

ACADEMIC GUIDANCE AND CAREER READINESS POLICY 26-27

**International School of Creative Science
Nad al Sheba**



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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

At the International School of Creative Science, Nad Al Sheba (ISCS NAS), we aim to give every student a secure foundation for life beyond school. Academic guidance and career readiness begin in the Foundation Stage and build progressively to Year 13, so that each student understands their own strengths, sees how their learning connects to future opportunities, and makes informed, confident decisions at every point of transition.

Our programme is shaped by the school's ethos of excellence rooted in values. We combine the National Curriculum for England with Arabic, Islamic Education, Social Studies and Moral Education, and we want our students to leave us ready to succeed in further education and work, and to contribute with purpose to their families, their communities and the UAE.

This policy sets out how the school is aligning its provision with the KHDA FutuReady Framework for Schools: The Dubai Standards for Academic Guidance and Career Readiness (2026). The nine FutuReady standards replace the Gatsby Benchmarks, which were used in previous versions of this policy, as the school's reference framework.

The school is implementing the framework over three years, from 2026-27 to 2028-29. This policy describes the provision already in place and the areas the school will develop over that period. The phased plan is set out in section 16 and Appendix B, and progress is reviewed each year.

SECTION 2 SCOPE

- This policy applies to all students from FS1 to Year 13, including students of determination and students supported through The Bridge.
- It applies to all staff who provide academic or career guidance in any form, including teachers, form tutors, phase leaders, the inclusion team and the career guidance team.
- It also applies to parents, alumni, volunteers, employers, universities and other external providers who contribute to the programme.

For ease of reference, the FutuReady Framework refers to grades. In this policy, Grade 6 is Year 7, Grade 10 is Year 11 and Grade 12 is Year 13.

SECTION 3 REGULATORY CONTEXT

The school's programme is aligned with:

- the KHDA FutuReady Framework for Schools (2026), which sets out nine standards for academic guidance and career readiness that apply to all private schools in Dubai, across all curricula and grade levels;
- Dubai's Education Strategy 2033 (E33) and the priorities of the Dubai Economic Agenda (D33);
- the UAE School Inspection Framework and the BSO inspection framework, under which personal development, transition and preparation for next steps are evaluated.

The FutuReady Framework sets out what schools are expected to provide but leaves schools to decide how. This policy describes the approach ISCS NAS has chosen for its context, curriculum and community.

SECTION 4 AIMS

The aims of our academic guidance and career readiness programme are:

- To help every student understand themselves, recognise their strengths and interests, and connect their learning to future pathways.
- To develop the life skills, soft skills and literacies (including digital, financial, media and career literacy) that students need for further study and work.

- To give students accurate, impartial information about all their options after school, including UAE and international universities, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), apprenticeships and entrepreneurship.
- To support students at each key decision point: KS4 options in Year 9, Sixth Form choices in Year 11, and post-18 applications in Years 12 and 13.
- To connect learning with the world of work through employer encounters, experiential learning and up-to-date labour market information, with particular reference to Dubai's high-growth sectors.
- To work in partnership with families, alumni, employers and the wider community.
- To ensure equitable access to guidance for every student, including students of determination and Emirati students, for whom the framework asks schools to provide particular support.
- To keep guidance rooted in Islamic values and Emirati culture while preparing students for a diverse, global world.

SECTION 5 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In line with the FutuReady Framework, our guidance aims to be:

Inclusive and student-centred: reflecting Emirati culture and the school's Islamic values, open to every student regardless of background or ability, and personalised to each student's strengths, interests and aspirations.

Future-focused: preparing students for Dubai's growing sectors, for a technology-driven world and for a lifetime of learning and upskilling.

High quality and continuously improving: delivered by qualified professionals, supporting a smooth move from school to university, training or work, and regularly reviewed using feedback and destination data.

SECTION 6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Principal holds overall accountability for the programme, ensures it is reflected in the school's vision, graduate profile, timetable and staffing, and reports on it to governors.

The Designated Lead for Academic Guidance and Career Readiness (the Head of Secondary and Sixth Form) oversees the programme across all phases, sets its objectives, leads the Careers Development Plan, ensures consistent delivery and holds staff to account (FutuReady 3.1).

The Career Guidance Counsellor(s) provide individual and group guidance, lead university, TVET and scholarship support, maintain student profiles from Year 11, track destinations and support teachers to embed career-related learning (FutuReady 3.2).

Phase leaders, subject teachers and form tutors link curriculum learning to careers, embed skills development in lessons and co-curricular activities, and support students to reflect on their progress.

The inclusion team works with the career guidance team to plan transitions for students of determination and others needing additional support, as part of a multidisciplinary approach (FutuReady 9.2).

The governing body receives an annual report on the programme, including destinations and evaluation findings, and holds leaders to account for its impact.

Qualifications and staffing

When appointing to academic guidance and career readiness roles, the school will look for the qualifications set out in the FutuReady Framework: a bachelor's degree in career counselling, career guidance or development, counselling, psychology or a related field, or a bachelor's degree in another subject plus a postgraduate diploma or certificate in career development or career counselling. Guidance staff are expected to understand the school's curriculum and qualification routes, the UAE labour market, international higher education and the scholarships available, particularly for Emirati students.

KHDA recommends one guidance professional to 800 students in FS to Year 6, 1:500 in Years 7 to 10, and 1:300 in Years 11 to 13. The school reviews its guidance staffing against these ratios each year, taking account of enrolment, student need and resources, and will work towards them over the implementation period. The framework's suggested division of guidance staff time is used as a guide in planning workloads.

Staff involved in guidance receive professional development on education pathways, future careers and Dubai's labour market, which will be extended to more teaching staff over the implementation period (FutuReady 3.3 and 6).

SECTION 7 THE PROGRAMME FROM FS TO YEAR 13

The framework expects a clear progression from FS to Year 13, following three stages of career education: awareness and exploration, information and exposure, and educational pathways (FutuReady 1.1 and 5). The school's established provision is strongest in the secondary phase and Sixth Form. Provision in the primary phase, and some elements in Years 7 to 9, will be developed in stages as set out in section 16.

Foundation Stage and Primary (FS1 to Year 6): awareness and exploration

In the primary phase, career-related learning is introduced through the curriculum and school life rather than through formal guidance. Over the implementation period, the career guidance team will work with teachers to build in age-appropriate experiences such as:

- themed weeks exploring the people who help us and the work they do;
- role-play areas, stories and topics linked to different professions;
- class visits from parents and community professionals;
- simple enterprise and project-based learning linked to real contexts, such as running a class shop;
- building positive attitudes to learning, responsibility and contribution to the community.

Years 7 to 9 (KS3): information and exposure

- Planned careers sessions and activities introduce students to a wide range of careers, industries and pathways, including vocational and alternative routes.
- Students are introduced to emerging industries and the skills employers are seeking, with this strengthened from Year 8 over the implementation period (FutuReady 6).
- In Year 9, the KS4 options programme supports students and families to choose IGCSE and BTEC subjects with a clear understanding of how those choices link to future courses and careers.

Years 10 and 11 (KS4): pathways and decisions

- Careers sessions focus on employability skills, labour market information and post-16 pathways.
- Every student has a one-to-one guidance meeting, and an individual careers action plan is agreed.
- The school is introducing a profile for each student from Year 11, recording academic progress, career interests and intended pathways (FutuReady 4.2).
- The Sixth Form options programme supports students in choosing A Level and BTEC courses, and every Year 11 student is offered a second guidance appointment.
- Students are supported to secure work experience or job shadowing, with CV and covering-letter workshops.

Years 12 and 13 (Sixth Form): transition

- Individual guidance on university, TVET, apprenticeship and employment routes in the UAE and internationally.
- Application support for UCAS, UAE universities, the Common Application and other systems, including personal statements, references and deadlines.
- Preparation for entrance and aptitude tests where required (for example IELTS, SAT, ACT and UCAT) and for interviews.
- Guidance on scholarships, grants and financial support, including eligibility and deadlines.

- For Emirati students, guidance on how their plans fit with national service and on the support available to them afterwards (FutuReady 4.1).
- Each student maintains a digital portfolio of their work, activities and reflections, which supports personal statements and applications.
- Encouragement to undertake volunteering, internships and work experience to strengthen applications.
- The school records the intended destinations of Year 13 leavers and will develop follow-up after graduation (FutuReady 4.2).

SECTION 8 GUIDANCE PROVISION

Individual guidance: Career guidance counsellors offer one-to-one sessions that help students develop and carry out their own plans and build self-awareness. This includes support with personal statements, application forms, documentation and any external tests required.

Careers and university fairs: Each year students attend fairs, on and off campus, where they meet universities and education providers from the UAE and overseas. Parents and teachers are welcome. The school also uses virtual fairs and online university events (FutuReady 8).

Workshops: Throughout the year the school runs workshops on university applications, portfolio building, CV writing, entrance tests, interview skills and the safe, responsible use of digital and AI tools for researching pathways.

University and provider presentations: Universities and TVET providers visit the school to explain courses, entry requirements, entrance examinations, costs and deadlines.

Careers Day: External speakers, including parents and alumni, talk to students about their work and career journeys.

Experiential learning: Students take part in workplace visits, job shadowing, mentoring, enterprise challenges, peer tutoring, Model United Nations, community service and other activities that let them practise skills in real settings (FutuReady 5).

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award: see section 13.

SECTION 9 FUTURE SKILLS, GRADUATE PROFILE AND LABOUR MARKET INSIGHT

Graduate profile

The school will develop a graduate profile, in consultation with students, parents, staff, alumni and employers, describing the knowledge, skills, values and attributes we want every ISCS NAS student to have when they leave us. It will reflect our vision, our Islamic values, the aspirations of our community and Dubai's national priorities. Once agreed, it will be shared with the school community and used progressively to guide curriculum planning, guidance and student goal setting (FutuReady 1.4).

Skills and competencies

Life skills, soft skills and literacies are developed through lessons and co-curricular activities. Over the implementation period, the school will map where these skills are taught, help students reflect on them and set personal goals, and consider how skills development can be reflected in student reviews and reporting (FutuReady 2).

Labour market information

Students learn about Dubai's and the UAE's high-growth sectors, which currently include technology and AI, sustainability, logistics, the creative industries and healthcare, and how technology, government policy and economic change shape the world of work. The school will build staff confidence in using labour market data and help students learn to find and use trusted labour market information for themselves (FutuReady 6).

SECTION 10 DIGITAL AND FUTURE-READY GUIDANCE

- Students use digital tools, including AI tools where appropriate, to explore their strengths, research pathways and plan their next steps, in line with the school's Artificial Intelligence Policy and Digital Safeguarding Policy.
- Sixth Form students (Year 12 onwards) maintain digital portfolios recording their work, activities, reflections and career exploration. The school will extend digital portfolios to younger year groups in phases over the implementation period (FutuReady 8.3).
- Students are taught to protect their personal data, manage their digital identity and communicate respectfully in online academic and professional settings.
- The school will build up online guidance resources for students and families so they can explore and plan outside school hours.
- Digital tools complement, and never replace, personal guidance from staff.

SECTION 11 PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY

- The school holds information sessions for families at each key transition, including KS4 options, Sixth Form choices and university applications, to explain subject choices, qualification routes, assessment and application processes (FutuReady 7.1).
- Parents are invited to contribute their professional experience through talks, Careers Day and class visits.
- The school works with universities and education providers and will build longer-term partnerships with employers, professional bodies and public sector organisations, so that opportunities do not depend on individual staff (FutuReady 5.3).
- The school will develop its links with alumni, inviting them to share their experiences and give feedback on how well the school prepared them (FutuReady 2 and 7.2).
- The school will seek to engage Emirati role models as volunteers to give culturally relevant guidance, particularly for Emirati students. They complement, and do not replace, the school's guidance professionals.

Communication

The school will maintain a dedicated section on its website for academic guidance and career readiness, setting out the programme's goals, key contacts, subject and pathway options, qualification routes, a calendar of key events and deadlines, and resources for students and families. Information is also shared through the school's communication platforms (FutuReady 1.3).

SECTION 12 INCLUSIVE GUIDANCE

- Guidance is equitable and accessible for every student, including students of determination, students supported through The Bridge, and students at risk of disengagement (FutuReady 9.1).
- For students of determination, transition into the next key stage and beyond is planned as part of their individual plan, with support from the inclusion team, the career guidance team and external specialists where appropriate (FutuReady 9.2).
- Experiential learning is adapted where needed, for example through virtual job shadowing or in-school simulations, so that all students can take part.
- Students are partners in their own planning through guidance and goal-setting conversations. Over time, the school will give students a greater role in shaping the programme, for example through student ambassadors (FutuReady 9).
- Where possible, students are connected with mentors and role models who share or understand their experiences (FutuReady 9.3).

SECTION 13 THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S INTERNATIONAL AWARD

ISCS NAS offers The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award to students aged 14 and over. Participants design their own programme across service, physical recreation and skills, and complete an adventurous journey, at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. The Award is non-competitive and voluntary, and it challenges young people to set and reflect on meaningful personal goals.

The Award develops teamwork, leadership, resilience and service to others. It is well regarded by universities and employers and gives students rich experiences to draw on in personal statements and applications. It is an important part of the experiential learning the school offers under FutuReady Standard 5.

SECTION 14 MANAGEMENT OF PROVIDER ACCESS

Procedure

The career guidance team maintains contact with universities, employers and education and training providers. An external provider wishing to visit must contact the team in advance, agree the purpose and format of the visit, and confirm attendance at least one day beforehand. The team notifies reception before the visitor arrives.

A provider wishing to request access should contact:

- Ms Jorna Khalique, Head of Secondary and Sixth Form: jornakh@nas.iscs.sch.ae
- The Guidance Counsellor, who can be contacted through Ms Khalique.

Opportunities for access

The following events, which form part of the annual guidance calendar, give external providers the chance to work with students and their families. Specific dates are published each year on the school website.

	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
FS1 to Year 6	Visits from parents and community professionals (being developed from 2027-28)	Career-related learning through topics (being developed from 2027-28)	Enterprise and project-based learning (being developed from 2027-28)
Years 7 and 8	Careers sessions and talks; careers and university fairs	Careers workshops and external provider talks	Careers workshops and external provider talks
Year 9	Careers sessions; careers and university fairs	KS4 options programme and family information evening	Careers workshops and external provider talks
Year 10	Employability skills sessions; careers and university fairs	One-to-one guidance and careers action plans	Work experience and job shadowing preparation
Year 11	Employability skills sessions; careers and university fairs	Sixth Form options programme and family information evening; second guidance appointment	Pathways and future planning sessions
Year 12	Careers and university fairs; university and provider presentations	University, TVET and scholarship research; family information evening	Application preparation, personal statements and entrance test preparation
Year 13	Application submission and deadlines support; interview preparation	Offers, scholarships and next-step decisions	Transition support and destination recording

Please speak to the career guidance team to identify the most suitable opportunity.

Safeguarding

All visitors, speakers, volunteers and mentors are subject to the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy and Volunteer Policy, including checks on identity and suitability and appropriate supervision. No adult is permitted to work with students until these requirements have been met. Off-site experiences such as

workplace visits and job shadowing are risk assessed in advance.

Premises and facilities

The school provides a suitable space and audio-visual or other specialist equipment for provider presentations. Arrangements are agreed in advance with the career guidance team and senior leaders, and are coordinated by the School Operations Manager.

SECTION 15 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- The Designated Lead and the career guidance team maintain a Careers Development Plan, which sets out each year's priorities from the three-year implementation plan with clear, measurable objectives (FutuReady 1.5).
- The programme is evaluated each year using feedback from students, parents and staff, including a careers survey in the summer term. Feedback from alumni and employers will be added as those links develop.
- The school uses Year 13 destination information, and over time participation data, to evaluate the impact of the programme for different groups of students (FutuReady 4.2 and 9).
- Progress against the implementation plan is reported to the Principal and governors each year, and the plan is adjusted where needed.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head of Secondary and Sixth Form and approved by the Principal, Mr Ataullah Parkar, and the Vice Principal, Mr Farhaan Abdulla Patel. It may be reviewed sooner if KHDA requirements change.

SECTION 16 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2026-27 TO 2028-29

The school recognises that full alignment with the FutuReady Framework is a medium-term goal. Implementation is phased over three years so that new provision is introduced carefully, is properly resourced and builds on what already works well. The phases below are indicative. Each year's priorities are confirmed in the Careers Development Plan and may be adjusted following the annual review.

Year 1 (2026-27): establish. Adopt this policy and confirm the Designated Lead; review current provision against the nine standards; consolidate the established secondary and Sixth Form programme; publish the careers section of the website; begin recording Year 11 profiles and Year 13 destinations; review guidance staffing against KHDA's ratios.

Year 2 (2027-28): extend. Develop the graduate profile with the school community; begin career-related learning in the primary phase; extend digital portfolios from the Sixth Form to Years 10 and 11; strengthen labour market information and staff training; hold family information sessions at each key transition; develop employer partnerships and Emirati role models.

Year 3 (2028-29): embed. Extend digital portfolios and skills reflection to Years 7 to 9; develop alumni links and feedback; use destination and participation data to evaluate impact; continue to move guidance staffing towards the recommended ratios.

A summary by standard is given in Appendix B.

SECTION 17 RELATED POLICIES

This policy should be read alongside the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy, Volunteer Policy, Digital Safeguarding Policy, Artificial Intelligence Policy, Inclusion Policy, Equalities Policy, Curriculum Policy and Health and Safety Policy.

APPENDIX A ALIGNMENT WITH THE KHDA FUTUREADY FRAMEWORK

FutuReady Standard	Where this policy addresses it
1. Formal Academic Guidance and Career Readiness Programme	Sections 4, 7, 9 (graduate profile), 11 (communication and website), 15 and 16
2. Universal Future Skills and Competencies	Sections 4 and 9 (skills and competencies)
3. Transformative Leadership and Skilled Professionals	Section 6
4. University, TVET and Career Pathways	Sections 7 and 8
5. Robust Engagement and Experiential Learning	Sections 7, 8, 11, 13 and 14
6. Essential Labour Market Insights	Sections 7 and 9 (labour market information)
7. Active Family and Community Collaboration	Section 11
8. Digital and Future-Ready Guidance	Section 10
9. Youth-Centred and Inclusive Guidance	Sections 12 and 15

APPENDIX B IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY BY STANDARD

This summary is indicative and is reviewed each year through the Careers Development Plan.

FutuReady Standard	In place now	Development focus and indicative phase
1. Formal programme	Secondary and Sixth Form guidance programme; KS4 and Sixth Form options programmes; careers survey	Review against the standards and website section (Year 1); graduate profile and primary provision (Year 2)
2. Future skills	Skills developed through lessons, co-curricular activities and the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award	Map skills across the curriculum (Year 2); skills reflection and reporting (Year 3)
3. Leadership and professionals	Head of Secondary and Sixth Form and Guidance Counsellor lead the programme	Confirm Designated Lead (Year 1); review staffing against KHDA ratios annually; extend staff training (Years 2 to 3)
4. Pathways	Individual guidance, application support, entrance test preparation, university presentations and fairs	Year 11 profiles and Year 13 destinations (Year 1); post-graduation follow-up (Year 3)
5. Experiential learning	Fairs, Careers Day, work experience, peer tutoring, Model UN, community service, the International Award	Employer partnerships (Year 2); primary experiences (Year 2 onwards)
6. Labour market insight	Introduced through careers sessions and talks	Staff training and structured labour market information from Year 8 (Year 2)
7. Family and community	Options information for families; parent involvement in events	Family sessions at every key transition (Year 2); alumni links (Year 3); Emirati role models (Year 2 onwards)
8. Digital guidance	Digital portfolios in the Sixth Form; online and virtual fairs; AI and Digital Safeguarding policies	Portfolios in Years 10 and 11 (Year 2) and Years 7 to 9 (Year 3); online resources for families
9. Inclusive guidance	Transition planning for students of determination with the inclusion team and The Bridge	Student voice in shaping the programme; mentoring; equity analysis of destination data (Years 2 to 3)

APPENDIX C KEY TERMS

These definitions are taken from the FutuReady Framework.

Academic guidance: structured support and advice for students on their educational choices, performance and progression, so that their choices align with their goals.

Career counselling: a personalised process, one-to-one or in groups, led by a qualified professional, that helps students understand themselves in relation to their career aspirations and plan how to achieve them.

Career education: a structured process through which students learn about careers, industries and the skills they require, in three stages: awareness and exploration, information and exposure, and educational pathways.

Career readiness: how well prepared a young person is to move from education into work, including the skills, competencies and attitudes needed to succeed and adapt.

Graduate profile: a school-wide statement of the knowledge, skills, values and attributes students should have when they complete their schooling.

TVET: technical and vocational education and training.

Experiential learning: hands-on learning in real-world settings, such as internships, job shadowing, service learning and research projects.



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