Partners in learning: A registration and grading scheme for ICAG PQ training organisations
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Dear Colleague,

Thank you for expressing interest in our Partnership in Learning scheme. In this document you will find details of the benefits to you and to your students in applying and also of the standards that we expect.

High-quality accountancy education and professional qualification tuition are core components of a successful qualification. ICAG has been working with ICAEW to develop this scheme which is derived from their own Partners in Learning scheme.

During its development, ICAEW reviewed the current accountancy education and training environment in depth, benchmarking against international best practice and visited a number of Colleges in Accra. We are currently trying to deal with two major issues. First, ICAG is not fully aware who is running courses or indeed how many colleges there are and so we know we need to get closer to the Colleges.

Secondly, there is a big range in the quality of what is being offered. Students and employers need to know what is available. There is no doubt that an accreditation and eventually grading scheme will make a substantial improvement to the quality of accountancy education in Ghana.

The scheme will also give tuition providers a chance to advertise their courses on the ICAG website and use the Partners in Learning logo. It will also help to provide better information for students and employers to base their training decisions on.

Discussions with trainers and the Institute and stakeholder firms confirmed that there is a real appetite for such a scheme. As an institute we know the future of our profession lies with the students. So we hope you will want to work with us to improve standards across the board.

Yours sincerely,

Christian Sottei
President of ICAG
INTRODUCTION

The Partners in Learning scheme recognises the shared relationship and mutual interest that we hold in the development of students and the delivery of professional qualifications and training programmes. It ensures that training organisations have access to ICAG to help you to deliver effective tuition, promoting consistently high quality training. By working together and communicating openly, your students will benefit as they embark on their future careers.

Because of the number of training organisations and the early stage of development the scheme is being introduced in two stages. Firstly, a registration scheme which will start on 1st January 2017. This will simply be to create a link between ICAG and the trainers so that lines of communication can be opened up. You will be given the chance to advertise your courses on the ICAG website. In order to register you will need to complete an application form indicating the courses that you will be running. You will also have to confirm that you will comply with the core principles of the scheme. The core principles are detailed in this document.

The second stage that will be introduced in late 2017 will be to indicate an element of grading to differentiate between the various tuition organisations (see section 4 below).

In November 2016 ICAEW consultants will visit Accra to visit a number of tuition organisations and to train ICAG staff in the process. This exercise will also take place in early 2017.

ICAG sees a number of benefits that will spring from this scheme. It will help:

- To drive up standards by providing transparent information about tuition providers.
- To assist students (and employers) to choose the right tuition provider for them.
- To have a formal means of communication with tuition providers so that general educational standards can be improved and to assist in the control of all tuition providers.
- To assist tuition providers by providing a central information depository about the tuition and facilities available.
- To offer a service to students that is provided by a number of foreign competitor bodies.
BENEFITS TO TUITION ORGANISATIONS

One of the key benefits of the scheme will be your organization having closer contact with ICAG. As a Partner in Learning you will receive the following benefits:

• Library copies of learning materials (These are for your benefit and should not be used for distribution to students).
• Invitation to ICAG student and trainer events.
• use of our ICAG Partner in Learning logo on your course and marketing materials to demonstrate our partnership.
• A PiL certificate for your training center as recognition of your status.
• The opportunity to advertise on the recognized Partners in Learning list on our website (see 3.2 below).
• access to a dedicated manager at ICAG.
• access to our student and member magazines and marketing materials.
• Access to a student results list as they are published.
REGISTRATION

General
From 1st December 2017 you will be able to register your organisation with ICAG for the Partners in Learning scheme. You should register using the form included in this brochure and the information that you provide will be included on the Partners in Learning section of the ICAG website. This will be prominently advertised in the student section of the ICAG web site.

Core Principles
In order to register you must confirm that your organisation complies with a number of core principles. These are outlined on page 8 of this document and should be read in conjunction with the best practice indicators in Annex 1.

Multiple Centres
If your organisation has more than one centre then you must register each centre separately. Of course, some of the data may be the same for both centres but details of courses are likely to differ.

Key ICAG contact
Mr Alhassan Yusif Trawule is responsible for administering the scheme:
Email – alhassan.trawule@icagh.com

Your data: The data that ICAG wishes you to include needs to be returned on the application form but will include:

• The name of your organisation.
• The location of classes.
• Courses run (Full time, part time and various levels).
• Lecturers
• Contact details and a tab to connect to your web site.
• A brief summary of the courses you run and why a student might choose you as a tuition provider (maximum 250 words).

This general registration scheme will only operate for one year to 31 December 2017. From that date you will be categorised as either a Bronze or Silver PiL.

Please note: failure to comply with the ICAG core principles will result in immediate termination from registration.
GRADING SCHEME

**General**
From 2018 ICAG will extend the registration scheme to a formal grading scheme where colleges will be able to apply to be graded as Bronze or Silver from January 2018.

From January 2019 a further category of Gold will be added.

All Colleges will be expected to continue to comply with the **Core Principles** as laid out in page 8. Silver or Gold graded colleges will be based on the quality of the courses offered. The grading will be based on a large number of factors indicative examples of which you will find in Annex 2.

*All registered tuition providers will be expected to comply with the core principles at all times.*
CORE PRINCIPLES

All registered tuition providers are expected to comply with the following core principles:

1. Courses are developed and continually monitored to meet market and stakeholder needs, based on appropriate research.
2. Courses are realistic and deliverable, and are presented by experienced, appropriately qualified tutors.
3. Courses are delivered in compliance with all Ghanaian laws and regulations.
4. Regular, open communication is maintained with ICAG and all stakeholders.
5. The PiL must endeavor to ensure that all students have purchased or have access to a copy of the official ICAG learning materials.
6. Tutorial staff undertake continuing professional development (CPD), and their development needs are reviewed regularly.

Best practice indicators

Best Practice Indicators provide guidance on how your organisation will satisfy the Core Principles. They can be found in Annex 1.

How to apply

From 1st December 2017, you will be able to register your organisation with ICAG for the Partners in Learning scheme Bronze or silver grading. You should register using the form enclosed in this booklet and the information that you provide will be included on the Partners in Learning section of the ICAG web site. This will be prominently advertised in the student section of the ICAG web site.

Key ICAG contact

Mr Alhassan Trawule is responsible for administering the scheme:

Email – alhassan.trawule@icagh.com
Telephone: +233 241 357250
HOW THE GRADING SYSTEM WILL WORK

Bronze status

To achieve Bronze status from 1st January 2018 your organisation must satisfy all of the core principles laid out above. Where you have a number of different sites operating each location will have to satisfy the core principles.

Silver status

To achieve silver status (also available from 1st January 2018) your College must achieve the core principles and the key additional features identified in the table in Annexe 2.

Gold status

Gold status will only be available from 1st January 2019 and to achieve Gold status you must achieve the core principles plus the additional features identified in Annexe 2.

Note: ICAG reserves the right to reduce or withdraw your grading status if the circumstances of your College change. We will of course talk to you about this before any action is taken.
ANNEX 1: BEST PRACTICE INDICATORS

The best practice indicators are designed to provide guidance on how an organisation may meet the core principles. The best practice indicators relevant to your organisation may vary depending on the courses offered and the method of course delivery.

The headings below reflect the different elements of course delivery. The best practice indicators that follow are grouped according to their relevance at each stage.

1. **Status of tuition provider:**
   a. The premises comply with all relevant local health and safety requirements, in addition to any other applicable Ghanaian legislation.
   b. The premises are secure and in a safe location (e.g., reasonable precautions taken against theft) and are easily accessible.
   c. Presentation equipment is appropriate for the size of the room and is suitable for the content of classroom material.
   d. Student numbers are appropriate for the size of the room, and facilities provided ensure a reasonable level of comfort for students.
   e. All tutorial staff hold an appropriate qualification.
   f. All tutorial staff comply with relevant CPD requirements and ethical guidelines.
   g. All tutorial staff have access to an ongoing training programme to ensure that they are fully up to date in their particular field, to a level that allows them to deliver training effectively.
   h. The organisation demonstrates financial stability.
   i. The organisation has experience in delivering professional education.
   j. The organisation treats all employees and job applicants fairly and equally regardless of their age, disability, marriage, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, social or educational backgrounds.

2. **Developing a tuition provider:**
   a. Market research must be undertaken in each locality. The tuition offered must be tailored to suit the needs of the local market. This may include offering day, evening, weekend or distance learning courses, for example.
   b. Each exam subject is assigned to a specific member of the tutorial staff. These tutors are responsible for producing detailed teaching plans and providing training to fellow tutors on the most effective teaching methods for their particular subject area.
   c. All promotional material complies with local standards, laws and ICAG guidelines and ethical principles. Promotional material for ICAG courses must be submitted to ICAG on request.
   d. The Partner in Learning logo is displayed only on promotional material for courses leading to ICAG qualifications.
e. The website (if you have one) includes full details of course offerings and is kept up to date.

3. Developing a tuition programme:
   a. Contact details of students and employers are recorded and kept up to date. The information is stored securely, and its use complies with Ghanaian legislation on data protection.
   b. Clear, appropriate joining instructions are sent to students before each course. Joining instructions include contact details and a map for the centre.
   c. Students are given clear instructions and guidance (as appropriate) about the exact location of the course upon arrival.
   d. Students have contact details of tutors and appropriate administration staff, and have a designated point of contact for support with studies or queries about the administration of the course.
   e. Students are given at the start of the course a clear programme of study so that they know what will be covered when and when they will be given tests and exams.
   f. Any reasonable requests from employers to meet students or tutors at the premises are accommodated where possible.
   g. Student attendance is recorded on a daily basis and available to the employer upon request.
   h. Student performance reports are available to the employer upon request.
   i. A minimum of two weeks’ notice must be given for any cancellations or changes to timetables. Students and employers must be contacted to ensure that an appropriate alternative course has been offered.
   j. Courses that have started must not be cancelled, unless acceptable alternatives are offered.
   k. Each student has access to ICAG learning materials for each relevant course.
   l. Use of any non-ICAG material in the classroom is kept to a minimum and any such material must not be promoted as official ICAG material. Access to any classroom material created by the tuition provider must be supplied to ICAG on request.
   m. Progress tests and course exams are marked and returned to students within 20 working days of receipt.
   n. Feedback is sought from students on a regular basis regarding the service and tuition they receive; such feedback is made available to ICAG on request. Any relevant points must be followed up within 10 working days.

4. Assessment:
   a. Students are reminded to submit their exam application before the appropriate deadline.
   b. Final mock exams are marked and returned to students before the date of the real exam.
c. Tutorial staff recommend that students seek advice from ICAG if they have any issues with the exams, for example, where alternative arrangements are required.

d. Pass rates are consistent from session to session and are consistent with ICAG pass rates, unless the calibre of the students varies significantly.

e. If there are significant variations in pass rates, these variations must be investigated. Where there is a negative variation, appropriate action is taken, such as tutor development.

5. Working with ICAG:
   a. An appropriate senior member of the tutorial staff is nominated as the main point of contact with ICAG for the organization. This person monitors the tutor area of the ICAG website and other relevant sources. They ensure that all relevant staff are kept informed of changes or issues affecting course content and delivery and must be identified to the students as a point of contact for any issues or concerns.
   b. An appropriate senior tutorial staff member must attend meetings with ICAG when required, and ensure that any relevant information is circulated within the organisation to the appropriate staff.
   c. Requests for visits from ICAG staff are accommodated wherever possible. A list of tutorial staff at each centre is provided to ICAG upon request, to ensure they have access to the tutor website and are included on relevant mailing lists.
   d. An official ICAG questionnaire is distributed to students on request.
   e. Copies of ICAG student material are available in the premises.
   f. Feedback about learning materials is provided to ICAG on request.
   g. Feedback on the exams is provided within one week of the exam sitting.
   h. Feedback on the exam solutions is provided within two weeks of the date of publication.
**ANNEX 2: SILVER AND GOLD STATUS**

The following are indicative of the standards that ICAG will look for in order for your centre to achieve silver or gold status from January 1st 2018 and 2019 respectively. Your organisation will not have to achieve all criteria to be graded silver or gold but must achieve the majority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Silver</th>
<th>Gold</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wef 1st January 2018</strong></td>
<td><strong>Wef 1st of January 2019</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tuition provider offers courses as follows</td>
<td>A full range of either level 2 and 3 courses (or level 1 and 2 courses) at least once a year.</td>
<td>The centre offers level 1, 2 and 3 courses at both sittings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revision Courses</td>
<td>Available for all level 1 and level 2 courses at least once a year</td>
<td>Available for all level 1, 2 and 3 courses at both sittings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress Tests and mock exams returned</td>
<td>Within 10 days of being sat</td>
<td>Within 7 days of being sat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student feedback</td>
<td>Is sought and acted upon for all courses</td>
<td>Is sought and acted upon for all courses. And is properly documented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Control</td>
<td>All courses are reviewed and remodeled on the basis of results.</td>
<td>There is a formal documented post course review process with courses amended on the basis of results and course appraisal sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching programme</td>
<td>There is a formal course programme for each course</td>
<td>There is a formal course programme for each course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lecturing staff**

<p>| Qualifications | More than 75% teaching staff are ICAG or IFAC qualified (excluding specialist subjects e.g. Law or IT) | More than 90% teaching staff are ICAG or IFAC qualified (excluding specialist subjects e.g. Law or IT) |
| Teaching Experience and employment arrangements | There will always be a range of teaching experience within the team as new tutors are brought on. Average teaching experience of the team should be at least 2 years | As for silver… i.e. at least 2 years teaching experience but in addition more than 40% of the teaching staff are full time employed |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Teacher Training</th>
<th>More than 75% of the teaching staff have attended a training for accountancy course</th>
<th>More than 75% of the teaching staff have attended a training for accountancy course.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial CPD</td>
<td>To comply with ICAG requirements for all members</td>
<td>To comply with ICAG requirements for all members and evidence of tutorial attendance at relevant courses for subjects taught.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuition centre</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The centre</td>
<td>Building of adequate quality. The centre is clean and tidy.</td>
<td>As for silver but providing easy access for many students. The centre is clean and tidy and well decorated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Facilities</td>
<td>Some element of student recreational facilities</td>
<td>Student common room Student restaurant Exceptionally students living accommodation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Class size</td>
<td>Under 75</td>
<td>Under 45.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Conditioning</td>
<td>Fans</td>
<td>Good quality functioning air conditioning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desks</td>
<td>Good quality school style desks and chairs</td>
<td>Good quality conference style desks and chairs. Good space ratio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight Lines to screen and White board</td>
<td>Reasonable with columns creating some disruption</td>
<td>Excellent full sight lines to screen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Boards</td>
<td>In every teaching room</td>
<td>In every room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Projectors</td>
<td>In most rooms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Results</strong></td>
<td>Average pass rates on a paper by paper basis at least the same as average ICAG pass rate</td>
<td>Average pass rates on a paper by paper basis at least 10% in excess of average ICAG pass rate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>