

QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

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Table of Contents

1. POLICY PURPOSE	3
2. POLICY SCOPE.....	3
3. TERMINOLOGY	3
4. MODE OF PROVISIONING	3
5. SCOPE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE	3
6. QUALITY ASSURANCE PRINCIPLES	4
7. QUALITY CULTURE.....	4
8. QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS.....	5
9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	5
10. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES	5
11. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT	6
12. MONITORING AND EVALUATION	6
13. COMPLIANCE AND REPORTING	6

1. POLICY PURPOSE

This policy establishes a comprehensive and systematic approach to ensuring the highest standards of academic quality and institutional effectiveness at iQ Academy. It aims to safeguard and enhance the quality of distance (online) learning provisioning, aligning with national and global standards in higher education. It sets out the roles, responsibilities, processes, and principles that govern quality assurance within iQ Academy to promote continuous improvement, accountability, and innovation.

2. POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all academic and operational functions at iQ Academy related to quality assurance in distance (online) learning. The policy governs the mechanisms, processes and principles that promote quality assurance and continuous improvement across all institutional activities.

3. TERMINOLOGY

The following terminology is defined:

- **Quality Assurance:** A formal system of policies, procedures, and practices designed to ensure that an institution meets and maintains high academic standards and delivers quality educational experiences.
- **Internal Quality Assurance:** The institution's internal system of reviewing and monitoring quality across its education, administrative and operational activities to ensure continuous improvement and compliance with its strategic objectives.

4. MODE OF PROVISIONING

iQ Academy is committed to providing high-quality distance (online) learning education that meets the standards set by relevant educational authorities. All quality assurance processes are aligned with the institution's approved distance learning model and relevant academic policies.

5. SCOPE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

This policy applies to all areas of academic and operational functions, including:

- **Teaching and Learning:** Ensuring curriculum relevance, pedagogic effectiveness, and student engagement.

- Research and Knowledge Generation: Promoting high-quality research aligned with national priorities and the academy's strategic goals.
- Student Support Services: Providing comprehensive support for student success, including academic advising, mental health resources, and career services.
- Community Engagement: Integrating community-oriented initiatives that align with iQ Academy's mission and add value to societal development.

6. QUALITY ASSURANCE PRINCIPLES

iQ Academy adheres to key principles outlined in the national Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) established by the Council on Higher Education (CHE) in South Africa.

These principles guide our commitment to quality:

- Institutional Responsibility and Accountability: iQ Academy holds primary responsibility for the quality of its educational offerings and internal quality assurance systems, ensuring student-centred learning and robust academic support.
- Integration and Collaboration: Quality assurance activities at iQ Academy are integrated across all departments, fostering collaboration among academic and administrative departments.
- Fitness for Purpose and Continuous Improvement: The institution's quality practices are fit for purpose, responsive to the educational needs of our students, and focus on continuous improvement.
- Differentiation and Responsiveness: The Quality Assurance framework respects iQ Academy's unique mission, promoting practices tailored to meet diverse learner needs and evolving industry standards.
- Transparency and Accountability: iQ Academy promotes openness in quality assurance processes and maintains accountability to stakeholders, including students, faculty, regulatory bodies, and society.

7. QUALITY CULTURE

iQ Academy fosters a quality culture that encourages self-reflection, continuous improvement, and proactive engagement among staff and students.

This culture is characterised by:

- Shared values: Promoting shared values and behaviours, prioritising quality in all institutional activities.
- Self-critical reflection: Encouraging a self-critical and reflective approach to quality assurance, moving beyond compliance-driven practices.

8. QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS

To achieve our quality goals, iQ Academy employs various mechanisms, including:

- **Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) System:** A structured system of policies, processes, and practices to maintain high standards across core functions. This system is continuously reviewed to align with the institution's goals and regulatory requirements.
- **Self-Evaluation and Peer Review:** Regular internal self-evaluation and peer review processes support a reflective and evidence-based approach to quality management, aligning with the CHE's standards for institutional reviews.
- **External Quality Assurance (EQA):** In partnership with the CHE and other regulatory bodies, iQ Academy undergoes periodic external reviews to ensure compliance with national quality standards, thus fostering credibility and transparency.

9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The implementation of this policy involves various stakeholders, each with specific roles and responsibilities:

- **Quality Assurance Office:** This office is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, coordinating self-assessment processes, liaising with external auditors, and ensuring continuous improvement.
- **Academic and Support Staff:** Faculty and administrative staff members are actively engaged in maintaining quality through curriculum development, teaching practices, student support, and feedback systems.
- **Executive Leadership:** Senior management is ultimately accountable for quality assurance outcomes, setting strategic goals and providing resources for quality enhancement.
- **Students:** Recognised as key stakeholders, students participate in quality assurance through feedback, surveys, and student forums, which inform improvements in learning experiences.

10. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

iQ Academy's quality assurance processes are structured to ensure systematic, ongoing improvement:

- **Curriculum Review:** Curricula are periodically reviewed to remain relevant and aligned with industry trends, societal needs, and technological advancements.
- **Staff Development:** Faculty and staff regularly train to enhance skills and align with the latest pedagogic practices.
- **Quality Audits and Monitoring:** Internal audits are conducted annually to assess performance against quality assurance benchmarks, while regular monitoring ensures adherence to set standards.

- Stakeholder Feedback and Engagement: Continuous feedback from students, alumni, professional bodies and employers helps shape quality strategies, ensuring that iQ Academy's offerings remain responsive and relevant.

11. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

iQ Academy is committed to quality enhancement as an ongoing practice, which involves:

- Quality Enhancement Initiatives: Initiatives aimed at exceeding basic quality standards, enhancing teaching methodologies, learning resources, and overall student experience.
- Capacity Building and Innovation: Investing in new technologies, pedagogies, and staff development programmes to foster a culture of innovation and excellence.
- Reflective Practice and Generative Methodology: Faculty and staff are encouraged to engage in reflective practices and adopt a generative methodology to discover new opportunities for quality improvements.

12. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The effectiveness of iQ Academy's Quality Assurance policy is regularly evaluated through:

- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): Tracking indicators aligned with national standards to measure institutional performance and student outcomes.
- Quality Assurance Dashboards: Visual data tools that present performance metrics, audit outcomes, and areas for improvement to provide a comprehensive overview of the institution's quality status.
- Annual Quality Reports: Compiled annually to document progress, challenges, and strategies for improvement and shared with stakeholders for transparency.

13. COMPLIANCE AND REPORTING

iQ Academy's compliance with quality standards is ensured through:

- Regular Reporting to CHE: As part of the national Quality Assurance framework, iQ Academy submits periodic reports to the Council on Higher Education detailing compliance with accreditation requirements.
- Review and Update of Quality Assurance Policy: This policy will be reviewed periodically, or as required, to ensure alignment with regulatory changes, advances in educational practice, and institutional developments.