GFM Academic and Career Guidance Policy

Published Date:	01 October 2026
The Policy will be reviewed annually, or more regularly, in the light of any significant new developments. The next anticipated review date will be:	**01 October 2027**

This policy is applied at GFM alongside our school's vision, mission and values.

Our Aim

To support and prepare students to identify a suitable career choice, advance their understanding of the workforce and develop employability skills.

Introduction

High-quality career guidance is an essential part of schooling that prepares students for their future. Careers are now increasingly seen as not being 'chosen', but as being constructed through a series of choices about learning and work that people make throughout their lives. At GEMS Founders School, Al Mizhar, we want our students to leave school with the confidence to effectively progress from learning to employment. Our programmes will equip our students with all the necessary information and skills required for this progression.

Objective

The decisions that young people make at school have a big impact on their lives – affecting not just their further education, training or employment, but also their social lives, finances and health outcomes. A key function of secondary schools is to prepare students to transition successfully towards a successful career path. This involves providing them with opportunities to build their general capabilities, support their interests and aspirations, and help them to make informed decisions about their subject choices and pathways. The programme intends to enhance our students' skill sets to attain a tertiary-level education and eventually enter the future workforce.

The programme will entail the following, but will not be limited to:
Initiatives

- Community Service and Volunteering: Engaging in community service provides students with the opportunity to become active members of their community and have a lasting, positive impact on society at large. Community service or volunteerism enables students to acquire life skills and knowledge, as well as provide a service to those who need it most.
- Cognitive Ability Testing (CAT4): An online assessment tool to help students identify their aptitude, learning style, potential strengths and weaknesses.

- Developing Essential Soft Skills: Group sessions or presentations on creating personal statements/essays, developing and enhancing academic CVs, interview skills and presentation skills.
- Co-Curricular Activities: Regular exposure to and participation in local events such as Model United Nations and TEDx Youth.
- University Campus Visits (around the UAE): In liaison with the various universities in the UAE, faculty-specific campus tours for GFM students in Years 11, 12 and 13 will be organised throughout the academic year.
- Course and University Selection: Individual or group sessions and presentations on university choices.
- University Applications: Ongoing support with university applications and comprehensive one-to-one career counselling sessions.
- Internships: Opportunities for GFM students to gain information about career options available to them before becoming university or college students. This can be particularly advantageous for students considering courses such as Medicine, Law, Accountancy and Finance, and IT.

Throughout Secondary School, GFM students are encouraged to develop an understanding of their individual strengths, areas for development and personal interests in relation to education and possible career pathways.

Years 7 and 8: Explore and Discover

An introduction to careers through Form Time programmes is designed to develop self-awareness and enable students to learn about the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life, including career pathway decisions.

Career guidance will also be woven through the whole-school enrichment programme for Years 7, 8 and 9. This will provide students with regular opportunities to explore their interests, recognise their strengths and develop an understanding of the skills and qualities required for different careers.

Through enrichment activities, curriculum experiences, assemblies, co-curricular opportunities and relevant careers-related events, students will be encouraged to:

- Develop self-awareness and identify personal strengths, interests and aspirations.
- Explore a range of careers, industries and future opportunities.
- Understand how subjects studied at school connect to potential careers.
- Develop transferable skills, including communication, collaboration, problem-solving, creativity, leadership and resilience.
- Challenge stereotypes and recognise the range of pathways available.

- Reflect on their learning experiences and consider how their skills and interests may relate to future opportunities.

Careers education at this stage will focus on broadening students' awareness and aspirations rather than requiring them to make specific career decisions.

Year 9: GCSE/IGCSE Options and Career Exploration

Students will be supported throughout the GCSE/IGCSE options process by teachers, leaders and the career counselling team.

Students will receive information in a variety of contexts, including GCSE/IGCSE Options Evenings, parent information sessions, career fairs and relevant online resources.

Careers guidance will be integrated into the whole-school enrichment programme, Careers Days and the GCSE Subject Marketplace. These opportunities will help students understand the relationship between their subject choices, personal interests, future study and possible career pathways.

Students will be supported to:

- Understand GCSE/IGCSE subject requirements and the knowledge and skills developed through different courses.
- Explore how subject choices may connect to future academic and vocational pathways.
- Consider their strengths, interests and aspirations when making informed options decisions.
- Access guidance from teachers, leaders and careers guidance staff.
- Discuss options with their parents or carers and make informed decisions about their next steps.

Years 10 and 11:

Students in Years 10 and 11 will continue to develop their understanding of careers, qualifications, employability and progression pathways. Careers guidance will support students to connect their GCSE/IGCSE studies with future opportunities and make informed decisions about their next steps.

Unifrog will be rolled out to Years 10 and 11 from Term 1.2. Students will be introduced to the platform and supported in using its relevant tools to explore careers, research pathways, reflect on their skills and interests, and consider future education and employment opportunities.

Year 10

Year 10 will focus on supporting students at the beginning of their GCSE/IGCSE journey, helping them understand the relationship between their studies, future opportunities and longer-term aspirations.

From Term 1.2, Unifrog will support students to:

- Explore career pathways and the qualifications associated with different professions.
- Investigate how their GCSE/IGCSE subjects relate to further study and potential careers.
- Reflect on their strengths, interests and developing skills.
- Research academic, vocational and technical progression routes.
- Develop an understanding of employability skills and the expectations of the workplace.

Students will continue to have access to careers guidance and relevant online resources. They will be encouraged to seek support from their year team and teachers regarding subject-related concerns, study support and future pathway decisions.

Year 11

Year 11 will focus on examinations and the selection of post-16 courses, including A Level options and other appropriate progression pathways.

Students will meet with relevant school leaders and subject staff to discuss their current grades, subject choices and the entry requirements for Sixth Form. Students will also engage in an A Level Subject Marketplace, where they can gain information from staff about Sixth Form and the courses they may wish to study.

From Term 1.2, Unifrog will support students in researching post-16 pathways and considering how their interests, strengths, qualifications and aspirations align with their future choices.

Students will also have opportunities to:

- Explore university, vocational, technical and apprenticeship pathways.
- Understand entry requirements and progression routes.
- Participate in careers-related enrichment, employer encounters and relevant events.
- Access individual guidance where appropriate.
- Develop an informed understanding of the opportunities available after Year 11.

Year 11 students may also contribute to careers and options activities for younger year groups, sharing their experiences of GCSE/IGCSE study and subject selection.

Years 12 and 13:

By the time students reach the Sixth Form, careers guidance is firmly focused on supporting university applications and individual student pathway progression.

Comprehensive support documents will provide students and parents with focused updates and guidance around A Level course progress, university and career advice, and student wellbeing.

Throughout these two years, students will have the opportunity to attend university fairs held at the school and will be informed of relevant external events taking place in Dubai and beyond. Presenters from universities around the world may join the school throughout the year to discuss their institutions, higher education opportunities and key considerations for success after school.

Students will also have the opportunity to inform younger year groups about the Sixth Form and A Level programme.

Students are expected to research and develop clear university and pathway goals by Sixth Form so that support can be individualised. These goals should be communicated and discussed with parents or carers.

Students will be supported with applications to universities and other post-18 destinations internationally, including guidance on the required documentation and application processes. Support may include:

- Individual university and careers guidance.
- Researching and shortlisting universities and courses.
- Understanding entry requirements, admissions tests and application deadlines.
- Preparing personal statements and application materials.
- Accessing university fairs, webinars, presentations and campus visits.
- Exploring scholarships, apprenticeships, employment and alternative progression pathways.
- Developing interview, presentation and employability skills.
- Planning individual progression routes in line with students' aspirations and qualifications.

Students and parents may request meetings with the Year Teams and Career Counsellor in advance.

The school provides guidance and support throughout the application process; however, students and their families remain responsible for completing and submitting applications and ensuring that all relevant requirements and deadlines are met.

Useful Links for Year 10–13

- Unifrog: www.unifrog.org – Research and shortlisting of universities and courses worldwide. This tool can also be used for personality tests, career and subject research, logging community service, MOOCs and completing the university application process.
- My Path to Uni: www.mypathtouni.com – GEMS partners supporting students and families throughout the journey from school to university. This resource also helps parents understand the international student journey and further supports school careers guidance staff.
- Oxford AQA: www.oxfordaqaexams.org.uk – Information about Oxford AQA International.
- Cambridge International: www.cambridgeinternational.org – Information about Cambridge Assessment International Education.
- Careers Wales: www.careerswales.com – Careers tools, resources, leaflets and an A–Z of careers.
- Bright Knowledge: www.brightknowledge.org – Careers and education information.
- BBC Bitesize Careers: www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/careers – Careers research and information.
- UCAS: www.ucas.com – Researching career pathways and suitable higher education courses in the UK.
- Russell Group – Informed Choices: www.russellgroup.ac.uk/informed-choices/ – Guidance to help students choose A Level options.
- Oxbridge Applications: www.oxbridgeapplications.com – Information and support for students applying to Oxford or Cambridge universities.
- Prospects: www.prospects.ac.uk/options_with_your_subject.html – Information about graduate recruitment and career options associated with different degree courses.
- Fulbright Commission: www.fulbright.co.uk – Information for students with British qualifications who wish to study in the USA.

- College Board: www.collegeboard.com – Information about SAT registration and requirements for entry to US universities.
- Education in Canada: www.educationau-incanada.ca – Researching university and college courses in Canada.
- Study Options: www.studyoptions.com – Information about higher education in Australia and New Zealand.
- Study in Europe: www.study-in-europe.org – Information about higher education options in Europe.

Designation	Name	Signature	Date
Executive Principal/CEO/	**Akram Tarik**		**01 October 2026**
Principal	**Mia Chorfi**		**01 October 2026**

Next policy review date: 01 October 2027