

POLICY OWNER	Universal Private School
EFFECTIVE DATE:	
NEXT REVIEW DATE	
APPROVAL	School Governing Body & ADEK (if applicable)

UNIVERSAL PRIVATE SCHOOL

CAREER COUNCELLING POLICY AND GUIDE (Adapted from ADEK Policy)

1. Introduction

Universal Private School (UPS) recognises that effective Career and University (CU) Guidance is fundamental to preparing students for successful, meaningful, and purposeful transitions into postsecondary life. In an evolving global landscape, students require not only academic knowledge but also well-developed career management competencies, decision-making skills, and informed awareness of future pathways.

This policy articulates the school's commitment to a structured, inclusive, and future-focused CU Guidance framework, aligned with the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) Career and University Guidance Policy (2024–2025). It ensures that all learners are supported in exploring, planning, and pursuing diverse postsecondary opportunities, including higher education, vocational training, employment, entrepreneurship, and national service.

As part of UPS's holistic educational vision, CU Guidance is embedded into the wider student experience, fostering lifelong learning, global citizenship, and personal agency. The school is committed to ensuring that all guidance practices reflect best practice, uphold UAE cultural values, and equip students with the tools needed to thrive in the dynamic world of work and study.

This policy provides a high-level governance framework for CU Guidance and sets out roles, responsibilities, and quality expectations for its implementation across the school community.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the strategic aims, core principles, and regulatory alignment of Universal Private School's (UPS) Career and University (CU) Guidance Programme. It establishes a clear framework to ensure that all students receive timely, equitable, and high-quality support in identifying and pursuing appropriate postsecondary pathways.

Specifically, this policy aims to:

- **Support Informed Decision-Making:** Enable students to make purposeful, self-directed choices about their future academic, vocational, or employment goals.
- **Promote Career Readiness:** Equip students with the personal, academic, and professional competencies required to transition successfully into postsecondary education or the workforce.

- **Ensure Regulatory Compliance:** Align the school's CU Guidance provision with the ADEK Career and University Guidance Policy (2024–2025) and other relevant national education frameworks.
- **Establish Role Clarity:** Define the responsibilities of school leaders, CU Guidance Counsellors, staff, and external stakeholders in delivering a cohesive and impactful programme.
- **Drive Continuous Improvement:** Provide a foundation for annual evaluation, data-informed planning, and quality assurance of the CU Guidance service.

3. Scope

This policy applies to the full school community, with emphasis on:

- **Students in Cycle 2 (Grades 6–8 / Years 7–9) and Cycle 3 (Grades 9–12 / Years 10–13)**, who are the primary recipients of career and university guidance.
- **CU Guidance Counsellors**, who are appointed to lead the design, delivery, and monitoring of the CU Guidance Programme.
- **Teaching, pastoral, and administrative staff**, who contribute to the holistic support of students through curriculum design, mentorship, and planning processes.
- **Parents and guardians**, who are engaged as essential partners in their children's career and university planning.
- **External stakeholders**, including higher education institutions, training providers, employers, and community organisations, who provide resources, opportunities, and real-world insight.

4. Definitions

- **Career**

At UPS, a career refers to the evolving journey of learning, skill development, and work experiences that students will undertake throughout their professional lifetime.

- **Career & University (CU) Guidance**

CU Guidance at UPS is the structured process through which students are supported in exploring potential career fields, understanding educational and vocational pathways, evaluating personal interests and competencies, and preparing for postsecondary study or workforce entry.

- **CU Guidance Counsellor**

A designated educational professional at UPS who leads and implements the Career and University Guidance Programme by delivering personalised, group, and administrative support services in accordance with ADEK requirements.

- **Cycle**

At UPS, the educational process is structured in alignment with ADEK classifications:

- *Kindergarten* (Pre-KG/FS1 to KG2/Year 1)
- *Cycle 1* (Grades 1–5 / Years 2–6)
- *Cycle 2* (Grades 6–8 / Years 7–9)
- *Cycle 3* (Grades 9–12 / Years 10–13)
- **Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)**

A staffing metric representing the workload of one full-time employee. For CU Guidance, UPS must ensure at least one FTE is dedicated to guidance counselling to maintain consistent service delivery.

4. CU Guidance Programme

4.1 Programme Requirements

Universal Private School (UPS) is committed to maintaining a robust CU Guidance Programme that:

1. Establishes a school-wide vision for career readiness, postsecondary planning, and lifelong learning.
2. Initiates early career exploration in Cycle 2 and deepens pathway awareness and preparedness in Cycle 3.
3. Builds essential workplace and application competencies, including CV writing, interview skills, digital literacy, and goal setting.
4. Engages alumni, local employers, and university representatives to enhance experiential learning and mentoring.
5. Provides comprehensive information sessions for students and parents on available academic, vocational, and alternative postsecondary routes, including higher education, TVET, military service, entrepreneurship, and employment.
6. Guarantees year-round access to guidance services, particularly during application periods and subject selection phases, through the appointment of at least one FTE CU Guidance Counsellor.

5. CU Guidance Counsellor

5.1 Appointment

UPS shall appoint a qualified CU Guidance Counsellor based on the student population, in accordance with ADEK's recommended counsellor-to-student ratios.

5.2 Qualifications & Experience

The appointed counsellor must meet the following standards:

- Hold a minimum Bachelor's degree (QFE Level 7) plus two years' experience in career guidance or

counselling, or

- Hold a Master's degree (QFE Level 9) in counselling or a closely related field.
- Demonstrate sound knowledge of local and international higher education systems, subject-career alignment, and inclusive planning for gifted students and Students of Determination.

5.3 Grandfathering Provision

If the counsellor does not meet all criteria at the time of appointment, UPS shall:

- Enrol the staff member in ADEK-approved CPD or bridging programmes.
- Allow a transitional period of up to 2 years to fulfil full compliance.
- Ensure their designation is clearly communicated (e.g., "Acting CU Guidance Counsellor") and their schedule adjusted to allow fulfilment of duties.

6. Responsibilities

The CU Guidance Counsellor at UPS is responsible for:

1. Initiating individual guidance from Grade 9 (Year 10) onwards to support personalised academic and career planning.
2. Supporting students in submitting at least one postsecondary application where applicable.
3. Ensuring alignment between students' course selections and graduation requirements, including MOE equivalency.
4. Facilitating continuous parent engagement while maintaining student agency and ownership in decision-making.
5. Managing all documentation support (e.g., recommendation letters, transcripts, personal statements).
6. Establishing partnerships with local and international universities, training institutions, and industry professionals.
7. Providing differentiated support for Students of Determination, gifted learners, and students with diverse career aspirations.
8. Organising school-wide events, including university fairs, career days, and informational sessions.
9. Offering exploratory exposure for Cycle 2 students to non-traditional and technical/vocational pathways.

10. Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

The CU Guidance Counsellor at UPS shall:

- Maintain annual membership in a recognised professional career guidance or counselling association.

- Complete a minimum of 25 hours of CPD each academic year, which must include inclusive education practices and strategies for supporting diverse learner profiles.
- Engage in collaborative peer learning through participation in local and regional communities of practice.

11. Monitoring & Evaluation

11.1 Internal Monitoring

UPS shall implement a cyclical evaluation process to monitor:

- CU programme effectiveness (qualitative and quantitative indicators)
- Student access to services and satisfaction levels
- Parent feedback and engagement
- Alumni destination tracking

11.2 Reporting to ADEK

UPS shall submit annual CU Guidance reports to ADEK, including:

- % of students (Cycle 3 & relevant Cycle 2) receiving guidance
- FTE counsellor-to-student ratio
- % of graduates entering higher education, employment, or vocational training
- % of students accepted into one of their top three postsecondary institutions

12. Compliance

UPS shall ensure full adherence to this policy and ADEK Career and University Guidance standards.

Non-compliance may result in formal intervention or sanctions as stipulated under ADEK regulatory frameworks. The school is obligated to cooperate with any audits, inspections, or data requests pertaining to CU Guidance implementation.

13. Review & Update

This policy will be formally reviewed annually by the Principal and Senior Leadership Team, incorporating:

- Amendments from ADEK's updated policy publications
- Internal evaluation findings and feedback from stakeholders
- Shifts in postsecondary trends, student demographics, or workforce needs

All revisions will be documented, communicated to relevant staff, and submitted to ADEK if required.

5. Policy Governance

UPS is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented with fidelity, monitored for effectiveness, and regularly reviewed to maintain alignment with evolving student needs and ADEK regulations.

The **Principal** holds overall accountability for policy oversight, while the **Career and University Guidance Counsellor** assumes operational leadership and reporting responsibilities.

All staff are expected to be familiar with this policy and contribute to its effective implementation through collaboration and role-appropriate engagement.

5. Review and Evaluation

This policy shall be reviewed **annually** by the **Senior Leadership Team**, incorporating:

- Updates to ADEK regulations and UAE federal education policy
- School self-evaluation findings and student destination data
- Stakeholder feedback, including student and parent surveys
- Recommendations from external inspections or audits

Amendments to this policy must be formally approved and published by the Principal and the UPS Board of Governors.

6. Regulatory Alignment

This policy aligns with the following core regulations:

- **ADEK Career and University Guidance Policy (2024–2025)**
- **ADEK Private School Policy and Guidance Manual**
- **UAE Federal Education Law and Labour Law Provisions on Career Education**
- **Relevant UPS internal policies**, including those relating to inclusion, student wellbeing, and safeguarding