

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING POLICY

(Revised in August 2025)



Islamiya English School Abu Dhabi LLC



GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Supporting students with career and university (CU) guidance allows for a smooth and successful transitions into postsecondary destinations.

Consistent and quality practices and programs will help Islamiya English School prepare students for their future. This policy lays out the basic requirements for regulating the provision of schools CU guidance program, the responsibility of the CU Guidance Counselor, and the requirements for successfully monitoring and evaluating the CU guidance program

DEFINITION:

IES is committed to empowering the pupils to be confident and self-reliant. The Counselling service provides a confidential, safe, nurturing and personalized approach for pupils to explore difficulties they may encounter, complementing the pastoral support within the wider community. The service is available to any parent within the school to discuss any concerns they may have regarding their son/daughter and is also available to any member of the staff.

PURPOSE:

- Regulate the provision of a high-quality CU guidance program across the school.
- Identify the institutional, qualification, and functional requirements for CU Guidance Counsellors.
- Mandate annual evaluations of program effectiveness for ADEK reporting.
- The aim is to ensure that pupils have a positive mental wellbeing and to provide safe and nurturing environment to support the therapeutic process for all pupils, appropriate to the needs and life stage of the pupil.
- To provide ethical and professional support for vulnerable pupils.
- To provide group intervention where there is a pattern of behavior emerging.
- To encourage pupil, parental and staff involvement in accessing the service.
- The counselling support provided is in line with current best practice. This policy also reflects the ADEK's counseling policy.

POLICY:

- Counselling provides an opportunity for individuals to talk, in confidence, about things that are worrying them or affecting their day to day life.
- Counsellors are trained to listen, without judging and to help the person to resolve their thoughts and feelings and gain a greater understanding of themselves and their situation.

1. CU Guidance Program

- 1.1 **Programme Requirements:** Schools shall implement a CU guidance program, based on a policy that includes the following:

1. Developing a school CU guidance philosophy/approach based on nurturing an early sense of aspiration for postsecondary education and lifelong learning in students.
2. Fostering awareness of broad career concepts during Cycle 2, and actively supporting student transitions into Cycle 3, where career pathways/concepts can be explored in detail and integrated into postsecondary preparation.
3. Developing workplace-relevant soft skills via in-school activities or external enrichment programs and seminars.
4. Connecting with the alumni and larger school community to engage with students on CU guidance. The goal should be to create a culture of community engagement, alumni connectedness, mentoring, and networking to support the building of workplace-relevant skills.
5. Orienting students and parents with all possible local and international postsecondary options (including universities, community colleges, foundation programs, academies, TVET, military service, and direct employment).
6. Providing CU guidance and support to students and parents by employing flexible working arrangements during critical periods such as school holidays. Therefore, schools shall ensure the continuous availability of at least 1 full- time equivalent (FTE) CU Guidance Counsellor.

2. CU Guidance Counselor

- 2.1 **Appointment:** Schools shall appoint at least one full-time equivalent (FTE) CU Guidance Counsellor with the aim of ensuring that they have **at least one dedicated full time CU Guidance Counsellor by 1st September 2026.**
- 2.2 **Qualifications and Experience:** Schools shall verify that the CU Guidance Counsellor meets the following minimum requirements, in line with the *ADEK Staff Eligibility Policy*:
 1. At least a QFE 7 (Bachelor's Degree) in any subject and meeting Continuous Professional Development (CPD) requirements as per this policy OR
 2. At least a QFE 7 (Bachelor's Degree) in any subject and having been employed as a former or current teacher/educator.

Grandfathering Provision:

Currently employed CU Guidance Counsellors who do not meet the minimum requirements shall undergo initial and on-the-job training, as well as additional CPD. They have a **grace period until 1st September 2024** to meet the minimum requirements. However, all new CU Guidance Counsellors employed after the issuance of this policy are subject to meeting the requirements stipulated prior to their appointment.

1. During the 2-year grace period, schools are permitted to appoint an existing staff member serving in another capacity, upon their written consent, to undertake the role of the CU Guidance Counsellor, whether on a full or part-time basis, under the following conditions:
 - a. The staff member meets the requirements for CU Guidance Counsellor.
 - b. The staff member who does not meet the minimum experience requirements is permitted to be appointed in an acting capacity (as “Acting CU Guidance Counsellor”). They would be required to undergo initial ADEK training and abide by CPD requirements.
 - c. The staff member’s teaching or administrative workload is decreased in proportion to their FTE status to accommodate the additional responsibilities.
- 1.2 The staff member’s title is amended to reflect the additional role (e.g., Vice Principal/Acting Career Counsellor, Student Counsellor/Career Advisor, Head of Social Studies/College Counsellor, etc.). They must be identified as a “Career and University Guidance Counsellor” in addition to their own role in the Private Schools Staff Information System (PASS). As nomenclature varies by school and curriculum, the responsibilities should be explicit and clear to students, parents, and external stakeholders.
- 1.3 **Responsibilities:** In addition to being responsible for the implementation of the school’s CU guidance policy and programme, the role of the CU Guidance Counsellor includes the following responsibilities at a minimum:
 1. Understanding the career aspirations of each student in Cycle 3, starting in Grade 9/Year 10, and providing guidance on the planning and alignment of their student portfolios to meet these aspirations (e.g., choice of subjects, academic and extracurricular profile, etc.).
 2. Guiding each student to the most suitable or “best-fit” local and international postsecondary options and institutions, based on their career aspirations. This includes ensuring that each student has submitted at least one application to a postsecondary destination.
 3. Ensuring that each student meets all graduation requirements relevant to the student’s curriculum and in accordance with the MoE equivalency requirements, if applicable.

4. Engaging with parents throughout the entire CU guidance process, all the while emphasizing the importance of student agency in the decision-making process.
5. Providing full administrative support to students in preparation for their postsecondary applications and pathways. Examples include writing recommendation letters, reviewing personal statements, and compiling relevant documents (e.g., transcripts, portfolios, attestations, etc.).
6. Establishing relationships with local postsecondary education institutions to facilitate local opportunities and support for students (e.g., admissions, visits, admissions, internships, partnerships, etc.).
7. Verifying that destination institutions have reasonable accommodations for any gifted students and students with additional learning needs.
8. Organizing CU guidance events and disseminating and maintaining an up-to- date CU guidance calendar of key dates and events as per the requirements in the CU Guidance Programme Implementation Guide.
9. Providing CU guidance support to any Cycle 2 student considering alternative pathways for Cycle 3 (e.g., transferring to TVET).

2.3

Continuous Professional Development:

Schools shall include the following elements as part of their CU Guidance Counsellor's CPD:

1. Annual membership in at least one professional organization for CU Guidance Counsellors, with recommended accountability measures to benefit from the membership.
2. Completion of at least 25 hours of professional development annually (linked as much as possible to the role), at no cost to staff as per UAE Labor Law, with dedicated days to attend professional development events. All CU Guidance Counsellors shall undergo specific CPD on the provision of CU guidance for gifted students and students with additional learning needs.
3. Access to peers through community groups to avail of local best practices, and measures should be in place to safeguard and retain these best practices within the school's CU guidance programme

Confidentiality: A key feature of the service is that information discussed in the counselling session is treated confidentially.

- Confidentiality will be explained at the beginning of the counselling process and periodically hereafter, where there is a need.

- However, in the event that there is a child protection concern about a pupil's welfare, then this information will need to be shared.

1. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 1.1 **Internal Monitoring and Evaluation:** Schools shall monitor and evaluate their CU guidance programme by developing internal qualitative and quantitative indicators and mechanisms to measure the adequate delivery of the program's services.
- 1.2 **Program Indicators for ADEK Reporting:** Schools shall report the following indicators to ADEK annually:
 1. **Student Coverage:** The percentage of students in Cycle 3 (and any in Cycle 2) who are receiving CU guidance.
 2. **Counselor-Student Ratio:** The number of students being served by each FTE CU Guidance Counsellor.
 3. **Graduate Destination:** The percentage of graduates of the current academic year entering higher education, TVET, or employment by the start of the following academic year
 4. **Top 3 Destination:** The percentage of graduates of the current academic year accepted to at least one of their top 3 choices of postsecondary institutions or employers.

Supervision:

All counsellors are required to access regular external clinical supervision with an accredited supervisor who has the experience and understanding of the children and staff of the school setting.

GUIDELINES:

- A) Career Guidance Career guidance is intended to prepare students for the next stage of their lives, whether in advanced educational studies or in the world of employment.
- B) It involves helping students –
- C) Making sense of what they are being told about the various options.
- D) Matching courses realistically to their own abilities as well as to their aspirations (the two are not always aligned).
 - Preparing application forms, curricula vitae (CVs) or personal statements.
 - Getting ready for university and job interviews.
 - Preparing for a very different life, for example living away at university.
 - Dealing with emotional upheavals that often accompany key stages in life (leaving family, friends, and familiar environments).

Personal Counselling

- Many students undergo times when they feel lonely or insecure, lack of self-esteem or self-confidence.
- Counselling offers a parallel but often connected set of support systems. Personal anxieties or even panic attacks are widespread throughout adolescence.
- Young people may often feel hesitant to confide in a Parent / Guardian or a teacher with whom they meet daily; and it may be easier for them to do so to a trusted professional counselor, depending on the nature of the concern.

Academic Guidance

- Academic guidance services are part of the curriculum, and mostly focus closely on the academic needs and concerns of individual students.
- Teachers offer guidance and support to students according to their ability and area of expertise within School working hours.


Support from Fellow Students

- The role of the students themselves in providing support for each other should not be underestimated, Peer mentorship programs, in which an older student befriends a younger one, to provide an introduction and guidance to the School when anything seems strange or uncomfortable, as is always the case for new students who join a large secondary school.

Policy Review

This policy is to be reviewed and checked annually by the SLT.

This policy is also approved by the governing bodies

Draft Date:	03/07/25
Approved By Board of Governors:	Approved
Principal Approval:	
Review Date:	22/08/25

The End