



STAFF ELIGIBILITY POLICY

Introduction

In today's rapidly changing labor market, school staff are composed of those who follow traditional pathways as well as those that may have entered the educational workforce later in their careers. In Abu Dhabi's global private schooling environment, there is equally a diversity of terminology used to describe staff qualifications and positions. The employment of high-quality staff therefore needs to be based on high standards and yet be flexible enough to accommodate this diversity, all while using a common language. This policy lays out the basic requirements for staff to hold core positions in Abu Dhabi private schools.

Purpose

- Identify the minimum qualifications, experience, and other requirements for the employment of staff in core positions (teaching, leadership, teaching support, non-teaching).
- Standardize terminology concerning qualifications, experience, and different types of positions to accommodate diverse curricula.
- Outline multiple eligibility profiles for different core positions to recognize prior experience and alternative pathways.

Definitions

Arabic	Arabic Language as a subject, classified as Arabic for Native Speakers and Arabic for Non-Native Speakers
Campus	A school's premises consisting of the physical grounds and collection of buildings at a single location.
Cycle	A stage in the primary and secondary educational process classified in Abu Dhabi as the following: Kindergarten (Pre-KG/FS1-KG2/Year1), 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).
Educational experience	Time spent working in a nursery or school in any role (teaching or non-teaching).
Eligibility	Requirements for staff to be employed in a specific position and includes qualifications, experience, and any other requirements.



Experience in the field of education	Time spent working in any institution in the education sector, including schools, nurseries, universities, private sector, government, NGOs, etc.
Language proficiency	Ability to communicate (writing, reading, speaking, listening) at a level of professional accuracy in a specific language, as determined by the relevant authority, if applicable.
License	The approval issued by an authorized government entity to qualified individuals to practice a specific profession.
Qualification	A credential (such as a certificate, diploma, or degree) attesting to an individual's achievement of a set of learning outcomes as defined by the qualification awarding body.
QF Emirates (QFE)	<p>The "Qualifications Framework Emirates" is a standard framework to establish equivalencies for qualifications earned in the UAE and abroad:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> QFE 10 Doctoral Degree QFE 9 Master's Degree QFE 8 Postgraduate Diploma QFE 7 Bachelor's Degree QFE 6 Diploma QFE 5 Diploma/Associate Degree QFE 4 Certificate (Certificate 4/Secondary School Certificate [G12])
Staff	An individual employed by a school on a remunerated contractual basis regardless of employment mode (internal, external/third-party, etc.).
Teaching experience	Time spent working in a nursery or school in a teaching role.
Valid Teaching License	A "Certified License" issued by the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE), including an MoE-recognized International License. The MoE "Transitional License" is not considered a valid teaching license.



Policy

Table 1. Teaching Positions

TEACHING			
CLASS TEACHER			
Role: A teacher who teaches multiple subjects to a group of students in KG or Cycle 1.			
Minimum Eligibility: Staff should match one of the following eligibility profiles:			
Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience
1	QFE 7 (Bachelor's Degree) in Early Childhood or Primary Education Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BEd (Primary Education) • BA (Early Years Education) • BSc (Early Childhood) • MEd (Primary Teaching) 	-	
2	QFE 7 (Bachelor's Degree) in another subject Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA (Archaeology) • BSc (Biology) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid Teaching License in Early Childhood or Primary Education OR • QFE 6 (Diploma) in Early Childhood or Primary Education 	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BEng (Civil Engineering) • LLB (Jurisprudence) • MBBS (General Medicine) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid Teaching License OR • QFE 6 (Diploma) Teaching Qualification 	3 years of teaching experience in early childhood or primary education
Additional requirements:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Successful school interview. 2. For non-native English speakers and those who have completed their education in a language other than English, a minimum of IELTS 6 or equivalent if teaching in English; IELTS 7 or equivalent if teaching English as a subject. Advanced proficiency in the language applied in the curriculum of the school, if the language of instruction is not English. 3. Only Native Arabic speakers are authorized to teach Arabic for Native Speakers. Non-Native Arabic speakers are authorized to teach Arabic for Non-Native Speakers. 4. Only female Class Teachers are authorized to teach in KG. 			



SUBJECT TEACHER

Role: A teacher who teaches a specific subject (or more in related fields) to a group of students in any cycle.

Minimum Eligibility: Staff should match one of the following eligibility profiles:

Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience
1	QFE 7 (Bachelor's Degree) in the education of the subject Examples for Math Teacher: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BEd (Mathematics) • MSc (Math Education) 	-	-
2	QFE 7 (Bachelor's Degree) in the subject (or a related subject) Examples for Economics Teacher: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA (Finance) • BSc (Econometrics) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid Teaching License OR • QFE 6 (Diploma) teaching qualification 	
3	QFE 7 (Bachelor's Degree) in another subject Examples for Economics Teacher: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BEd (Primary Education) • BA (Archaeology) • BSc (Biology) • BEng (Civil Engineering) • LLB (Jurisprudence) • MBBS (General Medicine) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid Teaching License OR • QFE 6 (Diploma) teaching qualification 	1 year of teaching experience in the subject For non-core subjects* (music, PE, etc.), includes experience teaching in field-specific institutions (e.g., conservatories, sports academies, etc.).

*For timetabled non-core subjects that are highly specialized, an "Instructor" with relevant experience in the field may be considered for ADEK approval on a case-by-case basis. Examples of such subjects include yoga, dance, coding, printmaking, fashion design, animation, and stagecraft.

Additional requirements:

1. Successful school interview.
2. For non-native English speakers and those who have completed their education in a language other than English, a minimum of IELTS 6 or equivalent if teaching in English; IELTS 7 or equivalent if teaching English as a subject. Advanced proficiency in the language applied in the curriculum of the school, if the language of instruction is not English.



3. For the teaching of other languages as a subject, the Subject Teacher must also have at least a QFE 5 (Diploma/Associate Degree) qualification or equivalent in the teaching of that language.
4. Only Native Arabic speakers are authorized to teach Arabic for Native Speakers. Non-Native Arabic speakers are authorized to teach Arabic for Non-Native Speakers.

INCLUSION TEACHER

Role: A Class or Subject Teacher with a background in special education who teaches groups of Students of Determination and those with special educational needs and reports to the Head of Inclusion.

Minimum Eligibility: Staff should match one of the following eligibility profiles:

Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience
1	QFE 7 (Bachelor's Degree) in Special Education	-	-
2	See Class or Subject Teacher requirements	QFE 5 (Diploma/Associate Degree) in Special Education in addition to Class or Subject Teacher requirements	-
3	See Class or Subject Teacher requirements	Coursework in Special Education	2 years of teaching experience working with Students of Determination and those with special educational needs

Additional Requirements:

1. Successful school interview.
2. For non-native English speakers and those who have completed their education in a language other than English, a minimum of IELTS 6 or equivalent if teaching in English; IELTS 7 or equivalent if teaching English as a subject. Advanced proficiency in the language applied in the curriculum of the school, if the language of instruction is not English.



ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL) TEACHER

Other names: English as a Second Language (ESL)/English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teacher, English Language Learner (ELL) Teacher, etc.

Role: A support teacher teaching English as an Additional Language to students who require further support in English language. This role is different from an English teacher, who needs to meet the requirements of a Subject Teacher.

Minimum Eligibility:

Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience
1	QFE 7 (Bachelor's Degree) in any subject	QFE 5 (Diploma/ Associate Degree) to teach English as an Additional Language , e.g., TEFL/TESL/TESOL, CELTA/DELTA, Trinity, or equivalent	-

Additional requirements:

1. Successful school interview.
2. For non-native English speakers and those who have completed their education in a language other than English, a minimum of IELTS 7 or equivalent. School's attestation of satisfactory proficiency in the language applied in the school's curriculum, if the language of instruction is not English.



SUBSTITUTE TEACHING

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER

Minimum Eligibility:

Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience
1	See requirements for the relevant category of Teacher		

Employment Restrictions:

1. Authorized to substitute an individual teacher/course for up to 3 consecutive months in an academic year.
2. Authorized to be employed on any type of contract, but with a restricted teaching load (should not be assigned a full course, except in the case of emergency cover up to 3 months).
3. Not authorized for staff holding a full-time contract with another employer in the UAE.

SUBSTITUTE INSTRUCTOR

Minimum Eligibility:

Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience
1	QFE 7 (Bachelor's Degree) in the teaching subject (or a related subject) Examples for Economics Teacher: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• BA (Finance)• BSc (Econometrics)	-	-

Employment Restrictions:

1. Authorized to substitute an individual Subject Teacher/course for up to 1 month in an academic year.
2. Authorized to be employed on any type of contract, but with a restricted teaching load (should not be assigned a full course, except in the case of emergency cover up to 1 month).
3. Not authorized to substitute for Class Teachers.
4. Not authorized for staff holding a full-time contract with another employer in the UAE.



Table 2. Leadership Positions

LEADERSHIP			
PRINCIPAL			
Other names: Head Teacher, Headmistress/Headmaster, Superintendent, Head of School, etc.			
Role: School-based role with the highest level of responsibility for the leadership and management of a single campus, and to whom all staff report.			
Minimum Eligibility: Staff should match one of the following eligibility profiles:			
Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience
1	QFE 9 (Master's Degree) in Educational Leadership	-	8 years of experience in the field of education, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 years of teaching experience AND either • 2 years as Vice Principal OR • 3 years as a Senior Leader
2	QFE 9 (Master's Degree) in any subject	Coursework in educational and/or organizational leadership	8 years of experience in the field of education, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 years of teaching experience AND either • 2 years as Vice Principal OR • 3 years as a Senior Leader
3	QFE 7 (Bachelor's Degree) in any subject	Coursework in educational and/or organizational leadership	10 years of experience in the field of education, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 years of teaching experience AND either • 2 years as Vice Principal OR • 4 years as a Senior Leader
Additional Requirements:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educational Leadership Standards Assessment and/or other relevant valid licenses as announced by ADEK. 2. Successful ADEK leadership approval interview. 3. Schools in Abu Dhabi have diverse governance models, and the above requirements do not apply to positions above that of Principal (e.g., Executive Director, CEO, etc.), for which Boards of Trustees are authorized to apply their own requirements. 			



VICE PRINCIPAL

Other names: Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal, Deputy Head Teacher, Deputy Headmistress/Headmaster, Assistant Head of School, etc.

Role: Deputy to the Principal, who (in addition to their own duties) assumes the role of Acting Principal when the Principal is unavailable. Depending on the size and organization, schools may have more than one Vice Principal.

Minimum Eligibility: Staff should match one of the following eligibility profiles:

Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience
1	QFE 8 (Postgraduate Diploma) in Educational Leadership	-	6 years of experience in the field of education, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 years of teaching experienceAND• 1 year as a Senior Leader
2	QFE 8 (Postgraduate Diploma) in any subject	Coursework in educational and/or organizational leadership	6 years of experience in the field of education, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 years of teaching experienceAND• 1 year as a Senior Leader
3	QFE 7 (Bachelor's Degree) in any subject	Coursework in educational and/or organizational leadership	8 years of experience in the field of education, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 years of teaching experienceAND• 2 years as a Senior Leader

Additional Requirements:

1. Educational Leadership Standards Assessment and/or other relevant valid licenses as announced by ADEK.
2. Successful ADEK leadership approval interview.
3. A minimum of IELTS 5.5 or equivalent in schools where the language of instruction is English, in addition to advanced proficiency in the language applied in the curriculum of the school, if applicable.



SENIOR LEADER

Other names: Assistant Principal of Cycle, Head of Department, Head of Subject, Head of Curriculum, Head of Cycle, etc.

Role: Current and former teachers who have whole-school leadership or administrative responsibility. Some schools may have multiple levels/ranks of senior leadership.

Minimum Eligibility:

Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience
1	See requirements for any category of Teacher	-	5 years of teaching experience

Additional requirements:

1. Successful school interview.
2. Relevant valid licenses as announced by ADEK, if applicable.
3. A minimum of IELTS 6 or equivalent, in addition to advanced proficiency in the language applied in the curriculum of the school.

MIDDLE LEADER

Other names: Head of Grade-Level Subject (e.g., Head of 8th Grade Science), Master Teacher, Senior Teacher, Head of Grade, Lead Teacher, Supervisor, etc.

Role: Current teachers who, in addition to teaching, have leadership or administrative responsibility, but not at the whole-school level. Some schools may have multiple levels/ranks of middle leadership.

Minimum Eligibility:

Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience
1	See requirements for any category of Teacher	-	3 years of teaching experience

Additional requirements:

1. Successful school interview.
2. Relevant valid licenses as announced by ADEK, if applicable.
3. A minimum of IELTS 6 or equivalent, in addition to advanced proficiency in the language applied in the curriculum of the school.



HEAD OF INCLUSION

Other names: Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCo), PoD/SoD/SEND Coordinator, etc.

Role: The Senior Leader with responsibility for the provision and monitoring of education for Students of Determination and those with special educational needs.

Minimum Eligibility: Staff should match one of the following eligibility profiles:

Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience
1	See requirements for Inclusion Teacher	-	2 years of experience as an Inclusion Teacher
2	Bachelors (QFE 7) in a related subject	Coursework as per ADEK Inclusion Policy requirements	5 years of experience as an Inclusion Teacher or any other inclusion-related senior leader in a school

Additional Requirements:

1. Successful school interview.
2. Relevant valid licenses as announced by ADEK, if applicable.

EDUCATION ADVISOR

Other names: Instructional Coach, Curriculum Advisor, Assessment Specialist, Pedagogy Advisor, Head of Curriculum, etc.

Role: To provide mentorship and coaching in their respective areas of expertise to teachers and leadership to improve teaching to support student outcomes.

Minimum Eligibility:

Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience
1	QFE 8 (Postgraduate Diploma) in Education or a specialized field within education (e.g., curriculum design, assessment, etc.)	-	5 years of teaching experience and 2 years of educational experience in the relevant field of expertise.

Additional requirements:

1. Successful school interview.
2. Relevant valid licenses as announced by ADEK, if applicable



Table 3. Teaching Support Positions

TEACHING SUPPORT											
TEACHER ASSISTANT											
<p>Other names: Learning Support Assistant, Teacher Assistant, Classroom Assistant</p> <p>Role: Teacher Assistants provide care and support to students by assisting teaching staff with their duties.</p> <p>Minimum Eligibility:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: black; color: white;">Profile</th> <th style="background-color: black; color: white;">Main Qualification</th> <th style="background-color: black; color: white;">Additional Qualification</th> <th style="background-color: black; color: white;">Experience</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td>QFE 4 (Certificate)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Additional Requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Successful school interview. School's attestation of satisfactory proficiency in the language applied in the school's curriculum. 				Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience	1	QFE 4 (Certificate)	-	-
Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience								
1	QFE 4 (Certificate)	-	-								
INCLUSION ASSISTANT											
<p>Other names: Learning Support Assistant, Teacher Assistant for SEN, Special Education Classroom Assistant, Special Needs Assistant, etc.</p> <p>Role: Assists teaching staff in supporting Students of Determination and those with special educational needs.</p> <p>Minimum Eligibility:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: black; color: white;">Profile</th> <th style="background-color: black; color: white;">Main Qualification</th> <th style="background-color: black; color: white;">Additional Qualification</th> <th style="background-color: black; color: white;">Experience</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td>QFE 4 (Certificate)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td>2 years of experience working with Students of Determination and those with special educational needs</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*No experience required for UAE Nationals.</p> <p>Additional Requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Successful school interview. Relevant valid licenses as announced by ADEK, if applicable. School's attestation of satisfactory proficiency in the language applied in the school's curriculum. 				Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience	1	QFE 4 (Certificate)	-	2 years of experience working with Students of Determination and those with special educational needs
Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience								
1	QFE 4 (Certificate)	-	2 years of experience working with Students of Determination and those with special educational needs								



INDIVIDUALIZED TEACHING SUPPORT

INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANT

Other names: Shadow Teacher, Individual PoD Support Assistant, PoD Learning Support Assistant

Role: An assistant providing 1:1 support for a Student of Determination.

Minimum Eligibility:

Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience
1	Recommendation to appointment by Head of Inclusion or Senior Leader	-	-

Additional Requirements:

1. Successful school interview.
2. Relevant valid licenses as announced by ADEK, if applicable.
3. School's attestation of satisfactory proficiency in the language applied in the school's curriculum.



Table 4. Non-Teaching Positions

CAREER AND UNIVERSITY GUIDANCE COUNSELING			
CAREER AND UNIVERSITY GUIDANCE COUNSELOR			
Career and University Guidance Counselors (CU Guidance Counselors) are required to meet the qualifications and experience requirements as per Section 2.2 of the <i>ADEK Career and University Guidance Policy</i> :			
Minimum Eligibility: Staff should match one of the following eligibility profiles:			
Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience
1	QFE 9 (Master's Degree) in Counseling (Career, College, School)	-	-
2	QFE 7 (Bachelor's Degree) in any subject	-	2 years of educational experience in Career and University Guidance
Additional Requirements:			
1. Provisional requirements for currently employed CU Guidance Counselors and the appointment of staff serving in other capacities are detailed in Sections 2.2.1-2.2.2 of the <i>ADEK Career and University Guidance Policy</i> .			





SOCIAL CARE

SOCIAL WORKER

Role: The Social Worker supports students (and their families) facing difficult circumstances by liaising between the school, families, and community resources on matters such as substance abuse, student protection, etc.

Minimum Eligibility: Staff should match one of the following eligibility profiles:

Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience
1	QFE 7 (Bachelor's Degree) in Social Work or Social Service	-	2 years of experience in youth-related social work . No previous experience required for UAE Nationals, but some experience in social service preferred.
2	QFE 7 (Bachelor's Degree) in Psychology, Counseling, Youth Development, Sociology, or a related subject	-	4 years of experience in youth-related social work .

Additional Requirements:

1. Successful school interview.
2. School's attestation of satisfactory proficiency in the language applied in the school's curriculum.
3. Relevant valid licenses as announced by ADEK, if applicable.



SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Other names: Counselor, Guidance Counselor, Academic Counselor, Support Counselor, Student Counselor

Role: The School Counselor provides social-emotional and academic support, guidance, and counseling to students.

Minimum Eligibility: Staff should match one of the following eligibility profiles:

Profile	Main Qualification	Additional Qualification	Experience
1	QFE 9 (Master's Degree) in School Counseling or a related subject	-	2 years of experience in school counseling
2	QFE 7 (Bachelor's Degree) in School Counseling or a related subject	-	5 years of experience in school counseling

Additional Requirements:

1. Successful school interview.
2. Relevant valid licenses as announced by ADEK, if applicable.
3. School's attestation of satisfactory proficiency in the language applied in the school's curriculum.

SOCIAL CARE PROFESSIONAL

Social Care Professionals other than the Social Worker and School Counselor are required to meet the educational standards, experience, and licensure requirements as per the *Regulations & Procedure Manual (2020)* and *DCD Standards for Education & Practical Experience (2020)* for the licensing of Social Care Professionals.

This includes the following positions:

1. Psychologist (Non-clinical)
2. Psychotherapists
3. Applied Behavioural Analysts



HEALTHCARE

ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

Allied Health Professionals are required to meet educational standards, experience, and licensure requirements as per the *Unified HealthCare Professional Qualification Requirements (2017)*.

This includes positions such as Speech and Occupational Therapists.

NURSE

Nurses are required to meet educational standards, experience, and licensure requirements as per the *Unified HealthCare Professional Qualification Requirements (2017)*.

OTHER NON-TEACHING

OTHER LICENSED POSITIONS

Other Licensed Professionals (Bus Supervisor, Canteen Staff, Lifeguards, Security Guards, etc.) are required to meet the licensure requirements of the Abu Dhabi Quality Control Council (QCC) as well as any other licenses required by the relevant sector's governing body. The license should be valid throughout the duration of their employment.





References

- Federal Decree Law No. (18) of 2020 Concerning Private Education
- Federal Decree Law No (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties Law
- Federal Decree Law No. (33) of 2021 Concerning the Regulation of Labour Relations in the Private Sector
- Organizing Regulations of Private Schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi (2013)
 - Article (29)
 - Article (30)
 - Article (34)
- *Private School Policy and Guidance Manual 2014-15 Policy (30)*
- *Regulations & Procedure Manual (2020) and DCD Standards for Education & Practical Experience (2020)*
- *Unified HealthCare Professional Qualification Requirements (UAE Ministry of Health, Abu Dhabi Department of Health, & Dubai Health Authority, 2017)*

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Department of Education and Knowledge, Abu Dhabi (ADEK)

This policy replaces Policy 24 (Accreditation and Licensing of the Principal and Vice Principal), Policy 25 (Approval of Teaching Faculty Appointments), Policy 26 (Licensing and Qualifications), Policy 28 (Continuous Professional Development and Performance Management), Policy 29 (Rights and Responsibilities), and Policy 31 (Conditions of Employment and Contracts) in the *Private School Policy and Guidance Manual 2014-2015*.