



Board of Governors Meeting
Wednesday 9th September 2026
In-person meeting at IFG

Invited Members (name and role)

Gordon Bowen	Chair
Audsin Dhas	Independent Member
Anita Wise	Independent Member
Michael Addison	IFG Director
Mohammed Elnsari	IFG Director
Stefan Green	Marketing and Partnerships Director

Additional Invited Members

None.

Contents

1. Minutes of last meeting
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Conflicts of interest
4. OfS updates, trends and next steps (SG & AW)
5. Updates on UKVI compliance – agents (MA & SG)
6. IFG strategic direction (MA)
7. Reports from the Operations Board (SG)
8. Report from the Academic Board – new course development (MA)
9. Project student numbers for September 2026
10. Progression (MA)
11. IFG Franchise partners (SG & MA)
12. Any other business
13. Date of next meeting

1. Minutes of last meeting

Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all.

SG asked for the following update from the Operations Board be retrospectively approved:

- On 22nd May 2026 IFG announced a small increase in Tuition fees for 2026/27. These only applied to IFG London and Online Foundation Programmes
- AD asked why the Medical Foundation Programme fees were the same for both in-person and online tuition. MA explained the rationale and agreed to add to FAQs

2. Approval of agenda

Approved

3. Conflict of interest

No conflicts of interest declared

4. OfS updates, trends and next steps (SG & AW)

Following the withdrawal of initial application the aim is to submit a new application by Jan 2027:

Key points for resubmission:

- OFS confirmed they will not refer back to the previous application, but will likely cross-reference it
- Key deliverables to strengthen the submission:
 - o Expand and update business plan
 - o Develop two new mini business plans to cover delivery of Pearson Programmes and validated/franchised HE provision)
 - o Update quality plan and QIP (AW to support)
 - o Revise financials and projected student numbers
 - o Audited Accounts need to be submitted with revised financial
 - o Strengthen explanation of progression agreements (Foundation and pre-masters) – submit agreements for pre-masters and sample for Foundation

Updates:

- Pearson application started – email response requesting Business Plan. There is also likely to be a ‘saturation test’ to determine local competition – IFG is focused on international recruitment rather than Home, so competition should not be an issue
- MOU with potential university partners still ongoing; need to assess whether they will be substantial enough for OFS
- Level six qualification: OFS leaning toward classifying it as HE under the Education Act 1988 (content taught at higher level, even without credits or awards) – therefore Audited Accounts will be submitted in accordance with previous HE delivery

Policy Management and Living Compliance:

- Full policy review underway: checking policies are current and that policies are being enacted
- Google Drive set up as the central repository for Policies and all IFG shared documents
- Recommendation: to help with HE partnership discussions add a column to the policy register indicating whether each policy is IFG-owned (I), joint (J), or university-led (U)
- Policy review cycle:
 - o High-risk policies (student contracts, fees, annual monitoring): annual review
 - o Low-risk policies: extend to three-year cycle
 - o Spread review dates across the year to avoid bottlenecks
- When policies are updated, a control box should be added summarizing key changes (standard practice) – **SG has sample of control box**
- Old versions of documents to be archived in a clearly labelled folder
- Create a summary document of changes to any policies from the first submission
- IFG needs to keep policies, procedures and student IAG updated to reflect any changes in the sector – even if review not due
- Example of change - Freedom of speech complaints scheme now live (September 1); policies need updating to reflect this
 - o OfS will expect to see this reflected by year-end
 - o Students and staff must be made aware of the scheme

AI and Automation for Policy and Compliance:

- Recommendation: use AI (ChatGPT, Gemini, etc.) to run monthly scans of OFS/regulatory updates
 - o AI supplies changes; a human (suggested: Tatiana) reviews and identifies which policies are affected
- Google Drive can automate review date notifications and document version tracking
- Update CMA Public Information policy and then ask Siavash to be asked to automate the policy update workflow, including auto-updating the website with the latest policy versions
- Process should be documented as a formal procedure (similar to an information, advice, and guidance procedure) to demonstrate a proactive compliance mechanism to OfS
- Key principle: IFG makes the decisions; AI does the information gathering

5. Updates on UKVI compliance – agents

- UKVI issued compliance guidance requiring CAS to be issued by branch rather than by agent
- Does not affect IFG currently, but CRM upgrade addresses the issue and anticipates a UKVI applications
 - o Agents being migrated from Excel spreadsheets into CRM with a dedicated agent log section to record meeting updates
 - o Meeting notes (including AI-generated notes) attachable to each agent record
- UKVI expected to publish formal agent regulations; most universities already use British Council's agent framework

Additional updates related to CRM and student progression tracking

- CRM has a new section to add university choices and actual university/course progressed to
- End-of-year reports will show how many students progressed to each university and whether it was their first choice
- HESA data reporting will become relevant once OFS-registered
- Data sharing with universities post-progression:
 - o Requires a clear purpose stated in the progression agreement
 - o Students must be informed via the data privacy notice (public document)
 - o Suggested approach: ask a friendly university partner to explore a data-sharing clause in their progression agreement
- Alumni engagement: Facebook group set up (managed from Abu Dhabi) but not yet active; flagged for development (now active as of 25.09.26)

6. IFG strategic direction

Core strategy unchanged:

- Meeting the changing aspirations of international students
- Moving into HE and offering international students (and eventually Home) Level 3 to Level 7
- Expanding the in-country franchise network
- Having a robust student recruitment strategy underpinned by a dynamic and respected brand image

7. Reports from the Operations Board

Key points

- Marketing material and change in London/Online Tuition fees for 2026/27 approved
- Marketing budgeted and budget coding discussed
- New Google Drive approved for all IFG key documents
- CRM changes discussed including changes to enrolment process
- Focus on promoting Abu Dhabi (which is not known as a study destination) – identified a separate marketing approach needed for local and international markets – developed new marketing material – flyers (English & Arabic) and social media – to target each group with a different message

8. Report from the Academic Board

New Courses

- Two new courses launching this academic year:
 - o Integrated Clinical Medicine: add-on for medical foundation students, prepares them for medical school style learning; triggered by University of Lancashire flagging module failures; externally developed
 - o Level 3 - Concepts, Ethics and Applications: embedded in computer science and engineering foundation; accredited by AI Qual awarding body; students earn level three credits

- Both new courses supported by completed academic and business cases
- Business plan needs updating to reflect these additions and how they support the broader shift toward employability and enhanced student experience
- IFG is also exploring a PGDL which would prepare students for the SQE (Solicitors Qualifying Examination) preparation course for international students wanting to practice UK law – market identified in UAE economic free zones (so this will initially be online with a focus on UAE)
- Agreement on proposed minor changes to the exam re-take policy (increasing to 75% max score from 50% for 2026/27)
- Agreement on change to interview element for coursework assignments, with teachers conducting 1-1 interviews to further guard against use of AI
- Project element of Foundation Programmes will now be separate in final transcripts.

9. Predicted student numbers for September

MA reported that numbers are not certain yet but anticipated to be similar to 2025/26. Noted that international student recruitment situation is currently very tough and universities as well as pathway providers are struggling. UKVI regulatory instability reducing appetite for UK study internationally

10. Progression

IFG students continue to receive offers and progress to a range of universities – more detailed analysis will be available once all students have started at university

- New progression agreement with the University of Law – both to undergraduate and postgraduate which will make the pre-masters in Law more attractive as ULAW offer a wide range of LLM programmes across their 8 UK centres
- Awaiting agreement from Kingston
- Noted that progression agreements are university-initiated; IFG signs but does not materially alter them; content and entry thresholds set by the university

11. IFG franchise partners

Small but developing network of mainly overseas franchise partnerships. Total number of students via partners in 2025/26 was 37 students

Current performing partners offering IFG Programmes:

- Veritas (UK-based): 8 students in first year
- BUF Algeria: 11 students, first intake
- Coates College, Seoul: 4 students in first intake
- AAGT Iraq steady at 5-6 students per year
- Two Nigeria partners: one starting September 2027 (online); one in Abuja with 2 students so far
- Ghana partner: working on a government scholarship agreement to boost recruitment

Current development of franchise network and strategy

Too many partnerships fail to get off the ground or stall on 1 or 2 students. So, too much time invested in low-yield relationships. As part of the Business Plan SG is reviewing and revising the current strategy and partners.

Issues and possible solutions

- Are we approaching serious partners – IFG needs to become more selective of partners and set higher barriers to entry
 - o Detailed marketing and business plan from potential partners
 - o Up front joining fee and annual fee to be introduced (same as NCUK)
 - o Internal analysis of key markets – potentially avoiding price sensitive markets
 - o Review of franchise fee structure
- Affordability – IFG 1+3 Model assumes that in-country foundation students who wish to study in-country to save money can then afford 3 years in the UK. Feedback from partners is that this assumption limits their ability to recruit – with many who can afford the UK choosing to study 4 years in UK (Foundation and degree). IFG needs alternative progression for those who can't afford to relocate for 3 years in UK
 - o Online degree – such as University of Essex
 - o Pearson delivered by IFG online
 - o Pathways to local Branch campuses – such as in UAE

12. Any other business

None

14. Date of next meeting

Gordon thanked all for their time and confirmed the next meeting to be **Wednesday 9th December** to meet in person at IFG.

- OFS reapplication progress to be picked up then; interim issues handled by correspondence or short online meeting

RECORD OF ACTIONS

	Action	Owner/Lead	Due (end of)
AP1	Add explanation of Medical Foundation fees to FAQs on IFG website	Stefan	September 2026
AP2	Complete Policy register and add IFG/joint/university ownership column (demonstrate to OFS that IFG has considered how policies will operate under a university partnership)	Stefan	October 2026
AP 3	Review and update freedom of speech policy and inform students & staff	Stefan (Anita)	October 2026
AP4	Review policies for any updates required and add control box for changes, review 'review cycle' as currently all annually	Stefan (Michael & Mohamed)	November 2026
AP5	Create a summary document of changes to any policies from the first submission Document the policy monitoring process as a formal procedure (Gives OFS confidence that a proactive compliance mechanism exists)	Stefan (Anita)	November 2026
AP6	Implement use of AI to automate policy tracking & set-up monthly process automate policy version tracking and website updates via Google Drive - Automate review date notifications, change logs, and ideally push latest policy versions to the website.	Set-up - Siavash (Stefan) Monthly monitoring – TBC	November 2026
AP7	Social media conversion tracking	Stefan	October 2026
AP8	Business and Academic case for PGDL	Michael	October 2026
AP9	Explore data-sharing clause with a friendly university partner (post progression student outcome tracking)	Michael	October 2026
AP10	Mini Business plans for Pearson and HE Offer plus review of main business plan	Stefan	October 2026
AP11	Organise Audited accounts and review financials	Michael	December 2026
AP12	Review in-country franchise strategy	Stefan	December 2026

