



Effective From	1 September 2022
Compliance From	AY 2024/25 (Fall term)

SCHOOL POLICY

on

CAREER AND UNIVERSITY GUIDANCE



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 schools prepare Abu Dhabi 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.

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.

Definitions

Additional Learning Needs	<p>Individual requirements for additional support, modifications, or accommodations within a school setting on a permanent or temporary basis in response to a specific context. This applies to any support required by students of determination and those who have special educational needs and/or additional barriers to learning, access, or interaction in that specific context (e.g., dyslexic, hearing or visually impaired, twice exceptional, or gifted and/or talented).</p> <p>For example, a student with restricted mobility may require lesson accommodations to participate in Physical Education and building accommodations to access facilities but may not require any accommodations in assessments. Equally, a student with hearing impairment may require adaptive and assistive technology to access content in class and may also require physical accommodations (e.g., sit in the front of the class to be able to lip read) to access learning.</p>
Career	<p>The learning and work journey an individual will undertake in their professional lifetime.</p>
Career and University (CU) Guidance	<p>The process of guiding students in exploring the world of work, making informed decisions about their careers, discovering alternative learning pathways, and providing support in preparing applications for postsecondary education and careers.</p>
Career and University (CU) Guidance Counselor	<p>An individual who implements the school’s CU guidance program by providing advisory and administrative CU guidance counseling services to students.</p>
Continuing Professional Development	<p>All activities undertaken by staff to improve their knowledge, skills, competencies, and performance on a regular basis. CPD includes in-person training, online training (synchronous or asynchronous), coursework, short certificate and degree programs, mentorship programs, peer/ collaborative learning, academic conferences, research projects, observational visits, and community programs to share teaching best practices. CPD excludes planning hours and general staff meetings.</p>
Cycle	<p>A cycle is a stage in the primary and secondary educational process and is classified in Abu Dhabi as the following: Kindergarten (Pre-KG/FS1-KG2/Y1), Cycle 1 (G1/Y2-G5/Y6), Cycle 2 (G6/Y7-G8/Y9) and Cycle 3 (G9/Y10-G12/Y13). Private schools teaching Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum may follow MoE cycles: KG, Cycle 1 (G1-G4), Cycle 2 (G5-G8) and Cycle 3 (G9-G12).</p>
Full-time Equivalent (FTE)	<p>Total workload equivalent to that of a full-time workload for a position. For example, 1 FTE for a single position may be filled by 1 staff member taking on the entirety of the full-time workload or 2 staff members taking on half of a full-time workload each.</p>

Gifted and Talented	Gifted students demonstrate exceptional ability in one or more domains. Talented students are those who can transform their giftedness into exceptional performance.
Higher Education	A type of postsecondary education based on academic learning, leading to a degree/certification issued by a higher education institution (e.g., university, colleges, academies, etc.).
Postsecondary	Describes the period that takes place following the completion of secondary school (Cycle 3). Postsecondary options include postsecondary education, employment, sabbaticals, etc.
Postsecondary Education	All educational pathways (higher and TVET education) following the completion of secondary school (Cycle 3).
Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)	A type of postsecondary education based on occupational/technical learning, leading to an award/certification issued by a TVET institution (e.g., technical colleges, polytechnics, etc.).



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.

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, 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 *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.

4. Compliance

- 4.1 This policy shall be effective as of 1 September 2022. Schools are expected to be fully compliant with this policy by AY 2024/25 (Fall term).
- 4.2 Failure to comply with this policy shall be subject to legal accountability and the penalties stipulated in accordance with the ADEK's regulations, policies, and requirements, notwithstanding any other penalties imposed by Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments or any other relevant law. ADEK reserves the right to intervene if the school is found to be in violation of its obligations.



References

- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments.

Publication

2024 (September) ADEK_School_Career and University Guidance Policy_v.1.2

Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK), Abu Dhabi

This policy applies to Private and Charter Schools in Abu Dhabi. However, any circular issued prior to this policy or issued specifically for Charter Schools thereafter supersedes the requirements of this policy.

Past versions:

2024 (January) ADEK_School_Career and University Guidance Policy_v.1.1

2022 (July) ADEK_School_Career and University Guidance Policy_v.1.0

