



ACADEMIC QUALITY HANDBOOK

Students

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Academic Quality Handbook (AQH) sets out the University's approach to quality assurance and enhancement, and specifies how this translates into practice through a rigorous set of policies, procedures, guidelines and regulations. This is to ensure that INCEIF's educational provision:

- Operates with appropriate academic standard
- Offers students learning opportunities of at-the-least, acceptable quality

Academic quality is a way of describing how well the learning opportunities available to students help them to achieve their award. It is about making sure that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided for them in enhancing their learning experience. The core aspects of the student learning experience are:

- The curriculum – its structure, aims (objectives), learning outcomes and types of assessment.
- The promotion and support of effective learning, this include:
 - Provision of student support services
 - Library and IT facilities
 - Measures to involve students in monitoring and enhancing INCEIF's educational provision

This handbook shall be used by all Students in performing their academic activities. The official version of this handbook is the web version that can be found on INCEIF webpage. Please take note that if you print this handbook, it may become superseded by later amendment. So, always check the web version for latest update.

Note:

Updated version of the Academic Quality Handbook is located in the shared folder server of INCEIF.

Reference document (stated as '**Formal Documents**') is linked to each topic and available either in the INCEIF's shared folder server or website.

2 STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS

Recruitment and admission is a beginning of the extended relationship with the applicant as a student. While INCEIF has a right to exercise judgment about a candidate's achievement and potential, it will ensure that such judgments are done systematically.

There are established policies and procedures for the recruitment and admission of students that are fair, clear and explicit and are implemented consistently. Transparent entry requirements, both academic and non-academic, are used to underpin judgments that are made during the selection process for entry.

Fresh applications from applicants are done online through INCEIF website which can be made at any time during the year. There is no closing date to apply for INCEIF programmes. The University will ensure that selection / recruitment policies and procedures are transparent and are followed fairly, courteously, consistently and expeditiously.

Applicants must possess degrees that are recognized by INCEIF or the Government of Malaysia. In view that INCEIF applicants would generally come from every corner of the world, it is crucial for INCEIF to verify that its applicants possess degrees from institutions or universities that are recognized.

It is easier to cross-check with Public Service Department of Malaysia (JPA) or Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) for recognition; however, not all universities in the world are in the list. Therefore, INCEIF takes caution to eliminate any bogus degrees from being accepted by adopting **“Recognized by INCEIF”** approach on the basis that any international universities that are not in the:

- ❖ Public Service Department of Malaysia (JPA); or
(<http://www.interactive.jpa.gov.my/webinteraktif/frmMainIktiraf.asp>)
- ❖ Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA)
(<http://www.mqa.gov.my/mqr/index.htm>)

Must at least satisfy the criteria stated below:

- The minimum qualification for entry into a programme of same level in their own country, for example, first degree in country A is recognized as minimum admission requirement for their Masters programme; and/or
- Comparing the number of years of study with equivalent qualification in Malaysia as benchmark for recognition; and/or
- Comparing the number of credit hours or academic loads between the equivalent qualifications of another country with similar qualification in Malaysia; and

- Listed but not limited to, in any one of the website stated below:
 - ❖ International Association of Universities (IAU) provided by UNESCO; or (<http://www.unesco.org/iau/onlinedatabases/list.html>)
 - ❖ Accredited Universities Worldwide provided by Eduers.com; or (<http://www.eduers.com/University/accredited/index.html>)
 - ❖ List of Universities and Polytechnics in United Kingdom; or (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_UK_universities_by_date_of_foundation)
 - ❖ John Bear's Guide for Distance and Online Learning provided by John Bear; or (http://www.degree.net/guides/qaap_listings.html)
 - ❖ National Qualifications Authority of Ireland – International Qualifications Database. (http://www.qualificationsrecognition.ie/recognition/int_qual_database/)

INCEIF Staff will ensure that efforts are not exhaustive in establishing the recognition status of international universities.

Staffs that attend the applications will ensure at all times he/she has taken reasonable cautions that the supporting documents are complete and meet the entry requirements of each programmes being offered as approved by Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) and also to follow the set procedures for timely processing.

Policies and procedures related to recruitment and admissions are kept under regular review to ensure that they continue to support the mission and strategic objectives of the University, and that they remain current and valid in the light of changing circumstances.

3 ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

Assessment of students is an important aspect of quality assurance because assessment methods drive student learning and the outcome of assessment is used in awarding qualifications.

3.1 Assessment Method

The assessment methods used in all programmes are consistent with the levels defined in the Malaysian Qualification Framework (MQF) and the MQF eight domains of learning outcomes – knowledge; practical skills; social skills and responsibilities; values, attitudes and professionalism; communication, leadership and team skills; problem solving and scientific skills; information management and lifelong learning skills; and managerial and entrepreneurial skills.

The frequency and method of student assessment including the grading criteria and all awards are documented and communicated to students on commencement of the programme.

The University will periodically review the effectiveness of its assessment process not just by inviting external examiners, students or academic staff to comment on trends or patterns, but through the systematic analysis of actual scripts over a period of time.

3.2 External Examiners

The appointment of the External Examiners is one of the most important features of the University's system of quality assurance. The involvement of the External Examiner in **Admission, Exemption and Examination Review Committee (AEERC)** is crucial to all aspects of the assessment process to ensure:

- Objectivity of the Committee,
- Comparability of awards and standard in the national context,
- Fair and equitable treatment of students, and
- Correct application of the Academic Regulations.

However, for the Chartered Islamic Finance Professional (CIFP) programme, involvement of the external parties is at the level of examination questions development. An External Moderator is appointed to moderate the setting-up of examination questions for each module.

While for Masters and Doctoral degree programmes, at least one external examiner is appointed in the assessment process. This external examiner must have substantial experience in Masters or PhD examining.

However, in exceptional circumstances, for areas of research where there are limited numbers of experienced external examiners, an academician can be utilised for the role of external examiner provided they have a minimum of PhD and respected in their field for the quality of their publications.

An external examiner will be independent both of the University and of the collaborating establishment and has not acted previously as the candidate's supervisor or advisor. An external examiner will normally not be either a supervisor of another candidate or an external examiner on a taught course in the same department at the University.

4 RESEARCH STUDENTS

INCEIF's research programmes are industry-driven and structured as such to allow candidates to develop the technical and intellectual ability to enable them to pursue research across a broad range of areas in Islamic Finance.

INCEIF has formulated the research programmes with the objectives:

- To equip graduates with analytical skills in solving specific issues pertaining to Islamic financial institutions;
- To develop graduates who have academic writing skills with the hope that they can produce additional literature in Islamic finance;
- To equip candidates with the latest tools in measuring and evaluating specific issues;
- To provide venue whereby experienced professionals in conventional and/or Islamic finance can reflect and write on Islamic finance; and
- To create a new group of graduates in Islamic finance institutions that have both practicing experience and are academic literate.

A fundamental characteristic of postgraduate research is that it is carried out under the guidance of one or more research supervisors. Hence, selection of a research supervisor is an extremely significant initial step to ensure that candidate acquires particular skills, knowledge and abilities while making progress towards completing a research and writing a thesis in a timely manner.

The main roles of the supervisor are:

- At the commencement of the research the supervisor should agree with research candidate a written timeframe for the conduct of the research and the completion of written work.
- To keep in regular contact with the candidate, including any period during the candidate is working away from the University.
- To give general guidance and advice to the candidate on the progress of his/her research.
- To give advice and instruction on research methods appropriate to the candidate's field of study.

In completing the initiation cycle of a research student, it is compulsory for the research students to participate, at their own expense or in collaboration with the faculty, in local and/or international workshops and colloquia, present their work at, or attend conferences relevant to their research area. They are also offered the opportunity to gain teaching experience, with appropriate training, in a way that is complimentary to their research.

5 MONITORING OF STUDENT PROGRESS

An important tool for monitoring the progress of all research candidates is the progress report. INCEIF requires that a progress report must be submitted every 12 month.

The progress report requires the details of the candidate's progress against objective set for the previous period of time, and the setting of the candidate's objectives for the period of time through the next report. The report shall contain:

- The candidate's rating of the supervision – expertise, availability of supervisor (s), helpfulness of advice, financial support and resources, computer facilities, library and information technology services support, workspace, and any other aspects of supervision distinctive to the field of research,
- Information provided by the candidate on personal circumstances which may be hindering his/her application to the research,
- The supervisor's rating of the candidate performance – application to the research, research techniques, time management and writing ability,
- An acknowledgement provided by the Head of Graduate Studies (GS) that he has seen and understood the candidate's and supervisor's comments, together with any additional observation(s) the Head of GS may wish to make.

The student has a responsibility to maintain the progress of the work in accordance with the stages agreed with the Supervisor, including, in particular, the presentation of written material as required in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussions before proceeding to the next stage.

Continuation of candidature is conditional on maintaining satisfactory progress in all aspects of candidature which may include some or all of: progress on research plans, coursework components, and doctoral or masters assessment.

6 STUDENT INPUT AND FEEDBACK

Student contributions to the teaching and learning environment occur daily through informal discussion and interaction with both academic and general staff. However, there are several formal mechanisms made available by departments to facilitate quality assurance and improvement:

- Teaching Evaluation Rating (TER)
- Library Customer Survey
- Student Exit Survey

7 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The importance of academic honesty and the safeguarding of academic integrity are assured through policy, rules, regulations and practice. Students are expected to be aware of and to abide to by the INCEIF's academic rules and regulations.

Academic rules and regulations:

- CIFP Programme Academic Regulations
- Academic Regulations – Masters Degree (MIF by coursework and dissertation / MIF by full research)
- Academic Regulations – Doctoral Degree (PhD by coursework and dissertation / PhD by full research)
- Anti Plagiarism Policy

The using of another person's words, ideas, data etc. without proper acknowledgement, citations or credits are considered to be plagiarism. Therefore, students are advised to exercise cautions and care and to fully observe INCEIF's Anti Plagiarism Policy at all costs when producing courseworks, dissertations or research materials during their study journey.

- Formal Documents:**
- a. CIFP Programme Academic Regulations
http://www.inceif.org/system/media/pdf/cifp_academic_regulation.pdf
 - b. Academic Regulations – Masters Degree (MIF by coursework and dissertation / MIF by full research)
http://www.inceif.org/system/media/pdf/mif_academic_regulation.pdf
 - c. Academic Regulations – Doctoral Degree (PhD by coursework and dissertation / PhD by full research)
http://www.inceif.org/system/media/pdf/academic_regulations.pdf
 - d. Anti Plagiarism Policy
<http://www.inceif.org/study/policy.php?intPrefLangID=1&>

8 ACADEMIC STAFF

INCEIF has envisaged its dream to only attract and retain the best talents for its faculty members and staff in the effort to build faculties that are internationally recognized while pursuing its quest to become the knowledge leader in Islamic finance.

In ensuring that only qualified candidates are appointed as Associate Professors and Professors, INCEIF has put in place its own set of guidelines and procedures and also in line with MOHE Circular (Bil 6/2007) that requires all IPTS to adopt a common process and a set of criteria for appointments of Associate Professors and Professors and these decisions are govern by INCEIF Faculty Appointment and Promotion Panel (IFAPP). Focuses are given on areas of:

- Eligibility and Experience;
- Teaching and Supervision;
- Research and Publication; and
- Consultancy of Expertise.

Credentials of the academic staff are of utmost importance in the effort to elevate INCEIF to its greater heights. In addition, INCEIF has also engaged world renowned academicians as visiting professors.

INCEIF holds to the reconstructivist philosophy, which advocates the learning-centred teaching-learning approach and aim to individualise learning so as to enable the students to maximize their potential. It is a contemporary philosophy which view education as a means for change and social reform that improves and reconstructs society by emphasizing creativeness, nonconformity, and self-actualization.

9 ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES AND RESOURCES

INCEIF is obliged to ensure its candidates are being provided with all the necessary resources required to nurture the learning-centred environment that are industry-driven.

9.1 Library Services

Knowledge Management Centre (KMC) provides physical and electronics reading materials for students who are on full-time, part-time and online learning mode. The serene environment and comfortable setting of KMC makes reading and learning experience much more invigorating.

Administration of the Knowledge Management Centre (KMC) is run by a team of qualified and knowledgeable librarian and well-trained library support staffs to ensure that sources and access to relevant reading materials are ready and available to candidates prior to commencement of each new semester.

To ensure that quest for knowledge are not restricted to only text books materials which can sometimes be limited in numbers and accessibility, KMC also subscribes to several online resources for additional reading and research such as:

- E-books;
- Online journals / magazines; and
- Online databases that provide up-to-date data and/or information regarding Islamic finance and/or financial industry.

Students are strongly encouraged to fully utilize the online resources provided by KMC. In order to gain access to these online resources anywhere at any time, students are required to use individual password which can be obtained from KMC by faxing the hard copy or email scanned copy of the “Request for Password to Access Online Resources” form that can be downloaded from the INCEIF web site.

Another way of accessing the online resources is to be at the KMC itself. Students who wish to do their research or reading at the KMC premise will be provided with an IP address by the KMC staff when requested.

- Website:**
- a. INCEIF Knowledge Grid – List of Resources
http://www.inceif.org/research_and_knowledge/inceif_knowledge_grid/list_of_resources.php
 - b. Request for Password to Access Online Resources form
http://www.inceif.org/system/media/pdf/kmc_brochures/kmc_subscribed_online_resources.pdf

9.2 Information and Communication Technology Services

IT staffs constantly monitor the performance of INCEIF information and communication infrastructure including software, hardware, computing systems, networks, telephony, Internet, and similar technologies for INCEIF campuses (local and remote) as well as externally hosted facilities to ensure uninterrupted services delivery for all its users.

IT Unit is committed to maintain its network uptime of at least 99.9% and in operation 24 hours daily 7 days a week. At the same time, for speedy internet accessibility, INCEIF has laid down a network bandwidth of at least 1 gigabyte for data streaming to all its users.

To inculcate ethical usage of the IT facilities provided, IT Unit has put in place the ICT Policy in respect of the acceptable use of its information and communications technology (ICT) resources. Students are required to acknowledge acceptance of the ICT Policy the first time they login to the E-University system.

Being a technology-driven university, INCEIF has invested in its E-University system to continuously improve and enhance:

- The management of teaching content through Learning Management System (LMS);
- The management of student data and records through Students Management System (SMS); and
- The quality of interactions and efficient flow of information among academics and students located anywhere in the world through Learning Management System (LMS).

From the point where a student has confirmed his registration with INCEIF, he will be provided with login ID and a default password, which later can be changed by the student, to gain access to the LMS. The login ID and default password will be sent by the Admission and Student Affairs Department (ASAD) of INCEIF to the student via email notification.

From thereon, students can make full use of the functions provided in the LMS to access, download and upload assignments, lecturer's additional teaching materials, examination results and communicate with lecturers on subject matters through forums etc.

9.3 Students Advisory Services

To guide students through their study journey, INCEIF has appointed a Student Advisor for CIFP student and Graduate students respectively. Academic advising is a form of teaching that exerts a powerful influence on the student success and critical to institutional effectiveness and student persistence. It provides assistance in the mediation of dissonance between student expectations and the actualities of the educational experience.

Students, who require assistance in matters pertaining to academics, should approach the Students Advisor so that INCEIF can serve them in the best possible way to enhance their learning experience. With the availability of advisory services, it is hope that this effort will contribute to the retaining of students and completion of their degrees.

Web site: a. www.inceif.org - Contact Us
http://www.inceif.org/discover/contact_us/contact_us.php?intPrefLangID=1&

9.4 Academic Appeals and Student Complaints

Academic appeal is defined as a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progression, assessment, and awards. Whereby, complaints refer to any specific concern about the provision of a programme of study, academic service or related facility or service provided by the University.

The University has procedure in place for resolving student complaints and academic appeals (except for CIFP). Students are given full opportunity to raise, individually or collectively matters of proper concern to them without fear of disadvantage and in the knowledge that privacy and confidentiality will be respected. Complaints and appeals will be addressed in a timely manner using transparent procedures.

Formal Document: a. Academic Grievance Procedure for Students
http://www.inceif.org/system/media/pdf/agh_students/Academic_Grievance_Procedure.pdf

b. Academic Appeal Procedure
– *Please refer to Academic Regulations - Masters Degree item 2.1.9.6 Review/Appeal of An Examination Decision*
http://www.inceif.org/system/media/pdf/mif_academic_regulation.pdf

- Please refer to Academic Regulations - Doctoral Degree Item 2.1.12.6 Review/Appeal of An Examination Decision
http://www.inceif.org/system/media/pdf/academic_regulations.pdf

9.5 Articleship

The University is responsible in ensuring that, where placement / articleship is an intended part of a course / programme:

- Responsibilities for placement are clearly defined.
- The intended learning outcomes contribute to the overall aims / objectives of the course / programme.
- Any assessment of articleship learning is part of a coherent assessment strategy.

In fulfilling one of its desired missions of “continuously supply competent Islamic financial talents to the industry to serve regulators”, INCEIF has designed the final portion of its three-part Chartered Islamic Financial Professional (CIFP) programme to include 6 months of articleship training at any financial institutions that provides any types of Islamic products and services.

This articleship is being administered and monitored by CIFP Programme Department staffs. Students must fulfill certain conditions before eligible for the articleship. In order to secure places for articleship, the student can either search for individual place of interest or seek assistance from the CIFP Programme Department. The staff of CIFP Programme Department will be there to help establish communication with financial institutions in effort to secure places for its students to undergo articleship.

Formal Document: a. Articleship Procedure
http://www.inceif.org/system/media/pdf/Articleship_Procedures.pdf