assurance associations	Regional cooperation, standard mutual recognition, joint activities
Private Education-related International Organizations	International Forum for Private Education, regional private university associations	Industry advocacy, experience sharing, joint research
Multilateral Development Institutions	World Bank Education Projects, regional development banks	Educational project cooperation, capacity building

Article 13 Strategic Objectives for International Organization Relations

The development of IAPUC's relations with international organizations shall serve the following strategic objectives:

(1) Short-term Objectives (1-3 Years)

- To apply for full membership of INQAAHE (or associate membership subject to the organization's membership rules);
- To establish initial connections with at least one regional quality assurance network active in private higher education;
- To submit introductory materials of the IQA accreditation system as an observer or

contributor in UNESCO's discussions on credential mutual recognition.

(2) Medium-term Objectives (3-5 Years)

- To build a reputation as an active participant in INQAAHE;
- To sign memoranda of cooperation with at least one international quality assurance organization;
- To launch preparatory work for qualification recognition applications to international accreditation bodies such as ENQA and CHEA.

(3) Long-term Objectives (Over 5 Years)

- To obtain official qualification recognition from at least one international accreditation body;
- To incorporate the IQA accreditation system into relevant guidelines or databases of UNESCO credential mutual recognition;
- To become a recognized professional voice for private education issues in the international quality assurance field.

Article 14 Participation in International Organization Affairs

(1) The Secretary-General shall formulate annual plans for the Association's participation in international organization activities and submit them to the Council for approval. Official letters issued for international organization affairs shall be signed by the Secretary-General or authorized personnel.

(2) Representatives participating in international organization conferences and activities shall be nominated by the Secretary-General and approved by the President. Representatives shall submit a brief participation report to the Secretariat within thirty days after the event.

(3) Official documents submitted by the Association to international organizations (including position papers, standard comparative analyses, capacity statements, etc.) shall be professionally reviewed by the Quality Accreditation Committee and approved by the Secretary-General before submission. Documents involving discussions on accreditation standard equivalence shall be attached with evaluation opinions from the Quality Accreditation Committee.

(4) In participating in international organization activities, the Association shall actively advocate for private higher education while maintaining modesty and professionalism — learning international advanced practices is equally important as sharing self-practices.

Chapter V Conflict of Interest and Risk Prevention

Article 15 Identification and Avoidance of Conflicts of

Interest

(1) Personnel participating in government relations and international organization affairs shall actively declare potential conflicts of interest before taking relevant duties or upon discovering new circumstances during work, including holding positions in government agencies or international organizations with business connections with the Association that may impair impartial performance of duties, or maintaining close personal or commercial relations with government officials having direct business dealings with the Association.

(2) Personnel with the above conflicts of interest shall not serve as the Association's chief representative or major decision-maker in relevant matters. If conflicts cannot be effectively avoided, the personnel shall take the initiative to recuse themselves.

Article 16 Code of Conduct Bottom Line in Government Relations

(1) Association personnel shall abide by the following conduct bottom line in interactions with government officials:

- Uphold strict integrity, refrain from providing false information or making unfulfillable commitments;
- Comply with local laws and public official codes of conduct in diplomatic meetings and government reception occasions, and refrain from offering bribes or improper benefits to government officials in any form;
- Politely accept moderately priced souvenirs or symbolic gifts presented by government officials in official activities and take the initiative to report to the Secretary-General.

(2) Association personnel shall not utilize government relations to seek personal commercial interests for themselves or related parties, improperly use undisclosed regulatory information, or interfere with legitimate regulatory investigations conducted by government authorities targeting specific institutions.

Article 17 Risk Identification and Response

The Association shall remain alert to the following risks in engagements with governments and international organizations:

(1) Independence Erosion Risk: Excessive reliance on grants or recognition from a single government or international organization may erode the independence of accreditation standards and decisions. Prevention measures: Maintain diversified funding sources and strictly abide by the grant acceptance conditions specified in Article 11 of these Guidelines.

(2) Jurisdictional Conflict Risk: As a globally operating association, IAPUC may face conflicting legal requirements from different countries. Prevention measures: Take the laws of the Association's place of registration as the basic basis in case of

legal conflicts, balance the legal expectations of operational jurisdictions on the premise of compliance, and seek international legal consultation when necessary.

(3) Reputational Association Risk: Establishing close relations with controversial governments or organizations may damage the Association’s reputation. Prevention measures: Conduct appropriate due diligence on counterparties before establishing formal cooperative relations, comprehensively evaluate the potential positive and negative impacts of cooperation on the Association’s mission and reputation, and submit relevant proposals to the Council for approval.

Chapter VI Supplementary Provisions

Article 18 Records and Archives Management

(1) Important correspondence, meeting minutes, cooperation agreements and memoranda between the Association and government agencies and international organizations shall be uniformly filed and preserved by the Secretariat.

(2) The retention period of such archives shall comply with the provisions on long-term archive preservation specified in the *IQA Detailed Rules for Accreditation Archive and Data Retention Management*.

Article 19 Relationship with Other Regulatory Documents

Document Name	Relationship with These Guidelines
<i>IQA Guidelines for International Dual Accreditation and Mutual Recognition Agreement Negotiation</i>	The Guidelines govern mutual recognition negotiations between quality assurance institutions, while these Guidelines govern relationship management with governments and broader international organizations.
<i>IAPUC Public Relations and Media Communication Management Measures</i>	External statements involving governments or international organizations shall be governed by both documents in a cross-applicable manner.
<i>IQA Interim Measures for Accreditation Risk Assessment and Management</i>	Reputational risks and compliance risks arising from external relations shall be incorporated into the risk identification and assessment framework of these Measures.

Article 20 Interpretation and Revision

(1) The right of interpretation of these Guidelines resides with the IAPUC Council.

(2) Revisions to these Guidelines shall be subject to approval by the IAPUC Council.

Article 21 Effectiveness

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

Document Approval

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

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