



Institutional Membership Application Guidelines

For Tertiary Vocational Institutions

Document No.: IAPUC/MEM/APP-TVET-2026-001

Version: 1.0

Effective Date: July 10, 2025

Issuing Body: International Association of Private Universities and Colleges (IAPUC)
Board of Directors

IAPUC Institutional Membership Application Guidelines

For Tertiary Vocational Institutions

Document No.: IAPUC/MEM/APP-TVET-2026-001

Version: 1.1.2

Effective Date: July 10, 2025

Issuing Body: International Association of Private Universities and Colleges (IAPUC)
Board of Directors

Applicable to: All private tertiary vocational institutions seeking Associate Membership in IAPUC, and Associate Members seeking reclassification to Full Membership

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 tertiary vocational institutions 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 Associate Membership or seeking reclassification from Associate Member to Full Member. The guidelines herein are designed to ensure a transparent, rigorous, and fair admission process that recognizes the distinctive contributions of vocational education within the broader landscape of private higher education.

These guidelines are consistent with the IAPUC Constitution, the IAPUC Membership Eligibility and Admission Standards, and the IAPUC Strategic Development Plan (2025–2030). 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 tertiary vocational institutions applying for institutional membership in IAPUC;
- (b) Define the documentary requirements, evaluation criteria, and procedural steps for membership applications;
- (c) Recognize the distinctive characteristics of vocational education—including its strong industry linkages, competency-based learning approaches, and employment-oriented training models—within the IAPUC membership framework;
- (d) Ensure that all applicants are assessed consistently and fairly against the established standards;
- (e) Facilitate the efficient processing of applications by the IAPUC Secretariat and the Membership Credentials Committee.

1.2 These Guidelines apply to all private tertiary vocational institutions that:

- (a) Are seeking Associate Membership for the first time;
- (b) Are Associate Members seeking reclassification to Full Membership after obtaining degree-awarding authority;
- (c) 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 "tertiary vocational institution" refers to private post-secondary institutions that primarily deliver vocational education and training programmes. These institutions may offer certificates, diplomas, advanced diplomas, and, where authorized, associate degrees or equivalent qualifications. Their primary focus is on equipping learners with practical skills, technical competencies, and professional capabilities for employment, career advancement, or further study.

2.3 The term "applicant" refers to the tertiary vocational institution applying for membership or reclassification.

Chapter 2: Membership Categories for Tertiary Vocational Institutions

Article 3: Available Categories

Tertiary vocational institutions may apply for the following categories of institutional membership, depending on their degree-awarding authority:

Category	Code	Description	Eligibility
----------	------	-------------	-------------

Associate Member	ASM	Institutions without degree-awarding authority, including private vocational education providers, training institutions, and other entities substantially connected with private higher education	Open to all qualifying tertiary vocational institutions
Full Member	FM	Legally established private universities and colleges with degree-awarding authority	Open to tertiary vocational institutions that have obtained degree-awarding authority

Article 4: Progression Pathway

The typical progression pathway for a tertiary vocational institution is as follows:

- 1. Application for Associate Membership** → Review and admission as Associate Member.
- 2. Participation in IAPUC activities** → Access to professional networks, training, publications, and knowledge resources.
- 3. Reclassification to Full Member** → If the institution subsequently obtains degree-awarding authority, it may apply for reclassification.
- 4. Application for IQA accreditation** → After becoming a Full Member, the institution may apply for accreditation if it meets all eligibility criteria.

It is important to note that Associate Members are not eligible to apply for IQA accreditation. Only Full Members with valid degree-awarding authority may enter the accreditation process. Associate Members that are committed to eventually pursuing accreditation are encouraged to use their membership period to strengthen their internal quality assurance systems in preparation for the accreditation process.

Chapter 3: Eligibility Requirements for Associate Membership

Article 5: Mandatory Eligibility Criteria

An applicant for Associate 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 tertiary vocational institution;
- (b) Hold valid operating permission, registration, or license from the competent authority in its country of domicile;
- (c) Provide a copy of its registration certificate, operating license, or equivalent authorization document, duly certified or notarized as required.

5.2 Operational History

The institution must:

- (a) Have been in operation for at least two full academic or training years;
- (b) Have produced at least one cohort of graduates or completers who have received certificates, diplomas, or other recognized qualifications;
- (c) Provide evidence of graduate/completer outcomes, including employment rates, employer feedback, or further study progression, if available.

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 body, an academic or training committee, and a management team;
- (c) Provide evidence of institutional autonomy in decision-making concerning curriculum, assessment, and staffing.

5.4 Training Programmes and Quality Assurance

The institution must:

- (a) Offer recognized vocational education and training programmes at certificate, diploma, or equivalent levels;
- (b) Have a documented quality assurance system or equivalent mechanism for monitoring and improving training quality;
- (c) Provide evidence of formal processes for curriculum development, industry consultation, programme review, and student or trainee assessment.

5.5 Faculty and Training Staff

The institution must:

- (a) Employ a sufficient number of qualified instructors and trainers to support its vocational programmes;
- (b) Have documented policies and procedures for instructor recruitment, evaluation, and professional development;
- (c) Demonstrate that instructors possess relevant industry experience and vocational qualifications appropriate to the programmes they deliver.

5.6 Industry Linkages

The institution must:

- (a) Demonstrate active linkages with relevant industries, employers, or professional bodies;
- (b) Provide evidence of industry input into curriculum design, programme delivery, or student assessment;
- (c) Show that its programmes are responsive to labour market needs and employment trends.

5.7 Financial Sustainability

The institution must:

- (a) Demonstrate financial viability and sustainability through audited financial statements, independently verified financial reports, or equivalent documentation;
- (b) Have documented financial management policies and procedures;
- (c) Not be subject to bankruptcy proceedings, financial restructuring, or similar insolvency processes.

5.8 Ethical Standards and Good Standing

The institution must:

- (a) Not have been subject to major regulatory sanctions, license revocation, or public censure for misconduct, enrollment fraud, financial impropriety, or other serious violations within the preceding three years;
- (b) Have documented policies on academic integrity, ethical conduct, and non-discrimination;
- (c) Provide a signed declaration of good standing by its chief executive officer or equivalent.

5.9 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.

Chapter 4: Reclassification from Associate Member to Full Member

Article 6: Conditions for Reclassification

6.1 An Associate Member that subsequently obtains degree-awarding authority from the competent education authority in its country of domicile may apply for reclassification to Full Member.

6.2 The institution must satisfy all eligibility criteria for Full Membership as set forth in the IAPUC Membership Eligibility and Admission Standards and the IAPUC Institutional Membership Application Guidelines for Universities and Colleges.

6.3 The institution must submit:

- (a) A formal application for reclassification;
- (b) Certified evidence of its newly acquired degree-awarding authority;
- (c) Updated documentation addressing all Full Member eligibility criteria.

6.4 If an Associate Member has commenced preparatory work toward accreditation before reclassification, such preparatory work may be recognized after reclassification—meaning the institution does not need to repeat preparatory steps already taken—but the formal accreditation application may only be submitted after Full Member status takes effect.

Chapter 5: Application Procedures

Article 7: Pre-Application Consultation

7.1 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.

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

Article 8: Submission of Application

8.1 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.

8.2 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.

8.3 The application must be signed by the chief executive officer (Director, Principal, President, or equivalent) of the applicant institution, or by a duly authorized representative with documented delegation of authority.

Article 9: Required Documentation

9.1 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 registration certificate, operating license, or equivalent authorization document;
- (c) Institutional brochure, prospectus, or equivalent summary document describing the institution's history, mission, governance, and programmes.

B. Governance and Management Documents

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

C. Training Programme Documents

- (a) List of all vocational programmes currently offered, with descriptions, duration, and qualification awarded;
- (b) Programme learning outcomes or competency standards for a representative

sample of programmes;

(c) Description of the institution's quality assurance system, including programme review and industry consultation processes.

D. Faculty and Training Staff Documents

(a) Summary of instructor profile, including headcount by qualification level, industry experience, and employment status;

(b) Instructor recruitment, evaluation, and professional development policies.

E. Student and Graduate Data

(a) Current student enrollment by programme;

(b) Completion and graduation rates for the most recent two training cycles;

(c) Graduate employment or further study data, if available.

F. Industry Linkage Documents

(a) Description of industry partnerships, advisory committees, or employer engagement mechanisms;

(b) Evidence of industry input into curriculum or assessment design.

G. Financial Documents

(a) Audited financial statements for the most recent fiscal year, or equivalent independently verified financial reports;

(b) Summary of financial policies and procedures.

H. Ethical and Compliance Documents

(a) Code of conduct or ethical standards policy;

(b) Non-discrimination and equal opportunity policy;

(c) Signed declaration of good standing.

I. Alignment Statement

(a) Statement of alignment with IAPUC mission and values.

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

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

Article 10: Application Fee

10.1 An application fee of **USD 1,500** is payable upon submission of the application for Associate Membership.

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

10.3 Payment instructions are provided with the application form.

Chapter 6: Review and Decision Process

Article 11: Initial Screening

11.1 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.

11.2 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 12: Membership Credentials Committee Review

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

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

12.3 The Committee may:

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

12.4 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 13: Decision

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

13.2 The possible decisions are:

- (a) **Approved:** The applicant is granted Associate Membership;

(b) **Deferred:** The application requires further information or clarification before a decision can be made;

(c) **Denied:** The applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria.

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

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

Article 14: Admission and Membership Activation

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

14.2 Membership takes effect upon confirmation of payment. IAPUC issues an Associate Member certificate.

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

Chapter 7: Post-Admission Obligations

Article 15: Maintenance of Membership

15.1 Associate 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 16: Obligations Regarding Accreditation

16.1 Associate Members must not, in any external communication or promotional material, imply or lead the public to believe that they hold IQA accreditation.

16.2 If an Associate Member subsequently obtains degree-awarding authority, it must notify IAPUC and may apply for reclassification to Full Member.

Article 17: Participation in IAPUC Activities

Associate Members are encouraged to:

- (a) Attend IAPUC conferences, workshops, and training events;
- (b) Participate in professional networks and forums;
- (c) Contribute to the development of good practice resources and case studies;

(d) Engage with the IAPUC membership community to share experiences and learn from peer institutions.

Chapter 8: Supplementary Provisions

Article 18: 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 19: Relationship with Other IAPUC Documents

These Guidelines operate in conjunction with:

- (a) The IAPUC Constitution;
- (b) The IAPUC Membership Eligibility and Admission Standards;
- (c) The IAPUC Institutional Membership Application Guidelines for Universities and Colleges.

Article 20: Interpretation and Amendment

20.1 These Guidelines are interpreted by the IAPUC Board of Directors.

20.2 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 21: 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

Copyright Notice

The intellectual property rights in this document and the IAPUC Institutional Membership Application Guidelines for Tertiary Vocational Institutions contained herein belong to the International Association of Private Universities and Colleges (IAPUC). No part of this document may be reproduced, modified, or used for commercial purposes without the prior written authorization of IAPUC.