

## **002. Access and Participation Statement**

## Access and Participation Statement

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### Who is IFG?

International Foundation Group (IFG) is a private education provider focused on the provision of pre-university programmes to international students from all countries and backgrounds.

The company has a simple mission to help students fulfil their academic dreams by providing pathways to university level study and beyond. We have been able to successfully deliver on this mission by adhering to two key principles.

#### Principle One

We treat all students as individuals, with their own dreams.

#### Principle Two

We recruit staff who are dedicated to offering students the support, choice, and quality they require during their academic journey.

IFG London holds UK Accreditation from ASIC (Accreditation Service for International Schools, Colleges, and Universities) with Premier Status for its commendable Areas of Operation. IFG is also an accredited exam centre for Trinity College London English language exams and a partner college for LanguageCert online exams. Additionally, certain IFG Programmes are also accredited or endorsed by Ofqual authorised awarding bodies.

### Current IFG Programmes

IFG's main programmes for international students are:

- Five Pre-University Foundation Programmes: Business Management, Social Sciences, Computer Science, Engineering and Medical
- Pre-Masters in Business Management
- Pre-Masters in Law
- Pre-sessional for Postgraduate Studies

All offer a pathway for international students who require a pre-university course before progressing to UK universities.

## **Our commitment to current and future international students**

IFG's current programmes are specifically designed for and targeted at international students who require a pathway to UK degree level study. Therefore, our students are exclusively international pre-university students and we do not currently recruit home students.

At IFG we are committed to recruiting and supporting international students from a range of socioeconomic groups and countries to help and support them to meet their education and career aspirations. Programmes are designed to meet the needs of motivated students regardless of disability, gender, race, religion and belief, or sexual orientation.

This commitment would extend to any future IFG Higher Education offer to international and where relevant home students.

## **Our commitment to future home students**

Our plans for expansion into Higher Education is primarily aimed at international students but its relevance to home students is set out in our 2030 Business Plan.

### Strategy to grow IFG into a Higher Education Provider offering Level 3 – Level 7 Programmes

IFG is committed to becoming a Higher Education Provider with an aim to partner with a UK university to deliver undergraduate and postgraduate study via franchise or preferably a validation agreement. IFG's competence and experience in the teaching of non-native speakers would make our HE provision relevant to students who are recognised as home students but may not have English as a first language.

### Undergraduate and postgraduate online Professional Accountancy delivery to international & home students

The successful launch of IFG Professional will enable IFG to deliver a suite of professional accountancy higher education programmes with exemptions for students who have completed ACCA or CIMA qualifications. This will initially focus on international students in Nigeria where students will be supported by IFG in-country support centres offering advice and masterclasses. Expansion to online delivery to home students will also be explored. As with our strategy to grow into a HE Provider would be relevant to all home students but in particular those who do not have English as a first language and are looking for extra support.

## **Our Access and Participation Statement**

Our Access and Participation Statement (APS) focuses on elements of our current strategy and international student recruitment processes that encourage participation from a range of socioeconomic groups across all international markets. These same processes and commitment will be applied to international recruitment for future undergraduate and postgraduate courses and will form the basis of any recruitment initiatives for home students in the future.

To summarise, our APS sets out what we are doing to make sure we meet the expectations of our current international students and how the same processes and ethos we be applied to ensure we meet student expectations as a Higher Education provider if we are successful in our application with the Office for Students (OfS) - the Higher Education Regulator in England.

## **Our commitment to widening access**

Access to pre-university pathway programmes is generally considered to be reserved for a minority of international students. This is partly due to the tuition fee and living costs associated with studying a one-year Foundation or Pre-masters in the UK. However, even if students can afford their one-year IFG Programme they may not be able to afford the international fees and living costs when they progress to undergraduate or postgraduate study in the UK.

IFG is committed to widening access for international students where possible even though we understand that the key affordability factor for international students is the cost of Higher Education after graduation from IFG.

### **Widening access initiative 1: Tuition fees and scholarships**

We want as many students as possible to take advantage of our excellent progression routes to university. For this reason, our tuition fees are lower than the majority of colleges offering foundation and pre-masters courses.

We appreciate that a UK education is not affordable for many international students. Therefore, in addition to keeping our fees as low as possible, we offer a number of part scholarships - these range from 10% to 50% of the total tuition fee.

As scholarships are merit based they do vary from year to year. However, an average year would see scholarships offered to students from Sudan, Nigeria and other sub-Saharan countries and also Iraq, where we also have a franchise partner teaching centre. The average annual breakdown in terms of the scholarship discount offered would be approximately:

- Three x 10% discount on tuition fees
- Three x 20% discount on tuition fees
- Two x 30-50% discount on tuition fees

To apply for an IFG Scholarships students must complete a scholarship application form explaining why they think they deserve a scholarship. Their application can focus on either financial grounds, prior academic achievement or a clear objective relating to how studying at IFG will impact their future either in the UK or in their own country.

### **Widening access initiative 2: IFG in-country franchise teacher partner school network**

In addition to its London operation, IFG operates an in-country franchise network of partner teaching centres. These centres offer IFG programmes face-to-face to students in their own country. They, therefore, offer an alternative for students who either prefer to live at home while studying their Foundation or are looking at a more cost-effective option. Tuition fees are generally lower than at IFG London.

IFG Programmes offered by our franchise partners replicate programmes offered at IFG London. They follow the same syllabus and assessment are set and marked by IFG London academic staff with final certificates being issued by IFG London's Academic Director. Students studying at a franchise partner also receive the same university application advice and benefit from the same university progression routes as students studying in London.

IFG currently has franchise partners in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Azerbaijan, Ghana, Nigeria, South Korea, Georgia, Iraq, Turkey, Bahrain and Jordan. Some currently have students whereas others have an agreement in place to recruit for 2025. IFG Abu Dhabi franchise is branded as IFG. All other partners have retained their company name and use co-branded material to promote their IFG Programmes.. Some currently have students whereas others have an agreement in place to recruit for 2026. Further expansion is planned for 2026 onwards and with a focus on countries where affordability is a key factor.

### **Widening access initiative 3: Online study via the IFG Virtual Classroom**

In addition to our in-country franchise initiative we also offer IFG Programmes online via the IFG Virtual Classroom, with fees for some programmes being 25% lower than London face-to-face. All our main programmes are available and our Virtual Classroom teachers are based at IFG London. The Virtual Classroom offers a complete online environment with students able to see and talk to their teachers and classmates, share an interactive whiteboard and view presentations and videos. There is no integration with face-to-face classes. However, the syllabus and assessments are the same, as are all other elements of the IFG offer such as university application and progression routes.

## Widening access initiative 4: IFG Professional

IFG, qualifications in partnerships with First Intuition Learning Solutions (FILS), has recently launched a new sub-brand focused on ACCA & CIMA online delivery for international students pursuing a career in accountancy. Online ACCA & CIMA qualifications are enhanced with a unique package of employability skills courses.

Students in Nigeria will have access to IFG in-country support centres which students can visit for advice. They will also run masterclasses and seminars. Students in Nigeria will therefore receive extra support tailored for international students without leaving home. IFG Professional therefore enhances access by delivering online professional courses with a package of employability skills courses enhanced by in-country support by a company who understands the needs of international students. In time, IFG in-country support centres will be rolled out to other key international markets.

Further development will see undergraduate and postgraduate online Professional Accountancy delivery to international students with the same in-country support. Additionally, there will be exemptions for students who have completed ACCA or CIMA qualifications.

## Our commitment to encouraging participation

We aim to ensure that all students from all backgrounds are able to have equal opportunity to participate and succeed at IFG and beyond. Once students start their IFG course our aim is to ensure they are encouraged to participate fully in class and perform to the best of their ability. We have processes in place which ensure this and thereby reduce non-attendance and drop-outs and so maximise student retention and successful progression to undergraduate or postgraduate study.

## How we support and encourage participation

Teaching at IFG is very supportive and inclusive to ensure all students are able to participate equally and have the same opportunity for success:

### Academic support

- Small classes (max 12 students per class)
- Personal tutors to ensure that we proactively identify any educational needs at an early stage
- A robust attendance policy
- English language support embedded into all programmes
- Pre-sessional English prior to the main course if required
- A variety of assessment methods rather than just a focus on exams
- Free membership of Perlego Online Library

### Non-academic support

- Membership of Togetherall – an independent, free and anonymous mental health organisation
- Student representatives and a student committee who can bring ideas and suggestions to the Senior Management Team

### University progression support

- A wide range of university partners and courses options to suit all student aspirations
- One-to-one university application support
- Feedback on personal statements
- Mock interviews and feedback for students who require university interviews

## Monitoring our success

We monitor academic success using several KPIs. These are:

- Student final grades
- Course offers made to students by our university partners
- Students success rate - IFG Programme grades and progressing to university/university of choice
- Student feedback at the beginning and end of the course

All issues are discussed by the IFG Board of Governors and our Academic Board which both meet 4 times a year.

## Ongoing goals to improve Access

Our 2030 Business Plan includes several initiatives to improve access to current as well as future IFG Programmes

### Increasing the number of IFG in-country franchise teacher partner schools

One of the 4 pillars of the IFG Strategy 2030 is to expand our franchise network for the delivery of academic excellence to international students in their own country. This will ensure that more students with access to less financial means can have access to our programmes delivered face-to-face without leaving home. The current network will be increased via new partnerships assisted by the UK Government Department of Business and Trade (UK DBT) in-country staff and other support organisations.

### Scholarships for UK based international students

IFG recognises that London has a diverse, multicultural population. This includes under 18 -23-year-olds who have moved to the UK recently and so have not been able to enter the UK education system. Many also do not have the financial means that our international students typically have. A pre-university Foundation programme is therefore a route for them towards undergraduate study. These students are often overlooked by International Education Providers. Therefore, IFG will focus on reaching out to students and their London based communities. This will involve contacting local community organisations as well as refugee advice centres. Many of these students would also qualify for IFG Scholarships.

## Ongoing goals to improve Participation

Our 2030 Business Plan includes several initiatives to improve participation at IFG

### Embedding student experience and career development across all programmes

21st Century degree level study has moved beyond the pure academic and now includes a significant focus on employability and real-life student experience. IFG pre-university programmes should reflect this trend. Therefore, resources will be targeted in the inclusion of up-to-date case studies as well as non-academic course related activities such as visits to companies or institutions such as the UK House of Commons for Social Science Foundation students. Virtual Internships will also be offered to students as a way of introducing employability/career development to all programmes. These measures will continue to ensure that IFG Programmes are relevant to the needs of international students and ensure all can participate.

### To continue to improve methods of collecting, analysing and reporting student data

We aim to work more closely with our university partners to obtain feedback from them on performance after students have progressed from IFG. This would focus on initial performance in their first term at university and for undergraduate students progression to Year 2. This will help us get a better understanding of our students and how we are preparing them for university study.

## **Access and Participation strategy for home students**

As outlined in our Business Plan and in this statement IFG is committed to becoming a Higher Education Provider with an aim to partner with a UK university to deliver undergraduate and postgraduate study. These courses would be open to home student and our marketing and student recruitment strategy would be focused on the following groups who we feel are underrepresented:

- Older students who don't meet the formal entry requirements but do have relevant work experience,
- UK residents who do not have English as a first language

In addition, further development of the IFG Professional brand will see undergraduate and postgraduate online Professional Accountancy delivery. This will be limited to international students. However, if the opportunity arises delivery would be extended to home students as well and our marketing & student recruitment would be focused on the same groups of students as our other HE provision.

## **Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)**

As part of IFG's commitment to embedding inclusive practices and removing barriers for all students, not only those from underrepresented groups, IFG carries out Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) where appropriate. EIAs enable the College to identify potential or existing barriers and to proactively consider and implement reasonable adjustments. This supports the College in meeting its anticipatory duty under the Equality Act 2010.

EIAs may be conducted in relation to both student and staff matters for key policies and student experience matters.

See Appendix A within IFG's Equality Impact Assessment Template and Guidance.