CAREER AND UNIVERSITY GUIDANCE POLICY

Academic Year: 2026–2027	**Applicable to:** Cycle 2 and Cycle 3	**Review:** Annually

Purpose

- Regulate the provision of a high-quality CU guidance program across the school.
- Identify the institutional, qualification, and functional requirements for CU Guidance Counselors.
- Mandate annual evaluations of program effectiveness for ADEK reporting.

Policy

1. CU Guidance Program

1.1 Program 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 Counselor.

2. CU Guidance Counselor

2.1 Appointment: Schools shall appoint at least one full-time equivalent (FTE) CU Guidance Counselor, with the aim of ensuring that they have at least one dedicated full-time CU Guidance Counselor by 1 September, 2026.

2.2 Qualifications and Experience: Schools shall verify that the CU Guidance Counselor meets the following minimum requirements, in line with the ADEK School 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.

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2.3 Grandfathering Provision: Currently employed CU Guidance Counselors who do not meet the minimum requirements shall undergo initial and on-the-job training, as well as additional CPD, see Section 2.5. They have a grace period until 1 September 2024 to meet the minimum requirements. However, all new CU Guidance Counselors employed after the issuance of this policy are subject to meeting the requirements stipulated in Section 2.2 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 Counselor, whether on a full or part-time basis, under the following conditions:

a. The staff member meets the requirements for CU Guidance Counselor (see Section 2.2).

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 Counselor"). They would be required to undergo initial ADEK training and abide by CPD requirements (see Section 2.5).

c. The staff member's teaching or administrative workload is decreased in proportion to their FTE status to accommodate the additional responsibilities.

d. The staff member's title is amended to reflect the additional role (e.g., Vice Principal/Acting Career Counselor, Student Counselor/Career Advisor, Head of Social Studies/College Counselor, etc.). They must be identified as a "Career and University Guidance Counselor" 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.

2.4 Responsibilities: In addition to being responsible for the implementation of the school's CU guidance policy and program, the role of the CU Guidance Counselor 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, internships, partnerships, etc.).
7. Verifying that destination institutions have reasonable accommodations for any gifted students and students with additional learning needs.

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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 ADEK CU Guidance Policy Guide.
9. Providing CU guidance support to any Cycle 2 student considering alternative pathways for Cycle 3 (e.g., transferring to TVET).

2.5 Continuous Professional Development: Schools shall include the following elements as part of their CU Guidance Counselor's CPD:

1. Annual membership in at least one professional organization for CU Guidance Counselors, 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), including attending all ADEK-mandated training, at no cost to staff as per UAE Labor Law, with dedicated days to attend professional development events. All CU Guidance Counselors 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 program.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

3.1 Internal Monitoring and Evaluation: Schools shall monitor and evaluate their CU guidance program by developing internal qualitative and quantitative indicators and mechanisms to measure the adequate delivery of the program's services.

3.2 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 Counselor.
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.

POLICY CONTROL

Policy Name	Career and University Guidance Policy
School	Indian School – Al Ain
Academic Year	2026–2027
Responsible Authority	Principal / CU Guidance Counselor
Review Date	April 2026
Next Review	April 2027

Sd/- by
Principal

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