



TWS ACADEMIC AND CAREER GUIDANCE POLICY

POLICY FOR	Academic and Career Guidance
PERSON RESPONSIBLE	Career Counsellor
REVIEW DATE	September 2026
REVIEWED BY	Assistant Principals
APPROVED DATE	September 2026
APPROVED BY	Executive Principal/CEO and Head of School/Deputy CEO
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	June 2027
RELATED POLICIES	Teaching and Learning Policy, Assessment Policy; Inclusion Policy; Data Protection/Confidentiality Policy; Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Executive Principal / CEO and
Brand Ambassador for GEMS Westminster Schools



Vision

To expand world-class support beyond education to all aspects of life for all members of the GEMS community—past, present, and future—by enabling informed academic, career, and life pathway decisions that contribute to personal fulfilment, employability, and responsible global citizenship.

Mission

To provide a coherent, inclusive, and progressive Academic and Career Guidance Programme that supports students at every transition point, ensuring they are well prepared for further education, employment, and lifelong learning in line with GEMS For Life and DSIB expectations.

The programme will provide progressive opportunities for students to understand themselves, explore pathways, connect learning with future opportunities, develop employability skills, and successfully manage transitions.

Policy Statement

The Westminster School (TWS) is committed to delivering a high-quality Academic and Career Guidance Programme that enables students to make informed, ambitious, and realistic choices about their education and future careers. This policy reflects the school's commitment to the DSIB inspection priorities of student wellbeing, effective curriculum pathways, post-school readiness, and inclusive provision, and aligns with the GEMS Education vision of developing confident, resilient, and future-ready learners.

The programme recognises that career development is a lifelong process and supports students in understanding how learning links to future opportunities in a changing global and local labour market.

The programme is designed to ensure that every student has access to appropriate guidance and opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence required to make informed decisions and progress successfully beyond school.

Guiding Principles

- Student-centred – guidance will reflect students' individual interests, strengths, aspirations, needs and circumstances.
- Inclusive and equitable – all students will have equitable access to guidance, opportunities and support.
- Impartial and evidence-informed – students will receive balanced information about a range of academic, vocational and professional pathways.
- Connected to the world of work – students will engage with employers, professionals, universities, alumni and real-world career contexts.



- Focused on successful transitions – guidance will support positive and appropriate destinations in higher education, employment, apprenticeships, vocational routes or other planned pathways.

Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Students develop self-awareness, resilience, and aspiration, supporting DSIB expectations for personal and social development.
- Students make informed subject and pathway choices at key transition points.
- Guidance supports positive destinations, including higher education, apprenticeships, vocational pathways and employment.
- Students acquire employability and life skills aligned with GEMS For Life competencies.
- All students receive impartial, well-informed, and accessible guidance.
- Academic pathways reflect labour market trends and global opportunities.
- Students develop the ability to research, evaluate and reflect on academic and career information independently.
- Students develop practical career-management skills, including communication, CV writing, applications, interview preparation, networking and professional behaviour.

Scope and Student Entitlement

This policy applies to students from Year 9 to Year 13. In line with DSIB standards, all students are entitled to:

- A planned, progressive, and age-appropriate academic and career guidance programme.
- Access to impartial and appropriately qualified academic and career guidance.
- Opportunities to explore academic, vocational, and professional pathways.
- Guidance that promotes wellbeing, safeguarding, and inclusion.
- Support that enables successful transitions within and beyond school.
- Opportunities to engage with universities, employers, alumni, external professionals, and other relevant partners.
- Access to careers and pathway resources, including digital platforms and labour market information.

Academic and Career Guidance Programme Framework

The programme will be structured around four progressive areas of development:

- Self-awareness – understanding interests, strengths, values, skills, motivations and aspirations.



- Career exploration – exploring occupations, sectors, emerging careers, labour market information and future opportunities.
- Pathway planning – understanding subject choices, qualifications, universities, apprenticeships, vocational routes and alternative pathways.
- Career management – developing the skills to make applications, communicate professionally, gain experience, make decisions and manage transitions.

Roles and Responsibilities

Career Counsellor

- Lead, coordinate, and evaluate the Academic and Career Guidance Programme.
- Provide individual and group counselling sessions.
- Support subject choices and post-16 and post-18 planning.
- Guide students through global university, apprenticeship, vocational and alternative pathway applications.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of labour market information, admissions systems and progression routes.
- Liaise with universities, employers, alumni, industry professionals and external partners.
- Support students' wellbeing through informed and realistic planning.
- Maintain an annual Careers, University Guidance and Employability Calendar.
- Monitor participation, guidance activity, applications and student progression.
- Coordinate work experience, internships, employer engagement and careers events.
- Provide and promote career-readiness activities including CV writing, interview preparation, personal statements, networking and professional skills.
- Maintain appropriate records of student guidance in accordance with school procedures.
- Undertake relevant continuing professional development to maintain current knowledge and professional practice.
- Prepare an annual evaluation/impact report using participation, feedback and destination data.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- Ensure effective implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Allocate appropriate curriculum time, staffing, and resources.
- Support staff development in careers education.
- Use destination data, participation data and stakeholder feedback to inform school improvement planning.
- Ensure careers provision is appropriately integrated into whole-school planning and transition arrangements.



Teachers and Tutors

- Embed career relevance within subject teaching, supporting DSIB curriculum coherence.
- Guide students in academic reflection and decision-making.
- Identify students requiring additional guidance and refer appropriately.
- Reinforce high expectations and aspiration.
- Support students to recognise transferable skills developed through their subjects and wider school experiences.
- Encourage students to maintain and reflect on their career and university planning through appropriate school platforms.

Parental and Student Engagement

In line with DSIB expectations for partnership with parents, TWS will:

- Provide individual and group counselling at key transition points (Years 9–10, 11–12, Sixth Form).
- Conduct scheduled one-to-one counselling for students in Years 11–13.
- Offer parent–student meetings during weekly consultation hours.
- Share regular updates on university deadlines, scholarships, careers and pathway resources.
- Deliver webinars and virtual sessions on international university admissions and career pathways.
- Provide parent information sessions on subject choices, university applications, careers, employability and alternative pathways.
- Encourage students and parents to participate actively in pathway planning and decision-making.

Programme Structure (Years 9–13)

Key Stage 3 – Year 9

- Exposure to a range of career sectors, roles and emerging opportunities.
- Introduction to digital career platforms and career research.
- Structured guidance for GCSE/IGCSE subject selection.
- Introduction to linking subjects, skills and possible future careers.

Key Stage 4 – Year 10

- Understanding links between GCSE/IGCSE subjects and future pathways.
- Careers education through Life Skills and form programmes.
- Employer talks, skills workshops, career exploration and university awareness sessions.
- Development of a longer-term career and pathway plan.



Key Stage 4 – Year 11

- Subject and pathway decision-making for Sixth Form and alternative post-16 routes.
- Individual guidance for post-16 choices and career connections.
- Introduction to post-18 pathways and university/career research.
- Career skills including CV/profile development, communication and professional behaviour.
- Support with transition into Year 12 or alternative post-16 pathways.

Sixth Form – Year 12

- Individual academic and career counselling.
- Planning for higher education and career pathways across the UK, US, Europe, Canada, Australia, UAE and other relevant destinations.
- University and course research, shortlisting and application planning.
- Work experience, internships, employer engagement and career exploration.
- Preparation for personal statements/essays, admissions tests, interviews and other application requirements.
- Guidance on apprenticeships, foundation routes, vocational pathways, gap years and alternative options.
- Development of employability, networking and professional skills.

Sixth Form – Year 13

- Individual academic and career counselling.
- Application support for UCAS, Common App and other international systems as appropriate.
- Support with admissions tests, interviews, personal statements/essays and documentation.
- Scholarship, funding and financial planning guidance.
- Tracking applications, offers and decisions.
- Guidance on university, employment, apprenticeships and alternative post-school destinations.
- Transition preparation, including independent living, financial awareness, professional expectations and next-step planning.
- Confirmation, verification and follow-up of final destinations.

Work Experience and Employer Engagement

TWS will provide meaningful, age-appropriate opportunities for students to engage in the world of work and develop an understanding of professional environments.

- External work experience and internship opportunities where appropriate.
- Internal school-based internships and employability experiences.
- Employer talks, career panels, masterclasses and workplace insight sessions.



- Career fairs and industry engagement activities.
- Alumni engagement and professional mentoring opportunities.
- Volunteering, enterprise and leadership experiences that develop transferable skills.
- Reflection activities to help students connect experiences to future pathways.

University, Alternative Pathways and Transition Guidance

- Higher education options in the UK, US, Canada, Europe, Australia, UAE and other appropriate destinations.
- Apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships where available and appropriate.
- Vocational and professional qualifications.
- Employment and school-to-work pathways.
- Gap years and structured alternative progression routes.
- Scholarships, funding and financial planning.
- Application systems, admissions tests, interviews and supporting documentation.

Equality, Inclusion, and Accessibility

In line with DSIB inclusion standards, the school is committed to:

- Ensuring equitable access to guidance for all students.
- Providing targeted support for students of determination and those with additional needs.
- Supporting students eligible for national and international progression schemes.
- Challenging stereotyping and promoting diversity in academic and career choices.

Employer, University, Alumni, and External Partnerships

The Westminster School actively engages with:

- Local and international universities.
- Employers, industry professionals, alumni and professional networks.
- Career fairs, university days, workplace engagement programmes and careers conferences.
- External careers and university guidance partners.

Safeguarding in External Engagement

As students are regularly exposed to external personnel through work experience, employer talks, career fairs, alumni engagement and other partnership activities, TWS will ensure this engagement is safe and appropriately



safeguarded. In line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, the Career Counsellor and staff coordinating external engagement will:

- Carry out appropriate due diligence and, where required, safeguarding/background checks on external visitors, employers, alumni and partner organisations prior to engagement with students.
- Ensure a member of staff supervises or is present at all times during employer talks, career panels, workshops and other sessions involving external personnel.
- Ensure any safeguarding concerns arising from external engagement are reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review

The impact and effectiveness of this policy and the annual programme will be evaluated through:

- Student and parent feedback.
- Student participation and engagement tracking.
- Individual guidance and counselling activity.
- University and other post-school application data.
- Destination and progression data.
- Work experience, internship and employer engagement participation.
- University/employer partner feedback.
- Review of programme coverage across Years 9–13.
- Annual evaluation of the Careers, University Guidance and Employability Calendar.
- Identification of gaps and priorities for the following academic year.

Staff Development and Professional Learning

The Career Counsellor will maintain professional knowledge through relevant continuing professional development, engagement with current admissions and labour-market information, professional networks, university updates and appropriate training. Teachers and tutors will be supported with relevant careers resources and guidance so that they can contribute effectively to careers education within their roles.

Useful Links and Resources for Year 10–13

The school will maintain a current list of approved careers, university and pathway resources. Digital resources may include:

- Unifrog – university and course research, careers exploration, skills and profile development, applications and progression planning.



- GEMS For Life / My Path to Uni – guidance and resources supporting students and parents through university and career pathways.
- UCAS – UK higher education research and applications.
- Common App – US university applications.
- Official university admissions websites and national higher education portals.
- Reliable labour-market and careers information sources relevant to students' intended destinations.
- Cambridge International and OxfordAQA – qualification and curriculum information.
- Pearson Edexcel – qualification specifications and curriculum information.

Links

- www.unifrog.org for research and shortlisting of universities and courses worldwide. This tool can also be used for personality tests, career/subject research, logging community service, MOOCs and completing the university application process
- www.mypathouni.com for GEMS partners involved to support your child's EVERY step from school to university. This resource also supports parents in understanding the international student journey. This is a tool to further support our schools' career guidance staff
- www.oxfordaqaexams.org.uk for information about Oxford AQA International
- www.cambridgeinternational.org for information about Cambridge Assessment International Education
- qualifications.pearson.com for Pearson Edexcel qualification specifications, past papers and curriculum information
- www.careerswales.com click on Tools and Resources, Leaflets and A-Z
- www.brightknowledge.org for careers information
- www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/careers for careers research
- www.ucas.ac.uk useful for researching career pathways and suitable higher education courses in the UK
- www.russellgroup.ac.uk/informed-choices to choosing A Level options
- www.oxbridgeapplications.com For students applying to Oxford or Cambridge Universities
- www.prospects.ac.uk/options_with_your_subject.html Information on graduate recruitment from a range of degree courses
- www.fulbright.co.uk for students with British qualifications wanting to study in the USA
- www.collegeboard.com to register for the SATs (required for entry to US universities)
- www.educationau-incanada.ca to research university and college courses in Canada
- www.studyoptions.com covers Higher Education in Australia and New Zealand
- www.study-in-europe.org covers Higher Education options in Europe

