



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

# Accreditation Handbook



WORKING TOGETHER

For Quality International Education.

UK BASED. INTERNATIONAL FOCUS.

We work globally with institutions  
and governments to improve the  
quality of their education provision.



Students at an ASIC Accredited University.

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### OUR CREDENTIALS

#### **UK Government approved**

ASIC is a UK Visas and Immigration (part of the UK Government Home Office) approved accreditation body for the Short-Term Study and Standard Visitor visas.

#### **INQAAHE: The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education**

INQAAHE is a worldwide association of organisations that is active in the theory and practice of quality assurance (QA) in higher education (HE). ASIC is a Full Member of INQAAHE. Approved Members are independently assessed and approved by the Membership & Membership Services Committee of the INQAAHE Board.

#### **ISO 9001:2015 Accredited**

ASIC holds ISO 9001:2015 certification in recognition of our commitment to high standards in the accreditation process and internal procedures.

**Please see our website for the full list: [www.asic.org.uk](http://www.asic.org.uk)**

# About ASIC



## 1. BACKGROUND

### 1.1. Introduction

Established in 2007, ASIC provides independent information to all interested stakeholders within the world of education through its international accreditation service of well-defined and objective benchmarking. As a result of our work globally and our philosophy of commitment to excellence, ASIC Accreditation is an internationally renowned quality assurance standard for every type of educational establishment [1].

### 1.2. Ethos of accreditation

ASIC Accreditation is holistic, recognising and underpinning the quality of operation at all levels of an institution's administration, governance, and learning provision. The primary objective of the accreditation process is to reward and reinforce best-practice where found and provide recommendations for further development; to aid in the continuous enhancement of internal QA processes and improvement of the student experience. Achieving accreditation through ASIC confirms external recognition of an institution's commitment to high international standards. It illustrates to students, parents/sponsors, and stakeholders that appropriate education/training is delivered competently by staff with relevant expertise in a safe and supportive learning environment.

ASIC Accreditation is independent and unbiased, with the certification of institutions (or individual faculties or departments within a larger college or university) undertaken by inspectors demonstrating a wealth of knowledge and relevant experience in the sector. The inspection phases leading to accreditation are holistic, covering all aspects of the educational experience on offer (see *Appendix A: Areas of Operation*), emphasising criteria which indicate the provision of a complete student journey. ASIC also accredits educational programmes through our Programmatic Accreditation, with the purpose of confirming the equivalence to international standards. [2]

Accreditation through ASIC enables providers to demonstrate, particularly to the international student body, that it is a high-quality institution. It supports students and their parents/caregivers in making an informed choice, helping them form a complete and honest picture of the institution's offering. Students can be confident not only of receiving worthwhile qualification(s)\* upon graduation but also that the institution's provision of quality resources, student support structures, and ethical practices will enrich their learning experience.

*\*Note, ASIC Accreditation does not confer any awarding/degree-awarding powers to an institution. Area of Operation F evaluates the delivery of the courses on offer, and our checks include that qualifications have (appropriate to the model of educational offering) the relevant approvals.*

1] Refers to all educational establishments and includes (but is not restricted to) schools, colleges, universities, distance and blended learning providers, business and management schools, and training organisations.

[2] Please note that ASIC Programmatic Accreditation does not confer degree-awarding powers to an institution.

# The ASIC Accreditation Process

## 2. ACCREDITATION PROCESS FOR INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

ASIC inspects the full range of provision and supporting activities offered by an institution, together with a detailed consideration of its documentation, helping to ensure a satisfactory level of operation is maintained.

### 2.1. The ASIC Accreditation Committee (AAC)

The AAC is responsible for making *all* decisions regarding the award, maintenance, and withdrawal or suspension of Accreditation. Please note that no member of ASIC staff is able to indicate, deliver, or override any decision that is made by the Committee. The AAC makes decisions based on the following evidence:

- the Report submitted by the Reporting Inspector(s) after an inspection visit;
- documentation provided by the institution;
- evidence provided by official agencies;
- evidence arising from the consideration of complaints and appeals;
- updated background checks.

### 2.2. The Accreditation Process

There are three stages in the process, with the following timeline and fees:

- **Stage 1: Application and Review.** 1-2 weeks. *The Application Fee is due with submission of the Application.*
- **Stage 2: Inspection - Parts 1 & 2.** 6-8 weeks. *The Accreditation Process Fee and Inspector Fees are due before the visit is confirmed. (Parts 1 and 2 are usually combined; but are two separate visits in some circumstances.)*
- **Stage 3: Report.** 6-8 weeks. *If the AAC grants Accreditation (following the visit, Report, and Decision), the Annual Fee is immediately payable and continues to be payable on the same date each year.\**

**Decision and Award of Accreditation:** The Reporting Inspector submits their Report to the AAC for review. ASIC will communicate the Decision in writing, usually within two weeks of submitting the Report. If successful, once the institution has paid the Annual Fee, the Certificate, Final Report, and Welcome Pack are then issued.

**Fees:** Details of how fee levels are decided and any circumstance where additional costs may become due (e.g. cancellation of a pre-arranged inspection) are found in the Finance Policy (*Appendix B* of this Handbook).

**Timeline:** The process is designed to be as unobtrusive to an institution's daily operation as possible. If the information submitted during Stage 1 is complete *and* an institution is immediately available for inspection, **the entire process can take as little as eight weeks to complete.** The number of weeks at each stage given above is the average period of time we find institutions take to get through the process, factoring in arranging dates for inspection. We find that there are two main reasons it can take longer:

1. The institution fails to submit the requested three different available dates for inspection, so the ASIC Office is unable to quickly ascertain the availability of inspectors to arrange the inspection.
2. The institution does not follow the process; examples include submission of incomplete information, non-payment of fees, unavailability of dates for inspection, or failure to respond to ASIC communication. *We recommend that institutions assign a designated contact person to deal with ASIC correspondence.*



**STAGE 1:**  
Application &  
Documentation



**STAGE 2:**  
Inspection  
Parts 1 & 2



**STAGE 3:**  
Review  
& Report



**Four Year  
Accreditation  
Cycle**

\*Note, in some circumstances the process may differ, and, in such cases, the Annual Fee will be due from the initial award of Accreditation.





ASIC institutions range in size and type of provision across the entire breadth of the sector.

### 2.2.1. Stage 1

**Overview:** The first step is simply information gathering. If an institution is operating as it should be, it will find the process straightforward and the documentation required\* easy to collate.

**Format:** All institutions must submit the following to ASIC to begin the process:

- The Application Form (available on the ASIC website) **completed in full**; please see the form guidance notes regarding the best way to address any queries *before* submission.
- Copies of the required documentation (see Application Form).
- The relevant fees **in full** (see the Finance Policy, Appendix B).

**Decision:** Once submitted, the application is reviewed. If the information provided is complete and acceptable, this will take no more than one week, and the process then proceeds straight to Stage 2.

If the application (including documentation) is incomplete/insufficient, ASIC will advise either:

- The institution needs to rectify any perceived shortcomings before proceeding.
- ASIC is unlikely to accredit at this time. (The institution is welcome to re-apply once it has undertaken further development.)

*\*On the rare occasion that providers feel they do not have everything required, we would advise that they contact the ASIC Office; we find that it is often the case that the relevant documentation does exist (e.g. under a different process name) or, in the case of newly-operating institutions, it may be that we can advise on any areas of confusion.*

N.B. ASIC reserves the right to decline an Application.



Observation of student learning during a Stage 2 Inspection in Indonesia.

### 2.2.2. Stage 2: Inspection Parts 1& 2

**Pre-inspection:** After the institution successfully completes Stage 1, the ASIC Office will arrange inspection dates and send the "*Checklist of Documents*" for the institution to collate and make available during the visit.

Once an inspection date is confirmed, the Lead Inspector will arrange for a short video conference (approximately 20-30 minutes) to take place 1-2 weeks before the visit. The pre-inspection meeting will provide guidance for staff co-ordinating the visit and the opportunity to ask any remaining questions. The Inspector will also send the institution the "*Preparing for Inspection*" document.

*Please note that ASIC expects institutions to tell staff and students about the visit ahead of the inspection, making them aware of the likelihood of lesson observations and that they may also receive a request to meet with the Inspector(s).*

**Inspection Format:** The format varies in relation to the institution's size, nature, location, and complexity of provision; however, for established providers with a physical campus, two or three inspectors will usually visit for two or three days (combining both inspection parts). The process differs for newly operating institutions where the institution has yet to enrol students (see *Section 2.5*). For institutions with purely online provision and operation, the Lead Inspector will liaise with the institution to organise online meetings of staff and student groups and arrange lesson observations appropriate to the mode of delivery (the Inspector will also request access to an institution's online systems, i.e. teaching and staff development platforms).

#### The remote pre-inspection meeting is for:

- Introducing the inspection stage and discussing what will be covered.
- Asking the institution to identify which lessons will be delivered during the inspection period and provide a timetable.
- Highlighting that the institution will need to identify the teaching and administration staff available to meet with the Inspector(s).
- Reminding the institution that groups of students must also be available to meet the Inspector(s) without members of staff.
- Clarifying the requirements for a suitable room\* for the inspectors to use.
- Explaining how the documentation needs to be presented in the room, in the order of the ASIC Areas of Operation: A, B, C etc.
- Asking for an organogram.

In the case of any travel restrictions due to a pandemic, civil unrest, or any other issue where the UK Foreign Office deems it unsafe to travel, ASIC will undertake a large part of the inspection process remotely, followed by a shorter confirmation inspection (onsite) when we have clearance to travel.

\*For online institutions, the Inspector will instead clarify requirements for system access, and explain the format to submit any required documents and links.



**Inspection Overview:** The Inspectors evaluate criteria from all eight Areas of Operation as detailed in *Appendix A* (see "ASIC International Standards for Accreditation"). The inspection is organised into two distinct but overlapping parts to focus on different aspects of the Standards and be as unobtrusive to the institution's normal operation as possible.

### Part 1

During the first part of the visit [1], the inspectors focus on statutory and immigration requirements, premises and health and safety, management, the adequacy of teaching resources for the advertised or planned courses, and staff and student records. The Inspector(s) will also meet with the Owner(s)\* to discuss the institution's Business Plan for ongoing operation and development.

### Part 2

Here, the emphasis is on academic matters, including teaching and learning, resources and quality management, student welfare, and reporting to official bodies. To assist with further development, the Inspector will encourage institutions to look for ways in which they might continue to improve their provision and provide recommendations to help achieve this.

The Inspector(s) will hold meetings with the senior management team, administration and teaching staff (without management present) and with a group/groups of students (without staff present). Teaching and lesson observation will occur, along with the inspection of learning resources, student/staff refreshment facilities, and any accommodation owned by the institution.

*Inspectors may request to see additional items of documentation or systems during the visit as part of the organic nature of the inspection. For example, an exchange about awarding bodies may lead to Inspectors requesting supplementary documentation regarding particular courses or asking to see a novel system for recording attendance following a discussion with staff about innovative practices.*

## Summary of Inspector activities:

### Part 1

- Meet the Owner/Principal and management
- Undertake an initial tour of all the premises
- Examine health and safety arrangements and fire-risk-related records
- Survey the library (where appropriate)
- Evaluate IT provision for staff and students
- Assess classroom facilities, laboratories, and audio-visual equipment (where applicable)
- Visit student common/refreshment areas and any institution-owned accommodation
- Inspect administration systems and process
- Confirm all "Checklist" documentation is satisfactory

### Part 2

- Meet a representative group of administration and teaching staff - without any senior management present
- Meet course/subject leaders (if appropriate)
- Observe several teaching sessions
- Meet representative groups of students (no. based on FTEs) - without staff present
- Inspect the administration systems
- Confirm all mandatory documentation is present, adhered to, and meets requirements (all documentation from the Stage 2 and 3 "Checklist of Documents" must be available for the Inspector to view)
- Hold a concluding meeting with the Principal to confer findings and next steps\*\*

## 2.2.3. Report

The Reporting Inspector will collate the application form, self-evaluation form, and documents along with the notes from the site visit(s) and produce a written report. The report covers each of the eight Areas of Operation, identifying points of strength and highlighting areas of good practice, including all ASIC Commendables conferred and any innovative approaches noteworthy of comment. Any areas to be improved/addressed are summarised under the heading "*Conditions, Recommendations, and Suggestions to the Institution.*"

The report is usually submitted to the AAC between two to four weeks after the inspection visit.

[1] As in the previous section, where the inspection takes place virtually for online-only providers the process is adapted accordingly.

\*If the Owner is unavailable, the Inspector will meet with the Principal and senior management (and meet the Owner at the concluding meeting at the end of the visit). If the Owner is not able to be present at this stage, the institution must provide a reasonable explanation to ASIC beforehand; a person authorised to speak on behalf of the Owner is to be identified and present for the concluding meeting.

\*\*The Inspector can not indicate the outcome of the visit and decision to award accreditation; the decision lies solely with the AAC.

## 2.2.4. Decision and Award of Accreditation

**Timeframe and delivery:** The AAC aims to meet and make a decision within two weeks of the Reporting Inspector's submission to award, defer, or refuse Accreditation. The result is then conferred in writing (via email) on behalf of the AAC by the ASIC Office. (ASIC staff/representatives/inspectors are not authorised to deliver an accreditation decision without the authority of the AAC in writing.)

**Decision:** Once the Accreditation Advisor has checked and edited the Final Report, the AAC will meet to determine one of the following outcomes:

1. **Award full Accreditation** for four years (not to be exceeded, Re-accreditation must occur before the period of accreditation lapses.) The initial or subsequent Annual Accreditation Fee will become due at this stage, depending on the status of previous annual fee payments (see *Appendix B*).
2. **Defer the Decision** as it is perceived that there are some weaknesses in provision. ASIC will notify the institution of the conditions to satisfy and will (usually) give a three-month period for these to be fulfilled; when met, the institution will submit its evidence. [1] The AAC will then meet to make the Decision.
3. **Refuse Accreditation** on the grounds that there are serious shortcomings in provision. In this case, the institution has the Right of Appeal (*Section 7*).

### Issuing of Accreditation Documentation (certificate, report, logo and marketing materials):

If successful, the accreditation documentation is issued once the institution satisfies the following conditions:

- ASIC receives payment of the Annual Fee (if outstanding).
- The Institution Evaluation of Inspections/Accreditation Process Form is completed and returned to ASIC.
- Any requirements detailed in the decision letter are met (with evidence).

The documentation will be initially issued by email from the ASIC Office, which includes the accreditation certificate, the report, the ASIC Badge of Accreditation (digital logo), and a digital welcome pack. The original (hard) copies of the accreditation certificate will follow in the post.

*Note that ASIC will need the full postal address (including the postal code) for an address where someone will be present to sign for receipt of the original documents. If delivery fails (due to an incorrect address/ the non-availability of someone to confirm receipt), we will charge for the reissue of the documentation (see Finance Policy, Appendix B).*



[1] Documentation/photographs to demonstrate the institution has made the required improvements. In some cases, the AAC may decide that a further visit to the institution is required to verify the evidence submitted. (There will be a charge for this visit, see the Finance Policy.)



### 2.3. Premier Status

**ASIC Premier Accredited Institutions:** When an institution demonstrates excellent practice in particular areas, at the point of awarding Accreditation, the AAC will also confer "ASIC Premier Status" to the institution; the Certificate of Accreditation and entry in the ASIC Directory will reflect this. Please see the "*ASIC Standards for Accreditation*" appropriate to the type of institution (on the ASIC website) for the criteria for gaining Premier Status.

*It is also possible for Accredited Institutions to upgrade their status to Premier during the course of the accreditation period by improving their provision in the areas outlined as commendable and providing the evidence required to ASIC. More information regarding the process for this is available from the ASIC Office.*

### 2.4. Re-accreditation

For Accreditation to continue, the institution will require another Inspection towards the end of the four-year accreditation period. The process for Re-accreditation is similar to the initial inspection, but the Stage 1 part of the process does not occur. The institution does not need to re-apply and, instead, will complete a Self-Evaluation Form. Providing the institution meets the required standards and is immediately available for inspection, the entire process will take less than four weeks to complete. There is no Application Fee for the Re-Accreditation Stage, and fees are as detailed in *Appendix B (a, vii)*.



ASIC Inspector engagement with students Part 2 of the Inspection Stage.



## 2.5. Newly operating institutions and Interim Accreditation

**Overview:** Newly established providers will be able to meet the criteria to complete Stage 1 and Part 1 of Stage 2 (excluding areas which require the institution to be fully operational). However, mandatory aspects of Part 2 of the process, such as the observation of classes and meetings with students, will not yet be possible for new institutions that have not begun recruitment or teaching. ASIC will instead consider new institutions for the award of Interim Accreditation. Interim, if awarded, allows the institution a period of up to 12 months to establish itself and recruit at least one significant cohort of students.

**Format:** The pre-inspection meeting and Part 1 of the inspection process will follow the format outlined in *Sections 2.3.1. and 2.3.2.* (minus any criteria requiring a current cohort of students). New institutions should contact the ASIC Office for more information.

### Interim Report

After the visit, the Lead Inspector will collate the application form and documents along with the notes from the site visit(s) and produce a written report, which will also assess the institution's readiness to proceed to Part 2 (identifying any areas to address before its progression).

The Report is then sent to the Accreditation Advisor for checks and editing (the report and review process usually takes two to three weeks from the inspection visit) before submission to the AAC.

**Interim Decision:** The AAC will meet to determine one of the following outcomes:

1. **Award Interim Accreditation** Accreditation for a total period not exceeding 12 months (during which Part 2 of the inspection stage must occur). The initial Annual Accreditation Fee (*Appendix B*) will become due.
2. **Defer the Decision** as it is perceived that there are some weaknesses in provision. ASIC will notify the institution of the conditions to satisfy and will (usually) give a three-month period for these to be fulfilled; when met, the institution will submit its evidence. [1] The AAC will meet to decide on the award of Interim.
3. **Refuse Accreditation** on the grounds that there are serious shortcomings in provision. In this case, the institution has the Right of Appeal (*Section 7*).

### 2.5.1. Interim to Full Accreditation

**Overview:** The award of Interim lasts for up to 12 months, and the Part 2 Inspection must occur within this period. Once the institution has enrolled students and has classes running, and has met any conditions outlined by the AAC, it should then be able to demonstrate that its provision meets all of the required Stage 2 criteria.

#### Format

The institution must inform ASIC that teaching has begun, and the ASIC Office will arrange the Part 2 visit. ASIC will also organise another remote pre-inspection meeting to help the institution prepare and ask for anything omitted from the process in Part 1. The process is detailed in *Sections 2.3.2. and 2.3.3.*

### Decision

If the institution demonstrates that its full range of provision meets the required standards and has resolved any issues identified during Part 1, the AAC will award Full Accreditation (see *Section 2.3.4.*).

[1] Documentation/photographs to demonstrate the institution has made the required improvements. The AAC may decide a further visit to the institution is required to verify any evidence submitted. (There will be a charge for this visit, see Finance Policy, Appendix B.)





## 2.6. Programmatic Accreditation

In addition to the Institutional Accreditation service described in the previous section, ASIC offers a separate accreditation service for university academic programmes. The Programmatic process involves a more detailed review of subject benchmarking, the appropriateness and verification of learning outcomes, assessment methodology, curriculum and pedagogy innovation, and research quality and relevance. More information about the process is available from the ASIC Office (please see Finance Policy, *Appendix B* for related fees).

Eligibility requirements:

- The university offering the programme(s) must have degree-awarding powers.
- Applications must be for a single programme or a small group of closely related programmes. (An entire faculty/department will (usually) need to apply for Institutional Accreditation.)

Programmatic Accreditation is an entirely separate process and award (distinct from our institutional service). Universities may apply for Programmatic at any time, before or after the university has achieved Institutional Accreditation, or apply for both types concurrently.



ASIC Premier Accredited Institution, University of Petra.



# After the award of Accreditation

## 3. POST-AWARD SERVICE AND MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION

As with all partnerships, both sides must fulfil the necessary conditions to maintain a successful working relationship. The following sections detail ASIC's service commitments and the ongoing requirements the institution must meet to maintain Accreditation.

### 3.1. ASIC Service Commitments

#### 3.1.1. ASIC International Directory listing and Institution Profile on the ASIC website

The online Directory entry includes the provider's address, website, and contact details to help students and other stakeholders to find the institution when searching for an accredited provider or confirmation of the institution's accreditation status. The additional Profile area is designed to encourage those who discover the institution through the ASIC listing to contact the institution directly or navigate to its website to learn more.

#### 3.1.2. Use of the ASIC Badge of Accreditation

The ASIC Accreditation Logo and Authorised Wording (along with the ASIC Brand Guidelines) are for institutions to use in student recruitment and marketing activities. Different logos are supplied for Interim Accreditation and full Accreditation.

*If the institution chooses to discontinue its relationship with ASIC or has its award of Accreditation withdrawn by the AAC, it may no longer use the Badge/Wording; the institution must remove them from its website and promotional materials with immediate effect.*

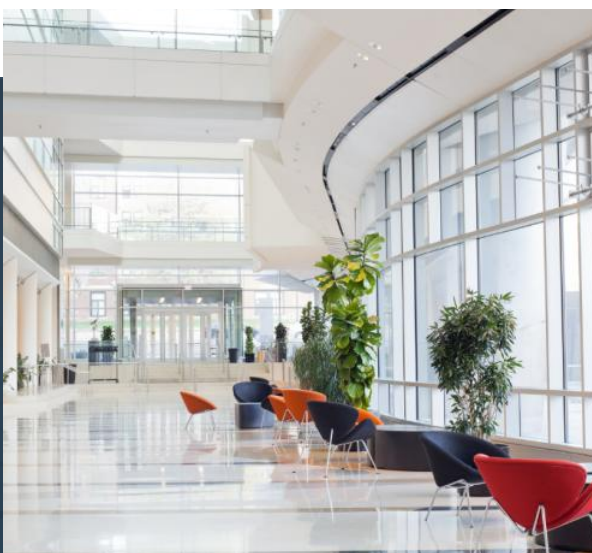


Example of the  
ASIC Accreditation Logo  
for use by fully  
Accredited Institutions

*In using the Badge and Wording, the institution agrees to follow the ASIC Brand Guidelines (and any README files sent with the resources).*

*Following them will help providers use the resources provided with confidence.*

Institutions will also receive a Marketing Pack with the Logo, Authorised Wording, and ASIC Brand Guidelines, containing useful ideas on how to use the Logo across their promotional activities to help them get the most out of their accredited status in their student recruitment and marketing activities.



### Example University has been awarded ASIC Accreditation.

Example University is excited to announce that we have been awarded Accreditation by the Accreditation Service for International Schools, Colleges and Universities (ASIC).

[READ MORE](#)





### 3.1.3. Ongoing advice and ASIC Support Services

There are numerous benefits to holding ASIC Accreditation, many of which are free at point-of-access (with costs covered by the Annual Fee). Key benefits are:

- On achieving accredited status, institutions receive an email introducing their dedicated ASIC Customer Relations point of contact, who will provide friendly and responsive assistance with any queries the institution has throughout the accreditation period. They are also the person the institution should communicate with regarding any changes in operation and contact details (see *Section 3.2.1.*).
- ASIC Call Support: ASIC will call/email several times a year to see how the institution is doing, ask if there is anything ASIC can help with, and let the institution know about upcoming events and other helpful ASIC/Partner services.
- The provision of ongoing support for business development, quality enhancement, and international partnership development
- Free access to various ASIC-run seminars/webinars/CPD training/other events.
- Discounted attendance rates for Partner services, events, and training
- Access to ASIC Newsletter

N.B. As the details for ASIC Events and Services, and those of our Partners, are time sensitive/subject to change, the above is not an exhaustive list of available benefits. More comprehensive, up-to-date information is available through our newsletters, website, and by contacting the ASIC Office.

### 3.1.4 Priority access to additional enhancement services

Opportunities to further develop your provision are available through supplementary services, e.g. ASIC International Education Conferences and ACS Consultancy (see ASIC website for more). Additional fees will apply to use these services, but we endeavour to offer priority access or provide discounts and other options exclusive to our accredited institutions.



ASIC International Education Conferences, Kuala Lumpur 2019.

### 3.2. Accredited Institution Commitments

#### 3.2.1. Actions required by an institution to maintain Accredited Status

The following conditions ensure that the institution continues to operate in a manner that protects its students and staff, maintains its ASIC Accredited Status, and upholds the institution's reputation and standing:

- Maintain the Standards of Accreditation and inform ASIC within 30 days of any significant changes to the institution's operation, e.g. in ownership and senior management, or to the location of main premises (and use of any new premises) and the courses on offer. *If there are any queries as to whether a change is significant, the institution's ASIC Point of Contact will be able to advise accordingly.*
- Assist with providing any information or evidence required by ASIC to fulfil its role of oversight, including the obligation to assist with any investigation into substantiated complaints made against the institution.
- Adhere to the "ASIC Code of Ethics and Practice" (available on the ASIC website).
- Payments of all required fees are made, on time, as stated in the terms detailed on any invoice issued and within the Finance Policy, *Appendix B*.
- Submit a completed Annual Return Form (sent by ASIC yearly in October) for each year of accreditation.
- Must not misrepresent their Accredited Status in any way which would be considered misleading or damage ASIC's reputation.
- Follow the Brand Guidelines and instructions provided with the ASIC Badge and Authorised Wording.

ASIC reserves the right to remove accreditation and the right to withdraw permission to use the Accreditation Logo, Wording, and Resources at any time. If an institution fails to meet any of the requirements listed above or declines to follow the "ASIC Code of Ethics" and "Brand Guidelines," this may lead to the removal of the institution's accredited status (*Section 6*). *If the AAC determines that an institution should lose its ASIC Accreditation, the institution has the right to appeal the decision (Section 7).*

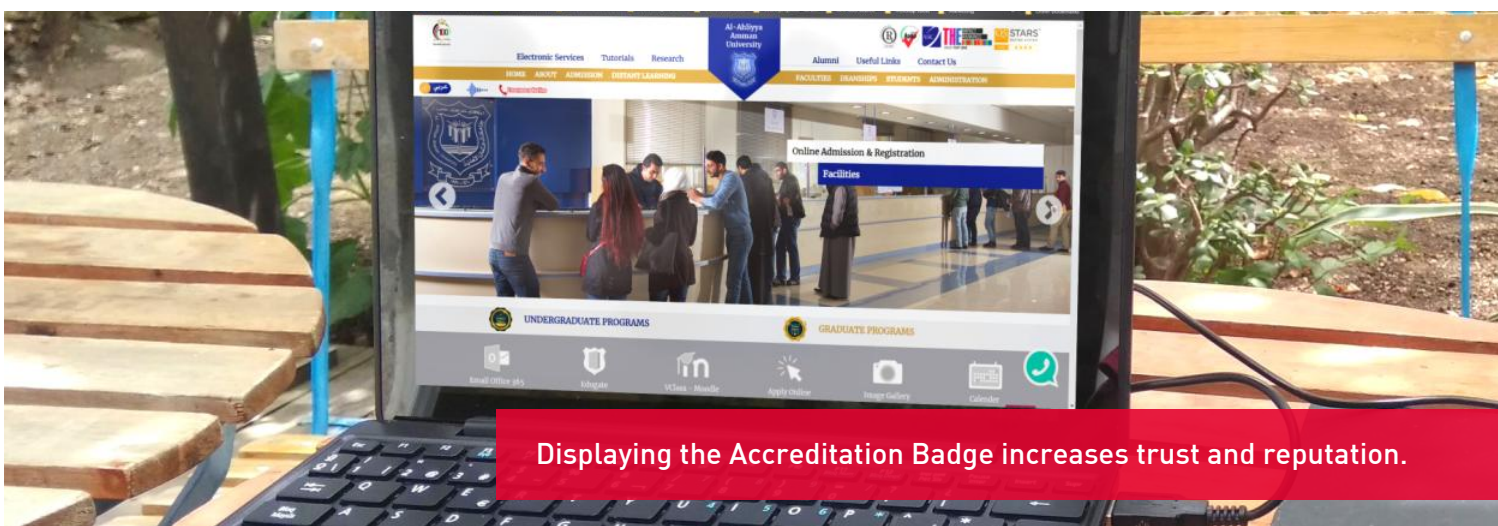
#### 3.2.2. Misuse of Accreditation status with regards to associated/partnered institutions

ASIC Accreditation pertains only to the accredited institution. It cannot be conferred or associated, in any way, with another institution or organisation (this includes other uninspected satellite campuses or institutions owned by/related to the accredited institution). Any advertisement of ASIC Accreditation status must relate only to the institution awarded as such by the AAC. The institution may not allow associated/partner institutions to state or imply that they are, in any way, linked with or benefit from the institution's award of Accreditation.

**Note on Badge of Accreditation use:** ASIC permits the use of the Accreditation Logo and Resources\* by accredited institutions ONLY.

**Permission for use does not grant ownership; institutions cannot authorise the use of the Logo or Resources to others.** If any partner of an ASIC institution wishes to demonstrate affiliation, partnership, or accreditation (or any other type of recognition by ASIC) they must seek their own relationship with us.

*\*The ASIC Brand Guidelines contain more detailed information about how to use the Badge and Resources.*







ASIC Premier Accredited Institution, Intertots Trilingual School.

### 3.3. Post-accreditation inspections and impromptu visits

#### 3.3.1. Reasons for mandatory post-accreditation inspections or impromptu visits

Sometimes it will be necessary for ASIC to inspect or visit an institution after they have gained Accreditation; the reasons for this include:

- To verify a change of circumstances, e.g. a move of premises (see *Section 3.2.1.*).
- To make an impromptu site visit in response to a concern regarding the institution's operation, a complaint about the institution, or a lack of reply to ASIC communication.
- A random spot-check.

*Note: Fees will apply for some types of post-accreditation inspection, invoiced in accordance with the Finance Policy (Appendix B).*

#### 3.3.2. Change of Circumstance Inspections

An inspection will be likely if significant changes occur in operation after the award of Accreditation. Sometimes the assessment may occur remotely; however, if ASIC needs to inspect due to the institution moving to new premises/opening additional premises, an onsite visit is required to ensure the institution meets the statutory requirements of Accreditation at the new facilities.

*The fees and terms of payment for any mandatory Change of Circumstance Inspection are per the Finance Policy (Appendix B) and the invoice issued.*

These changes include (but are not exhaustive, see *Section 3.2.1.*):

- Change of ownership
- Changes to/appointment of new senior staff
- Introduction of several new courses (affecting more than 40% of the enrolment)
- Major expansion plans for the existing premises, a move to new premises, or the opening of a satellite campus/other additional premises

#### 3.3.3. Impromptu site visits

An impromptu site visit is (usually) unannounced. A visit may occur due to significant changes (as listed above) and is likely to be an unannounced visit if:

- the institution fails to notify ASIC of any significant changes (which ASIC then learns of independently);
- there is concern that the institution is no longer operating in accordance with the requirements of holding ASIC Accreditation.

*Fees will apply for some types of post-accreditation inspection and are invoiced in accordance with the Finance Policy (Appendix B).*



# Going further

## 4. HELPING OUR INSTITUTIONS WITH CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT

### 4.1. The ASIC Internationalisation Index

ASIC's Internationalisation Index is a comprehensive evaluation of quantitative and qualitative criteria used to assess the successful internationalisation of an institution. Institutions can use the metric in three ways:

1. For guided self-assessment (often at the request of senior management): to establish how its current internationalisation strategy is performing in order to refine and adjust specific goals.
2. Achieve ASIC Internationalisation Diamonds - to celebrate and showcase existing achievements.
3. To formulate an action plan, implemented with ASIC support, for those in the early stages of their internationalisation journey.

The process varies depending on the above implementation of the Index and individual institution objectives. More information is available on request. Fees are payable for each type; see Finance Policy, *Appendix B*.

### 4.2. ASIC Platinum Crowns Accreditation

Exemplary universities strive for continuous improvement, and the evaluation of the entire student experience is increasingly relevant to the priorities of government ministries and agencies. Platinum provides an objective and reliable measure of outstanding student satisfaction across all areas, including teaching and learning, publications output, resources and facilities, industry/corporate sector links, and graduate employability strategies.

Eligibility requirements:

- ASIC Accredited Universities - with Premier Status, who feel they have gone beyond the Premier level (this may include demonstrating that they have implemented earlier ASIC recommendations) may apply to go through the Platinum inspection process.
- Have comprehensive data collection systems enabling quality monitoring of all aspects of operation, i.e. the depth of information required by ranking systems such as QS Stars and WURs. Platinum is also a useful (and time-saving) tool when applying for placement and improvement in these systems.
- Have a national reputation for the quality of its programme delivery, research, and contribution to society through community involvement, enterprise and developmental impact.

Institutions can accumulate up to five Platinum Crowns, opening up a continuing pathway for improvement. More information is available on request. (See *Appendix B* for notes on fees.)

### 4.3. Consultancy

ASIC institutions can take advantage of our area expertise at special rates. Our highly skilled and respected practitioners include VCs, CEOs, Deans, Professors, and Chairs with years of executing successful strategies and setting the highest standards in their organisations. Contact ASIC to discover how to advance your project goals.



Education leaders networking at ASIC International Conference and Education Awards.



# ASIC Complaints Procedure

## 5. COMPLAINTS AGAINST ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS

ASIC will consider genuine and relevant complaints made where the complainant has exhausted the institution's own complaints procedure and feels the response is inadequate. We take our role as a mediator seriously and will make every effort to recommend acceptable solutions for both parties.

### 5.1. Making a complaint

Complaints may be submitted via letter or email to the ASIC Customer Relations Manager (CRM) and must:

- Identify the complainant, including name, address, email, and telephone number.
- Explain the basis of the complaint, which must relate to an alleged failure to comply with the accreditation criteria.
- Include full evidence (including all correspondence, e.g. emails, call logs) of action taken to follow the institution's complaints procedure.

*We are unable to participate in arbitration where a complaint falls outside of our remit, e.g. a contract dispute, or where the relevant body to deal with the complaint supersedes ASIC, e.g. a criminal complaint (we will assist with external investigations where appropriate).*

### 5.2. Procedure for complaints

On receipt of the above, the CRM will send a letter/email to request that the complainant:

- Confirms that they have followed the institution's complaints procedures without being able to resolve the issue to their satisfaction (or can demonstrate this is not relevant).
- Authorises ASIC to investigate the complaint.

### Note - Inappropriate complaints:

ASIC will not investigate a complaint where:

- The complaint is not relevant to accreditation/not within ASIC's remit.
- The complainant did not attempt to follow the institution's complaints procedure.
- The complaint is made anonymously or by telephone with no willingness to submit in writing via letter/email, see *Section 5.1*.
- The evidence provided is insufficient or the complainant withholds/doctors evidence.
- The complainant has sought legal advice/commenced legal proceedings against the institution (therefore superseding ASIC's involvement).
- A contractual agreement exists that negates the institution's refund procedures.
- The complainant did not ensure that the course met their needs/check the awarding body has appropriate recognition for their requirements before\* enrollment.
- There is a contract dispute between the institution and its employee(s).

*\*Students should be encouraged to look carefully (and institutions should be particularly mindful to provide clarity where language barriers/cultural differences exist) at the refund policy and complaints procedures before signing an acceptance offer to avoid any future misunderstanding.*

#### 5.2.1. ASIC and Institution action:

1. The ASIC Office officially logs the complaint, and its receipt is acknowledged.
2. ASIC reviews the evidence submitted. The complainant may need to provide further evidence as required.
3. ASIC contacts the principal/owner (the institution must cooperate with the attempted resolution of any complaint upheld by ASIC, see *Section 3.2.1*.) to investigate the complaint, who must then respond with the outcome of their investigation within ten working days. The response (by correspondence and, if necessary, a meeting between the principal/owner and the complainant) must detail the complaint and propose a resolution. ASIC will review the response to ensure the institution is adhering to its accreditation commitments.

**5.2.2. Outcome:** ASIC informs the complainant of the outcome and any recommendations made to the institution or will decide to investigate further; ASIC will then make an unannounced visit to examine the issue in more detail. In appropriate cases, ASIC will inform other bodies of genuine complaints and the result of any investigation.



# Removal of Accreditation

## 6. WITHDRAWAL OR REMOVAL OF ACCREDITATION BY THE AAC

Holding ASIC Accreditation is conditional; an institution must continue to uphold the Standards by which it gained Accredited Status and all obligations listed in *Section 3.2* of this handbook. ASIC is happy to discuss situations as they arise, where appropriate, and will give a reasonable period for any issues to be resolved.

### 6.1. Reasons for Removal of Accreditation

ASIC reserves the right to withdraw Accreditation if the institution:

- No longer meets the Accreditation criteria (ASIC Standards of Accreditation).
- Fails to adhere to the *Section 3* requirements of the ASIC Handbook.
- Makes false claims/engages in misrepresentation in its publications (including on its website), particularly concerning professional memberships and accreditations.
- Fails to disclose malpractice.
- Refuses to pay any of its required ASIC Fees - on time and according to the Finance Policy (*Appendix B*) and any additional payment terms.

ASIC will also withdraw Accreditation when it receives substantiated complaints from students/stakeholders, and after investigation, ASIC finds that the institution is not meeting the Accreditation criteria.

*The reasons outlined here are not exhaustive. ASIC reserves the right to remove Accreditation if it feels the institution is not upholding the high standards of provision required or there is a perceived risk to the integrity of ASIC's reputation.*

# Appeals

## 7. RIGHT OF APPEAL AGAINST AAC DECISIONS

ASIC recognises that institutions that are refused Accreditation or have had their Accreditation withdrawn or suspended should have access to a fair and expeditious appeals process.

Should the AAC refuse to award Accreditation or suspend/withdraw Accreditation, the Chair of the AAC will contact the institution to advise the principal/owner of the decision, detailing the reasons for their decision and reminding them of their Right of Appeal. (If the Appeal is by an accredited institution, its Accredited Status remains during the appeals process.) The principal (or another appropriate representative) should then submit an appeal (with the applicable Fee, see Finance Policy, *Appendix B*) **within ten working days** of receipt of the notification from the AAC.

**Note that ASIC reserves the right to remove Accreditation without Appeal in specific cases, e.g. ASIC will withdraw the Right of Appeal if an institution is found guilty of deliberately providing false information.**

### 7.1. ASIC Appeals Procedure

#### 7.1.2. Appeal to review the rejection of an application for Accreditation

If ASIC rejects an application after a Stage 2 Inspection, the institution can:

- Request a review of the inspection report
- Submit additional documentation responding to the reasons for rejection.

The AAC will then hold the review and consider any new documentation and decide:

1. In the institution's favour: the process will then proceed to Stage 3 (or Stage 2, Part 2 if Interm Accredited).
2. To uphold the AAC's original decision: the institution has the Right of Appeal as described below.

### 7.1.3. Appeal against the AAC decision to refuse, suspend, or remove Interim or Full Accreditation

An institution wishing to appeal against the rejection of its application or against the suspension or withdrawal of Accreditation, for whatever reason (with exceptions, such as deliberately providing false information), may request a hearing by the ASIC Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee will comprise members of the AAC, the Executive General Manager of ASIC, and Inspectors (not involved in the original decision).

The appellant must:

1. Notify ASIC of their intention to appeal **within five working days** of the original AAC Decision.
2. Submit a statement setting out the grounds for the Appeal and provide any relevant documentation - **within fifteen working days** of the notification of the intention to appeal.

The Appeals Committee will endeavour to meet no later than fifteen working days after receipt of the Appeal; the institution has the right to be represented at the meeting (which will also be attended by the Chair of the AAC).

The ASIC Appeals Committee may decide to:

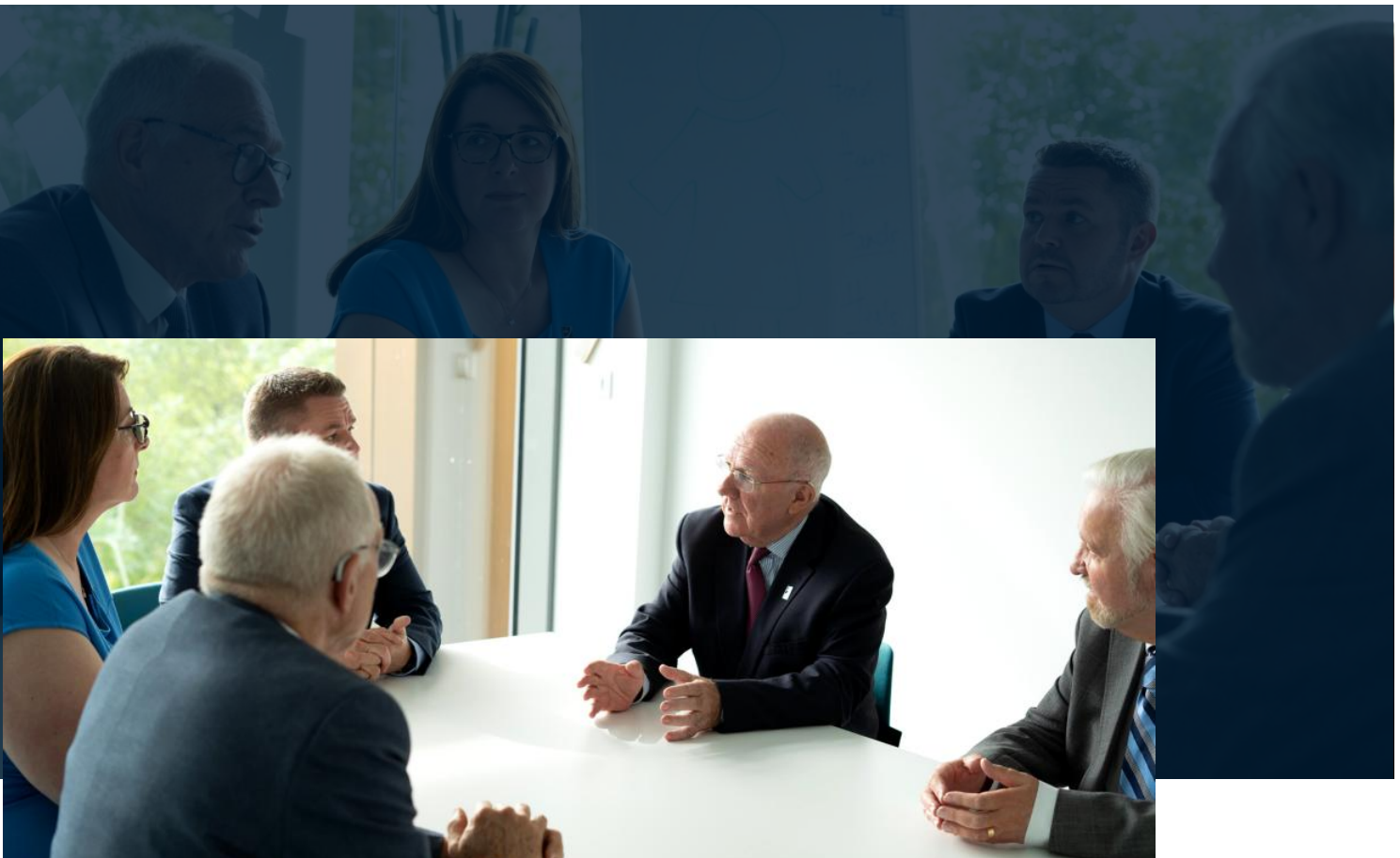
- Dismiss the Appeal
- Order a new inspection of the institution (at the expense of ASIC)
- Instruct the AAC to grant/restore Accredited Status

The Chair of the Appeals Committee will submit a report of the meeting to the CEO of ASIC, giving the grounds for the decision and any recommendations that the AAC should consider.

***The final decision rests with the Appeals Committee, after which there is no further Right of Appeal.***

### 7.2. Fee related to an Appeal

The institution must pay a deposit on submission of its Appeal, as noted in the Finance Policy (*Appendix B*). If the Appeal is successful, the deposit is fully refundable.







# Appendix A

## ASIC HANDBOOK FOR INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: GLOSSARY

### Areas of Operation:

The Areas of Operation of the ASIC Standards of Accreditation for International Institutions, which can be downloaded in full from our website (per type of institution), are as follows:

- A.** Governance, Management, and Staff Resources
- B.** Quality Assurance and Enhancement
- C.** Systems Management
- D.** Learning, Teaching, and Research Activity
- E.** Awards and Qualifications
- F.** Student Welfare
- G.** Premises and Health and Safety
- H.** Marketing and Recruitment of Students

### Glossary:

**AAC** - ASIC Accreditation Committee

**CRM** - Customer Relations Manager

**EGM** - Executive General Manager

**FTEs** - Full-Time Equivalents (Students)

**Institution** - inclusive of all types of education providers, including Schools, Further Education and TVET Colleges, Universities, Training Organisations and Business Schools.

# Appendix B

## ASIC FINANCE POLICY FOR INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Note, all applications to ASIC include a signed declaration that this policy has been read and understood.

### Introduction

Fees for international institutions are detailed below. To apply for and maintain any type of ASIC Accreditation (if awarded) or partake in any other service, it is a requirement that the institution pays all applicable fees in full in accordance with the terms stated on any invoice issued and as stated in the Finance Policy before the undertaking of services. Failure to comply with the terms of payment of the policy or invoice will lead to the termination of the application or removal of Accreditation/services. Institutions must pay all fees and expenses associated with the relevant accreditation or service when due. (Institutions which do not adhere to this will be assumed to have withdrawn from the process, which may lead to the removal of accreditation or action to recover costs for services received.)

At ASIC, we pride ourselves on being transparent in all areas of operation, including the fees we charge for our services, inspections, and reimbursement of expenses. Applicants should contact the ASIC team for a personalised Financial Proposal prior to submission of an application for accreditation; we always endeavour to keep costs as low as possible and will advise the institution of all relevant fees in their proposal. ASIC will never add any additional costs whilst a valid proposal is in place and will always advise on the expected amount of expenses when quoting fees, keeping all travel and accommodation costs reasonable and transparent.

As there can be a delay between the payment of Fees by an institution and the receipt of fees by ASIC, fees will not be considered paid until the ASIC Finance Department has acknowledged receipt of payment.

### a. ASIC Accreditation Process Fee and Annual Fees for international institutions

The cost of the accreditation process depends on the size of an institution, the type of provision, and in which country they operate. Applicants should contact the ASIC team for a personalised Financial Proposal before submission of an application for accreditation. Institutions must pay all fees and expenses associated with the accreditation process when due before any outcome is declared. Institutions which do not adhere to this (or delay payment of any Annual Fee by more than three months, see below) will be assumed to have withdrawn from the process (and if Accreditation was awarded, it will be removed.)

As a guide, fees for the accreditation process for an international institution start from a minimum of £5,000.

#### (i) Stage 1 Fee

The Fees covering Stage 1 (Assessment of completed Application Form and Supporting Documentation) are payable with the submission of the application.\*

The Stage 1 Fee is £1,000 and is payable at the time of submitting a completed ASIC application form.

*\*Note, ASIC reserves the right to decline an application at any time.*

#### (ii) Stage 2 Fee

Stage 2, Parts 1 and 2 may be combined or take place as separate visits and usually includes two or three inspectors for two or three days depending on factors such as the institution's size, as outlined at the start of this section. Therefore, the Stage 2 Fee varies; the Financial Proposal issued to the institution at the beginning of the process details the level of fee payable (before an inspection date is confirmed).

#### (iii) Annual Accreditation Fee

The Initial Annual Accreditation Fee is immediately due when either Interim Accreditation or full Accreditation is awarded (as detailed in Section 2). The institution must pay the Initial Annual Fee to complete the process and receive its ASIC Accredited status.



The Annual Fee will be between £1,000 and £3,000 depending on the number of Full Time Equivalents (FTE) registered at the institution as detailed on the application form.

The levels of Annual Fees and the numbers of FTEs are:

- £1,000 for FTEs from 0 to 199
- £2,000 for FTEs from 200 to 299
- £3,000 for FTEs from 300 and above

#### **(iv) Subsequent Annual Fees**

Payments are due on the anniversary of the institution's first Period of Accreditation (the award date for either Interim or full Accreditation, as above) for each year of its Accreditation, with the amount payable determined by the number of FTEs returned on the Annual Return Form (Section 3.2). If the institution fails to submit the Annual Return Form (or a subsequent requirement for student registration numbers as FTEs is not received, ASIC will set the Annual Fee at the highest level of £3,000 - which must then be paid immediately to maintain Accreditation.

#### **(v) Post-accreditation Inspection Fees**

Sometimes ASIC needs to inspect an institution after it has gained ASIC Accreditation (see Section 3); fees start from approximately £1,000 (plus expenses) per visit, depending on the reason for the visit, and are due before the inspection date is confirmed.

**(vi) Impromptu visits and unannounced spot-checks:** The reason for an impromptu inspection (Section 3) will determine the fee (if any) and is dependent on the circumstances of the requirement for the inspection. Any fee will be detailed on the invoice and set in accordance with this policy. ASIC does not usually charge a fee for unannounced random spot-checks; however, if ASIC finds something of concern (or needs to return due to an area of concern found) during the spot-check, a fee for the return visit will be invoiced as above.

#### **(vii) Re-accreditation Fee**

The fee to cover a Re-accreditation is payable before the inspection date is confirmed.

The breakdown of the amount payable is as follows,

- £1,350 – Inspection Fee
- £350 – ASIC Inspector Fee (per inspector, per day)

### **b. Programmatic Accreditation**

The programmatic accreditation process for an international institution will cost from £5,000. Applicants will need to contact the ASIC team for a personalised Financial Proposal prior to their application for this service, as the cost is dependent on the number of programmes to be accredited.

### **c. Platinum Crowns Accreditation**

The platinum accreditation process will cost from £3,000. Applicants will need to contact the ASIC team for a personalised Financial Proposal prior to their submission for this service.

### **d. The ASIC Internationalisation Index**

The International Index process costs from £3,000. Applicants will need to contact the ASIC team for a personalised Financial Proposal prior to their submission for this service.

### **e. Cancellation of an inspection**

If the institution cancels a visit within 21 days of the scheduled date, ASIC will invoice for the Inspector Fee (£350 per inspector per day) and any expenses incurred - for immediate payment. The institution must pay the invoice before the ASIC Office can reschedule the cancelled inspection.

*ASIC reserves the right to cancel an inspection without reason or recompense (at ASIC Management's discretion).*

#### **f. Refund of Fees paid to ASIC**

Once an application is received and the relevant fees paid, ASIC will not issue any refunds should the institution choose to withdraw from the accreditation process. All other Fees are payable as detailed in the Finance Policy, and the ASIC Management team will only issue refunds at their discretion, where appropriate.

#### **g. Appeals**

To submit an Appeal, institutions must pay a £1,000 deposit (as per Section XXXXX); the deposit is fully refundable if the Appeal is upheld.

#### **h. Postal Charge and Administration Fee for the re-issue or resending of accreditation documentation**

If the institution asks ASIC to re-issue/resend the accreditation documentation due to supplying ASIC with an incorrect address or the non-availability of someone for receipt of the documentation at the address provided, a £50 fee is payable to ASIC. The ASIC Office will not re-issue/resend any documentation until receipt of payment.

#### **i. Fee levels and period rises in costs**

ASIC reserves the right to amend its services, processes, and all associated fees at any point as deemed necessary. Changes to accreditation fees and all other associated fees will be communicated to existing ASIC institutions via email and updates to the Finance Policy.



A quality educational experience delivers quality outcomes, benefiting everyone.





We are passionate  
about excellence in  
international education.