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DATE FOR NEXT REVIEW	2029	
RELATED POLICIES	All IIE policies relate to this Policy.	

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¹ S20:2009-06-30 Item 8.1 (whole policy review)

² S32:2013-05-21 Item 9.2

³ Amendments to policy post-S43 2016-11-03: Renumbering, editing and amendments to Section 5.1 to align with the Policy and Academic Governance System document v17.

⁴ S45: 2017-08-24 Item 7.2.1 Whole policy review and policy was re-named, the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy.

⁵ Changes made to sections 7 of this Policy – to align with amendments to the Policy and Academic Governance System V22, approved at Senate 51: 2019-07-22.

⁶ Editorial changes (Glossary and Library name change) post S55: 2020-12-02

⁷ Revised IIE Strategic Intent inserted- approved at S64 2023-11-13 Item 8.4. Editorial changes made.

⁸ S66:2024-09- Item 8.2.1 (whole policy review)

⁹ S70: 2025-04-12: Editorial changes:

- Cover page updated with version number, amended and implementation date.
- CAT replaced with Academic Centre of Excellence (ACE).
- 7.1.(2) - 19 standards changed to 16 as the QAF has only 16 standards and we have added standards 17, 18 and 19 to cover research, community engagement and transformation.
- IIE031 added, in sections 8, 10 & 11 under list of policies.
- Distance Education Committee removed in Section 12.4 as per the revised IIE031 Policy.
- Other minor grammatical/ spelling/ editorial corrections.

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GLOSSARY AND ROLES¹⁰

Academic Centre of Excellence (ACE)	<p>The IIE team responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality review of the student learning journey (IQAF), • Design and periodic review of qualifications and associated curricula • Customisation and integration of technology and processes that enhance teaching and learning • Ensuring regulatory compliance • Industry-leading development programmes for academics (Sirius) • Publishing of multiple accredited academic journals and hosting national and international conferences.
Benchmarking¹¹	<p>Benchmarking involves evaluating programmes/qualifications/modules in terms of quality, breadth, content complexity, and other factors against those of similar departments in other Higher Education Institutions. External examiner reports on assessments serve as another method of benchmarking.</p>
Constructive Alignment	<p>There needs to be direct and, therefore, transparent relationships between the outcomes of a qualification (meso level of constructive alignment), outcomes of modules (micro-level), learning units, learning materials, learning activities, assessments and lecturer-student interactions in order for constructive alignment in curricula to be achieved. Consistency between all of these components is essential for constructive alignment to be achieved.</p> <p>A form of curriculum alignment that pertains to the consistency across various levels and components of a curriculum. On a macro level, it entails vertical consistency among the overall purpose of a qualification, the exit-level outcomes expected upon completion of the qualification, and the outcomes specified for individual modules. On a meso level, it involves horizontal consistency among programmes and the modules comprising them. On a micro level, it involves internal consistency among elements within programmes or modules, such as the module objectives, learning outcomes, instructional approaches, and assessment methods.</p>
External Quality Assurance	<p>The processes, mechanisms, and procedures implemented by external statutory, professional or voluntary bodies to</p>

¹⁰ S66:2024-09- Item (whole policy review)

¹¹ S66:2024-09- Item (whole policy review)

	evaluate and verify that educational quality standards at the institution are met.
Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC)	The sub-committee of the Council on Higher Education responsible for quality assurance and promotion of higher education. ¹²
Integrated Assessment Strategy	An integrated assessment strategy involves the systematic incorporation of various assessment methods and types to comprehensively evaluate students' understanding, skills, and progress across different programmes within a qualification.
Internal Quality Assurance	A comprehensive integrated framework comprising of policies, procedures, and processes within the institution, aimed at effectively managing its operations and assessing its performance across teaching and learning, research and community engagement endeavours.
Programme Review	The evaluation processes undertaken by a faculty to ensure that a programme is relevant and meets students' learning needs and industry needs. Data is collected from a number of perspectives (e.g., alumni, students, lecturers, industry experts, external academics, Kitso, etc.). The data is triangulated to identify strengths and weaknesses. Empirical data related to success or throughput rates are also used.
Quality	A multifaceted concept that involves various activities spanning from quality control to quality enhancement. It is conceptualised around four broad themes: fitness of purpose, fitness for purpose, value for money and transformation. It also involves working towards improving the quality of services and programmes to ensure the best possible student experience.
Quality Assurance	The process and method of providing evidence of the extent to which the institution has mechanisms in place to achieve its own and regulatory bodies' goals and standards.
Quality Enhancement and Improvement	Quality enhancement refers to the pursuit of continuous improvement. Quality improvement, on the other hand, is the framework and systemic approach that is used to continuously evaluate and improve programmes, services, systems and processes to meet and exceed minimum standards of provision beyond what is required by external stakeholders. Quality enhancement within the context of The IIE is always deemed to include quality assurance.
Quality Management System	The quality management system comprises principles, policies, processes, and systems that monitor how the institution can exceed minimum standards and continually improve its provision of higher education.

¹² Definition amended by item 8.2.2 of S64:2023-11-13.

The IIE/ the Institution	The Independent Institute of Education (Pty) Ltd.
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1 INTRODUCTION

- (1) The Independent Institute of Education (Pty) Ltd (The IIE) is committed to delivering high-quality education and ensuring the continuous improvement of its programmes and provisions. This Policy outlines the Institution's approach to maintaining and enhancing the quality of education offered to its students.
- (2) The goal of The IIE 001 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy is to promote excellence in learning, teaching, research, and community engagement, backed by competent quality staff and efficient service delivery from both academic and administrative support staff. It emphasises the importance of quality infrastructure and facilities to fulfil The IIE's strategic intent and strategic objectives. More precisely, the Policy aims to establish a structured quality management system that guides improvements in quality through enforceable standards and norms.
- (3) The IIE 001 Policy considers:
 - a) The external context within which The IIE functions, namely international, national, statutory and national higher education policy environments.
 - b) The internal context of The IIE, informed by The IIE's strategic intent and goal.
 - c) The historical context and development of The IIE.
- (4) Quality in higher education is still best articulated in the Higher Education Quality Committee - HEQC Founding Document (HEQC 2001: 9), where quality is a manifestation of:
 - a) The fitness of purpose of a higher education institution based on national goals, priorities, targets, and an institution's understanding of and engagement with these.
 - b) Its fitness for purpose in relation to its specified vision, mission, planning and actions concerning diversity and differentiation in South African higher education.
 - c) Value for money in relation to effectiveness and efficiency.
 - d) Transformation as it relates to social equity, quality, and fundamental institutional, cultural and academic change.
- (5) ¹³**The Strategic Intent** of The IIE is to inspire individuals to develop a sense of self as citizens of change in a complex world through its commitment to transformation and excellence in learning and teaching, scholarship, and community engagement.
 - a) We encourage and develop individuals to fulfil their potential and enable them to make meaningful contributions within their spheres of influence.

¹³ S64: 2023-11-13 Item 8.4

- b) We empower individuals to become mindful and ethical active citizens and leaders who challenge established ideologies, narratives, and ways of thinking.
 - c) We foster creativity and innovation through embracing diverse ideas and solutions in our commitment to the co-creation of knowledge that transforms individuals and society.
 - d) We pursue impactful research and collaborations that improve and enrich lives, communities, and society.
 - e) We entrust individuals to take responsibility for their learning and development while providing them with appropriate support to enhance their success.
- (6) We value a transformative mindset characterised by ‘**change**’, (an acronym for the below concepts):
- a) **Co-creation**: Collaboratively pursuing knowledge that transforms individuals and society.
 - b) **Holistic thinking**: Approaching challenges from a systemic viewpoint, acknowledging the interconnectedness and interrelatedness of all the parts.
 - c) **Advocacy**: Championing meaningful, positive, and sustainable change ethically and mindfully.
 - d) **Nation-building**: Promoting social cohesion that celebrates and embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion.
 - e) **Grit**: Navigating challenges that accompany learning and transformative change with passion, perseverance, and resilience.
 - f) **Empowerment**: Enabling individuals to participate actively in shaping their own lives and the world around them.
- (7) These characteristics collectively form a transformative mindset that embraces change, innovation, and growth, while empowering individuals and communities to create positive and lasting change in society.
- (8) We aim to develop graduates with a transformative mindset who are:
- a) **Innovative Co-creators** who seek ethical and meaningful solutions and promote transformative knowledge that addresses challenges faced by individuals and society.
 - b) **Holistic Thinkers** who adopt eco-systemic perspectives on global issues and local contexts and view challenges and solutions critically and comprehensively.
 - c) **Change Advocates** who skilfully and mindfully challenge the status quo and champion meaningful solutions through principled leadership.
 - d) **Engaged Citizens** who promote social cohesion, diversity, equity, and inclusion, leading with purpose, influence, and integrity within their respective spheres of influence.
 - e) **Resilient Navigators** who approach learning, transformational and personal challenges with unwavering perseverance and a willingness to adapt.

- f) **Empowered Individuals** who are self-directed, life-long learners who seek opportunities for growth and continually expand their knowledge and skills in pursuit of personal and professional success.
- g) **Intellectually Curious Individuals** who are self-reflective with a tolerance for ambiguity and the intellectual curiosity to explore new ways of thinking, knowing, being and understanding.
- h) **Versatile Communicators** who can both collaborate effectively within a team and work independently, with well-developed negotiation and networking skills.

(9) Quality at The IIE is, therefore, the extent to which The IIE delivers on the following:

- a) The IIE's stated purpose is to inspire individuals to develop a sense of self as citizens of change in a complex world through its commitment to transformation and excellence in learning and teaching, scholarship, and community engagement and to do so through a range of qualifications offered at multiple sites of delivery organised around a common, equitable approach to higher education in a singular institutional governance framework. This purpose, in turn, must remain aligned with national goals of creating a diverse but integrated higher education and post-school education and training system that will generate graduates able to contribute to the national developmental goals and plans.
- b) Delivering on that purpose through institutional structures, processes and activities that contribute to the achievement of its purpose in a way that supports diversity and differentiation in South African Higher Education.
- c) Offering value-for-money education to its prospective students that will enable them to become productive in the economy (employed or self-employed) while The IIE itself is independently sustainable and scalable.
- d) An institutional culture that is dedicated to respect, diversity, and inclusion in all that The IIE does so that its stakeholders are equipped and empowered to contribute to a more equitable society through the application of their knowledge, skills, and values. On a micro-institutional level, The IIE's educational offering must achieve equity of outcomes and deliver equitable learning, teaching, research and community engagement experiences and opportunities while serving its communities in a manner that is respectful and responsive to their differentiated needs and circumstances. Equity as a goal must always trump equality.

2 DEFINITIONS

- (1) Pursuing quality, as a principle, means applying and maintaining educational standards. This principle relates to both complying with specific requirements (quality assurance) and the pursuit of excellence (quality enhancement). Pursuing quality involves evaluating provision and services against a set standard. The goals of the pursuit of quality, broadly, include improvement, renewal, and progress (CHE, 2001).
- (2) Quality means putting in place all that is required to deliver on the goals and standards set internally and externally by and for the institution and sector.
- (3) Quality assurance is the process and method (means) of gathering/providing evidence of the extent to which the institution has in place the mechanisms to achieve its goals and standards and those that are put in place by external entities to which the institution subscribes or complies (CHE, 2014: 10 and CHE, 2020: 9).
- (4) Internal quality assurance is the “integrated institutional system, policies and processes” (CHE, 2020: 8) used by The IIE to manage, by measurement, feedback, and action, the quality of our teaching and learning, research, and community engagement.
- (5) External quality assurance is carried out by statutory or professional or voluntary bodies to assure themselves that The IIE meets externally defined standards and has an operational and effective internal quality assurance system. The IIE makes use of external quality assurance to validate its own measurement of quality and its quality improvement activities as well as to improve its own standards and ambitions against its purpose and standards.
- (6) Quality enhancement and improvement are interdependent in The IIE. Through a process of planned improvement, The IIE seeks to raise its standards of provision beyond the minimum standards required externally and the current internal levels of achievement (CHE, 2014: 11; CHE, 2020: 10).
- (7) Through quality assurance, improvement, and enhancement, The IIE seeks to promote, embed and deepen a quality culture in the institution. This is also understood as Quality Promotion (CHE, 2020: 10).

3 PRINCIPLES

- (1) **Commitment to Excellence:** We provide education of the highest standard, meeting the expectations and needs of our students and other stakeholders.
- (2) **Continuous improvement:** We strive for continuous improvement in all aspects of our provision, guided by feedback, data, evidence, and best practices.

- (3) **Transparency:** We maintain transparency in our quality assurance processes, ensuring stakeholders are informed and engaged.
- (4) **Compliance:** We adhere to all relevant regulatory requirements and accreditation standards, both locally and internationally.

4 QUALITY VALUES

- (1) The values that underpin the pursuit of quality at The IIE are:
 - a) Integrity
 - b) Transparency
 - c) Development
 - d) Innovation
 - e) Equity
 - f) Collaboration.

5 THE GOALS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITIES

- (1) The goals/outcomes of The IIE's quality assurance activities are:
 - a) To articulate The IIE standards and the measures for those standards.
 - b) To meet and demonstrate compliance with South African and international higher education standards and requirements.
 - c) To improve the quality of undergraduate and postgraduate provision.
 - d) To integrate teaching and learning, research and community engagement in the context of The IIE's strategic intent.
 - e) To generate evidence and information that can be used for data-driven decisions resulting in a system of continuous improvement in which the community of the Academic Centre of Excellence (ACE) and the Brands collaborate.

6 SOURCE OF STANDARDS

- (1) The standards that are applied in The IIE come from:
 - a) The Higher Education Act and its regulations.
 - b) The vision and mission (strategic intent) of The IIE.
 - c) The IIE values and principles.
 - d) The standards set by external quality assurance organisations to which The IIE subscribes or to which The IIE must comply.
 - e) The HEQSF and the NQF Act and related regulations and standards.
 - f) The IIE's associated professional bodies.
 - g) The IIE's understanding of international best practices in higher education.

- (2) The IIE affords special status to the standards against which The IIE's statutory quality assurance regulator (the CHE) measures institutions in institutional audits as these are aligned with The IIE's internal standards as well as the accreditation criteria and frameworks that govern The IIE's delivery.

7 STANDARDS (CHE 2021)

7.1 Standards

- (1) The Standards are sourced from all of the above.
- (2) For purposes of convenience and ease, the first 16 standards are those as articulated by the CHE (2021) in the new Audit Framework but are used in The IIE in categories as presented below. The CHE number for each standard is retained for ease of reporting, although it is no longer sequential.
- (3) As the CHE standards are silent on key quality imperatives of research, community engagement and transformation, The IIE has its own standards in that regard, and they are presented below.

7.2 Strategic Intent (Vision and Purpose)

- (1) **Standard 1:** The institution has a clearly stated vision and mission, and strategic goals that have been approved by appropriate governance structures, subject to comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
- (2) **Standard 2:** The stated vision, mission and strategic goals align with national priorities and context as well as sectoral, regional, continental and global imperatives.
- (3) **Standard 3:** There is demonstrable strategic alignment between the institution's quality management system for core academic activities across all sites and modes of provision, and its vision, mission and strategic goals, as well as its governance and management processes.

7.3 Governance Structures

- (1) **Standard 4:** There is a clear understanding of and demonstrable adherence to the different roles and responsibilities of the governance structures, management and academic leadership.
- (2) **Standard 10:** Evidence-based, regular and dedicated governance and management oversight of the quality assurance system exists.

7.4 Quality Management System

- (1) **Standard 5:** A quality assurance system is in place, comprising a minimum of:
 - a) Governance arrangements
 - b) Policies
 - c) Processes, procedures and plans
 - d) Instructional products
 - e) Measurement of impact
 - f) Data management and utilisation.
- (2) **Standard 8:** Systems and processes monitor the institution's capacity for quality management, based on the evidence gathered.
- (3) **Standard 9:** An evidence-based, coherent, reasonable, functional and meaningfully structured relationship exists between all components of the institutional quality management system.
- (4) **Standard 12:** The quality assurance system achieves its purpose efficiently and effectively.

7.5 Resource Allocation

- (1) **Standard 6:** Human, infrastructural, knowledge management and financial resources support the delivery of the institution's core academic functions across all sites of provision, along with the concomitant quality management system, in accordance with the institution's mission.
- (2) **Standard 11:** Planning and processes exist for the reasonable and functional allocation of resources to all components of the institutional quality management system.

7.6 Evidence-led Decision Making

- (1) **Standard 7:** Credible and reliable data (for example, on throughput and completion rates) are systematically captured, employed and analysed as an integral part of the institutional quality management system to inform consistent and sustainable decision-making.
- (2) Management oversight of the quality assurance system exists.
- (3) Reflection on policies, the way they are implemented and what is learned from monitoring this implementation needs to be informed by data, theory, and research rather than by commonsense assumptions and anecdotal evidence.

7.7 Academic

- (1) **Standard 13:** An effective institutional system for programme design, approval, delivery, management and review is in place.
- (2) **Standard 14:** There is evidence-based engagement at various institutional levels, among staff, and among staff and students, with:
 - a) Curriculum transformation, curriculum reform and renewal.
 - b) Learning and teaching innovation.
 - c) The role of technology:
 - i) In the curriculum.
 - ii) In the world of work.
 - iii) In society in general.
- (3) **Standard 15:** The student's exposure to learning and teaching at the institution across all sites and modes of provision is experienced by them as positive and enabling of their success.
- (4) **Standard 16:** Institutions engage with and reflect on the employability of their graduates in a changing world.

7.8 Research

- (1) **Standard 17:** The institution has a clearly articulated research strategy aligned with its vision, which is supported with resources, information and monitoring mechanisms and systems.

7.9 Community Engagement

- (1) **Standard 18:** The institution has a clearly articulated approach to community engagement that is aligned with its strategy and vision and is supported with resources, information, monitoring mechanisms and systems.

7.10 Transformation and Equity

- (1) **Standard 19:** Societal transformation and values of equity are explicitly integrated into all areas of functioning of the institution and are monitored and supported.

8 TEACHING AND LEARNING AS PRIORITY AREA

8.1 Quality Assurance Ecosystem

- (1) The quality of teaching and learning is assured through the implementation of the following policies:
 - a) Admissions Policy (IIE002)
 - b) Qualification Design and Programme Review Policy (IIE005)
 - c) Work-Integrated Learning Policy (IIE006)
 - d) Research and Postgraduate Studies Policy (IIE007)
 - e) Information Centre Policy (IIE008)
 - f) Assessment Strategy and Policy (IIE009)
 - g) Student Representation Policy (IIE016)
 - h) Language Policy (IIE013)
 - i) Academic and Research Conditions of Service (IIE018)
 - j) Community Engagement and Citizenship Policy (IIE019)
 - k) Teaching and Learning Strategy (IIE022)
 - l) Intellectual Integrity Policy (IIE023)
 - m) Student Support and Professional Development Policy (IIE026)
 - n) Distance Education Policy (IIE029)
 - o) The IIE Internationalisation Policy (IIE030)
 - p) Governance Policy (IIE031)
 - q) Personal Information, Intellectual Property and Cybersecurity Policy (IIE032)
 - r) Policy on the Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Teaching and Learning Practices (IIE033).

- (2) In addition, the following are indicators of the standards in core areas:
 - a) Curriculum Development and Review
 - b) Teaching and Learning
 - c) Assessment and Feedback
 - d) Learning resources.

8.1.1 Curriculum Development and Review

- (1) Ensuring that there is constructive alignment between the overarching purpose of the qualification and its intended exit-level outcomes, down to the outcomes of individual modules and the assessments associated with them.

- (2) Demonstrating that there is a rational alignment between the objectives of a specified module and the broader exit-level outcomes of the qualification, and how students are enabled and supported in achieving these objectives and demonstrating their attainment.

- (3) Demonstrating consideration for the alignment between the existing knowledge and skills of students, and what is required of them in terms of the module and programme requirements.
- (4) Evidence of vertical alignment across different NQF levels within qualifications, including how the development of concepts progresses and how complexity increases as the students advance through the programme.
- (5) Evidence of ongoing curriculum and programme renewal to ensure its relevance, currency and alignment with industry standards through regular review processes and feedback mechanisms This is followed by an improvement and development plan with monitoring actions to address recommendations identified during the evaluation process to ensure follow-through.
- (6) Evidence of deliberate consideration in determining and monitoring the overall student workload encompassing both time commitment and the anticipated depth of intellectual engagement).
- (7) Development of a curriculum designed to facilitate the aforementioned indicator, incorporating careful consideration of prerequisite and progression requirements, as well as the methodology for establishing the level, standard, and credit value of modules.

8.1.2 Teaching and Learning

- (1) The IIE is committed to a constructivist approach to learning, in which students are empowered to be active participants in the learning process. It is therefore imperative to ensure that there are initiatives in place that support a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. This entails deliberate consideration of various factors, including logistical aspects such as class size and the lecturer-student ratio, as well as the teaching methods employed tailored to this approach.
- (2) Lecturers act as facilitators of learning as opposed to dispensers of knowledge. A constructivist approach promotes deeper learning and understanding through developing students' critical thinking, problem-solving and reflective skills. Students are encouraged to actively participate in the construction of knowledge.
- (3) The IIE employs suitably qualified and experienced lecturers who are supported through professional development initiatives.
- (4) The IIE promotes innovative teaching methodologies and employs feedback mechanisms to monitor and improve teaching effectiveness,
- (5) The IIE aims to promote equitable practices across all aspects of education delivery.

8.1.3 Assessment and Feedback

- (1) Robust assessment practices are in place to assess student learning against module and exit-level outcomes, with due consideration of the overall integrated qualification assessment strategy.
- (2) The institution makes informed decisions regarding the cognitive demand of modules, and the relationship between the module content, module outcomes, and exit-level outcomes that students must achieve.
- (3) The institution makes intentional decisions regarding how assessments are structured, including the types of assessments, the types of questions, how questions are asked, and the scope and nature of the assessment tasks, whether they are assessments for learning (formative) or assessments of learning (summative).
- (4) There is evidence of validity, transparency, fairness, reliability, and authenticity in assessment practices
- (5) Timeous, constructive, and actionable qualitative feedback is provided to students for formative assessments and for summative assessments where relevant.
- (6) Internal and external moderation is used to ensure consistency and fairness in the assessment process by verifying the accuracy and reliability of assessment outcomes.
- (7) The logistical aspects of assessment are student-centred and support rigorous assessment practices, including when and how formative and summative assessments occur, and when results are made available to students.
- (8) Feedback mechanisms are in place to collect feedback from students, lecturers, and external examiners/moderators that are used to enhance assessment practices.

8.1.4 Learning Resources, Infrastructure and Facilities

- (1) The learning resources and support provided by The IIE support the attainment of the educational outcomes of students through the provision of an appropriate and wide range of learning resources, including information centres¹⁴, computer facilities, the learning management system, teaching spaces and physical spaces where individuals or groups of students can work together.
- (2) The IIE maintains modern facilities and infrastructure conducive to learning, with a focus on safety, accessibility, and technological support.

¹⁴ S55: 2020-12-02 Item 8.2.7 the term "library" reviewed to "information centre"

9 STUDENT SUPPORT AS PRIORITY AREA

9.1 Quality Assurance Ecosystem

- (1) The IIE provides comprehensive support services to students, including academic advising, counselling, and career guidance, to ensure their success and well-being throughout their academic journey.
- (2) The quality of student services, support and administration is quality assured by adherence to the Student Support and Professional Development Policy (IIE026).
- (3) In addition, the following quality indicators are in place:
 - a) Enrolment
 - b) Academic student support
 - c) Non-academic student support.

9.1.1 Enrolment

- (1) The processes and criteria for admission are ethical and transformative.
- (2) Student success is central to decisions and procedures related to admissions, including student numbers, and mechanisms used for the selection and placement of students.
- (3) Administration is respectful and includes timeous notification of the outcome of the application and registration processes.
- (4) The ongoing enrolment planning and enrolment of students include procedures for refusing readmission, monitoring programme enrolments, and throughput and completion rates.

9.1.2 Academic Student Support

- (1) Support provided is responsive to students with differing levels of ability, and the supplementary support is provided to develop specific academic skills, including academic and digital literacy.
- (2) There is an integrated system of curriculum and career advising, academic monitoring, and referral in the instance of poor academic performance.

9.1.3 Non-academic Student Support

- (1) Explicit attention is given to student well-being and the creation of a respectful, diverse, and inclusive campus culture.

- (2) This area of focus includes student life outside of formal academic programmes, and importantly, orientation and induction into the institution.

10 RESEARCH AS PRIORITY AREA

10.1 Quality Assurance Ecosystem

- (1) The quality of research is assured through the implementation of the following policies:

- a) Admissions Policy (IIE002)
- b) Qualification Design and Programme Review Policy (IIE005)
- c) Research and Postgraduate Studies Policy (IIE007)
- d) Information Centre Policy (IIE008)
- e) Qualification Completion, Credit Accumulation and Transfer, Articulation and RPL Policy (010)
- f) Student Records Policy (IIE011)
- g) Graduation and Certification Policy (IIE012)
- h) Language Policy (IIE013)
- i) Student Representation Policy (IIE016)
- j) Academic and Research Conditions of Service (IIE018)
- k) Teaching and Learning Strategy (IIE022)
- l) Intellectual Integrity and Property Rights Policy (IIE023)
- m) Student Support and Professional Development Policy (IIE026)
- n) Distance Education Policy (IIE029)
- o) The IIE Internationalisation Policy (IIE030)
- p) Governance Policy (IIE031)
- q) Personal Information, Intellectual Property and Cybersecurity Policy (IIE032).
- r) Policy on the Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Teaching and Learning Practices (IIE033).

- (2) In addition, the following are indicators of the standards in core areas:

- a) Ethical Considerations and Research Integrity
- b) Research Design and Methodology Rigour
- c) Communication and Publication
- d) Continual Improvement and Capacity Development
- e) Impact and Evaluation

10.1.1 Ethical Considerations and Research Integrity

- (1) Implementing clear and comprehensive procedures to obtain informed consent from research participants, ensuring they are fully informed about the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of the study, and that their consent is voluntary and documented appropriately.

- (2) Establishing protocols to protect the anonymity or confidentiality and privacy of research participants, including secure storage and management of data, and ensuring that identifiable information is not disclosed.
- (3) Taking measures to minimise any potential physical, psychological, social, or economic harm to research participants, including the use of appropriate safeguards, debriefing procedures, and referrals to support services when necessary.
- (4) Obtaining research ethics clearance from The IIE Research Ethics Committee or the Higher Degrees Committee is a requirement, before conducting research involving human participants, animal subjects, the natural environment, secondary studies (from NQF level 8 to 10 only), or sensitive data and ensuring that research protocols comply with relevant ethical guidelines, regulations, and institutional policies.
- (5) Conducting research with honesty, integrity, and transparency, including accurately reporting methods, procedures, findings, and limitations, and avoiding fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in all aspects of research conduct and reporting.

10.1.2 Research Design and Methodology Rigour

- (1) Ensuring that research studies have clearly defined objectives that guide the design and implementation of the research, allowing for focused investigation and meaningful interpretation of results.
- (2) Selecting an appropriate research design that is aligned with the research objectives and research questions, and that allows for valid and reliable and/or trustworthy data collection and analysis.
- (3) Using rigorous data collection methods that are appropriate for the research objectives and study design, and that minimise bias and error, and protect all stakeholders involved in the research.
- (4) Employing appropriate statistical or qualitative analysis techniques to analyse the data collected, ensuring that the chosen data analysis methods are capable of answering the research questions and that results are valid, reliable, and/or trustworthy and interpretable.

10.1.3 Communication and Publication

- (1) Ensuring that research findings are communicated clearly and accessibly to diverse audiences, including academics, practitioners, policymakers, and the general public, through publications, presentations, and other dissemination channels.
- (2) Subjecting research to rigorous peer review processes by experts in the field before publication, ensuring that the quality, validity, and significance of the research are thoroughly evaluated and validated.
- (3) Adhering to ethical authorship practices, including accurately attributing authorship to individuals who have made substantial contributions to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the research, while also acknowledging the contributions of others appropriately.
- (4) Ensuring that the language used in research communication is clear, concise, and precise, with well-defined terms and concepts that are accessible to the intended audience, minimising ambiguity and facilitating understanding of the research findings and conclusions.

10.1.4 Continual Improvement and Capacity Development

- (1) Providing opportunities for researchers, including postgraduate students and early-career academics, to engage in professional development activities such as workshops, seminars, conferences, and mentorship programmes to enhance their research skills, knowledge, and capabilities.
- (2) Offering research capacity development programmes and methodological support to researchers at all career stages, including guidance on research design, data collection and analysis, literature review, academic writing, and ethical considerations.
- (3) Ensuring that researchers have access to the necessary resources, facilities, and infrastructure to conduct high-quality research, including information centres, databases, electronic resources, and research support services.
- (4) Creating opportunities to provide researchers with constructive feedback and support from experienced researchers, supervisors, and peers to help them identify strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for growth, and to address any challenges or barriers they may encounter in their research endeavours.
- (5) Implementing robust supervision practices for postgraduate research students, including clear expectations, regular meetings, constructive feedback, and support to ensure that students receive effective guidance and mentorship throughout their research projects, leading to the successful completion of their qualifications.

10.1.5 Impact and Evaluation

- (1) The Independent Journal of Teaching and Learning (IJTL) publishes high-quality, double-blind, peer-reviewed research papers focused on teaching and learning practices.
- (2) The IJTL promotes The IIE's commitment to maintaining high-quality teaching and learning best practices and disseminating the latest information on teaching and learning best practices in its free, fully open-access platform.
- (3) The accreditation of the IJTL is testament to the quality and rigour through which each manuscript goes before it gets published.
- (4) The annual release of the journal impact factor and index used to measure the number of citations of the journal, serves as a quality management matrix for the IJTL.
- (5) All research published by IIE students or staff is recorded on the institutional research tracker and evaluated against the DHET Research Output Policy of 2015 and DHET Creative Outputs Evaluation Report 2023.

11 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS PRIORITY AREA

11.1 Quality Assurance Ecosystem

- (1) The quality of community engagement is assured through the implementation of the following policies:
 - a) Community Engagement and Citizenship Policy (IIE019)
 - b) Work-Integrated Learning Policy (IIE006)
 - c) Qualification Design and Programme Review Policy (IIE005)
 - d) Research and Postgraduate Studies Policy (IIE007)
 - e) Student Conduct and Discipline Policy (IIE015)
 - f) Student Representation Policy (IIE016)
 - g) Teaching and Learning Strategy (IIE022)
 - h) Intellectual Integrity Policy (IIE023)
 - i) Student Support and Professional Development Policy (IIE026)
 - j) Distance Education Policy (IIE029)
 - k) The IIE Internationalisation Policy (IIE030)
 - l) Governance Policy (IIE031)
 - m) Personal Information, Intellectual Property and Cybersecurity Policy (IIE032).
 - n) Policy on the Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Teaching and Learning Practices (IIE033).
- (2) In addition, the following are indicators of the standards in core areas:

- a) Ethical Conduct and Engagement
- b) Needs Assessment and Collaboration
- c) Impact and Evaluation
- d) Empowerment
- e) Sustainability and Commitment
- f) Communication and Transparency
- g) Respecting Diversity
- h) Reflection and Continuous Improvement
- i) Safety and Security for Staff, Students, and the Community.

11.1.1 Ethical Conduct and Engagement

- (1) Ensuring that communities are not exploited and that a mutually beneficial relationship is established and sustained between communities and all other relevant stakeholders.
- (2) Ensuring that all community members involved in engagement activities are provided with clear and understandable information about the purpose, risks, and benefits of participation, and that their consent is obtained voluntarily and without coercion.
- (2) Implementing measures to protect the confidentiality and privacy of community members' personal information and sensitive data shared during engagement activities and securely storing and managing such information in accordance with relevant regulations and policies.
- (3) Establishing procedures to identify and manage conflicts of interest that may arise in engagement activities, including disclosing relevant financial, personal, or institutional relationships that could influence the integrity or objectivity of the engagement process.
- (4) Holding all parties accountable for their actions and commitments to uphold ethical standards.
- (5) Regularly evaluating the ethical dimensions of engagement activities through feedback mechanisms, participant surveys, and independent reviews, and using findings to enhance ethical practices and address any identified issues or concerns.
- (6) Providing training and support to staff and community partners involved in engagement activities to enhance their awareness and understanding of ethical principles, cultural competence, and best practices in community engagement

11.1.2 Needs Assessment and Collaboration

- (1) Conducting thorough assessments to identify the diverse needs, priorities, and assets of the community through methods such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, and participatory mapping.
- (2) Engaging community members as equal partners in the planning process, ensuring their active participation in defining goals, objectives, and strategies for addressing identified needs.
- (3) Identifying and involving key stakeholders within the community, including residents, local organisations, businesses, non-government organisations, and other relevant stakeholders, in collaborative decision-making and action planning.
- (4) Adapting needs assessment methods and engagement strategies to be culturally sensitive and respectful of the diversity of perspectives, languages, and cultural norms within the community.
- (5) Developing long-term engagement strategies and action plans that go beyond immediate needs and incorporate mechanisms for ongoing dialogue, adaptation, and continuous improvement.
- (6) Establishing partnerships with the community that are based on mutual respect, trust, and reciprocity, and that result in tangible benefits and positive outcomes for both The IIE and the community.

11.1.3 Impact and Evaluation

- (1) Establishing clear, measurable objectives and outcomes for community engagement initiatives, aligned with the identified needs and priorities of the community and the goals of The IIE.
- (2) Conducting baseline assessments to establish a starting point for measuring change and impact over time, including relevant indicators related to community well-being, empowerment, and social capital.
- (3) Employing a combination of quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods to assess the impact of community engagement initiatives comprehensively, capturing both quantitative data on outputs and outcomes and qualitative insights on processes and experiences.
- (4) Engaging community members as active participants in the evaluation process, involving them in data collection, analysis, interpretation, and decision-making to ensure their perspectives and priorities are incorporated into evaluation findings.
- (5) Using evaluation findings to inform adaptive learning and continuous improvement processes, adjusting strategies, approaches, and interventions based on feedback and evidence of effectiveness to enhance impact and achieve desired outcomes.

11.1.4 Empowerment

- (1) Actively involve community members in decision-making processes related to engagement activities, allowing them to contribute their perspectives and priorities.
- (2) Providing opportunities for skill development and training within the community to enhance their abilities and resources for active participation and leadership.
- (3) Promoting equity and inclusion by addressing systemic barriers and ensuring equal opportunities for all community members to participate and benefit from engagement initiatives.
- (4) Empowering community members to take ownership and control of the development process within their communities, fostering a sense of agency, self-determination, and pride in their ability to effect positive change.
- (5) Capacitating community members through access to information and knowledge pertaining to areas of concern and/or their rights and responsibilities and enabling confidence to manage a range of situations

11.1.5 Sustainability and Commitment

- (1) Developing a comprehensive, long-term engagement strategy that outlines clear goals, objectives, and action plans for sustained collaboration with the community over time.
- (2) Securing institutional support and resources, including staff and infrastructure, to sustain engagement efforts and ensure continuity beyond short-term projects or initiatives.
- (3) Cultivating and maintaining strong, mutually beneficial partnerships with community stakeholders, based on trust, reciprocity, and shared commitment to addressing community needs and priorities.
- (4) Progressively enacting sustainable solutions that will benefit the environment and communities over the long term.

11.1.6 Communication and Transparency

- (1) Establishing clear and accessible communication channels between The IIE and the community.
- (2) Ensuring transparency in decision-making processes related to community engagement activities, including the sharing of agendas, meeting minutes, and other relevant documents with community stakeholders.
- (3) Providing community members with access to relevant information about engagement initiatives, including project goals and outcomes, in a timely and understandable manner.
- (4) Facilitating two-way communication between The IIE and the community, allowing for active listening, feedback, and dialogue to address concerns, share perspectives, and co-create solutions.
- (5) Recognising and respecting the diverse cultural backgrounds, languages, and communication preferences within the community, and ensuring that communication efforts are inclusive, culturally sensitive, and responsive to community needs.

11.1.7 Respecting Diversity

- (1) Ensuring that engagement activities are accessible and welcoming to individuals from diverse backgrounds, including those of different races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, and socioeconomic statuses.
- (2) Demonstrating cultural competence by understanding and respecting the values, beliefs, customs, and communication styles of diverse communities, and adapting engagement approaches to be culturally appropriate and sensitive.
- (3) Providing language support and translation services as needed to ensure that information and communication materials are accessible to community members who may have limited English proficiency or speak languages other than the dominant language.
- (4) Ensuring that engagement initiatives reflect the diversity of the community and include voices and perspectives from marginalised or underrepresented groups and actively seeking to address systemic barriers to inclusion and participation.

11.1.8 Reflection and Continuous Improvement

- (1) Implementing a process for regular reflection and evaluation of community engagement activities, including opportunities for stakeholders to review progress, discuss challenges, and identify lessons learned.
- (2) Establishing feedback mechanisms to gather input and perspectives from community members, staff, students, and other stakeholders involved in engagement initiatives, and using this feedback to inform decision-making and programme improvement.
- (3) Documenting and sharing insights, best practices, and lessons learned from community engagement activities within The IIE, contributing to collective knowledge building and capacity development.
- (4) Involving stakeholders, including community members, academic staff, students, and partner organisations, in decision-making processes related to programme design, implementation, and evaluation, ensuring diverse perspectives are considered and valued.

11.1.9 Safety and Security for Staff, Students and the Community

- (1) Conducting a risk assessment for each community engagement initiative and establishing appropriate risk management strategies to mitigate potential risks and ensure the safety and security of all staff, students, and the community.
- (2) Implementing appropriate policies and procedures to address and, where possible, prevent risks.
- (3) Ensuring that community engagement activities involving all stakeholders are conducted in a safe, secure, and responsible manner.

12 THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AT THE IIE

- (1) The IIE QMS (Quality Management System) consists of:
 - a) The IIE principles, policies, processes, and systems that articulate The IIE standards, enable their implementation and allow The IIE to measure impact and compliance.
 - b) The IIE procedures for measuring the above (monitoring systems).
 - c) Processes and the structure for evaluating the above and planning improvement (quality support).
 - d) The IIE Governance systems and processes for setting standards and monitoring compliance (quality support and governance).

- e) The IIE management and organisational roles and structures for implementing, monitoring, and improving The IIE's adherence and compliance (quality support and improvement).
- f) The IIE records and reports (internal and external).

12.1 Governance and Management

- (1) The IIE has policies covering all aspects of its work.
- (2) The policies are based on consistent principles.
- (3) The policies are developed collaboratively and are approved by governance structures that include student representation.
- (4) The policies are reviewed every five years or when conditions change.
- (5) Clear roles and responsibilities are assigned to individuals and teams for the implementation, evaluation and review of policies.
- (6) Compliance is monitored by managers and through various other functions such as audits and reviews, reports, dashboards, and tracking systems.
- (7) Remedial and enhancement actions are taken and interventions that are implemented are monitored and evaluated, and progress is reported.
- (8) Evidence-based regular and dedicated governance and management oversight of the quality assurance system exists.

12.2 The Internally Facing System

- (1) Internal quality assurance is built into the roles and responsibilities of all individuals and/or teams.
- (2) Use is made of systems and data to check compliance and of activities such as internal moderation to manage equity and standards.
- (3) The equity of implementation of standards, as well as overall site compliance with quality assurance and the enhancement of quality, are managed through a monitoring system called Pulse.
- (4) Sites of delivery are assessed annually against quality standards related to the annual theme for Pulse and are required to develop quality improvement plans based on the outcomes of this assessment.
- (5) Reviews of the effectiveness of the work of the Academic Centre of Excellence Team are undertaken.

- (6) Performance management is used to ensure that each individual is accountable for meeting set quality standards and to reward quality enhancement.
- (7) Goals and targets for performance and priority are explicit and monitored.
- (8) There are qualification communities of practice (QCOP) for each qualification that regularly review each qualification/programme and student and lecturer experience on the programme and performance on the programme.
- (9) There is a business intelligence and management information system for monitoring and tracking student, cohort, and lecturer performance and student and lecturer feedback.
- (10) Enhancements and decision-making are informed by the Management Information System (MIS) by evaluating relevant data on various aspects that are collected and analysed to identify areas for improvement and inform decisions.
- (11) Self-reflection is used to inform improvement plans following external quality assurance activities such as CHE audits and national reviews.
- (12) Internal quality assurance plans, processes, reports, reviews, self-reflection and improvement plans are used to enhance internal quality, and all quality interventions are monitored, evaluated, and reported on.

12.3 The External System

- (1) A system of external moderation and examination is in place to assure the quality of assessments and constructive alignment in this area. The functions of the moderators are governed by the provisions of the Assessment Strategy and Policy (IIE009).
- (2) External programme reviewers ensure that programmes are fit for purpose in meeting student and employer demands and are of an appropriate standard and quality.
- (3) Each faculty has a process in place to obtain advisory input by way of, inter alia /committees and external reviewers that support the quality assurance of programmes by advising on curriculum, implementation, and development of programmes. The functions of these structures are outlined in the Qualification Design and Programme Review Policy (IIE005).
- (4) The IIE carries accreditation from at least one international accreditation structure to ensure that its standards are locally and internationally benchmarked.

- (5) Based on the findings of external evaluations, The IIE develops and implements improvement plans that outline specific actions, timelines, and responsibilities for enhancing the quality of education and provision.

12.4 Governance Structures

- (1) The governance structure of The IIE is managed through its Governance Policy (IIE031).
- (2) The IIE has a full governance system of committees attending to all the core areas of functioning.
- (3) These include:
 - a) Senate
 - b) Teaching and Learning
 - c) Faculty Boards
 - d) Research and Postgraduate Studies (including Sub-committees)
 - e) Student Performance Review
 - f) Academic Planning and Development
 - g) Qualification Accreditation
 - h) Quality Forum
 - i) Institutional Student Council
 - j) IIE Student Faculty Academic Forum
 - k) Campus Disciplinary Committees
 - l) Disciplinary Appeals Committee.

13 RESPONSIBILITY FOR QUALITY, MONITORING, AND OVERSIGHT OF IMPLEMENTATION

- (1) Quality is the responsibility of all who act on behalf of The IIE – from administration to management, marketing, teaching and social events. While senior staff is responsible for setting and monitoring standards (quality management), quality enhancement can only really happen at the level of each staff member's job. Where appropriate, Brands and Faculties will have considerable freedom to adapt procedures and structures to their own requirements, whilst complying with The IIE policies.
- (2) It is expected that all staff take personal responsibility for professional quality and standards in all activities. Staff must implement this responsibility within a supportive environment where expectations and standards are identified, where continuous improvement is promoted, development, education, and training opportunities are made available, and feedback is actively acquired from students and other relevant stakeholders.

- (3) Monitoring and oversight of the implementation of policies must take place. This has both a quality assurance and quality enhancement function.
- a) **Quality Assurance:** Adherence to the policy is important for quality assurance. Monitoring, therefore, needs to ensure that policies are applied.
 - b) **Quality Enhancement:** Monitoring needs to ensure reflection on implementation so that the learning that emerges from reflection, which has the potential to enhance practice, can thus inform policy review.
 - c) Faculty leadership is the first level of academic quality promotion oversight. Faculty Boards provide oversight at the Faculty level, while the Senate (through the respective subcommittees) provides oversight at the institutional level.
- (4) Quality assurance and enhancement are integral to The IIE's strategic intent of providing students with a transformative educational experience that prepares them for success in their personal and professional lives. The IIE's strategic intent translates into the planning documents, systems, and annual key performance goals of all staff. Through a commitment to excellence, continuous improvement, and collaboration with stakeholders, The IIE strives to uphold high standards of quality in all aspects of provision.

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