



Membership Eligibility and Admission Standards

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

Applicable to: All institutions and individuals applying for or holding IAPUC 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). The Association is dedicated to advancing quality in private higher education worldwide through the establishment and promotion of the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) accreditation system.

This document establishes the categories, eligibility criteria, rights, obligations, fee structures, and admission procedures for IAPUC membership. It also defines the relationship between IAPUC membership and IQA accreditation, and sets forth the governance framework for maintaining the integrity and consistency of the Association's membership system.

The standards set forth herein are aligned with the IAPUC Constitution, the IAPUC Strategic Development Plan (2026–2031), and the IQA Accreditation Manual. They reflect the practices of international academic associations and quality assurance networks, adapted to the unique characteristics of private higher education institutions worldwide.

Chapter 1: General Provisions

Article 1: Purpose and Scope

1.1 This document serves to:

- (a) Establish a clear and transparent framework for IAPUC membership categories and admission standards;

- (b) Define the eligibility requirements, rights, and obligations for each category of membership;
- (c) Set forth the fee structures and payment procedures for membership dues;
- (d) Articulate the relationship between IAPUC membership and IQA accreditation;
- (e) Provide a procedural framework for the application, admission, maintenance, and termination of membership.

1.2 This document applies to all institutions and individuals applying for or holding IAPUC membership.

Article 2: Guiding Principles

The IAPUC membership system is governed by the following principles:

Principle	Description
Voluntary Participation	Membership is based on voluntary application, except where accreditation results in automatic upgrade of membership status.
Authenticity of Credentials	All information provided in membership applications must be truthful, accurate, and verifiable.
Tiered Progression	Membership follows a tiered structure: Associate Member → Full Member → Accredited Member. Advancement is based on meeting defined eligibility criteria.
Non-Discrimination	Membership applications are evaluated without discrimination based on geographic location, institutional size, educational level, religious affiliation, or political orientation.
Proportional Rights and Obligations	The rights and benefits of membership correspond to the category and the corresponding fee obligations.

Chapter 2: Membership Categories

Article 3: Overview of Membership Categories

IAPUC offers Institutional Membership and Individual Membership. Institutional Membership is further divided into three categories:

Category	Code	Description	Eligible for IQA Accreditation?
Full Member	FM	Legally established private universities and colleges with degree-awarding authority	Yes — this is the prerequisite for accreditation application
Accredited Member	AM	Full Members that have successfully obtained IQA accreditation	Already accredited; maintains accreditation status
Associate Member	ASM	Institutions without degree-awarding authority, such as vocational training providers, corporate universities, education technology companies, and industry associations	No — not eligible to apply for IQA accreditation
Individual Member	IM	Faculty, researchers, and administrators employed at legally recognized universities or colleges	No

Article 4: Membership Progression Logic

4.1 Full Member status is the foundation for accreditation. No institution may apply for IQA accreditation without first obtaining IAPUC Full Membership.

4.2 Upon successful attainment of IQA accreditation (at any level: Provisional, Accredited, or Fully Accredited), a Full Member is automatically upgraded to Accredited Member status. No separate application is required.

4.3 Associate Members are not eligible to apply for IQA accreditation. An Associate Member wishing to pursue accreditation must first apply for and be granted Full Member status, meeting all eligibility requirements for Full Membership.

4.4 If an Accredited Member loses its accreditation status—whether through expiration, withdrawal, or revocation—its membership status automatically reverts to Full Member, provided the institution continues to meet the eligibility criteria for Full Membership. If the

institution no longer meets those criteria, it must apply for reclassification to Associate Member or withdraw from membership.

4.5 Individual Members may be affiliated with institutions in any membership category or with non-member institutions. An Individual Member's rights are not affected by the membership category of their employing institution.

Chapter 3: Eligibility Criteria

Article 5: Full Member Eligibility

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

5.1 Legal Status

The institution must be a legally registered and operating private university, private college, or private higher vocational education institution, holding valid degree-awarding authority or equivalent recognition from the competent education authority in its country of domicile.

5.2 Completed Academic Cycle

The institution must have completed at least one full academic cycle (from student admission to graduation).

For newly established institutions that have not yet completed a full academic cycle due to longer program durations, the Membership Credentials Committee may, upon special evaluation, admit them as Full Members under an observation period. During this observation period, the institution enjoys all rights of Full Membership except the right to apply for IQA accreditation. Upon completion of the observation period and the first full academic cycle, the institution transitions to unrestricted Full Member status.

Newly established institutions that do not yet meet the observation criteria may first join as Associate Members and apply for reclassification to Full Member once eligibility is achieved.

5.3 Alignment with IAPUC Mission

The institution must demonstrate genuine alignment with the mission and core values of IAPUC, and commit to the continuous improvement of educational quality. The institution must accept the IAPUC Constitution and all applicable membership regulations.

5.4 Good Standing

The institution must not have been subject to major regulatory sanctions or public censure for academic misconduct, enrollment fraud, financial scandal, or other serious violations within the preceding three years.

5.5 Recommendation or Direct Review

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

Applications recommended by an Accredited Member may be processed through an expedited review channel. 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.

5.6 Continuous Compliance

Full Member status is granted for an indefinite term, subject to continuous compliance with all eligibility criteria, fulfillment of membership obligations, and timely payment of annual dues.

Article 6: Accredited Member Eligibility

6.1 Accredited Member status arises solely from the automatic upgrade of a Full Member upon successful attainment of IQA accreditation. No separate application process exists for Accredited Membership.

6.2 A Full Member that obtains IQA accreditation (Provisional, Accredited, or Fully Accredited) is automatically upgraded to Accredited Member, effective from the date the accreditation decision takes effect.

6.3 The validity of Accredited Member status is synchronized with the validity period of the IQA accreditation. Changes in accreditation status affect membership as follows:

- (a) Accreditation Upgrade: If an institution's accreditation level is upgraded (e.g., from Provisional to Accredited, or from Accredited to Fully Accredited), Accredited Member status continues automatically, with rights adjusted accordingly to the new accreditation level.
- (b) Accreditation Lapse, Expiration, or Revocation: If an institution's accreditation lapses, expires, or is revoked, Accredited Member status automatically reverts to Full Member, provided the institution continues to satisfy the eligibility criteria for Full Membership. If the institution no longer meets Full Member criteria, it must apply for reclassification to Associate Member within 30 days or withdraw from membership.

Article 7: Associate Member Eligibility

An institution applying for Associate Membership must satisfy all of the following conditions:

7.1 Legal Operation

The institution must be a legally registered and operating private vocational education provider, training provider, corporate university, education industry association, education technology company, education research institute, or other entity substantially connected with private higher education.

7.2 Relevance of Operations

The institution's primary activities must have a substantive connection to talent development, educational services, or academic research in the private higher education sector.

7.3 Alignment with IAPUC Mission

The institution must demonstrate genuine alignment with the mission and core values of IAPUC.

7.4 Good Standing

The institution must not have been subject to major legal or regulatory violations, or actions that significantly damage the reputation of the education sector, within the preceding three years.

7.5 Continuous Compliance

Associate Member status is granted for an indefinite term, subject to continuous compliance with all eligibility criteria and timely payment of annual dues.

7.6 Accreditation Restriction

Associate Members are not eligible to apply for IQA accreditation. An Associate Member that wishes to pursue accreditation must first apply for and be granted Full Member status, meeting all eligibility requirements specified in Article 5. 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.

Article 8: Individual Member Eligibility

An individual applying for Individual Membership must satisfy all of the following conditions:

8.1 Employment

The individual must be currently employed on a full-time basis as a faculty member, researcher, or administrator at a legally recognized and duly authorized university, college, or higher vocational education institution—not necessarily an IAPUC Institutional Member.

For current Individual Members who no longer satisfy the employment requirement due to retirement, resignation, or career transition, membership may be retained for one additional full billing cycle as a one-time transitional accommodation, not a permanent retention.

8.2 Professional Background

The individual must be engaged in teaching, research, administration, or quality assurance related to higher education, and must normally hold at least a master's degree or equivalent professional qualification. For practitioners who have made notable contributions and demonstrated significant influence in the field of higher education, the degree requirement may be relaxed at the discretion of the Membership Credentials Committee.

8.3 Alignment with IAPUC Mission

The individual must demonstrate genuine alignment with the mission and core values of IAPUC.

8.4 Good Standing

The individual must not have been involved in academic misconduct, professional ethical violations, or other actions that significantly damage the reputation of the education sector within the preceding three years.

8.5 Continuous Compliance

Individual Member status is granted for an indefinite term, subject to continuous satisfaction of eligibility criteria and timely payment of annual dues.

Chapter 4: Rights and Obligations of Members

Article 9: Rights of Members

The following table summarizes the rights and privileges associated with each membership category:

Right / Privilege	Accredited Member	Full Member	Associate Member	Individual Member
Eligibility to apply for IQA accreditation	Already accredited	Yes	No	No
Right to use the IQA Accreditation Mark	Yes (per accreditation level)	No	No	No
Voting rights at the IAPUC General Assembly	Yes (one vote per institution)	Yes (one vote per institution)	Yes (observer, non-voting)	No
Eligibility to serve	Yes	Yes	No	No

on the Board of Directors				
Eligibility to serve on professional committees	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Access to member-exclusive training and seminars	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Access to Association publications and research reports	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Participation in Association professional networks and forums	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Listing in the IAPUC online member directory	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (Individual Member listing)
Membership certificate	Yes (Accredited Member)	Yes (Full Member)	Yes (Associate Member)	Yes (Individual Member)
Discounted rates for accreditation-related activities	Yes	Yes (during application)	No	No

9.1 Exercise of Voting Rights

Full Members and Accredited Members each hold one vote at the IAPUC General Assembly. Voting rights may only be exercised if the membership is in good standing and annual dues for the current year have been paid. If a Full Member's accreditation lapses and its status reverts to Full Member, its voting rights remain unaffected.

9.2 Individual Member Governance Participation

Individual Members may serve on IAPUC professional committees (such as the Academic Committee, Professional Development Committee, etc.) in their personal capacity, contributing

professional expertise to the Association's academic and operational activities. Service on a professional committee does not confer voting rights at the General Assembly.

9.3 Recommendation Rights

Institutional Members may recommend qualified institutions for membership. Recommendations do not affect the voting weight of the recommending institution.

Article 10: Obligations of Members

10.1 Common Obligations of All Members

All members shall:

- (a) Comply with the IAPUC Constitution, these Standards, and resolutions adopted by the Association;
- (b) Pay membership dues in full and on time;
- (c) Safeguard the reputation of IAPUC and refrain from any conduct that may harm the interests or reputation of the Association;
- (d) Promptly notify IAPUC of any material changes to institutional or personal information;
- (e) Not transfer or lend membership rights to any third party.

10.2 Additional Obligations of Accredited Members

Accredited Members shall additionally:

- (a) Maintain continuous compliance with all requirements of the IQA accreditation system and ongoing oversight obligations;
- (b) Use the IQA Accreditation Mark in accordance with the IAPUC-IQA Accreditation Mark Usage and Brand Management Code.

10.3 Additional Obligations of Associate Members

Associate Members shall additionally:

- (a) Not, in any external communication or promotional material, imply or lead the public to believe that they hold IQA accreditation;
- (b) Notify IAPUC within 30 days if a material change in their scope of operations results in their no longer meeting the eligibility criteria for Associate Membership.

Chapter 5: Membership Fee Structure

Article 11: Fee Determination Principles

IAPUC membership fees are established according to the following principles:

Principle	Description
Cost Recovery and Sustainability	Fee revenue is used to cover the operational costs of membership services and the Association's development initiatives.
Tiered Reasonableness	Fees correspond to the membership category, institutional scale, and the rights and benefits enjoyed.
International Comparability	Fees are benchmarked against comparable international associations and set at a competitive intermediate level.
Regional Equity	Fees take into account differences in economic development across countries and regions, avoiding disproportionate financial burden on members based solely on geographic location.

Article 12: Institutional Membership Fee Schedule

All fees are stated in United States Dollars (USD).

12.1 Accredited Member Fees

Accredited Member fees consist of two components: IQA Accreditation Annual Fee (governed by the IQA Internal Financial Regulations) + Accredited Member Dues (governed by this document).

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Enrollment	Accredited Member Dues (USD/year)	IQA Accreditation Annual Fee	Total
Below 1,000	2,800	Per IQA Financial Regulations	2,800 + Accreditation Fee
1,000 – 5,000	3,800	Per IQA Financial Regulations	3,800 + Accreditation Fee
5,001 – 15,000	5,200	Per IQA Financial Regulations	5,200 + Accreditation Fee
Above 15,000	7,000	Per IQA Financial Regulations	7,000 + Accreditation Fee

FTE enrollment for Accredited Members includes all students across all campuses and instructional sites operated by the institution.

12.2 Full Member Fees

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Enrollment	Annual Dues (USD/year)
Below 1,000	2,200
1,000 – 5,000	3,200
5,001 – 15,000	4,500
Above 15,000	6,200

FTE enrollment is based on the most recent complete academic year as officially reported at the time of application. For multi-campus institutions, total enrollment across all campuses is used.

Upon attaining IQA accreditation, a Full Member shall pay Accredited Member dues starting from the next billing year.

12.3 Associate Member Fees

Institution Type	Annual Dues (USD/year)
Vocational education provider (non-degree-granting)	1,200
Training provider / Corporate university	950
Education industry association / Nonprofit education organization	750
Education technology company / For-profit education provider	1,600
Other qualifying institutions	Determined on a case-by-case basis by the Membership Credentials Committee

Article 13: Individual Membership Fee

The annual fee for Individual Membership is 100 USD.

Fee reductions are available in the following circumstances:

- (a) Applicants from countries classified by the United Nations as Least Developed Countries (LDCs): fee reduced to 50 USD per year;
- (b) Full-time doctoral students: fee reduced to 40 USD per year;
- (c) Other cases deemed appropriate by the Membership Credentials Committee, including individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the Association: fee reduction determined on a case-by-case basis.

Article 14: Fee Payment

14.1 Fees are payable annually. The billing cycle may be aligned with the calendar year or calculated on a rolling basis from the date of admission. For new members admitted mid-year, the first-year fee is prorated based on the remaining months of the billing cycle. Full annual fees apply from the second year onward.

14.2 Renewal fees must be paid by the annual deadline. If fees remain unpaid for more than 90 days beyond the deadline without approved exemption, membership shall be automatically suspended. If outstanding fees plus a late charge of 10% of the amount due are paid within 120 days of suspension, membership shall be reinstated. If fees remain unpaid for more than 180 days, membership shall be terminated; the former member must reapply for admission if it wishes to regain membership.

14.3 Newly admitted institutional members must pay their first-year dues within 30 days of approval of their application. Membership takes effect upon confirmation of payment.

14.4 Fees may be paid by bank transfer, online payment platform, or other electronic methods recognized by IAPUC. All payments must be directed to the designated IAPUC membership fee account. Except in cases of duplicate payment, fees are non-refundable.

Chapter 6: Application and Admission Procedures

Article 15: Institutional Member Admission Procedures

15.1 For Full Members and Associate Members

The admission procedure is as follows:

- (a) Submission of Application: The institution submits a completed Institutional Membership Application Form, together with all required supporting documentation, to the IAPUC Membership Credentials Committee.
- (b) Credentials Review: The Membership Credentials Committee reviews the application and conducts a credentials assessment within 45 days of receipt of a complete application. The Committee may request additional information or documentation as needed.

- (c) Decision: If the application is approved, the IAPUC Board of Directors formally grants membership. If the application is denied, the applicant shall be notified in writing with reasons provided.
- (d) Fee Payment: The institution pays the first-year membership dues within 30 days of approval. Membership takes effect upon confirmation of payment.
- (e) Certificate Issuance: IAPUC issues the corresponding membership certificate (Full Member or Associate Member).

15.2 For Accredited Members

No separate application is required. Upon a Full Member's attainment of IQA accreditation, membership status is automatically upgraded, and IAPUC issues an Accredited Member certificate within 30 days of the accreditation decision taking effect.

Article 16: Individual Member Admission Procedures

The admission procedure is as follows:

- (a) Submission of Application: The applicant submits a completed Individual Membership Application Form, together with proof of employment and professional qualifications, to the IAPUC Membership Credentials Committee.
- (b) Credentials Review: The Membership Credentials Committee reviews the application within 30 days of receipt of a complete application.
- (c) Fee Payment: If the application is approved, the applicant pays the first-year membership dues.
- (d) Membership Effective: Membership takes effect upon confirmation of payment, and IAPUC issues an Individual Member certificate.

Article 17: Changes in Membership Status

17.1 An institutional member that experiences a material change in its information (such as name, legal entity, or status of operating license) must notify IAPUC in writing within 30 days of such change.

17.2 A member may voluntarily withdraw from membership by providing 30 days' written notice to IAPUC. Paid fees are non-refundable.

17.3 If a member no longer meets the eligibility criteria for its current membership category, it must proactively apply for reclassification or withdraw. If no proactive action is taken, the Membership Credentials Committee may, upon verification, reclassify or terminate the membership.

Chapter 7: Relationship between Membership and Accreditation

Article 18: Membership as Prerequisite for Accreditation

18.1 Full Membership in IAPUC is a mandatory prerequisite for applying for IQA accreditation. No institution may apply for IQA accreditation without first having obtained Full Member status.

18.2 This requirement ensures that all institutions entering the IQA accreditation process have been vetted for basic legal standing, degree-awarding authority, and alignment with IAPUC's mission and values. It also establishes a prior relationship through which the institution becomes familiar with IAPUC's governance and quality culture before undertaking the rigorous accreditation process.

Article 19: Automatic Upgrade upon Accreditation

19.1 A Full Member that successfully obtains IQA accreditation—at any level—is automatically upgraded to Accredited Member. This upgrade reflects the institution's demonstrated commitment to quality and its achievement of a recognized quality benchmark.

19.2 The effective date of the membership upgrade is the date on which the accreditation decision takes effect.

Article 20: Reversion upon Loss of Accreditation

20.1 If an Accredited Member's accreditation lapses, expires, or is revoked, its membership status automatically reverts to Full Member—provided the institution continues to meet the eligibility criteria for Full Membership.

20.2 If the institution no longer meets Full Member criteria (for example, if its degree-awarding authority has been revoked), it must apply for reclassification to Associate Member or withdraw from membership.

20.3 This reversion mechanism ensures that membership status at all times accurately reflects the institution's current relationship with IAPUC and its quality assurance framework.

Chapter 8: Special Provisions for Founding Sponsors

Article 21: Founding Sponsor Status

21.1 The Founding Sponsors of IAPUC are:

- (a) Fuyao University of Science and Technology (degree-granting institution);
- (b) The Asia Pacific School of Business (degree-granting institution);
- (c) Global Academy of Finance and Management (non-degree-granting academic organization).

21.2 The two degree-granting Founding Sponsors are recognized as Full Members (subsequently Accredited Members upon accreditation) with founding seats on the inaugural Board of Directors.

21.3 The Global Academy of Finance and Management, as a non-degree-granting academic organization, holds Associate Member status. During the preparatory period and the initial phase of the Association's operations, it enjoys governance participation rights equivalent to those of Founding Member institutions. It may participate in the preparatory work of the Board of Directors and the formation of the inaugural Board, but it does not participate in IQA accreditation pilot reviews or accreditation decision-making, in order to preserve the professionalism and independence of the accreditation process.

Chapter 9: Oversight and Enforcement

Article 22: Membership Credentials Committee

The IAPUC Membership Credentials Committee is responsible for:

- (a) Reviewing new membership applications and verifying credentials;
- (b) Conducting periodic reviews of existing members' continued eligibility;
- (c) Investigating alleged violations of membership regulations;
- (d) Making recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding reclassification, suspension, or termination of membership.

Article 23: Disciplinary Measures

23.1 If a member violates these Standards or the IAPUC Constitution, the following measures may be imposed, in escalating order of severity:

- (a) Written reminder;
- (b) Suspension of specified membership rights (for a period of 3 to 12 months);
- (c) Demotion to a lower membership category;
- (d) Termination of membership.

23.2 Disciplinary decisions are proposed by the Membership Credentials Committee and take effect upon deliberation and approval by the Board of Directors. The member subject to disciplinary action shall be notified in writing, with reasons provided.

23.3 A member that disputes a disciplinary decision may file an appeal with the IAPUC Appeals and Arbitration Committee within 30 days of receiving notification, in accordance with the IQA Accreditation Appeals, Complaints, and Dispute Resolution Management Measures.

Chapter 10: Supplementary Provisions

Article 24: Relationship with Other IAPUC Documents

This document operates in conjunction with:

- The IAPUC Constitution;
- The IQA Internal Financial Regulations (with respect to fee management and financial governance);
- The IQA Accreditation Appeals, Complaints, and Dispute Resolution Management Measures (with respect to the appeal of membership decisions);
- The IAPUC-IQA Accreditation Mark Usage and Brand Management Code (with respect to the use of accreditation marks by Accredited Members).

Article 25: Interpretation and Amendment

25.1 The IAPUC Board of Directors is responsible for interpreting this document.

25.2 Amendments to the fee schedule require approval by a two-thirds majority of the Board of Directors. Revised fee schedules apply from the next billing year forward and are not retroactive.

25.3 Other amendments require approval by the Board of Directors.

Article 26: Effective Date and Transitional Provisions

26.1 This document takes effect upon approval by the IAPUC Board of Directors.

26.2 Institutions that held membership under prior arrangements at the time this document takes effect shall be reclassified in accordance with the categories defined herein, with no requirement to reapply.

26.3 The first billing cycle after the effective date shall apply the fee schedules set forth in this document.

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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