

FAQs on IFSCA IBC and OEC Regulations, 2022

1. What is the purpose of these regulations?

The IFSCA regulations aim to enable foreign universities and educational institutions to establish International Branch Campuses (IBC) and Offshore Education Centres (OEC) in the GIFT International Financial Services Centre (GIFT IFSC), providing high-quality education and research opportunities.

2. Who can establish an IBC or OEC in GIFT IFSC?

Foreign universities and educational institutions that meet the eligibility criteria specified in the regulations can establish an IBC or OEC in GIFT IFSC.

3. What are the eligibility criteria for a Foreign University?

A foreign university must rank within the Top 500 in the QS World University Rankings (either in global ranking or subject ranking).

4. What are the eligibility criteria for a Foreign Educational Institution?

A foreign educational institution (excluding universities) must be recognized as a reputed institution in its home jurisdiction.

5. What courses can be offered under these regulations?

Courses, including research programs, can be offered in Financial Management, FinTech, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

6. How can a Foreign University or Institution apply for registration?

The applicant must submit an application to IFSCA along with:

- Resolution from the governing body approving the establishment of an IBC or OEC.
- Details of infrastructure, faculty, academic plan, and financial resources.
- A commitment to maintaining academic quality.
- Proof that degrees issued in GIFT IFSC will be recognized in the home jurisdiction.
- The latest Quality Assurance Audit report from a recognized agency.

7. What is the process for registration approval?

The application is reviewed by a Committee of Experts. If approved, the applicant receives an in-principle approval for 180 days to set up infrastructure and engage faculty. Final registration is granted upon fulfilment of requirements.

8. What is the validity of the registration?

Registration is valid for five years and can be renewed for additional five-year terms.

9. What is the fee structure for setting up an IBC or OEC?

- **Application Fee:** \$1,000 (one-time)
- **Initial Registration Fee:** \$25,000 (one-time)
- **Annual Fee:** \$10,000 (from the second year onwards)
- **Processing Fee for Relaxation Requests:** \$10,000

10. Can IBCs and OECs modify their curriculum?

Yes, modifications are allowed but must be:

- Aligned with changes made by the Parent Entity in its home jurisdiction.
- Approved by the Academic Council or equivalent authority of the Parent Entity.
- Notified to IFSCA before implementation.

11. How are students' interests protected?

An IBC or OEC cannot discontinue or suspend courses without prior approval from IFSCA. If a course is discontinued, the Parent Entity must offer an alternative arrangement for affected students.

12. In what currency will transactions be conducted?

All transactions must be in freely convertible foreign currency. However, administrative expenses can be paid in Indian Rupees using a Special Non-Resident Rupee (SNRR) account.

13. What happens if an IBC or OEC violates regulations?

IFSCA may suspend, cancel, or refuse to renew the registration, and may impose penalties for non-compliance.

14. Are there any restrictions on promotional activities?

An IBC or OEC cannot act as a representative office of the Parent Entity for promotional activities outside GIFT IFSC.

15. What are the requirements for maintaining accounts and reporting?

- IBCs and OECs must maintain proper records in the declared foreign currency.
- They must submit an Annual Report detailing student admissions, programs conducted, fees collected, funds repatriated, and degrees awarded.

16. Can the Parent Entity repatriate profits?

Yes, the Parent Entity can repatriate profits without restrictions.

17. How does IFSCA ensure compliance?

- Regular inspections by IFSCA to ensure infrastructure, academic quality, and compliance with regulations.
- Appointment of an Inspecting Authority if required.

18. Can IFSCA relax any of these regulations?

Yes, IFSCA has the authority to issue clarifications or relax strict enforcement of any provision if justified.
