



المدرسة العالمية الأمريكية  
UNIVERSAL AMERICAN SCHOOL

Al-Futtaim Education Foundation

## OUR VISION

TO BE THE LEADING AMERICAN  
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN THE REGION

## OUR MISSION

TO NURTURE A COMMUNITY  
OF INTEGRITY AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

## OUR VALUES

BELONGING, CURIOSITY, RESILIENCE, EMPATHY

### CURRICULUM POLICY

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## RATIONALE

Our curriculum is at the center of the learning and teaching at the Universal American School. As an American school our curriculum provides a broad and balanced approach that encourages creativity and provides flexibility to meet the needs of our learners. Our focus is on the growth and development of the whole child through a well-rounded curriculum that includes experiential learning along with co-curricular and extracurricular activities.

## PURPOSE

- To provide an agreed overview of our curriculum based on the New York State Standards and the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme and Diploma Programme frameworks and content.
- To ensure curriculum coverage and delivery is consistent, challenging, and culturally responsive.
- To promote lifelong learning through a broad and balanced curriculum that addresses the needs of the whole child.
- To support progressive curriculum content and delivery.
- To meet the needs of all students through differentiation within the classroom, curriculum adaptation, and/or personalized learning.
- To raise attainment and maximize progress for all students.

## CURRICULUM DESIGN

At UAS, we provide an adaptive, challenging, and coherent curriculum that is based on a clear rationale which aligns to our identity as an American international school and to the UAE's National Vision. Our comprehensive curriculum is broad and balanced addressing the needs of the whole child. It is innovative, relevant, and personalized to meet the needs of all learners through varied experiences that develop their knowledge, understanding, and skills in the content areas. The culturally responsive curriculum is also designed to cultivate each student's thinking, communication, social, research, and self-management skills in order to develop independent learners. Conceptual and cross-curricular links are thoughtfully developed to model the application of knowledge in the real world and ensure a deeper understanding across subject areas. Our curriculum ensures preparedness for the next grade level and beyond through regular horizontal and vertical review to support the continued progress of students as well as local and national priorities.

## CURRICULUM ADAPTATION

The UAS curriculum is effectively planned and adjusted to engage and challenge students based on their academic skills, aspirations, and interests. Appropriate modifications provide stimulating learning opportunities for all groups of students in order to support them reaching their personal and academic goals. Our curriculum provides room for teachers to

be innovative, flexible, and creative in meeting the needs of all students through interesting, diverse, and collaborative lessons both inside and outside of the classroom. Students are provided with multiple approaches to learning independently, in pairs, or with groups and they are encouraged to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways. In addition, extracurricular activities are offered to support and extend learning introduced in the classroom as well as expand learning into other areas of community service, curiosity, or enjoyment.

## **CURRICULUM RATIONALE**

### **Elementary - Early Years – PreK – KG2**

Our holistic, hands-on, and individualized curriculum is based on the New York State Standards, the IB Primary Years Programme framework, and is modified to include links to UAE culture and heritage as well as the culture and heritage of our students' home countries. The curriculum is designed to build children's confidence, creativity, and critical thinking skills through hands-on, project-based investigations. The units and lessons promote discovery and inquiry with opportunities for children to develop their academic and social-emotional skills with rich, interactive investigations of relevant and interesting topics both in the classroom and beyond. Teachers utilize student interests and questions to modify the curriculum to support high levels of student engagement and support students in meeting their own personal and academic goals. The curriculum is enhanced by special events, trips, visitors, and learning experiences with other students in the school.

### **Elementary - Grades 1-5**

Our transdisciplinary, inquiry-based, and conceptual curriculum is based on the New York State Standards, the IB Primary Years Programme framework, and is modified to include links to UAE culture and heritage as well as the culture and heritage of our students' home countries. The curriculum provides broad and balanced lessons across subject areas and is designed to develop the foundational skills of reading, writing, and math while teaching students how to apply these skills to access knowledge across the curriculum. The student-centered approach takes into consideration the students' prior learning, needs, interests, and wonderings in order to deliver engaging and challenging lessons for all students. Students are expected to become more independent learners, taking responsibility for their own learning through the development of thinking, communication, social, research, and self-management skills. Our curriculum provides opportunities for learning through creative, physical, and practical experiences that develop students' knowledge, skills, and understandings. There are also opportunities for students to learn beyond the classroom through special events, trips, visitors, and extracurricular activities.

## Middle School - Grades 6-8

Our dynamic, broad, balanced, and inclusive curriculum is based on the New York State Standards and modified to provide links to UAE culture and heritage as well as the culture and heritage of our students' home countries. During Middle School, students are exposed to a wide variety of subjects with the goal of supporting them in identifying their strengths, areas of interest, and aspirations while preparing them for any high school pathway they may choose. Teachers recognize students' varied needs, interests, and goals, using this information to ensure the curriculum is engaging and challenging for all learners. Our curriculum provides opportunities for learning through creative, physical, and practical experiences that develop students' knowledge, skills, and understandings. Throughout the program students engage in cross-curricular and conceptual learning in meaningful and engaging contexts. A strong focus is placed on students becoming fully independent learners through the development of thinking, communication, social, research, and self-management skills. There are also opportunities for students to learn beyond the classroom through special events, trips, visitors, and extracurricular activities.

## High School - Grades 9-12

### American High School Track

Our broad, balanced, and rigorous American curriculum is based on the New York State Standards and modified to provide links to UAE culture and heritage as well as the culture and heritage of our students' home countries. The curriculum is designed to provide students with choice and flexibility to meet their academic and personal goals for high school, university, and beyond. The development of courses and recommended pathways ensures learning builds smoothly through the progression of courses. The high school curriculum consists of a variety of creative, physical, and practical experiences both within and outside of the classroom that strengthen students' knowledge, skills, and understanding. Throughout the program students engage in cross-curricular learning in meaningful and engaging contexts while developing their independent learning through the development of thinking, communication, social, research, and self-management skills.

To provide additional challenge and rigor to students within the American High School Track, Advanced Placement (AP) courses are available to students. AP courses enable willing and academically prepared students to pursue college-level studies while still in high school. They are modeled after comparable introductory level university courses and culminate in a standardized college-level assessment or AP Exam. Ambitious students also have the opportunity to complete the AP Capstone Diploma Program. This two-year program is designed to develop students' research, analysis, evidence-based arguments, collaboration, writing, and presenting skills. The successful completion of AP classes, particularly the AP Capstone Diploma, provides students with improved prospects for college admission and success.

## International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme

Our IB Diploma Programme offers a broad and balanced education for our students through the study of a range of subjects. The international nature of the program serves our student body, which represents over 60 different countries from around the world. The program is known for its rigor and challenge, providing excellent prospects for admission and success in top universities around the world. Within the IBDP, there is not only a focus on the development of content-based knowledge and skills, but also growing students' thinking, communication, social, research, and self-management skills. The Theory of Knowledge (TOK) class and extended essay provide unique opportunities for the students to develop their inquiry and critical thinking skills as they question their own knowledge and understanding of the world around them. As part of the DP, students participate in a Community, Action, Service (CAS) component of the program, which provides students an opportunity to develop as caring members of the global community.

## CURRICULUM REVIEW CYCLE

The deliberate and regular review of the curriculum is essential to student success. Throughout the year, teachers participate in reflective practice regarding the effectiveness as well as vertical and horizontal alignment of our curriculum. In addition, we believe in a thorough and in-depth review of each subject area's curriculum on a regular basis to ensure our students are receiving the best education possible. Our Curriculum Review Cycle is a five-year plan that allows for all members of the teaching and leadership teams to participate in the review, writing, implementation, refinement, and evaluation of the curriculum. The five stages of the UAS Curriculum Review Cycle are as follows:



## Stages of the UAS Curriculum Review Cycle

1: Review & Research	<p>This stage of the curriculum review cycle involves reviewing and researching curriculum specific to the content area, age range, and programs taught.</p> <p>The report at the end of this stage includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• current curriculum documents</li> <li>• a summary of the content area across the school</li> <li>• an outline of the resources consulted</li> <li>• recommendations for moving forward in the revise or write phase</li> </ul> <p><b><i>It is essential that the team ensures these recommended resources align with the New York State Standards and IB programme requirements as appropriate.</i></b></p>
2: Revise or Write	<p>This stage in the cycle begins by establishing a shared vision for the content area across the school.</p> <p>The report at the end of the cycle includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a completed scope and sequence</li> <li>• resources for the implementation of the curriculum</li> <li>• an implementation plan</li> </ul> <p><b><i>During this curriculum development process, the resources collected from the previous stage are considered.</i></b></p>
3: Train & Implement	<p>This is the stage when the curriculum is put into practice in the classrooms. Staff development and support are the major focus during this stage.</p> <p>The report at the end of this stage includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• areas of success</li> <li>• areas that need further attention</li> <li>• examples of how to best move the curriculum forward</li> <li>• initiatives that are/will be taken to do so</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Possible areas of consideration: potential workshops and/or consultant visits to the school, staff meetings, grade level meetings and/or department meetings agendas outlining staff training for successful implementation and other support systems for teachers such as email support, coaching, a mentor system, a buddy system, or other effective strategies.</i></b></p>
4: Reflect & Refine	<p>This is the stage when the curriculum has been taught for a year in the classrooms. Based on the report from the implementation stage, the appropriate adjustments should be made to the implementation plan and/or curriculum to meet the needs of the school and students.</p> <p>The report at the end of this stage includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• areas that were adjusted, why, and how</li> <li>• the impact of any adjustments made</li> <li>• areas that need further attention</li> </ul>
5: Evaluate	<p>At this stage in the cycle, the curriculum is fully operational in all classrooms, as appropriate.</p> <p>The report at the end of this stage includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how teachers are implementing the curriculum and how instruction is in alignment with New York State Standards and IB programmes as appropriate</li> <li>• the attainment and progress data collected for use during the review/ research stage of the following year</li> <li>• additional staff development that could be done in needed areas</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Possible areas of consideration: After full implementation for multiple years, is this curriculum and resource pairing meeting the needs of our learners?</i></b></p>