

## **CERTIFICATION, AWARDS AND GRADUATION POLICY**

POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT	
QMS DOCUMENT CODE	iQA-HET/AS2
VERSION NUMBER	8
NUMBER OF PAGES	6

	IQ ACADEMY-HET DIVISION/FACULTY	DATE
<b>COMPILED BY</b>	Quality and Regulatory Compliance Division	01/2013
AMENDMENT/REVISION HISTORY	Faculty Management Committee	12/2025
APPROVAL AUTHORITY	Faculty Management Committee	12/2025
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	Head: Faculty	12/2027

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## 1. POLICY PURPOSE

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The purpose of this Certification, Awards and Graduation Policy is to ensure that the integrity of the certification process is not compromised.

## 2. POLICY SCOPE

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This policy outlines the awarding process for iQ Academy qualifications and certificates, including digital distribution for qualification programme graduates and short course students, in adherence to the Council on Higher Education Norms.

- Students who have successfully satisfied the outcomes of the qualification programmes at the exit level will be awarded an iQ Academy (iQ) qualification certificate.
- Qualification certificates are distributed to students digitally before the annual graduation ceremony. The Council on Higher Education Norms related to the issuing of digital certificates are upheld throughout this process.
- Short course students do not participate in a formal graduation ceremony. Certificates for short course programmes are issued digitally via the Learning Management System as students complete their programmes.

## 3. TERMINOLOGY

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The following terminology is defined:

- **Qualification Certificate:** A formal document awarded to students who have successfully completed all outcomes of a qualification programme.
- **Digital Certificate:** An electronically issued qualification or short course certificate distributed through secure digital systems.
- **Summative Assessment:** Final assessment designed to measure a student's achievement of programme outcomes.
- **Academic Transcript:** A formal document summarising a student's academic performance, including module results and final outcomes.
- **Third-Party Verification:** A process that allows external parties to verify the authenticity of a student's certificate through secure systems.
- **Notarial Seal:** An official stamp printed on certificates to signify authenticity and compliance with institutional standards.
- **Unique Identifier:** A specific number or code imprinted on digital certificates to ensure traceability and authenticity.

#### 4. ASSESSMENT TO CERTIFICATION – HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

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This section outlines the process from assessment to certification for Higher Education programmes, detailing result capturing, graduate verification, and the criteria required for releasing digital certificates.

- After marking summative assessments, the results are captured onto the student portal, and the student's academic transcript is populated with their result outcomes.
- Following the capturing of the summative results, the results list and the list of potential HET graduates are generated. The results lists will contain the formative results, the class mark, the exam mark, and the final module mark.
- The results list and potential graduates are presented to the Faculty Management Committee (Academic Board) for sign-off.
- Before the certificate can be released, the student must satisfy certain payment and documentation criteria, as below:
- The student's fees for the programme must be paid up.
- The student's admission documents (highest qualification and copy of ID) must be marked as 'Compliant' on the student's profile.
- The Student Support Department does these checks and actions accordingly to release the digital certificate to the student.
- If the student does not satisfy these criteria, the Student Support Department will contact the student to request payment to be made/documents uploaded so that the student can receive their certificate. The Student Support Department will stay in contact with the student with regard to meeting the criteria.

#### 5. AWARDING OF CERTIFICATES WITH DISTINCTION

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A qualification shall be awarded "With Distinction" if a candidate:

- Passed all modules for the qualification at iQ.
- None of the modules prescribed in the programme must have failed at any point.
- Obtained an average of at least 75% for all the modules in the candidate's prescribed programme.

If a qualification has been obtained with distinction, this fact will be reflected on both the statement of final results (academic transcript) and the qualification certificate.

#### 6. STORAGE AND PRINTING OF CERTIFICATES

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This section details the procedures for storing, printing, verifying, and distributing certificates, ensuring secure handling and accurate tracking throughout the process.

- Under the guidance of the Student Support Office, certificate templates are printed. The notarial seal is printed directly onto the certificate when the certificate template is printed. The blank certificate templates are stored in a locked safe at the Academy's premises.

- When certificates are to be printed, the Student Support Team Leader generates PDF versions of the certificates to be printed. The PDF contains the students' full name, ID Number, Certificate Number, Qualification, and achievement date. The Student Support Department Team Leader will take the required blank certificate templates from the safe. The blank certificate templates and the PDF versions are sent for printing.
- Once printed certificates are received, the Student Support Team Leader will verify that all certificates have been printed and received according to the spreadsheet. The certificate number is captured electronically when the system generates the certificate. The certificate and tracking number for registered mail are captured in the student management system under the student details. An automated date is generated, which allows the monitoring of turnaround time and the date the certificate was posted to the student.
- An SMS is sent to the student, notifying them that the certificate has been posted together with the tracking number.

## 7. ISSUING OF CERTIFICATES

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This section outlines the standardised, secure, and quality-controlled process for issuing certificates, including third-party verification, restricted access, and unique identifiers.

- The digital system for issuing certificates allows for third-party verification.
- The process is standardised across programmes.
- The process is quality-controlled by the Student Support Office, and no certificates are released to students in an ad hoc manner.
- The process is regulated by ensuring access to release certificates is limited to key personnel in the process.
- The system has security features such as password-protected login/access to the system, with limited features being made available to select personnel overseeing the process of certificate release.
- The digital certificate is imprinted with a unique number that is identifiable within the system and aligned with the industry's requirements.

## 8. SAFEGUARDING CLAIMS FOR CERTIFICATES

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Any fraudulent claims for certificates will be identified as follows:

- Certificates are issued against a certificate number the Student Management System generates.
- The student's identity number appears on the certificate.
- Cross-referencing against the student database ensures authenticity.
- Certificate numbers are recorded in a Certificate Register.
- Each certificate issued is electronically stored.
- All certificates are embossed and endorsed with a signature to ensure authenticity. The CEO (Academic Director) and Dean must sign all certificates. In large volumes, it is permissible that electronic signatures be used with due regard to confidentiality arrangements being in place.

## 9. STORAGE OF STUDENT RECORDS

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Student records are reliable and secure. They are recorded electronically and kept indefinitely. All student records are recorded in a secure Student Management System according to the rules and procedures outlined in the Assessment Policy.

## 10. AWARDS FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

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iQ offers awards for academic excellence to promote and recognise students who excel in their studies:

- Certificates and prizes are awarded to the top achieving graduate for academic excellence in a particular module or programme. Achievement of an award requires a student to obtain the highest aggregate within the class.
- Awards are handed out at the annual graduation ceremony.

## 11. GRADUATION CEREMONY

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The graduation ceremony is a formal event which is held annually:

- Students may only attend the graduation ceremony upon receipt of a formal invitation.
- Formal invitations will be sent to those students who have successfully satisfied all the programme outcomes.
- It is permissible that students who have met all academic requirements but have not paid the full balance on their accounts be allowed to partake in the graduation ceremony. Such students will, however, not receive their certificates until the full outstanding balance is settled.