# INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

## Mapping of IPA Criteria and Guidance to ESG Standards Part 1

August 2026

| ESG Standards and guidelines | Mapping to the numbered IPA criteria and guidelines (using a number for the criterion and a letter for the guideline) |
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| **1.1 Policy for quality assurance**<br>Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders. | For all IPA reviews, the institution's policy for quality assurance is required as part of supporting documentation and its application at programme level is assessed as part of the following:<br><br>**Criterion 6: Robust internal quality assurance systems are used to monitor, review, and enhance the quality of the programme. This includes the use of accessible data systems that enable the tracking of student success. Planned enhancements are tracked, communicated to stakeholders and their effectiveness is evaluated.**<br><br>For institutions with current IQA/IQR institutional accreditation from QAA, ESG 1.1 has been assessed at an institutional level as part of the institutional review.<br><br>For institutions without IQA/IQR institutional accreditation, section 1 part A of the Self Evaluation Document for IPA requires the institution's policy for quality assurance, or equivalent as well as other related structures, policies and processes. The visit (including a meeting with senior management) will confirm its application and the quality culture at programme level. |
| **1.2 Design and approval of programmes**<br>Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. | **Criterion 1: The programme has clearly defined, published, and relevant objectives and learning outcomes that align with the mission of the institution and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) or equivalent national qualifications framework.**<br><br>1a. Learning outcomes reflect sector expectations, national qualifications frameworks and relevant QAA subject benchmark statement.<br><br>1c. The learning outcomes of modules/courses are mapped to the programme learning outcomes to ensure that there are appropriate opportunities for all outcomes to be met.<br><br>**Criterion 2: The curriculum has been developed and approved using effective and approved institutional processes and structures. It is logically structured, up-to-date with current scholarship and professional practice, and effectively integrates theory and practice. It ensures all graduates meet the required international and professional standards.**<br><br>2a. Logical curriculum structure ensures that students' knowledge and skills develop incrementally over the course of their studies and makes more complex demands at each level of study and prepares them for future careers.<br><br>2b. Student workload is clearly defined (using credits, hours or other appropriate quantifiers). Teaching and assessment are planned so as to ensure balance in workload for students across the academic year. |

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| | 2c. Programmes are kept up to date by gaining regular feedback from internal and external stakeholders and making appropriate enhancements, and students have the opportunity to engage at the frontiers of their subject through research and/or other appropriate activities.<br><br>**Criterion 7: Information about the programme(s) including their accreditation status, entry requirements and learning outcomes is accurate, objective, and publicly available. Programme certification clearly states the qualification achieved and its recognition by relevant authorities.**<br><br>7f. Graduates receive certification that clearly states the qualification achieved which is mapped to published standards.<br><br>**Criterion 8: Employers, alumni, professional bodies, community partners, government agencies and other relevant stakeholders are involved, where appropriate, in the development, monitoring, enrichment and enhancement of the programmes of study.**<br><br>8d. Students have opportunities to gain understanding of the workplace and the expectations of employers. |
| **1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment**<br>Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach. | **Criterion 3: The teaching and learning methods are designed to help students to achieve the intended learning outcomes and encourage their active participation. Assessment procedures are fair, consistent, transparent and appropriate to the subject area.**<br><br>3a. Teaching and learning methods encourage student participation and support the development of independent learning, including the use of AI tools and pedagogies where appropriate. The approach (whether face to face, on line or hybrid) includes sufficient variety and flexibility to cater for the needs of a diverse student population.<br><br>3b. Assessment is carefully planned to provide opportunities to demonstrate the extent to which learning outcomes have been met. They reflect the international standards expected for each level of study (as defined in qualifications frameworks, subject benchmarks, professional standards).<br><br>3d. Students receive support in developing the academic, digital and transferrable skills required to be successful in their learning and following completion of the programme.<br><br>3e. Students receive support in preparing for different types of assessment; including the the appropriate use of AI and awareness of academic misconduct, and feedback on assessment promotes improvement.<br><br>3f. Regulations for passing, progressing and calculation of final outcomes are clear and available to staff and students.<br><br>3g. There are coherent and easily understandable policies and procedures related to academic integrity and the use of artificial intelligence. |

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| | 3h. Students understand the processes for mitigation, complaints and appeals.<br>2d. Programme delivery teams create opportunities for students to participate as partners in their learning. |
| **1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification**<br>Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification. | **Criterion 6: Robust internal quality assurance systems are used to monitor, review, and enhance the quality of the programme. This includes the use of accessible data systems that enable the tracking of student success. Planned enhancements are tracked, communicated to stakeholders and their effectiveness is evaluated.**<br><br>**Criterion 7: Information about the programme(s) including their accreditation status, entry requirements and learning outcomes is accurate, objective and publicly available. Programme certification clearly states the qualification achieved and its recognition by relevant authorities.**<br><br>7d. The application and admissions processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.<br><br>7e. New entrants receive an induction to their programme that enables them to understand expectations and sources of information and support.<br><br>7f. Graduates receive certification that clearly states the qualification achieved which is mapped to published standards.<br><br>3f. Regulations for passing, progressing and calculation of final outcomes are clear and available to staff and students. |
| **1.5 Teaching staff**<br>Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff. | **Criterion 4: Teaching staff are appropriately qualified, have relevant expertise and experience, and engage in continuous professional development to ensure they remain up to date. The institution provides a supportive environment for its staff.**<br><br>4a. Programme-related staff are recruited using a transparent process and supported during their induction period.<br><br>4b. Staff numbers, qualifications and areas of expertise are appropriate to deliver the programme.<br><br>4c. There is a process for the regular review of staff which identifies strengths and areas for development.<br><br>4d. Staff can access training and development to support their teaching, use of technology and wider roles.<br><br>4e. Staff research and/or scholarly activity clearly underpins programme delivery. |

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| **1.6 Learning resources and student support**<br>Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided. | **Criterion 5: Students have access to sufficient learning resources, including library facilities, IT infrastructure, and appropriate teaching and learning spaces. Adequate student support services and career counselling are also provided.**<br><br>5a. Students can access adequate teaching and learning resources to support their studies. This includes on line and/or physical resources.<br><br>5b. Reading lists, or their equivalent, are kept up to date and include a range of relevant sources.<br><br>5c. Students are able to access and use the IT hardware and software that they need to carry out their assessments and other programme-related tasks.<br><br>5d. Students are aware of the professional support services that are available to them and are provided with information and advice on how to access them.<br><br>5e. Professional services staff understand the needs of a diverse range of students and ensure that they have the necessary provision to meet their needs. |
| **1.7 Information management**<br>Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities. | **Criterion 6: Robust internal quality assurance systems are used to monitor, review, and enhance the quality of the programme. This includes the use of accessible data systems that enable the tracking of student success. Planned enhancements are tracked, communicated to stakeholders and their effectiveness is evaluated.**<br><br>6a. Effective processes are in place to collect and monitor programme related data. The data allows for comparisons to be made of student outcomes and performance. There is evidence of the analysis and use of data to inform decision-making and planning.<br><br>6b. Feedback from students and staff involved in the programme is analysed, reviewed and used to assure and enhance the quality of the programme.<br><br>6c. Data is accessible to programme level staff to monitor student success and identify aspects where students may need further support.<br><br>5f. Resources and support services gather feedback from users and use it to make further improvements. |
| **1.8 Public information**<br>Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible. | **Criterion 7: Information about the programme(s) including their accreditation status, entry requirements and learning outcomes is accurate, objective and publicly available. Programme certification clearly states the qualification achieved and its recognition by relevant authorities**.<br><br>7a. Programme information is sufficiently detailed to enable prospective students to understand its requirements and key features. |

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| | 7b. Information about cost of study, bursaries and other financial aspects of the programme is clear and regularly updated.<br><br>7c. There is a process and designated responsibility for the checking and updating of information about the programmes in all its forms including website and social media. |
| **1.9 Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes**<br>Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned. | **Criterion 6: Robust internal quality assurance systems are used to monitor, review, and enhance the quality of the programme. This includes the use of accessible data systems that enable the tracking of student success. Planned enhancements are tracked, communicated to stakeholders and their effectiveness is evaluated.**<br><br>6a. Effective processes are in place to collect and monitor programme related data. The data allows for comparisons to be made of student outcomes and performance. There is evidence of the analysis and use of data to inform decision-making and planning.<br><br>6d. Institutional quality processes and procedures for monitoring and review of programmes are fully implemented at programme level.<br><br>6f. Programme and course/module improvements and enhancements are planned, tracked and evaluated.<br><br>5f. Resources and support services gather feedback from users and use it to make further improvements.<br><br>7c. There is a process and designated responsibility for the checking and updating of information about the programmes in all its forms including website and social media.<br><br>8a. Programme teams involve stakeholders and external members in reviewing and developing the curriculum.<br><br>8b. Feedback is sought from relevant external experts or bodies at appropriate stages of the programme's implementation. |
| **1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance**<br>Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis. | In submitting programmes for QAA IPA accreditation, the provider is committing to a process of external cyclical review. |

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