



Institutional Membership Application Guidelines

For Universities and Colleges

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Applicable to: All private universities, private colleges, and private higher vocational education institutions seeking Full Membership or Accredited Membership in IAPUC

Preamble

The International Association of Private Universities and Colleges (IAPUC) is a global, nonprofit membership organization registered in the State of Colorado, United States of America (Nonprofit Registration No. 20251179157). IAPUC is dedicated to advancing quality in private higher education through the establishment and promotion of the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) accreditation system.

This document provides comprehensive guidance for private universities and colleges seeking to apply for institutional membership in IAPUC. It sets forth the eligibility requirements, application procedures, required documentation, evaluation criteria, and fee obligations applicable to institutions applying for Full Membership or Accredited Membership. The guidelines herein are designed to ensure a transparent, rigorous, and fair admission process that upholds the integrity and reputation of IAPUC and its membership.

These guidelines are consistent with the IAPUC Constitution, the IAPUC Membership Eligibility and Admission Standards, and the IAPUC Strategic Development Plan (2026–2031). All institutions are encouraged to review these foundational documents before commencing their application.

Chapter 1: General Provisions

Article 1: Purpose and Scope

1.1 These Guidelines serve to:

(a) Provide a clear and detailed roadmap for private universities and colleges applying for institutional membership in IAPUC;

- (b) Define the documentary requirements, evaluation criteria, and procedural steps for membership applications;
- (c) Ensure that all applicants are assessed consistently and fairly against the established standards;
- (d) Facilitate the efficient processing of applications by the IAPUC Secretariat and the Membership Credentials Committee.

1.2 These Guidelines apply to all private universities, private colleges, and private higher vocational education institutions that:

- (a) Are seeking Full Membership for the first time;
- (b) Are Associate Members seeking reclassification to Full Membership;
- (c) Are Full Members that have obtained IQA accreditation and are thereby automatically upgraded to Accredited Member status;
- (d) Are existing members seeking to renew or update their membership credentials.

Article 2: Interpretation

2.1 In these Guidelines, terms defined in the IAPUC Membership Eligibility and Admission Standards shall have the same meaning.

2.2 The term "institution" refers to private universities, private colleges, and private higher vocational education institutions.

2.3 The term "applicant" refers to the institution applying for membership.

Chapter 2: Membership Categories for Universities and Colleges

Article 3: Available Categories

Universities and colleges may apply for the following categories of institutional membership:

Category	Code	Description
Full Member	FM	Private universities and colleges that meet all eligibility criteria and have been formally admitted. Full Members are eligible to apply for IQA accreditation.

Accredited Member	AM	Full Members that have successfully completed the IQA accreditation process and hold a valid accreditation status (Provisional, Accredited, or Fully Accredited).
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Article 4: Progression Pathway

The typical progression pathway for a university or college is as follows:

1. **Application for Full Membership** → Review and admission as Full Member
2. **Preparation for IQA Accreditation** → Self-evaluation, gap analysis, and improvement
3. **Application for IQA Accreditation** → Peer review, site visit, and accreditation decision
4. **Automatic Upgrade to Accredited Member** → Upon successful attainment of IQA accreditation

Associate Members (non-degree-granting institutions) that subsequently obtain degree-awarding authority may apply for reclassification to Full Member.

Chapter 3: Eligibility Requirements for Full Membership

Article 5: Mandatory Eligibility Criteria

An applicant for Full Membership must satisfy all of the following conditions:

5.1 Legal Status and Authorization

The institution must:

- (a) Be a legally registered and operating private university, private college, or private higher vocational education institution;
- (b) Hold valid degree-awarding authority granted by the competent education authority in its country of domicile, or possess equivalent legal recognition;
- (c) Provide a copy of its operating license, charter, or equivalent authorization document, duly certified or notarized as required.

5.2 Operational History and Academic Cycle

The institution must:

(a) Have been in operation for a sufficient period to have completed at least one full academic cycle (from student admission to graduation);

(b) Provide evidence of the number of graduates produced in its most recent complete academic cycle.

For newly established institutions that have not yet completed a full academic cycle, the Membership Credentials Committee may, upon special evaluation, admit them under an observation period, during which they may enjoy all rights of Full Membership except the right to apply for IQA accreditation.

5.3 Institutional Governance

The institution must:

(a) Have a clearly defined governance structure with documented roles, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms;

(b) Demonstrate the existence of a governing board, an academic governance body (such as an academic senate or committee), and an executive management team;

(c) Provide evidence of institutional autonomy in academic and administrative decision-making.

5.4 Academic Programs and Quality Assurance

The institution must:

(a) Offer recognized degree programs at one or more levels (bachelor's, master's, doctoral);

(b) Have a documented internal quality assurance system or equivalent mechanism for monitoring and improving academic quality;

(c) Provide evidence of formal processes for curriculum development, program review, and student assessment.

5.5 Faculty and Staff

The institution must:

(a) Employ a sufficient number of qualified faculty members to support its academic programs;

(b) Have documented policies and procedures for faculty recruitment, evaluation, and professional development;

(c) Demonstrate an appropriate student-to-faculty ratio for the disciplines offered.

5.6 Financial Sustainability

The institution must:

(a) Demonstrate financial viability and sustainability through audited financial

statements or equivalent financial documentation;

(b) Have transparent and documented financial management policies and procedures;

(c) Not be subject to bankruptcy proceedings, financial restructuring, or similar insolvency processes.

5.7 Ethical Standards and Good Standing

The institution must:

(a) Not have been subject to major regulatory sanctions, license revocation, or public censure for academic misconduct, enrollment fraud, financial impropriety, or other serious violations within the preceding three years;

(b) Have documented policies on academic integrity, research ethics, and non-discrimination;

(c) Provide a signed declaration of good standing by its chief executive officer or equivalent.

5.8 Alignment with IAPUC Mission and Values

The institution must:

(a) Demonstrate genuine alignment with the mission and core values of IAPUC, as set forth in the IAPUC Constitution and the IAPUC-IQA Founding Philosophy and Authoritative Statement;

(b) Provide a written statement explaining how its institutional mission and strategic priorities align with IAPUC's commitment to quality, continuous improvement, and social responsibility;

(c) Commit to active participation in IAPUC activities and to contributing to the development of the Association and its membership.

5.9 Recommendation

The application must be supported by a written recommendation from at least one existing Institutional Member of IAPUC (Accredited Member or Full Member), unless the Membership Credentials Committee agrees to conduct a direct review.

The recommending member must confirm a substantive basis for its familiarity with the applicant institution—such as academic exchange, regional cooperation, or peer visits—rather than mere general awareness based on publicly available information. The recommender assumes no liability for the truthfulness of the application content.

Chapter 4: Application Procedures

Article 6: Pre-Application Consultation

6.1 Before submitting a formal application, prospective applicants are encouraged to:

- (a) Review the IAPUC Constitution, the IAPUC Membership Eligibility and Admission Standards, and these Guidelines;
- (b) Contact the IAPUC Secretariat to discuss any questions regarding eligibility or the application process;
- (c) Attend an IAPUC information session or webinar for prospective members, if available.

6.2 Pre-application consultation is optional but recommended to ensure that the applicant understands the requirements and can prepare a complete application.

Article 7: Submission of Application

7.1 The applicant must submit a completed Institutional Membership Application Form, together with all required supporting documentation, to the IAPUC Membership Credentials Committee through the IAPUC Secretariat.

7.2 Applications may be submitted electronically via the IAPUC online portal or by email to the designated address, or in hard copy to the IAPUC Secretariat address. Electronic submission is preferred.

7.3 The application must be signed by the chief executive officer (President, Rector, Vice-Chancellor, or equivalent) of the applicant institution, or by a duly authorized representative with documented delegation of authority.

Article 8: Required Documentation

8.1 The applicant must submit the following documents as part of its application package:

A. Institutional Profile and Legal Documents

- (a) Completed Institutional Membership Application Form;
- (b) Certified copy of the institution's operating license, charter, or equivalent authorization document;
- (c) Certified copy of the degree-awarding authorization or equivalent recognition;
- (d) Institutional brochure, prospectus, or equivalent summary document describing the institution's history, mission, governance, and programs.

B. Governance and Management Documents

- (a) Organizational chart showing governance and management structures;
- (b) Composition and terms of reference of the governing board;
- (c) Curriculum vitae or biographical profiles of the chief executive officer and senior academic leadership.

C. Academic Program Documents

- (a) List of all degree programs currently offered, with program descriptions, credit hours, and normal duration;
- (b) Program learning outcomes for a representative sample of programs;
- (c) Description of the institution's internal quality assurance system, including curriculum review and program evaluation processes.

D. Faculty and Staff Documents

- (a) Summary of faculty profile, including headcount by qualification level, employment status, and discipline;
- (b) Faculty recruitment, evaluation, and professional development policies.

E. Student Enrollment and Outcomes Data

- (a) Current student enrollment by program and level;
- (b) Student retention and graduation data for the most recent three academic years;
- (c) Graduate employment or further study data, if available.

F. Financial Documents

- (a) Audited financial statements for the most recent two fiscal years, or equivalent independently verified financial reports;
- (b) Summary of financial policies and procedures.

G. Ethical and Compliance Documents

- (a) Academic integrity policy;
- (b) Research ethics policy (if applicable);
- (c) Non-discrimination and equal opportunity policy;
- (d) Signed declaration of good standing.

H. Alignment and Recommendation

- (a) Statement of alignment with IAPUC mission and values;
- (b) Letter of recommendation from an existing IAPUC Institutional Member (if applicable).

8.2 All documents not originally in English must be accompanied by a certified English translation.

8.3 The applicant may be requested to provide additional information or clarification during the review process.

Article 9: Application Fee

9.1 An application fee of **USD 3,500** is payable upon submission of the application. During the first three years following the launch of the IQA accreditation system, a promotional rate of 75% of the standard fee may apply.

9.2 The application fee is non-refundable, except where the application process cannot be completed due to reasons attributable to IAPUC.

9.3 Payment instructions are provided with the application form.

Chapter 5: Review and Decision Process

Article 10: Initial Screening

10.1 Upon receipt of the application, the IAPUC Secretariat conducts an initial screening to verify that:

- (a) The application form is complete and signed;
- (b) All required documents have been submitted;
- (c) The applicant appears to meet the basic eligibility criteria.

10.2 If the application is incomplete, the Secretariat shall notify the applicant within 15 working days and specify the missing information or documents. The applicant shall have 30 days to supplement the application.

Article 11: Membership Credentials Committee Review

11.1 Complete applications are forwarded to the Membership Credentials Committee for substantive review.

11.2 The Committee reviews the application against the eligibility criteria set forth in Chapter 3 of these Guidelines.

11.3 The Committee may:

- (a) Request additional information or documentation from the applicant;
- (b) Conduct a site visit or virtual interview with the applicant's leadership, if deemed necessary;
- (c) Consult external experts or references, with the applicant's consent.

11.4 The Committee shall complete its review within 45 days of receipt of a complete application. This period may be extended if additional information is requested.

Article 12: Decision

12.1 The Membership Credentials Committee makes a recommendation to the IAPUC Board of Directors, which makes the final decision on membership

applications.

12.2 The possible decisions are:

- (a) **Approved:** The applicant is granted Full Membership;
- (b) **Approved with Observation Period:** The applicant is granted Full Membership subject to an observation period, as provided for newly established institutions;
- (c) **Deferred:** The application requires further information or clarification before a decision can be made;
- (d) **Denied:** The applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria.

12.3 The applicant shall be notified in writing of the decision. If the application is denied, reasons shall be provided.

12.4 An applicant whose application is denied may reapply after 12 months, addressing the reasons for denial in its new application.

Article 13: Admission and Membership Activation

13.1 Upon approval, the applicant must pay the first-year membership dues within 30 days.

13.2 Membership takes effect upon confirmation of payment. IAPUC issues a Full Member certificate.

13.3 The institution's name and profile are added to the IAPUC online member directory.

Chapter 6: Post-Admission Obligations

Article 14: Maintenance of Membership

14.1 Full Members must:

- (a) Pay annual membership dues by the due date;
- (b) Submit annual updates on institutional information as required by IAPUC;
- (c) Comply with the IAPUC Constitution and all applicable regulations;
- (d) Notify IAPUC of any material changes that may affect eligibility.

Article 15: Pathway to Accredited Membership

15.1 Full Members are eligible to apply for IQA accreditation. The accreditation process is governed by the IQA Accreditation Manual and the IQA Accreditation Process Specification.

15.2 Upon successful attainment of IQA accreditation, a Full Member is automatically upgraded to Accredited Member, effective from the date the accreditation decision takes effect.

Chapter 7: Supplementary Provisions

Article 16: Confidentiality

All information and documents submitted by the applicant shall be treated as confidential and used solely for the purpose of evaluating the membership application, in accordance with the IAPUC Privacy Policy.

Article 17: Interpretation and Amendment

- 17.1** These Guidelines are interpreted by the IAPUC Board of Directors.
- 17.2** IAPUC reserves the right to amend these Guidelines. Amendments take effect upon approval by the Board of Directors and apply to applications submitted after the effective date.

Article 18: Effective Date

These Guidelines take effect upon approval by the IAPUC Board of Directors.

Approval

Role	Name / Title	Date
Prepared by	IAPUC Membership Standards Working Group	May 2026
Reviewed by	IAPUC Board of Directors	Pending
Approved by	IAPUC Board of Directors	Pending

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