

**The Graduation Requirements of High School Students
from American Schools: Examining Graduation
Requirements in American Schools in the United Arab
Emirates – A Comparative Analysis of Multiple Case
Studies**

متطلبات التخرج لطلاب المدارس الثانوية من المدارس الأمريكية: فحص
متطلبات التخرج في المدارس الأمريكية في الإمارات العربية المتحدة - تحليل
مقارن لدراسات الحالة المتعددة

by

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**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF EDUCATION
at**

The British University in Dubai

November 2022

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – Graduating from a high school is the steppingstone for the start of the future of the undergraduate study for any student that prepares for further postgraduate studies, workforce, and career paths. Every year, several new private schools open their doors for students to join. The Ministry of Education in a country sets the rules and regulations that need to be followed to ensure that the school is providing its students with the needed graduation requirements to join universities. The purpose of this study is to comparatively analyze the graduation requirements of various American schools in United Arab Emirates, examine their fulfilment of the graduation requirements as per the ADEK, KHDA, and MoE requirements, and finally propose suggestions/improvements for graduation requirements that better ensure the entry requirements for universities in UAE, as well as obtaining the UAE equivalency.

Methodology – The study will adopt a comparative analysis of multiple case studies where the graduation requirements from different American schools in UAE will be examined and studied. The study will investigate the graduation requirements in four schools in Dubai, four schools in Abu Dhabi, four schools in the Northern Emirates, as well as the graduation requirements in four schools in the United States of America. The rationality of a comparative analysis stands on the examination of patterns of similarities and differences across conditions in the cases. The aim of this type of analysis is to identify conformations of causal conditions that are satisfactory for the existence of an outcome.

Findings – The research examines the graduation requirements of different private American schools in the UAE – namely accreditation body, school rating, graduation credits, one credit calculations and the equivalency requirements. It has been revealed to the researcher that the sampled schools do not abide by the expectations of the MoE and its ministerial resolution, where students are graduating without fulfilling the graduation credits nor meeting the graduation requirements. Moreover, some schools include the word “American” in its name and assume to award the high school diploma, but they are not meeting the requirements of graduation.

Implications – The research highlights the need for monitoring private schools, mainly the American schools, operating in the UAE to ensure meeting the graduation requirements and readiness of the students to be issued the UAE equivalency.

Originality / Value - This study is part of numerous research studies that have been conducted to inform about the importance of fulfilling high school graduation requirements. There is a noticeable gap in research on the availability of data about local graduation policies. The study will provide a positive addition to the literature about graduation requirements from private American schools in the UAE while recommending policy improvement for graduation that will result in securing UAE equivalency requirements and students joining higher education. Consequently, the research can be used as a focal point for future disquisitions that addresses various other educational systems, other than the American schools, this includes, but is not limited to, the British system, the International Baccalaureate system, as well as the Indian system. With the availability of future information via the MoE's official website, further statistical data can be collated to inform about the needed improvements to ensure securing the graduation of the students from any school system in the UAE.

Keywords

High School, Graduation Requirements, ADEK, KHDA, Comparative analysis, Multiple case studies, Grounded Theory, Constructivism, Constructivist Theory

خلاصة البحث

الغرض - التخرج من المدرسة الثانوية هو حجر الأساس لبدء مستقبل الدراسة الجامعية لأي طالب يستعد لمزيد من الدراسات العليا والقوى العاملة والدراسات العليا. في كل عام، تفتح العديد من المدارس الخاصة أبوابها للطلاب للالتحاق. تضع وزارة التربية والتعليم في أي دولة القواعد واللوائح التي يجب اتباعها للتأكد من أن المدرسة تزود طلابها بمتطلبات التخرج اللازمة للالتحاق بالجامعات. الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو تحليل المقارنات لمتطلبات التخرج للعديد من المدارس الأمريكية في الإمارات العربية المتحدة، واختبار مدى استيفائها لمتطلبات التخرج وفقاً لمتطلبات دائرة التعليم والمعرفة، وهيئة المعرفة والتنمية البشرية، ووزارة التربية والتعليم، وأخيراً اعطاء اقتراحات / تحسينات لمتطلبات التخرج التي تؤكد على شروط القبول للجامعات في الدولة، وكذلك الحصول على المعادلة الإماراتية.

المنهجية - ستبنى الدراسة تحليلاً لمقارنة دراسات حالات متعددة حيث سيتم فحص ودراسة متطلبات التخرج من المدارس الأمريكية المختلفة في الإمارات العربية المتحدة. ستبحث الدراسة عن متطلبات التخرج في أربع مدارس في دبي، وأربع مدارس في أبو ظبي، وأربع مدارس في الإمارات الشمالية، بالإضافة إلى متطلبات التخرج في أربع مدارس في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. تعتمد الطريقة التحليلية باستخدام نهج المقارنة على فحص أنماط التشابه والاختلاف عبر ظروف الحالات. الهدف من هذا النوع من التحليل هو تحديد مطابقة الظروف العرضية التي تكون ذات نتيجة مرضية.

النتائج - يختبر البحث متطلبات التخرج لمختلف المدارس الأمريكية الخاصة في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة - وهي هيئة الاعتماد، وتصنيف المدرسة، وعدد ساعات الدراسة للتخرج، وحسابات الساعة الدراسية الواحدة ومتطلبات المعادلة. وقد تبين للباحث أن مدارس العينة لا تلتزم بتوجهات وزارة التربية وقرارها الوزاري، حيث يتخرج الطلاب دون استيفاء الساعات الدراسية للتخرج ولا استيفاء متطلبات التخرج. علاوة على ذلك، فإن بعض المدارس تتضمن كلمة "أمريكية" في اسمها وتدعي منح شهادة الثانوية العامة، لكنها لا تستوفي متطلبات التخرج.

التداعيات - يسلط البحث الضوء على الحاجة إلى مراقبة المدارس الخاصة، ولا سيما المدارس الأمريكية، العاملة في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة لضمان استيفاء متطلبات التخرج والاستعداد لإصدار المعادلة الإماراتية للطلاب.

قيمة الدراسة - هذه الدراسة جزء من العديد من الدراسات البحثية التي أجريت للاطلاع عن أهمية تلبية متطلبات التخرج من المدرسة الثانوية. هناك فجوة ملحوظة في البحث حول توافر البيانات لسياسات التخرج المحلية. ستوفر الدراسة إضافة إيجابية إلى الأدبيات المتعلقة بمتطلبات التخرج من المدارس الأمريكية الخاصة في الإمارات العربية المتحدة مع التوصية بتطوير سياسة التخرج التي ستؤدي إلى تأمين متطلبات المعادلة للطلاب في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة والالتحاق بالتعليم العالي. وبالتالي، يمكن استخدام البحث كنقطة محورية لعمليات الاكتشاف المستقبلية التي تتناول مختلف النظم التعليمية الأخرى، بخلاف المدارس الأمريكية، وهذا يشمل، على سبيل المثال لا الحصر، النظام البريطاني، ونظام البكالوريا الدولية، وكذلك نظام التعليم الهندي. مع توفر المعلومات المستقبلية عبر الموقع الرسمي لوزارة التربية والتعليم، يمكن جمع المزيد من البيانات الإحصائية للاطلاع عن التحسينات اللازمة لضمان تخرج الطلاب من أي نظام مدرسي في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, this dissertation is dedicated to my father's soul, Professor Lotfy Elost, who has always been my source of inspiration.

I would like to express deepest appreciation and gratitude to Professor Christopher Hill, my research supervisor, for his invaluable guidance, and constructive support and feedback from day one when I started the master's program at the British University in Dubai as well as the dissertation. I also could not have taken this journey without Dr. Tendai Charles, who continuously and generously provided knowledge and guidance.

This endeavour would not have been possible without the love and support of my husband, Mohamed, and my two girls, Jasmin, and Farah. Their continuous motivational, encouraging words, and belief in my abilities is what kept me going. I love you all.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my friends, Nesrine and Phoebe, for their continuous support and motivation throughout this journey.

Table of Content

Chapter 1 – Introduction	1
1.1 Background and Context	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	4
1.3 Rationale	4
1.4 Research Aim	5
1.5 Research Questions	6
1.6 Research Objectives	6
1.7 Significance of the Study	6
1.8 The Structure of the Dissertation	7
Chapter 2 – Literature Review	8
2.1 Conceptual Framework	8
2.1.1 The Stance of Education in the UAE	9
2.1.2 Education Reform in the UAE	10
2.1.3 Private Education in the UAE	10
2.1.4 Licensing Private Schools in the UAE	11
2.1.5 The Credit System in Education	12
2.1.6 High School Equivalency Requirements – The Decree	13
2.1.7 Graduation Requirements in the UAE	15
2.1.8 Accreditation Bodies for American Schools in UAE	16
2.1.9 Graduation Requirements in the USA	17
2.2 Theoretical Framework	17
2.2.1 The Grounded Theory	18
2.2.2 The Constructivist Theory	19
2.3 Summary	20
Chapter 3 – Methodology	21
3.1 Research Paradigm	21
3.2 Methodology or Research Approach	22
3.2.1 Logic of Selection (Qualitative or Quantitative)	22
3.2.2 Characteristics of a Qualitative Researcher	23
3.2.3 Case Study – A Type of Qualitative Research	23
3.2.4 Case Study and Case – The Difference	24
3.2.5 Case Study – The Two Variants	25
3.2.6 Multiple Case Studies	25
3.3 Data Collection and Data Analysis – The Process	25

3.3.1	Data Collection.....	26
3.3.2	Data Analysis	26
3.3.3	Reliability, Validity, and Generalizability in Case Studies.....	27
3.4	Strengths, Limitations, and Ethical Considerations	27
3.4.1	Strengths of Case Study	27
3.4.2	Limitations of Case Study	28
3.4.3	Ethical Considerations.....	28
Chapter 4	– Results, Data Analysis, and Discussions.....	29
4.1	Results & Data Analysis.....	29
4.1.1	General Information About Schools in the UAE and the USA.....	29
4.1.2	High School Graduation Requirements in the UAE and the USA – The Focus	34
4.2	Discussion	42
4.2.1	General Information About Schools in the UAE and the USA.....	42
4.2.2	High School Graduation Requirements in the UAE and the USA – The Focus	44
4.3	Summary	51
Chapter 5	–Conclusion, Recommendations, and Limitations.....	52
5.1	Conclusion	52
5.2	Recommendations.....	53
5.3	Limitations of the Study	55
References		57
Appendix		67
Appendix 1:	Organising Regulations of Private Schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi Annexed to the Chairman of the Executive Council Resolution No. (26) of 2013. (Chapter III – Schools Licensing – Articles 7 to 16)	67
Appendix 2 – Knowledge and Human Development Authority (Permits of Private Schools in Dubai).....		68
Appendix 3 – Sharjah Private Education Authority (Licensing Department – Institutional Licenses).....		69
Appendix 4 – The Ministry of Education E-Services (Service Catalog – Organizations Licensing)		70
Appendix 5 – Ministerial Resolution No. (883) of 2019 – Concerning the System of Equivalence of Private School Certificates (Articles Two, Four, and Five)		71
Appendix 6 – Private Schools Policy and Guidance Manual 2014-2015 (Policy 46)....		73
Appendix 7 – Knowledge and Human Development Authority and New England Association of Schools and Colleges (Section Two – KHDA Requirements).....		74

Appendix 8 – School 1 – GEMS Dubai American Academy (DAA)	75
Appendix 9 – School 2 – American School of Dubai (ASD)	78
Appendix 10 – American International School (AIS)	79
Appendix 11 – Beaconhouse Al-Khaleej International School (BAKIS) - Sharjah	81

List of Tables

Table 1 – American System Equivalency Requirement – The General Stream (Source: Ministerial Resolution No. (883) of 2019).....	14
Table 2 – American System Equivalency Requirement – The Advanced Stream (Source: Ministerial Resolution No. (883) of 2019).....	14
Table 3 – American System Equivalency Requirement – The Elite Stream (Source: Ministerial Resolution No. (883) of 2019).....	15
Table 4 – Definitions of a Case Study (Source: Author).....	24
Table 5 – Number of Private Schools and Registered Students in the UAE (Cycles 0 – 3) for Academic Year 2021 – 2022 (Source: Author).....	31
Table 6 – Number of Male and Female Students Private Schools in the UAE (Cycles 0 – 3) for Academic Year 2021 – 2022 (Source: Author).....	31
Table 7 – The USIF – Six Level of Quality of Schools in Dubai (Source: United Arab Emirates School Inspection Framework Inspection United Arab Emirates Framework School, 2017)	33
Table 8 – Number of Public and Private Schools in the USA Year 2019 – 2020 (Source: Author)	34
Table 9 – GEMS Dubai American Academy – General Information (Source: Author)	35
Table 10 – American School of Dubai – General Information (Source: Author)	36
Table 11 – American International School – Dubai – General Information (Source: Author)	36
Table 12 – Dubai Arabian American Private School – General Information (Source: Author)	36
Table 13 – Summit International School – Abu Dhabi – General Information (Source: Author)	37
Table 14 – ADNOC School – Sas Al Nakhel – Abu Dhabi – General Information (Source: Author)	37
Table 15 – Al Ain American School – General Information (Source: Author)	38
Table 16 – Al Sanawbar School Al Ain – General Information (Source: Author)	38
Table 17 – Beaconhouse Al-Khaleej International School (BAKIS) – Sharjah – General Information (Source: Author).....	38
Table 18 – Al Shola American School of Ajman (SAS) – General Information (Source: Author)	39
Table 19 – American Private School of Kalba (APSK) – General Information (Source: Author)	39
Table 20 – The WellSpring School – Ras Al Khaimah – General Information (Source: Author)	40
Table 21 – Pasadena Waldorf School – California – General Information (Source: Author)	40
Table 22 – King School – Connecticut – General Information (Source: Author).....	41
Table 23 – Cortona Academy – Virginia – General Information (Source: Author).....	41
Table 24 – Greenhill School – Texas – General Information (Source: Author)	42
Table 25 – Comparison Among American Private Schools in Dubai (Source: Author).....	45

Table 26 – Comparison Among American Private Schools in Abu Dhabi (Source: Author)	46
Table 27 – Comparison Among American Private Schools in the Northern Emirates (Source: Author).....	48
Table 28 – Comparison Among Private Schools in the USA (Source: Author)	50

List of Figures

Figure 1. Curriculum in Public and Private Schools in UAE (Source: Author)	2
Figure 2. The Regulatory Authorities of K – 12 Education in UAE (Source: Author).....	3
Figure 3. Conceptual Framework of the Study (Source: Author)	9
Figure 4. Steps to Access MoE Data about Private Schools in Dubai (Source: Author)....	30
Figure 5. Steps to Access KHDA Data about Private Schools in Dubai (Source: Author)	32
Figure 6. Steps to Access NCES Data in the USA (Source: Author)	33
Figure 7. Comparison Among American Private Schools in the UAE (Source: Author)...	49
Figure 8. Comparison Among American Private Schools in the UAE and the USA (Source: Author).....	51

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The research starts with this chapter that includes the background and context of the study. It specifies the statement of the problem that inspired the researcher to delve deep in the field of research to prepare a dissertation that might, in the future, have an impactful effect on the graduation requirements of the high school students from the American private schools in United Arab Emirates (UAE). Furthermore, this chapter highlights the rationale of the study, its aim that leads to the research questions and objectives as well as the significance of the study. The chapter concludes with setting the general structure of the study.

1.1 Background and Context

The completion of high school graduation requirements is one of the most essential steps towards completing high school education since it demonstrates the extent of knowledge attained by the student. In general, graduating from high school has a continuous increase in demand worldwide. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), graduating from high school has become increasingly essential in all countries as the skills needed in the labour market are diverting to be more knowledge-based to be able to adapt to the continuously changing global economy. It is also one of the OECD indicators; *Indicator B3. Who is expected to graduate from upper secondary education?* (Education at a Glance 2022 OECD INDICATORS, 2022).

“The UAE Government recognises the role of education in building a knowledge-driven economy for the post-oil era. Ministry of Education developed Education 2020 strategy to develop a first-rate education system”. (u.ae, 2022)

In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), education is one of the major pillars of the national agenda (MOE Website, 2019) where the strategy of the Ministry of Education (MoE) has been formulated, to the best interest of the students, based on different leading educational systems and best international practices (u.ae, 2022). There are two types of schools in the UAE (within its seven Emirates): *Public Schools* and *Private Schools*. The *Public Schools* offer the UAE MoE National curriculum only, while the *Private Schools* offer various international curricula as American, Australian, Bangladeshi, British, Canadian, Filipino, French, German, Indian, International Baccalaureate (IB), Japanese, Pakistani, Russian,

SABIS, Spanish, as well as the UAE MoE National curriculum. The private schools are mandated, by the UAE MoE, to offer core programmes to their students, and these include Arabic as a second-language, Islamic studies, Social studies, and Moral education. For non-Arabic speakers in private schools, these subjects are offered as special classes (u.ae, 2022).

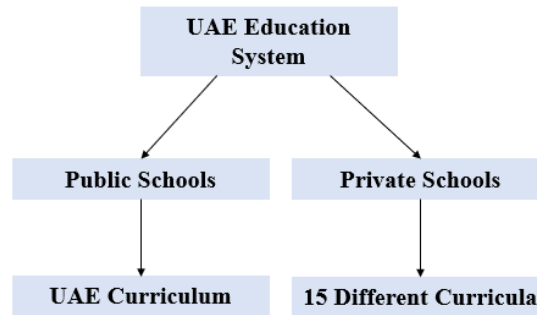


Figure 1.Curriculum in Public and Private Schools in UAE (Source: Author)

Every year, several new private schools open their doors for students to join education from kindergarten to secondary school. The Ministry of Education in a country sets the rules and regulations that need to be followed to ensure that the school is providing its students with the needed graduation requirements to join universities. In the UAE, the *Regulatory Authorities of K – 12 Education* are of two types: *Federal* and *Local*. (1) *Ministry of Education (MoE)* is a *federal* authority that manages different stages of education in the UAE including schools, universities, colleges, and post-graduate programmes. It oversees both public and private schools (where the private schools are mandated to adopt the guidelines set by the MoE, for Arabic, Islamic studies, Social studies, and Moral education, while following the intended curriculum selected by the school. (2) *Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK)* is a *local* authority that supervises, regulates, and spearheads various educational developmental initiatives for both private and public schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. (3) *Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA)* is a *local* authority that is responsible for inspecting the schools in the Emirate of Dubai. The KHDA is also responsible for monitoring the quality of private education in the private schools in Dubai as well as the growth of these schools where is supports educators, investors, parents, students, and different private schools to ensure creating a high-quality education that focuses on the happiness and well-being of students (u.ae, 2022).



Figure 2. The Regulatory Authorities of K – 12 Education in UAE (Source: Author)

According to the HSBC Expat Explorer 2021 Survey, the UAE ranked fourth among forty-six countries surveyed worldwide, this makes it the highest-ranking country among the Middle East countries as well as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries (www. expat.hsbc.com, 2022). This rank explains the reason behind the opening of private schools that adopt various curricula and different languages of instruction to accommodate the education needs of different nationalities living in the UAE.

Private schools in the UAE have to be licensed and registered by different regulatory authorities. Generally, the MoE has the responsibility of licensing different private schools in the UAE, except for three Emirates. In the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the private schools are licensed by ADEK, in the Dubai Emirate the private schools are licensed by KHDA, and in the third Emirate, Sharjah, the private schools are licensed by Sharjah Private Education Authority (SPEA) (u.ae, 2021). Every private school must have a graduation plan for its educational programme with specific graduation requirements and credits that will ensure the readiness of the students to join different universities and colleges worldwide. Furthermore, any private school operating in the UAE must ensure that the high school graduates are meeting the MoE requirements of *Equivalency of a General Education Certificate within the UAE (Grade 12)*.

Inspired by the words of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan “*The real asset of any advanced nation is its people, especially the educated ones, and the prosperity and success of the people are measured by the standard of their education*” (www.uaecd.org, 2011), this study has been sparked by the fact that there are many new private schools that open their doors for students from

kindergarten to Grade 12 every year in UAE. The graduation requirements mandated by the UAE MoE require these schools to set graduation plans (requirements and credits) to ensure the quality of their graduates. The study will focus on exploring the graduation requirements in American Schools in UAE overseen by the three regulatory authorities in the UAE (MoE, ADKE, and KHDA) as well as the graduation requirements in American schools of different states in the United States of America (USA). Furthermore, the researcher will look into the graduation requirements recommended to meet the UAE equivalency for American school graduates and will propose or suggest a general guideline for recommended requirements from American schools in the UAE.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to the rules set by the regulatory authorities in the UAE, all private schools currently operating in the UAE are licensed and registered, hence they are authorized to operate and are responsible about the educational journey of hundreds, if not thousands, of students. With this being said, all American schools operating in the UAE should be required to offer the parents with the necessary information about the graduation requirements, the number of credits, the number of hours per credit, and the credits assigned to every course. During the research phase of conducting this study, the researcher investigated the information available electronically about different private schools in the UAE that adopt the American curriculum. It has been revealed that many schools have the name of the school with the noun “*American*” but do not have any details about the graduation requirements, credit distribution and graduation plan to ensure meeting the accreditation and equivalency requirements. This was the main triggering point that inspired the researcher to conduct this study. Hence, there is a need for the regulatory authorities in the UAE (MoE, ADEK, and KHDA) to set mandates for the private American schools operating in the UAE to have clear information, via their formal websites, about the graduation plan, its requirements, and credits, and how the school is ensuring that its graduates are meeting the graduation requirements of the UAE to be able to have the equivalency as well as meeting the university requirements to be able to continue their higher education.

1.3 Rationale

One of the main goals of a high school is to ensure that its graduates are completing the credits needed for graduation as well as, meeting the graduation requirements based on the

school's graduation policy. Many private schools do not rigorously enforce the need of having a graduation policy and this, unfortunately, allows some students to graduate without fulfilling the graduation credits nor meeting the graduation requirements (Teitelbaum, 2003). In the UAE, although there are specific rules and regulations for licensing and registering private schools, yet the graduation requirements are relatively broad. According to ADEK (2020) *“there is no external exam or qualification that students must pass to obtain a high school diploma. Students only receive a Grade Point Average (GPA) as an indication of their academic achievement at the end of their schooling.”* Although several research studies have been conducted regarding the importance of fulfilling high school education by achieving the graduation requirements, yet there is a perceptible gap in research on the availability of data about local graduation policies (Gao, 2021), as well as monitoring graduation requirements (Clune, White and Patterson, 1989). For this reason, there is a need for policymakers to consider including an indicator to monitor graduation requirements (course taking, course content, credit hours, and number of hours per credit) (Clune, White and Patterson, 1989) and setting clear regulations about the American school graduation requirements. Consequently, this study will investigate the graduation requirements in different American schools in the UAE and explore the graduation requirements for schools in different states in the USA. This is to ensure that the graduates of the American private schools in the UAE are not only meeting the graduation requirements but are also given the correct guidance and advise on how to achieve this goal. The study will present the effort to fill the gap in the literature and participate in recommending policy improvement for graduation that will result in securing UAE equivalency requirements and students joining higher education.

1.4 Research Aim

Graduating from a high school marks the steppingstone for the start of the future of the undergraduate study for any student that prepares for further post graduate studies, workforce, and career paths. Every year, several new private schools open their doors for students to enrol. The MoE in a country sets the rules and regulations that need to be followed to ensure that the school is providing its students with the needed graduation requirements to join esteemed universities. The purpose of this study is to comparatively analyze the graduation requirements of various American private schools in the UAE, examine their fulfilment of the graduation requirements as per the ADEK, KHDA, and MoE requirements,

and finally propose suggestions and improvements for graduation requirements that better ensure the entry requirements for universities in the UAE, and international universities, and meeting the UAE MoE equivalency requirements.

1.5 Research Questions

The study intends to answer the following main research question:

What graduation requirements are necessary to ensure successful graduation of high school students from American schools in the UAE?

In order to adequately answer the main research question presented above, the researcher have raised the following subsequent questions:

- *Question 1: What are the graduation requirements for American schools in the UAE?*
- *Question 2: What are the graduation requirements for schools in the USA?*
- *Question 3: What is the graduation policy needed to be in place to secure meeting the graduation requirements?*

1.6 Research Objectives

In order to reach the research aim, the researcher will complete the following objectives:

1. Investigate the graduation requirements in American private schools in the UAE and the USA.
2. Comparatively analyze the graduation requirements of American schools in UAE and schools in the USA by studying variable documents available as open source.
3. Investigate the graduation policies (if any) available in place in the UAE and USA.
4. Comparatively analyze the graduation policies set in place in the UAE and USA.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study focuses to illustrate the importance of having clear graduation requirements in any school, specifically the private schools, operating in the UAE. The graduation requirements, and its policy, are set clearly by the MoE and the regulatory authorities. These requirements have also been updated based on the “*Ministerial Resolution No. (883) of 2019 – Concerning the System of Equivalence of Private School Certificates – Articles Two, Four, and Five*”. Furthermore, the research, with its data and findings, will reflect the imperative need of following up on the implementation of the ministerial resolution in private American

schools in the UAE to safeguard awarding its high school graduates the UAE equivalency. Additionally, the study urges the call for raising awareness to parents about the ministerial resolution and its impact on their children. With this being said, this is needed to make sure that the parents are aware about the quality of education offered to their children in the schools and be able to successfully identify whether it is abiding by the policies, laws, and regulations of the educational sector in the UAE.

1.8 The Structure of the Dissertation

The structure of this study is presented in five chapters. To begin with the first chapter – *Introduction*, starts by providing a detailed background about the study, as well as the aim and objectives of the study that led to the research questions. The introduction chapter concludes with stating the significance of this study. Chapter Two – *Literature Review*, covers the contribution of literature to the study, the conceptual framework that outlines the main concepts associated to the foci of the study, and the theoretical framework that presents the theories that can be used to explain the reason behind the research problem. The third chapter – *Methodology*, addresses the research paradigm and approach adopted by the researcher to answer the research questions. This chapter describes the reason behind adopting the research methodology whilst drawing attention towards the research methodology ethics and limitations. The fourth chapter – *Results, Data Analysis, and Discussion* presents and discusses all the results of the comparative analysis of multiple case studies included in this chapter. The final chapter – *Conclusion, Recommendations, and Limitations*, recapitulates the main findings of the study, draws on its implications, and proposes recommendations for possible future research.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to provide significant, timely analysis on the selected topic where it will prepare the researcher to conduct the original research. It will also offer a theoretical foundation for the undertaken study. The chapter starts with a timely-constructed conceptual framework grounded into the data available. The study commences by giving a stance of education in the UAE, followed by a brief description about education reform in the UAE, and the uprising of private education in the UAE. Then it discusses the licensing procedures and graduation requirements of American private schools governed by the MoE and the three regulatory authorities (ADEK, KHDA, and SPEA). Based on the aim of exploring the graduation requirements of American schools in the UAE following the American system, there is a need to delve into the graduation requirements of high school diploma in different American states.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework specifies the relationships between concepts that are specific and relevant to the study and aids in answering the research question (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2017). The cornerstone of a multiple case study design is the conceptual framework (Greene and David, 1984). Since a multiple case study must produce comparable data across all cases, the purpose of the conceptual framework is to construct data collection in a way that is sufficient to provide comparability across the concerned cases (Greene and David, 1984). Consequently, the conceptual framework of a multiple case study must be “*explicit and elaborate*”.

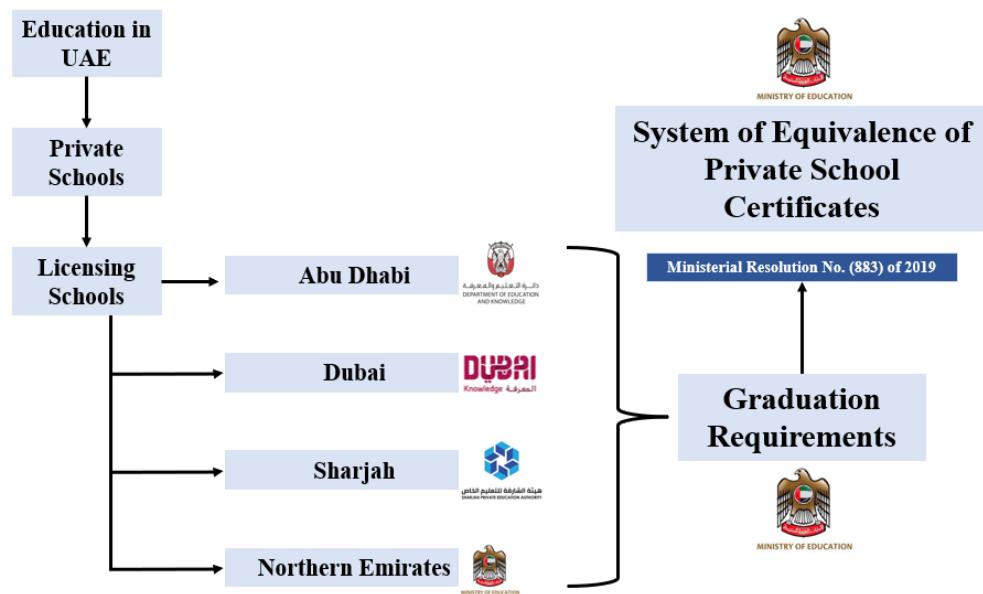


Figure 3. Conceptual Framework of the Study (Source: Author)

2.1.1 The Stance of Education in the UAE

One of the main tasks of the government in any country is to secure the quality of education and place it on the top of its policy agenda (Gaad, Arif and Scott, 2006). With the increasing need for the development of the human capital, the UAE has been aspired for reforming its educational system throughout the years (Warner, Guy, and Burton, 2017).

Based on the Global Competitiveness Index (GDI) reports, the UAE continued to outperform other countries in the Arab Region based on its effort in improving education (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2018). In November 2021, the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Centre (FCSC) notified the Emirates News Agency that the UAE has ranked *First Globally* in three indexes related to the *Fourth* Sustainable Development Goal “*Quality of Education*”. One of these indexes was the determination on “*promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all*” (WAM, 2021). The aforementioned reflects the country’s effort to improve education in the UAE. From its stance to commitment to education and following the inspiration of Sheikh Zayed, the UAE has undergone several education reforms in order ensure that the UAE students are prepared to join universities across the world and compete in the global marketplace (Education in the UAE | UAE Embassy in Washington, DC, 2022).

2.1.2 Education Reform in the UAE

Prior to the founding of the UAE, education was for boys only in local mosques and this was based on the cultural context before 1971. At that time, education included Islamic teaching by *Al Mutawaa*, the religious preacher, and *Al Fiqi*, the visiting religious teacher, as well as writing and reading (Ridge, Kippels, and Farah, 2017). The founder of the UAE, His highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, considered that education is the only way forward to generate an inclusive and wealthy society (Education in the UAE | UAE Embassy in Washington, DC, 2022). From the time of establishment of the UAE, in 1971, and until 1990, the UAE borrowed the Egyptian model in education (Findlow, 2001). In 1994, the *Model Schools* were founded, where teaching was in English for Mathematics and Science (Shaheen, 2010). In 2007, *Madares Al Ghad* initiative took place followed by *New Model School* initiative in 2010. Starting from 2011, the focus of education in the UAE was on technology and twenty-first century skills. Before 2015, students were given the option to choose between the literary stream or scientific stream (u.ae, 2021).

In 2015, the MoE moved towards another streaming system where four streams were offered: the *General stream*, the *Advanced stream*, the *Elite stream* (Advanced Science Program), and the *Professional stream* (Vocational stream). Initially, all students are enrolled in the General stream from Grade one until Grade eight. After completing Grade eight, a student can join the professional stream and continue studying from Grade nine to twelve, where the student will be awarded a certificate equivalent to technical high school certificate. Another option is that after completing Grade nine, and depending on the student's performance, the student can opt to continue in the general stream or move to the advanced stream where the student will receive additional in-depth teaching in sciences and mathematics. For both streams, the student will continue from Grade ten to twelve and will be awarded the high school certificate. Moreover, the elite stream is offered for outstanding and gifted students, from grade six to twelve, where the students develop skills in problem-solving, reasoning, and analysis (u.ae, 2021).

2.1.3 Private Education in the UAE

Since 1971, the UAE has metamorphosed from a deserted country counting on the acquired wealth from oil revenues to a country endeavouring to achieve top rank status in education (Matsumoto, 2019). The effort of the country to establish a *Competitive Knowledge Economy* and develop a *First-Rate Education System* has been among the top

priorities of its government throughout the years. For more than five decades, the expatriate population in the UAE has continued to expand, and this reflected in the expansion of the public and private education in the UAE (Ridge, Kippels, and Farah, 2015). The UAE is a country that hosts more than 200 nationalities and is known for its multicultural community (u.ae, 2022). Consequently, the UAE has a huge network of private schools that offers around fifteen different curricula to meet the various cultural and educational needs of the expatriate students (Gaad, Arif and Scott, 2006).

The private schools in the UAE are inspected by various regulatory authorities as per every Emirate: (1) in Abu Dhabi, all private schools must be registered with the ADEK where they will be inspected, on yearly basis, according to the Itriqa'a programme; (2) in Dubai, all private schools will be inspected by the KHDA via the Dubai School Inspection Bureau (DSIB) that is comprised of inspectors who pay annual visits to the Dubai schools; (3) in Sharjah, the SPEA inspects the private schools to evaluate the performance; (4) in the Northern Emirates, the accreditation of all private schools is conducted by the MoE. The three regulatory authorities along with the MoE conduct annual inspection visits to the schools to evaluate the performance of each school, provide comprehensive review of the standards of education, and issue detailed reports about the performance of each school along with the rating of the performance of schools as outstanding, good, acceptable, and unsatisfactory (u.ae, 2021).

2.1.4 Licensing Private Schools in the UAE

Licensing Schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi – ADEK

By referring to *Chapter III – Schools Licensing Articles (7) to (16) from “Organising Regulations of Private Schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi – The Chairman of the Executive Council Resolution No. (26) of 2013”* (Appendix 1), there are a set of guidelines to be followed:

- for compulsory licensing of schools,
- licenses categories,
- granting a temporary license for a new school,
- approving the operational plan,
- temporary license renewal,

- granting general license,
- general license renewal,
- granting accredited license
- licenses cancellation, and
- licenses fees and financial guarantees.

Licensing Schools in the Emirate of Dubai – KHDA

In the Emirate of Dubai, the guidelines about providing “*Permits for private schools*” is provided via the KHDA’s official website (Appendix 2). The site offers guidelines for education providers to apply for a service permit, where the required documents are available via the e-Service portal. The official website lists three prerequisites along with marketing and advertising guidelines. Moreover, the website offers guidelines about renewing the educational service permit, cancelling the educational services permit, amending the educational services permit as well as requesting advertisements approval (Khda.gov.ae, 2022).

Licensing Schools in the Emirate of Sharjah – SPEA

For the Emirate of Sharjah, the licensing of educational institutions (as schools, nurseries, institutes, and training canters) is provided via the official website of the SPEA (Appendix 3). The website lists only the title for the available services without providing details about the required steps and documentation needed for obtaining the license (all.site_name, 2021).

Licensing Schools in the Northern Emirates – MoE

In in the remaining four Emirates of the UAE (Ajman, Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah and Umm Al Quwain), the various licensing activities for private general education institutions are available on the MoE’s official website (Appendix 4). Several E-Services are available as requesting a license for private schools, requesting approval for advertisement for private schools, requesting renewal of a private school license, and requesting modification of a school license (Website, 2022).

2.1.5 The Credit System in Education

A credit is one of the initial methods used to verify and provide evidence that students have met the graduation requirements needed at the high school level. It is awarded to a

student upon passing and fulfilling the course requirements for a certain educational program. In the USA, credits are based on the “Carnegie unit”, which is equivalent to one-hundred and twenty hours of instructional time (This is equivalent to 1 hour of instruction per day, five days per week, for twenty-four weeks). Nevertheless, the exact duration of credit-bearing courses may vary substantially from the Carnegie-unit standard (sabbott, 2013). Also in the UAE, the courses are expressed in the terms of credit. The exact number of credits differ from one school to another (www.adek.gov.ae, 2022). Although the number of hours equivalent to one credit is different, all schools operating in the UAE are licensed by the MoE and are allowed to operate based on the approval of the regulatory authorities in the UAE.

2.1.6 High School Equivalency Requirements – The Decree

As a definition, *the High School Equivalency* means the fulfilment of the knowledge and skills of a certain academic proficiency as compared to that which would be accomplished in a high school program and substantially produces the equivalent outcome (Law Insider, 2022). It is recognized as an alternative to a high school diploma (www.careeronestop.org, 2022).

In 2001, the UAE MoE initiated exceptional measures to deal with the equivalence criteria of private school certificates following concerns received from high school graduates of private schools in the UAE who failed to meet the equivalence requirements specified in *Ministerial Decision No. 4443 of 2001 “regarding the organizational guide for the equivalence of private school certificates”* (Website, 2018). In 2019, another ministerial resolution “*Ministerial Resolution No. (883) of 2019 – Concerning the System of Equivalence of Private School Certificates*” (Appendix 5), was stipulated to further regulate the equivalence of high school certificate.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher will focus on “*Articles Two, Four, and Five*” from “*Ministerial Resolution No. (883) of 2019*” related to Private schools applying the American system in the UAE (Appendix 5). According to this resolution, the high school certificates pursued by students in the American System in the UAE will be issued the equivalence based on general conditions:

- (1) The student must successfully pass Grades nine, ten, eleven, and twelve with a minimum of eighteen credit hours or equivalent (Arabic language and Islamic education are not to be included), where the grade is 60% or more or not less than D.
- (2) The student must be streamed into one of the three streams: Advanced, General, or Elite (Advanced Science Program).
 - (a) For the General Stream, the student must successfully pass certain subjects with their identified credits (as shown in Table 1) from the ninth Grade to the twelfth Grade.

Subject	Minimum Number of Credits
English	4 Credits
Mathematics	4 Credits
Science Subjects	4 Credits (Including Physics)
Humanities or Social Studies	3 Credits

Table 1 – American System Equivalency Requirement – The General Stream (Source: Ministerial Resolution No. (883) of 2019)

- (b) For the Advanced Stream, another set of requirements with regards to the subjects completed and their relevant credits must be completed from Grade nine to twelve (as shown in Table 2).

Subject	Minimum Number of Credits
English	4 Credits
Mathematics	4 Credits (Including AP Calculus AB)
Science Subjects	4 Credits (Including Physics – Calculus Based, and Chemistry or Biology where one of them has to be of the Advanced Placement (AP) level)
Humanities or Social Studies	3 Credits

Table 2 – American System Equivalency Requirement – The Advanced Stream (Source: Ministerial Resolution No. (883) of 2019)

- (c) For the Elite Stream, the equivalency will be awarded to the students who conditionally complete specific subjects successfully and fulfil their credits throughout the four Grades 09 – 12 (as shown in Table 3).

Subject	Minimum Number of Credits
English	4 Credits
Mathematics	4 Credits (Including AP Calculus AB)
Physics	Including AP Physics C: Mechanics, and AP Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism
Chemistry or Biology	At the AP level
Any other subject (Excluding Arabic language and Islamic education)	At the AP Level

Table 3 – American System Equivalency Requirement – The Elite Stream (Source: Ministerial Resolution No. (883) of 2019)

2.1.7 Graduation Requirements in the UAE

During the research phase of this study, the researcher managed to obtain information about the graduation requirements in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi as well as the Emirate of Dubai from the official sites of the ADEK and the KHDA. The graduation requirements for American schools in the other Emirates were not found up to the time of the completion of the study.

Graduation Requirements in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi

By referring to “*Policy 46: Promoting Students to the Next Grades or Retaining Them to Repeat*” from “*Private Schools Policy and Guidance Manual 2014 – 2015*” (Appendix 6), regarding the promotion or retention of students in cycle 2 and cycle 3; i.e., Grades 6 to 12. For schools adopting the MoE curriculum, the graduation requirements for Grade 12 students follow the MoE graduation requirements. For schools that do not follow the MoE curriculum, as the American schools that is the focus of this study, the graduation requirements for Grade 12 students in these schools are based on the approved curricular requirements.

Graduation Requirements in the Emirate of Dubai

By referring to *Section Two* from “*Knowledge and Human Development Authority and New England Association of Schools and Colleges*” (Appendix 7), there are certain graduation requirements mandated to be fulfilled by the schools adopting the American curriculum or the “*US Curriculum*”. These include (1) the alignment of the internal assessments of English Language Arts and Mathematics with the US Common Core standards and expectations, (2) alignment of the internal assessments of other subjects with the approved curricular standards, (3) abiding by the standard conversion chart for the calculation of the cumulative grade point averages (GPA), (4) completing the expectations for certain recognized standardized tests accompanying the US curriculum expectations.

2.1.8 Accreditation Bodies for American Schools in UAE

Accreditation is a manifestation of trust in the mission of any educational institution, program, or performance, as well as its human and financial resources. It is a system of culpability via ongoing peer review that is comprehensive in scope. Moreover, accreditation is based on specific developed and regularly reviewed standards that define the characteristics of an educational institution (a school, a college, or a university). (Synchronized inspection and accreditation visit Knowledge and Human Development Authority and New England Association of Schools and Colleges KHDA Requirements 2, 2013)

In the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the American private schools operating under the regulatory authority, ADEK, is allowed to be accredited by one of five regional “U.S. Accreditation agencies” (Adek.gov.ae, 2020); Accrediting Commission for Schools-Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS-WASC); American International Accreditation Association (AIAA); Cognia (previously AdvancED); Middle States Association-Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA-CESS); and New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) (Adek.gov.ae, 2020). On the other hand, in the Emirate of Dubai, where the regulatory authority is KHDA, there is a mandate to have the American private schools accredited by the NEASC (Synchronized inspection and accreditation visit Knowledge and Human Development Authority and New England Association of Schools and Colleges KHDA Requirements 2, 2013).

2.1.9 Graduation Requirements in the USA

Based on the aim of exploring the graduation requirements of American schools in the UAE following the American system, there is a need to delve into the graduation requirements of high school diploma in different American states.

In the USA, almost every state mandates students to complete a specific number of units per course to be eligible to receive a standard diploma in the state where the student has been studying (Ecs.org, 2019). The high schools diploma requirement is awarded by a school in agreement with the local state requirements or provincial government requirement. These requirements differ by jurisdiction and vary by stream or level of high school graduation.

According to “50-State Comparison: High School Graduation Requirements” released in 2019 by the *Education Commission of the States* (Ecs.org, 2019), a trusted basis for full understanding and impartial resources on education policy issues, several takeaways were identified:

- (1) Forty-seven states as well as the District of Columbia have mandated minimum high school graduation requirements. The three states; Colorado, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, have high school graduation requirements based on their local districts, but the three states have state-wide recommended graduation requirements and assessment.
- (2) Of the fifty states, sixteen states offer diploma options other than the standard diploma offered, and six states offer several diploma options.
- (3) Certain states have a number of total units that vary from thirteen to twenty-four.
- (4) Seventeen states indicate non-course requirements as a mandate for graduation in its graduation policy.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Merriam (1998), in her book *Qualitative Research and Case Study applications in Education*, noted that “Qualitative research is designed to inductively build rather than to test concepts, hypotheses, and theories”. The theoretical framework is developed from the perspective or orientation that the researcher brings to the study (Merriam, 1998). Grant and Osanloo (2014) called it the “*blueprint of the study*”. This framework will help build the structure of the study by drawing upon the terms, definitions, and theories of a certain

disciplinary orientation or literature. Hence, the theoretical framework will aid in generating the problem of the research that leads to the research question(s), data collection and analysis techniques (Merriam, 1998). Stake (2000) emphasizes the significance of establishing a certain theoretical framework that constructs data collection in any case study. According to Maxwell (2010), any conclusion, fact, or investigation cannot be theory free. The researcher needs to be aware of the theory or set of theories to be adopted in order to use it to understand the education phenomenon (Mogashoa, 2014). The theoretical framework of this study is based on two theories: the Grounded Theory and the Constructivism theory. These two theories inform about the methodology to be adopted during the research and the data analysis to be conducted.

2.2.1 The Grounded Theory

The Grounded Theory is widely used in qualitative research (Birks & Mills, 2015; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Morse, 2009; Timmermans & Tavory, 2007) where it has some common characteristics with other qualitative approaches; as categorization and inductive analysis and is unique in that it aims to create theory that is grounded to data (Stough and Lee, 2021). Birks, Hoare, and Mills (2019) and Holton & Walsh (2017), argue that formal or substantive theory must always emerge from analysis. Grounded theory arises from, and is subsequent to, data, where it is a “*bottom-up*” process that emerges from ground of data and is “*grounded in data*” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This theory identifies the main elements and relationships evolving from different data and then proposes a reasonable explanation of the phenomenon in the study based on the data produced to ensure that the theory “*explains all the data without exception*” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2017). Charmaz (2006) defines grounded theory as a method for carrying out a qualitative research that concentrates on designing theories via building inductive data analysis. The grounded theory has considerable significance in qualitative research because it offers clear, chronological guidelines for carrying out the qualitative research, provides specific tactics for dealing with the analytical stage of the study; and rationalizes the data collection and analysis stages (Charmaz, 2009). Furthermore, Birks and Mills (2015) highlight that the quality of the grounded theory can be associated with three main areas: the knowledge, research skills and expertise of the researcher; the precision in the undertaken methodological procedures; and the congruence between the methodological approach and the research question. The current study adopts a multiple-case study design; that is eclectic in the type of data used, where during the process of data analysis, the researcher

continuously goes back and forth through the data to ensure that the data fit the given interpretation and the anticipated conclusion (Yin, 2009).

2.2.2 The Constructivist Theory

Constructivism can be recognized in several ways including an approach to social investigation, a learning theory, and philosophical perspective on the knowledge of individuals (Taber, 2012). As a learning theory, a theory of knowledge, or a meaning-making theory, constructivism is a theory that suggests an explanation of the kind of knowledge and how a person starts to learn (Abdal-Haqq 1998). Constructivism, as a theory of knowledge, argues that an individual generates knowledge and meaning from the interaction the individual's own experiences and ideas. Constructivism implies that people, as learners, construct knowledge for themselves, where each learner independently and collectively constructs meaning through the path of learning. Hence, people construct their own new individual knowledge and understanding via the interaction between what they already know, their own beliefs, and ideas they construct while coming in contact with the surrounding.

In light of the rapid changes taking place nowadays, adopting a constructivist learning approach in an educational system is a necessity. It is essential to have an educational system where the learners have an active role, to have the ability to complement the old information in mind with the gained information and utilize this information to generate new information (Ayaz and Sekerci, 2015). Hence, in discussion about education, the constructivism is now a point of discussion in a significant way (Cunningham and Duffy, 1996). Constructivism is a training theory, a concept of education, a knowledge approach as well as a learning approach (Haney and McArthur, 2002). According to the constructivism theory, learning is a process of creating a link between the new information and the information that is already there in learners, during this process. The learner's information is not heaped on; a learner creates the basis of information by combining his/her own remark. Consequently, teachers have an imperative role in the constructivist approach, where the essence of a learning system is the learner. Keeping this in mind, teachers guide and support learners to grasp and construct the information rather than directly transferring the information to the learners (Bryant, Kastrup, Udo, Hislop, Shefner and Mallow, 2013). Teachers, as mediators between the learners and any education program, help learners to further understand and develop their self (Holt-Reynolds, 2000). Constructivism necessitates the regulation of an academic

environment, where teachers manage the learning process based on the learners' concerns and demands. Teachers motivate the learners to pose questions, produce new ideas, make observations, experiment their ideas, and to work collaboratively with others (Kim, 2005). A learning environment, based on the constructivist approach, promotes creative thinking and problem solving in a collaborative atmosphere where the learner's experience is always taken into consideration (Rice and Wilson, 1999). Hence, in an educational environment based on the constructivist approach, learning will be achieved in a high level of efficacy and resilience. Assessment and evaluation is an accurate measurement for the efficiency of the teaching and learning processes. In the constructivist approach, assessment activities focuses on measuring the process of learning by portfolio, project work, self-assessment, and peer review. Furthermore, what is evaluated is the learning process and not the product of learning itself. Based on all the information mentioned above, the constructivist approach in teaching and learning has a vital contribution to the academic achievement of learners (Ayaz and Sekerci, 2015).

2.3 Summary

The UAE is one of the most mature education markets in the MENA region and GCC countries, where it has been attracting several investors, providers, and consequently students across all the educational stages (UAE Country Profile PwC Education and Skills Practice Understanding Middle East Education, 2018). This led to the opening of several private schools adopting various educational system to meet the education needs of the investors and providers (Gaad, Arif and Scott, 2006). The previously stated is to provide an overview of the purpose of the study, to address the research question and to understand the readiness of the American school graduates to meet the UAE equivalency as well as graduation requirements.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

The third chapter of the study focuses on the methodology adopted in this research. It starts with the research paradigm, its meaning and the philosophical assumption driving the study. It follows with describing the research approach adopted, the logic behind the selection of the approach, and the characteristics of the researcher needed to complete the selected type of approach. As a multiple case study research, there is a need to shed the light on the various definitions of case study from the literature, the difference between a case and a case study, and the two variants of a case study. Moving on, the chapter proceeds with describing the method of data selection, data collection and describes the method of analysis to be adopted. The study utilizes the comparative analysis of secondary data for multiple case studies. Finally, the chapter discusses the ethical considerations that were considered before conducting the research, as well as the strengths, and limitations of the methodology.

3.1 Research Paradigm

Paradigm is a word originating from the Greek word “paradeigma” which means an evidence, an example, or a pattern. This word is regularly used in the field of social sciences where it commonly means a cluster of theories, or actions or models representing a guiding idea (www.encyclopedia.com, 2019). Kuhn (1962) was the first to use this word which expressed a philosophical way of thinking. In the world of educational research, the term paradigm is used to define the worldview of the researcher (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006), that is the perspective or the school of thought that informs interpretation of the data in the research (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). It has been argued that paradigm is a model containing a group of legitimate assumptions and specific design for data collection and interpretation (Barker, 2003). Furthermore, the paradigm defines the philosophical orientation of the researcher, that indicates where the researcher is coming from to be able to construct and interpret the meaning embedded in the research data (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Nowadays, many philosophical paradigms exist due to the development in the ways humans think, and the distinct ways of describing the existence and implications of the phenomena in the world (Adom, Yeboah and Ankrah, 2016).

For a strong research design, the researcher needs to select a research paradigm that is in congruence with his/her own beliefs considering the nature of reality. The philosophical

paradigm guiding this study is *Constructivism*. This paradigm is an approach that asserts that humans construct their own knowledge and understanding of the world via experiencing and reflecting on the experiences they undertake (Honebein, 1996). Researchers who use this paradigm are focused on the creation of reconstructed interpretations of the social world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). In the constructivist paradigm, theory follows research, hence the theory is mainly grounded on the generated data. (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). Consequently, when adopting this paradigm, data gathering, and analysis is in consistence with the grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

3.2 Methodology or Research Approach

A research methodology is the main principle that drives a research (Dawson, 2019) where it determines the research method to be adopted. On the other hand, the research method is the tool used to gather data (Dawson, 2019). Several aspects need to be considered when selecting the most suitable methodology, mainly limitations and ethical considerations (Galauner, 2021).

3.2.1 Logic of Selection (Qualitative or Quantitative)

Usually, a researcher starts the study with a concise comprehension of whether the research methodology or approach to be adopted is qualitative in nature engaging descriptive data (Brynard, Hanekom and Petrus Brynard, 2014) or quantitative in nature utilizing numerical data (Maree, 2010).

Research producing knowledge about the world of educational practice is what inspired the researcher to conduct this study. Hence, in order to be able to answer the research questions, the researcher opted for qualitative research, that concentrates on value of context, and necessitates a data collection tool that is vulnerable to underlying meaning when collecting and interpreting data (Merriam, 1998). The researcher will be comparatively analyzing the graduation credits, requirements, and offered AP courses for a number of schools in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and other Northern Emirates under ADEK, KHDA, SPEA, and MoE as the regulatory authorities.

3.2.2 Characteristics of a Qualitative Researcher

A qualitative researcher must have several characteristics that are considered essential attributes needed to be acquired by researchers performing qualitative research. Firstly, the researcher must have an immense open-mindedness for ambiguity during the research process. Secondly, the researcher must be extremely intuitive, having a notion of sensitivity during the data-collection phase, especially a sufficient sense of timing – realizing when enough has been studied. Lastly, this sensitivity must expand to understanding how biases or subjectivity structure the study and its findings (Merriam, 1998). Peshkin (1988) reckons that subjectivity *"can be seen as virtuous, for it is the basis of researchers making a distinctive contribution, one that results from the unique configuration of their personal qualities joined to the data they have collected"* (p. 55).

3.2.3 Case Study – A Type of Qualitative Research

In qualitative research, one of the commonly used methodologies is case study (Yazan, 2015). The case study method is the most commonly used in the world of academia for researchers whose main focus is qualitative research (Baskarada, 2014). It allows researchers to perform an in-depth exploration of complex phenomena within a certain context through different data resources (Rashid et al., 2019). Furthermore, it includes the studied collection of data and analyses of a range of empirical materials (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018).

Case study approach has been used in several disciplines; especially social sciences, including business, law, education, and health (Creswell, 2013, Harrison et al., 2017 and Yin, 2003). It is a helpful research method in various fields, specifically education, due to the fact that a holistic view within a specific context brings about deep detail, that improves the understanding of the reader. Merriam (1998) describes the vital characteristics of case study as a type of qualitative research *".....the goal of eliciting understanding and meaning, the researcher as primary instrument of data collection and analysis, the use of fieldwork, an inductive orientation to analysis, and findings that are richly descriptive."* (p. 11). Case study has been regarded as a type of qualitative research that is distinctive from other types of qualitative research including ethnography, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, and phenomenological approaches (Creswell, 2014). Over the past 40 years, case study has been defined in several ways as presented below in Table 4.

(Cronbach, 1975)	“ <i>interpretation in context</i> ” (Cronbach, 1975, p.123)
(Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis, 1976)	“... <i>the study of an instance in action</i> ” (Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis, 1976)
(Nisbet and Watt, 1984)	“ <i>A specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle</i> ” (Nisbet and Watt, 1984, p. 72).
(Stake, 1995)	“ <i>the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances</i> ” (Stake, 1995, p. xi)
(Merriam, 1998)	“ <i>A qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social.</i> ” (Merriam, 1998, p. xiii)
(Simons, 2009)	“ <i>an in-depth investigation of a specific, real-life project, policy, institution, program, or system from multiple perspectives in order to catch its complexity and uniqueness</i> ” (Simons, 2009, p. 21)
(Tight, 2010)	“ <i>It is the detailed examination of a small sample</i> ” (Tight, 2010, p. 337)
(Yazan, 2015)	“ <i>A contested terrain</i> ” (Yazan, 2015)

Table 4 – Definitions of a Case Study (Source: Author)

3.2.4 Case Study and Case – The Difference

In the words of Stake (2005), case study is “*the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances*” (Stake, 1995, p. xi). Is there a difference between a *Case Study* and a *Case*?

The *process* of carrying out the case study is conflated with the *case* (the unit of study) and the *product*, where this represents part of the misunderstanding surrounding the case study as a research method (Merriam, 1998). Miles and Huberman (1994) defines it as a *sort of phenomenon appearing in a bounded context* and Smith (1978) defines the case as a *bounded system*, and Stake (1995) defines it as an *integrated system*.

3.2.5 Case Study – The Two Variants

The researcher opted to adopt the case study approach to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the situation (Merriam, 1998 p.18). In this type of approach there are two variants; the first is the *single-case study* that can be used to study and comprehend different cases (critical, longitudinal, revelatory, or unusual); the second is the *multiple-case study*, where two or more cases are used to examine the same phenomena (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, and Liao, 2003 and Yin 2018).

3.2.6 Multiple Case Studies

Multiple case studies is a term used when a researcher conducts a study using more than one case. Several terms have been used by researchers conducting a study using several cases: collective case study, comparative case study, multicase study, or multisite study. In this type of study, the researcher collects and analyzes the data from several cases, as the name suggests (Merriam, 1998). The researcher decided to adopt this approach in order to investigate and analyze several cases (or analysis units) to gain a deeper and more general understanding for the specific question under study (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2017 and Stake 2005). This will allow the researcher to delve into the similarities and differences between the cases (Baxter and Jack, 2015). Since the goal is to replicate the findings across the cases, it is imperative that the cases are carefully identified to give a chance for the researcher to synthesize similar results across cases and therefore, predict differences among them based on theory (Yin, 2003).

3.3 Data Collection and Data Analysis – The Process

In a constructivist qualitative study, the researcher (investigator) is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam 1998, p. 20). Hence, the researcher will be able to react to the situation by expanding opportunities for collecting and generating profound information. Stake (2005) mentions that “*standard qualitative design call for the persons most responsible for interpretations to be in the field, making observations, exercising subjective judgement, analysing and synthesising, all the while realising their own consciousness*”.

3.3.1 Data Collection

The researcher's study is prepared with the effort to investigate to what extent the graduation requirements for students from American schools in the UAE are meeting the graduation requirements of the UAE and ensure the successful graduation of the students to join universities. A multiple case design is concerned with exploring real-life multiple bounded systems via detailed and thorough process of data collection of several sources of information (Creswell, 2013). Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the researcher opted for the collection of *secondary data*. Secondary data is the data collected by a source other than the researcher (Panchenko and Samovilova, 2020) and for a different purpose (Glaser, 1963). Secondary data can be the result of survey data and may include official statistics, national surveys, university records and administrative data. Also, it can be international surveys as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Progress in International Reading Literacy Studies (PIRLS), and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Qualitative and quantitative secondary data can include literature, meta-analyses, scholarly journals, and the websites that hold secondary analysis for national databases as well as international ones. These include OECD, UNESCO, and the World Bank. Secondary data offers greater validity due to the robustness of the large-scale data collected (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2017).

In this study, the secondary data is collected from several sources including websites of various schools in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and the Northern Emirates (Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah, and Ras Al Khaimah). Secondary data is also collected from government documents and official sites in the UAE and the USA, as well as different articles and published documents related to graduation requirements, graduation credits and graduation policies. The data selection was guided by the researcher's experience in the field of high school education in the UAE, and familiarity with the graduation requirements and graduation credits as part of the graduation plan needed for high school students to meet the equivalency and graduations requirements in the UAE and the USA.

3.3.2 Data Analysis

For this qualitative study, the researcher will comparatively analyze the various information extracted from official websites and documents collected as secondary data. Comparative analysis depends on analyzing and synthesizing the patterns of similarity and

differences across two or more cases. Panchenko and Samovilova (2020) highlighted that analysis of secondary data in the field of educational sciences is promising.

3.3.3 Reliability, Validity, and Generalizability in Case Studies

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2017) noted in their book *Research Methods in Education* that although case studies may not possibly have the external balances as well as checks found in other research forms, yet they continue to abide by principles of validity and reliability. The first of which is *Construct validity*, that deals with the concept of operationalization. This will be attained in the study by employing accepted terms, definitions, and constructed concepts throughout the study. Furthermore, *External validity* that addresses generalizability, where the researcher will clarify the contexts, and theory to which generalizability can apply. Lastly, *Reliability* which is concerned with demonstrating internal consistency as well as replicability. The precision, external validity, and replicability of findings can be strengthened by the inclusion of multiple cases that will in turn enhance the generalizability of the findings (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

3.4 Strengths, Limitations, and Ethical Considerations

Any research design can be reviewed in terms of its strengths and limitations. The pros of a specific design are fundamentally related to the rationale of its selection as the most suitable design for the nature of research problem and a method for answering the research question (Merriam, 1998).

3.4.1 Strengths of Case Study

Based on its strengths, case study is an alluring design for various applied fields of study, as education. It has proven to be specifically useful for informing policy and evaluating programmes that will bring better understanding and can even improve practice (Merriam, 1998). The multiple-case design, with two or more case studies, for comparative purposes, is better than having double the quantity of information and data for a single case study (Campbell, 1975). It offers the ability to conduct an in-depth study of a “*complex phenomenon*” (Bhatta, 2018).

3.4.2 Limitations of Case Study

As with all research, the multiple-case study approach has some limitations. To begin with, in multiple case studies, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Hence, as a qualitative method, a multiple case study is limited by the *integrity and the sensitivity* of the researcher. Secondly, with reference to *time restrictions*, the depth of the analysis preferred to be completed is constrained with the amount of time available for the researcher to complete the study (Crowe et al., 2011). Furthermore, regarding the *amount of data*, although a rich description and analysis of a certain phenomenon may be preferred by the researcher, assuming that the time is available, the amount of data may result in a lengthy and broadly detailed study that would hinder educators and policy makers from reading and using the study (Merriam, 1998). Moreover, it is prone to *bias* by the researcher and the readers which can affect the outcome and understanding of the study (Gubaa and Lincoln, 1981). The secondary data collected during the study might have been originally collected to answer different research questions other than those addressed in the current study, or for substantially different purposes and contexts. This may cause bias in the current research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2017). Lastly, identifying the case (or unit analysis) can represent a challenge for a novice researcher (Baxter and Jack, 2015).

3.4.3 Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration is an integral component of any study. Prior to starting the research, ethical approval was requested and obtained from the Research Ethics Committee in The British University in Dubai (BUiD). All efforts were made to abide with the BUiD Policies for Research. Due to the fact that this study uses secondary data that already exist, the research acknowledges several ethical issues as anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2017).

Chapter 4 – Results, Data Analysis, and Discussions

In this chapter, the researcher focuses on presenting, in a neutral and objective manner, the results and findings to support the aim of this paper. This study aims to comparatively analyze the graduation requirements of various American private schools in the UAE and examine their fulfilment of the graduation requirements as per the ADEK, KHDA, and MoE requirements. The rationality of a comparative analysis stands on the examination of patterns of similarities and differences across conditions in the cases. The aim of this type of analysis is to identify conformations of causal conditions that are satisfactory for the existence of an outcome. Furthermore, this method allows examining multiple paths leading to the same outcome (Mahoney, 2007, p. 135). The study intends to seek answers to the main research question “*What graduation requirements are necessary to ensure successful graduation of high school students from American schools in the UAE?*” by examining the graduation requirements in four schools in the Emirate of Dubai, four schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, four schools in the Northern Emirates, in addition to four schools in four different states the USA. The researcher will analyze the information revealed about every school, then conduct comparative analyses among the schools within the same Emirate (for the UAE schools), and among the 12 examined UAE schools to identify similarities and differences among the patterns. Furthermore, the researcher will perform the same type of analyses for the USA schools. Finally, further comparative analysis will be conducted among the sixteen examined schools in both, the UAE, and the USA.

4.1 Results & Data Analysis

4.1.1 General Information About Schools in the UAE and the USA

This section looks into the general information about the schools in the UAE and the USA. It starts with giving an idea about how the data has been extracted from the electronic resources and websites of each country. Then the number of schools (private and public) in each country is identified, moving on to a focus on the number of students enrolled in the private schools. The section includes analysis within every country as well as a comparative analysis between the data of the two countries.

General Information about Schools in the UAE

In the UAE, the educational system (K – 12) is divided into four cycles: *Cycle 0* covers Kindergarten 1 and 2; *Cycle 1* covers Grades 1 – 4; *Cycle 2* covers Grades 6 – 8; and *Cycle 3* covers Grades 9 – 12 (u.ae, 2021). For the purpose of this study, the researcher explores the various information available via the MoE official website. Since the most recent information available is for the academic year 2021 – 2022, the data in this section is based on 2021 – 2022 data.



Figure 4. Steps to Access MoE Data about Private Schools in Dubai (Source: Author)

For the academic year 2021 – 2022, there are 1317 schools (public and private schools) from Cycle 0 to Cycle 3 that accommodate 1,240,581 students (Website, 2022). By filtering through the data, it has been revealed that out of the 1317 schools, 613 schools are private with 775,267 students. The distribution of private schools across the Emirates with the registered number of students in the academic year 2021 – 2022 is presented in Table 5 below.

Emirate	Number of Private Schools	Number of Students
Abu Dhabi (Abu Dhabi, Al Dhafra, and Al Ain)	228	108,058
Dubai	8	310,430
Sharjah	107	245,785
Ajman	72	60,045
Fujairah	68	16,030
Umm AlQuwain	62	7,166
Ras AlKhaima	68	27,753
Total	613	775,267

Table 5 – Number of Private Schools and Registered Students in the UAE (Cycles 0 – 3) for Academic Year 2021 – 2022 (Source: Author)

By further filtering through the data of the MoE website, the researcher extracted the number of male and female students in the private schools for academic year 2021 – 2022, detailed in Table 6 below.

Emirate	Number of Male Students	Number of Female Students
Abu Dhabi (Abu Dhabi, Al Dhafra, and Al Ain)	56,606	51,452
Dubai	160,452	149,978
Sharjah	126,420	119,365
Ajman	29,146	30,899
Fujairah	8,433	7,597
Umm AlQuwain	3,733	3,433
Ras AlKhaima	14,602	13,151
Total	399,392	375,875

Table 6 – Number of Male and Female Students Private Schools in the UAE (Cycles 0 – 3) for Academic Year 2021 – 2022 (Source: Author)

Private Schools in the Emirate of Dubai

In reference to the official website of the KHDA, there are 215 private schools, where the total number of students is 303,262 (Khda.gov.ae, 2022). Based on the *Open Data Initiative* implemented by the Dubai Government, another official source of data – *DuabiPulse* (which is described as the central hub for open data in Dubai) has more educational statistical data. The data about the private schools in Dubai shows that there are 210 schools with 279,191 students adopting various curricula (American, Chinese, French, German, Indian, International Baccalaureate, Iranian, Japanese, MoE, Pakistani, Philippine, Russian, SABIS, and UK) (www.dubaipulse.gov.ae, 2022).



Figure 5. Steps to Access KHDA Data about Private Schools in Dubai (Source: Author)

Since the focus of this study is to look into the graduation requirements in American private schools, the extracted data is further filtered from the *DubaiPulse* data base, which showed that there are 38 American private schools that have 43,224 students.

Additionally, the data is further filtered to extract information based on a criteria that will aid in the data analysis of the following section – *School Rating based on Inspection*. In Dubai, schools are rated based on the inspection conducted by the KHDA. This inspection is based on standards of the UAE School Inspection Framework (USIF) that describe the fundamental aspects of a quality education in the UAE. The schools are rated on a scale from outstanding to very weak (United Arab Emirates School Inspection Framework Inspection United Arab Emirates Framework School, 2017) as shown in Table 7 below. Based on the data from the DubaiPulse, out of the 38 schools, 1 school was rated as outstanding, 15 schools as Good, 7 schools as Accepted, and 15 schools were not inspected due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

Outstanding	Quality of performance substantially exceeds the expectation of the UAE
Very Good	Quality of performance exceeds the expectation of the UAE
Good	Quality of performance meets the expectation of the UAE (This is the expected level for every school in the UAE)
Acceptable	Quality of performance meets the minimum level of quality required in the UAE (This is the minimum level for every school in the UAE)
Weak	Quality of performance is below the expectation of the UAE
Very Weak	Quality of performance is significantly below the expectation of the UAE

Table 7 – The USIF – Six Level of Quality of Schools in Dubai (Source: United Arab Emirates School Inspection Framework Inspection United Arab Emirates Framework School, 2017)

Private Schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi

Throughout the research phase, the ADEK official website has been visited several times but there was no sufficient information provided about the private schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Consequently, the researcher opted to search for other electronic resources to be able to extract the needed information about the private schools in this Emirate. According to the Edarabia website, the number of private schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in academic year 2019 – 2022 are 191 with 241,000 students enrolled at that time (edarabia.com, 2022). The schools in this Emirate are rated based on the same scale used in the Emirate of Dubai.

General Information About Schools in the USA

In the USA, the students in elementary and secondary schools are distributed over the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

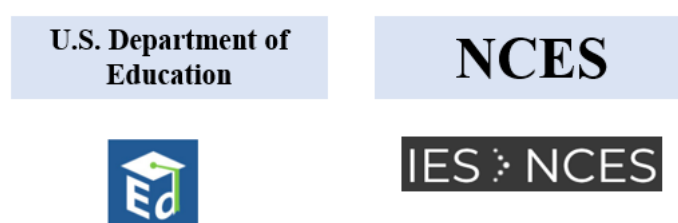


Figure 6. Steps to Access NCES Data in the USA (Source: Author)

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for the academic year 2019 – 2020, there are 128,961 public and private schools in total. These schools are categorized into (1) Prekindergarten, elementary, and middle, (2) Secondary and high, and (3) Other, ungraded, and not applicable/not reported (nces.ed.gov, 2022) as shown in Table 8 below.

Level	Public Schools	Private Schools
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Prekindergarten, elementary, and middle	70,039	18,870
Secondary and high	23,529	3,626
Other, ungraded, and not applicable/not reported	4,901	7,996
Total	98,469	30,492

Table 8 – Number of Public and Private Schools in the USA Year 2019 – 2020 (Source: Author)

In 2020, the number of students registered in the public schools (around 63.2 million) is by far more than the number of students registered in the private schools (around 11.1 million) (Statista, 2022).

4.1.2 High School Graduation Requirements in the UAE and the USA – The Focus

This section looks deeper into the graduation requirements in private American schools in the UAE and the private schools in the USA. The selection criteria for schools in the UAE was based on the rating of schools. In Dubai and Abu Dhabi Emirates, four schools are selected (one outstanding or very good, one good, one acceptable, and a fourth that was not inspected or had a weak or very weak rating). For the other Northern Emirates (Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah, Umm AlQuwain, and Ras AlKhaima) a school was selected based on its name having the word “American” or its high rating based on a regulatory authority, or it is found via searching the internet. For each school, the information extracted will be about the accreditation body, the credit hours for graduation, the one credit calculations, the offered AP courses, the availability of the graduation requirements, and whether the school is meeting the UAE equivalency criteria or not. A comparative analysis will be conducted among these schools to have an overview of the status of graduation requirements in American schools in the UAE. Moreover, the graduation requirements about private the schools in the USA will also be addressed based on the availability of data online. Due to time limitations, only four private schools in the USA from four different states will be explored. This will be accompanied by a comparative analysis between the graduation requirements and credits in the UAE and the USA.

Private American Schools in the UAE

❖ Private American Schools in the Emirate of Dubai – General Information

• School 1 – GEMS Dubai American Academy (DAA)

KHDA Rating	Outstanding
Accreditation Body	NEASC
Website	https://www.gemsaa-dubai.com/
Credit Hours for Graduation	22 Credits (minimum)
One Credit Calculations	1 Credit is equivalent to 120 hours of instructional time
Offered AP Courses	6 AP courses are offered: ○ AP Human Geography ○ AP World History ○ AP English Language and Composition ○ AP Macroeconomics ○ AP Statistics ○ AP Chemistry
Graduation Requirements	Available (via the official website) (Appendix 8)

Table 9 – GEMS Dubai American Academy – General Information (Source: Author)

• School 2 – American School of Dubai (ASD)

KHDA Rating	Good
Accreditation Body	MSA – CESS
Website	https://www.asdubai.org/
Credit Hours for Graduation	25 Credits (minimum)
One Credit Calculations	Not Available
Offered AP Courses	25 AP Courses are offered: ○ AP Biology ○ AP Calculus AB ○ AP Calculus BC ○ AP Capstone – Seminar ○ AP Capstone – Research ○ AP Chemistry ○ AP Computer Science A ○ AP Computer Science Principles ○ AP English Language and Composition ○ AP Human Geography ○ AP Macroeconomics ○ AP Microeconomics ○ AP Physics 2 ○ AP Physics C (Mechanics and Electricity & Magnetism) ○ AP Psychology ○ AP Spanish Language and Culture ○ AP Statistics ○ AP Studio Art 2D Design

	○ AP English Literature and Composition ○ AP European History ○ AP French Language and Culture ○ AP Studio Art 3D Design ○ AP Studio Art Drawing ○ AP US History ○ AP World History
Graduation Requirements	Available (via the official website) (Appendix 9)

Table 10 – American School of Dubai – General Information (Source: Author)

• **School 3 – American International School (AIS) – Dubai**

KHDA Rating	Acceptable
Accreditation Body	Not Available
Website	https://aisch.ae/
Credit Hours for Graduation	22 Credits
One Credit Calculations	1 Credit is equivalent to 120 hours of instructional time
Offered AP Courses	4 AP Courses are offered: ○ AP Calculus AB ○ AP Biology ○ AP Chemistry ○ AP Physics
Graduation Requirements	Not Available (only a very broad statement) (Appendix 10)

Table 11 – American International School – Dubai – General Information (Source: Author)

• **School 4 – Dubai Arabian American Private School**

KHDA Rating	Not inspected due to COVID-19 pandemic
Accreditation Body	Not Available
Website	https://www.daaschool.com/
Credit Hours for Graduation	26 Credits
One Credit Calculations	Not Available
Offered AP Courses	Not Available
Graduation Requirements	Not Available

Table 12 – Dubai Arabian American Private School – General Information (Source: Author)

❖ **Private American Schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi – General Information**

• **School 5 – Summit International School – Abu Dhabi**

ADEK Rating	Acceptable
Accreditation Body	MSA – CESS
Website	https://www.summitinternationalschool.com/about/
Credit Hours for Graduation	Not Available
One Credit Calculations	Not Available
Offered AP Courses	Not Available
Graduation Requirements	Not Available

Table 13 – Summit International School – Abu Dhabi – General Information (Source: Author)

• **School 6 – ADNOC School – Sas Al Nakhel – Abu Dhabi**

ADEK Rating	Weak
Accreditation Body	MSA – CESS
Website	https://www.adnoc.sch.ae/english/Pages/home.aspx
Credit Hours for Graduation	Not Available
One Credit Calculations	Not Available
Offered AP Courses	Not Available
Graduation Requirements	Not Available

Table 14 – ADNOC School – Sas Al Nakhel – Abu Dhabi – General Information (Source: Author)

• **School 7 – Al Ain American School**

ADEK Rating	Good
Accreditation Body	Not Available
Website	https://americanschoolalain.com/about-us/mission-vision
Credit Hours for Graduation	Not Available
One Credit Calculations	Not Available
Offered AP Courses	Not Available

Graduation Requirements	Not Available
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Table 15 – Al Ain American School – General Information (Source: Author)

- **School 8 – Al Sanawbar School – Al Ain**

ADEK Rating	Good
Accreditation Body	Cognia (AdvancED)
Website	https://alsanawbarschool.com/about-us/accreditation/
Credit Hours for Graduation	Not Available
One Credit Calculations	Not Available
Offered AP Courses	Not Available
Graduation Requirements	Not Available

Table 16 – Al Sanawbar School Al Ain – General Information (Source: Author)

- ❖ **Private American Schools in the Northern Emirates – General Information**

- **School 9 – Beaconhouse Al-Khaleej International School (BAKIS) – Sharjah**

SPEA Rating	Developed* (Appendix 11)
Accreditation Body	NEASC and AIAA (Expired) (Appendix 11)
Website	https://www.beaconhouse-azr.ac.ae/
Credit Hours for Graduation	Not Available
One Credit Calculations	Not Available
Offered AP Courses	4 AP Courses are offered: ○ AP Calculus ○ AP Biology ○ AP Chemistry ○ AP Physics (Algebra-based)
Graduation Requirements	Not Available

* At least 9 Themes are Developed & none are Not Developed

Table 17 – Beaconhouse Al-Khaleej International School (BAKIS) – Sharjah – General Information (Source: Author)

- **School 10 – Al Shola American School of Ajman (SAS)**

MoE Rating	Not Available
Accreditation Body	Not Available
Website	https://alsholaamericanschool.com/about-sas/
Credit Hours for Graduation	Not Available
One Credit Calculations	Not Available
Offered AP Courses	Not Available
Graduation Requirements	Not Available

Table 18 – Al Shola American School of Ajman (SAS) – General Information (Source: Author)

- **School 11 – American Private School of Kalba (APSK) – Fujairah**

MoE Rating	Not Available
Accreditation Body	AIAA
Website	https://apskalba.com/
Credit Hours for Graduation	18 Credits
One Credit Calculations	Not Available
Offered AP Courses	Not Available
Graduation Requirements	Not Available

Table 19 – American Private School of Kalba (APSK) – General Information (Source: Author)

- **School 12 – The WellSpring School – Ras Al Khaimah**

MoE Rating	Not Available
Accreditation Body	Cognia (AdvancED)
Website	https://tw-s-rak.org/
Credit Hours for Graduation	Not Available
One Credit Calculations	Not Available
Offered AP Courses	Not Available

Graduation Requirements	Not Available
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Table 20 – The WellSpring School – Ras Al Khaimah – General Information (Source: Author)

❖ Private Schools in the USA

When exploring the official website of the schools in the USA, the focus was on the state where the school is located, the credit hours needed for graduation, and the offered AP courses. The reason behind this is the fact that the graduation requirements for schools operating in the USA vary based on the local and state requirements and the unfamiliarity of the researcher with the accreditation bodies in the USA.

• School 13 – Pasadena Waldorf School - California

State	California
Website	https://www.pasadenawaldorf.org/
Credit Hours for Graduation	Not Available
One Credit Calculations	Not Available
Offered AP Courses	Not Available

Table 21 – Pasadena Waldorf School – California – General Information (Source: Author)

School 14 – King School – Connecticut

State	Connecticut
Website	https://www.kingschoolct.org/
Credit Hours for Graduation	Not Available
One Credit Calculations	Not Available
Offered AP Courses	27 Courses (Including Calculus AB, Physics Algebra based and Physics C Mechanics only) ○ AP 2-D Art and Design ○ AP 3-D Art and Design ○ AP Biology ○ AP Calculus AB ○ AP Calculus BC ○ AP Chemistry ○ AP Chinese Language ○ AP Comparative Government and Politics ○ AP Computer Science A ○ AP European History ○ AP Macroeconomics ○ AP Microeconomics ○ AP Music Theory ○ AP Physics 1 ○ AP Physics 2

	○ AP Computer Science Principles ○ AP Drawing ○ AP English Language and Composition ○ AP English Literature and Composition ○ AP French Language and Culture	○ AP Physics C: Mechanics ○ AP Psychology ○ AP Spanish Language and Culture ○ AP Spanish Literature and Culture ○ AP Statistics ○ AP United States History ○ AP World History: Modern
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Table 22 – King School – Connecticut – General Information (Source: Author)

School 15 – Cortona Academy - Virginia

State	Virginia
Website	http://www.cortonalearning.com/
Credit Hours for Graduation	Not Available
One Credit Calculations	Not Available
Offered AP Courses	2 AP Courses are offered: ○ Calculus AB ○ Calculus BC

Table 23 – Cortona Academy – Virginia – General Information (Source: Author)

School 16 – Greenhill School – Texas

State	Texas
Website	https://www.greenhill.org/
Credit Hours for Graduation	Available
One Credit Calculations	Not Available
Offered AP Courses	15 AP Courses are offered: ○ AP Computer Science Principles ○ AP 2D Art and Design ○ AP Comparative Government and Politics ○ AP Macroeconomics ○ AP Microeconomics ○ AP Calculus AB ○ AP Calculus BC ○ AP Statistics ○ AP Spanish Language and Culture

	○ AP Latin Language and Literature ○ AP Chinese Language and Culture ○ AP Biology ○ AP Chemistry ○ AP Physics C ○ AP Environmental Science
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Table 24 – Greenhill School – Texas – General Information (Source: Author)

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 General Information About Schools in the UAE and the USA

General Information about Schools in the UAE

Based on the information for academic year 2021 – 2022, 46.5% of the schools operating in the UAE are private schools. Furthermore, 62.5% of the students in the UAE public and private schools are registered in private schools.

Another point that attracted the attention of the researcher from the data extracted from the MoE official site is the number of private schools in Dubai (8). By further researching the online data, the KHDA report – School and Inspection Results and Ratings 2019 – 2020, the number of private schools operating in Dubai is definitely more than 8 (Westley, 2020). Moreover, and to support the idea that the listed number of Dubai schools require further review is that Dubai private schools have 40% of the students registered in the UAE schools across the seven Emirates. This high number of private schools can be easily justified based on the fact that *“Dubai has created a global example for a vibrant and inclusive cultural environment while also providing a platform for the development of creative ideas, all of which have combined to create a rich cultural life”* as quoted by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum – The Crown Prince of Dubai since 2008 (mediaoffice.ae, 2022). The above coincides with the fact that the educational scenery in Dubai echoes the diverse communities of more than 200 nationalities living and working in the Emirate, by offering a high quality of education across the schools with different curricula and educational programs (Invest In Dubai, 2022).

Private Schools in the Emirate of Dubai

Based on the electronic data extracted from the KHDA and the DubaiPulse, the number of private schools in the Emirate of Dubai as well as the number of registered students do not coincide with each other respectively. The aforesaid draws attention to the need of adequate and precise electronic data about the exact number of schools and registered students via the official sites to present accurate and precise information to serve the purpose of offering the parents clear information when searching for a school for registering their children. Moreover, based on the USIF rating, 50% of the American private schools in Dubai met the UAE expectation of quality education.

What About Schools in the Other Emirates?

For the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the official ADEK site did not have the necessary information and the information available on the Edarabia website is not consistent with the MoE numbers. For the other Emirates, the Northern Emirates, unfortunately, by the time this study was conducted, there was no information available from the regulatory authorities to be able to compare the data with that extracted and analyzed for the Emirates of Dubai. In fact, this could be among one of the recommendations for the study to better improve the understanding of the stance of the private education in the UAE, especially the American system.

General Information About Schools in the USA

The discussion in this section is based on the latest data available from the NCES for academic year 2019 – 2020. According to the NCES, 40% of the schools operating in the USA are private. Additionally, 17.6% of the students studying in the USA are registered in private schools.

Comparison Between General Information About Schools in the UAE and the USA

In light of the above electronically extracted data from the official website for the USA and the UAE, it has been disclosed that although the two countries have a close percentage of private schools (The UAE: 46.5% and the USA 40%), yet the USA has only 17.6% of its students enrolled in private schools.

4.2.2 High School Graduation Requirements in the UAE and the USA – The Focus

❖ Private American Schools in the Emirate of Dubai – General Information

- **School 1 – GEMS Dubai American Academy (DAA)** – Although the school has the word “American” in its name (GEMS Dubai American Academy, 2022) and is said to offer US High School Diploma in its official Goggle document (DAA HS Program of Studies 2022/23) (Google Docs, 2022, p. 5), yet it only offers 6 AP subjects where AP Physics and AP Calculus are not one of them (as a requirement for UAE Equivalency). The website has detailed information about the students, the graduates, and the universities that the students join. It also provides clear information about the different courses offered and the program paths in the school.
- **School 2 – American School of Dubai (ASD)** – The school offers a wide range of AP courses, where AP Physics C and AP Calculus AB are among them as part of the UAE equivalency requirements (American School of Dubai | Est. 1966, 2021). The school’s official website provides detailed information about the curriculum for every course offered.
- **School 3 – American International School (AIS)** – The school offers 4 AP courses only. Although AP Physics is listed as one of the courses, yet it is not clearly identified (where it could be Physics 1 or Physics 2, that are Algebra-based or Physics C that is Calculus based) (aisch.ae, 2022). The school’s website does not offer any details about the accreditation body, the offered courses, and the readiness to meet the UAE equivalency mandates.
- **School 4 – Dubai Arabian American Private School** – The school’s official website has no information about the accreditation body, the offered AP courses (if any), or the evidence of graduation requirements to meet the UAE equivalency criteria (www.daaschool.com, 2022).

- **Comparison Among Private American Schools in the Emirate of Dubai**

Based on the general information about the four studied schools in the Emirate of Dubai, summarized in Table 25 below, it is evident that (1) not all schools have the accreditation body clearly listed via their official websites, (2) the credit hours needed for graduations varies from 22 – 26, (3) the number of AP courses offered range from 4 – 25, and (4) not all schools have shared the UAE MoE equivalency requirements via the official website.

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
Accreditation Body	Available	Available	Not Available	Not Available
Credit Hours for Graduation	22	25	22	26
One Credit Calculations	Available	Available	Not Available	Not Available
Offered AP Courses	6	25	4	Not Available
Graduation Requirements	Available	Available	Not Available	Not Available

Table 25 – Comparison Among American Private Schools in Dubai (Source: Author)

- ❖ **Private American Schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi – General Information**

- **School 5 – Summit International School** – The official website does not have information about the credit hours, the one credit calculations, the offered AP courses, the graduation requirements, or the course requirement to meet the UAE equivalency criteria (Summit International School Abu Dhabi, 2022).
- **School 6 – ADNOC School Sas Al Nakheel** – There is no information available on the school’s website about the credit hours, the one credit calculations, the offered AP courses, the graduation requirements, or the course requirement to meet the UAE equivalency criteria (www.adnoc.sch.ae, 2017).

- **School 7 – Al Ain American School** – There is no information available on the school’s website about the accreditation body, the credit hours, the one credit calculations, the offered AP courses, the graduation requirements, or the course requirement to meet the UAE equivalency criteria (americanschoolalain.com, 2022).
- **School 8 – Al Sanawbar School Al Ain** – The school’s website lacks information about the credit hours, the one credit calculations, the offered AP courses, the graduation requirements, or the course requirement to meet the UAE equivalency criteria (Al Sanawbar School, 2018).
- **Comparison Among Private American Schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi**

According to the general information about the four studied schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi (Including Abu Dhabi and Al Ain), summarized in Table 26 below, it is evident that the four schools have no data about the credit hours, the one credit calculations, the offered AP courses, or the readiness of the educational program to meet the UAE equivalency criteria. Furthermore, the accreditation body is available for two schools only (one school was by Cognia and the other one was by MSA – CESS).

	School 5	School 6	School 7	School 8
Accreditation Body	Available	Available	Not Available	Available
Credit Hours for Graduation	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
One Credit Calculations	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
Offered AP Courses	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
Graduation Requirements	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available

Table 26 – Comparison Among American Private Schools in Abu Dhabi (Source: Author)

❖ **Private American Schools in the Emirate of the Northern Emirates – General Information**

- ❖ **School 9 – Beaconhouse Al-Khaleej International School (BAKIS)** – The school’s accreditation expired in 2021 and there is no evidence via the school’s website that the accreditation has been renewed. There is not any information about the credit hours, the one credit calculations, as well as the graduation requirements to ensure meeting the UAE equivalency criteria. (www.beaconhouse-azr.ac.ae, 2022).

- ❖ **School 10 – Al Shola American School of Ajman (SAS)** – Although the school has the word “American” in its name, yet the website does not have any information about the credit hours, the one credit calculations, offered AP courses, as well as the graduation requirements to ensure meeting the UAE equivalency criteria (Al Shola American School, 2021).

- ❖ **School 11 – American Private School of Kalba (APSK) – Fujairah** – The website has information about the accreditation body as well as the number of credits needed for graduation. Though the school has “American” in its name, the site lacks any information about the one credit calculations, the offered AP courses and the graduation requirements needed to ensure meeting the UAE equivalency criteria (apskalba.com, 2020).

- ❖ **School 12 – The Well Spring School Ras Al Khaimah** – The only information available about this school is the accreditation body. The website is missing the information about the credit hours, the one credit calculations, the offered AP courses and the graduation requirements needed to ensure meeting the UAE equivalency criteria (twrs-rak.org, 2022).

- ❖ **Comparison Among Private American Schools in the Northern Emirates**
 By the time this research paper was completed, the researcher did not find any trusted information for a private American school in the Emirate of Umm Al Quwain. According to the general information about the four schools in the Northern Emirates (Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah, and Umm Al Quwain) shown in Table 27 below, unfortunately, the schools lack information about the one credit calculations and graduation requirements that ensure readiness for meeting the UAE equivalency criteria. Furthermore, only one school has information about the credit hours, and another school listed the offered AP Courses.

	School 9	School 10	School 11	School 12
Accreditation Body	Available	Not Available	Available	Available
Credit Hours for Graduation	Not Available	Not Available	18	Not Available
One Credit Calculations	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
Offered AP Courses	4	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
Graduation Requirements	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available

Table 27 – Comparison Among American Private Schools in the Northern Emirates
(Source: Author)

❖ **Comparison Among the American Private Schools in the UAE**

By looking into the collated data from the general information about the 12 schools investigated in the UAE as shown in Figure 7 below, the following can be deduced:

- *Accreditation Body*: 2 schools are accredited by NEASC, 3 schools by MSA – CESS, 1 school by AIAA, and 2 schools by Cognia.
- *Credit Hours*: 5 schools have credit hours (ranging from 18 – 26) identified for their offered educational program.
- *One Credit Calculations*: Only two schools have the data available about how to calculate the one credit hour for the offered program.
- *Number of AP Courses Offered*: Although the 12 examined schools are said to offer an American system program, which requires identifying the AP courses to fulfil the UAE equivalency requirements based on the Ministerial Resolution No. (883) of 2019, yet only 4 schools have the AP courses available on their websites.
- *Graduation Requirements for UAE Equivalency*: Unfortunately, only two schools were found to have information about the structure of their educational program to ensure meeting the UAE equivalency requirements.

School	Emirate	Accreditation Body	Credit Hours	One Credit Calculations	Number of AP Courses Offered	Graduation Requirements for UAE Equivalency
School 1	Dubai	NEASC	22	Available	6	Available
School 2	Dubai	MSA-CESS	25	Not Available	25	Available
School 3	Dubai	Not Available	22	Available	4	Not Available
School 4	Dubai	Not Available	26	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
School 5	Abu Dhabi	MSA-CESS	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
School 6	Abu Dhabi	MSA-CESS	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
School 7	Al Ain	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
School 8	Al Ain	Cognia	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
School 9	Sharjah	NEASC	Not Available	Not Available	4	Not Available
School 10	Ajman	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
School 11	Fujairah	AIAA	18	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
School 12	Ras Al Khaimah	Cognia	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available

Figure 7. Comparison Among American Private Schools in the UAE (Source: Author)

❖ Private Schools in the USA

❖ **School 13 – Pasadena Waldorf School – California** – The school’s website has several information about the courses offered but without mentioning that the courses are of AP level. The information about the credit hours required for graduation, and the one credit hour calculations is not available (Pasadena Waldorf School, 2022).

❖ **School 14 – King School – Connecticut** – The school’s website is very rich with information about the courses offered specially the AP courses. The AP courses offered does not include AP Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism which is considered a complementary course for AP Physics C: Mechanics. The official website lacks information about the credit hours needed for graduation as well as the one credit calculations (www.kingschoolct.org, 2022).

❖ **School 15 – Cortona Academy – Virginia** – The school’s website has several information about the efforts to support the students in meeting the college and university requirements without mentioning the required credits for graduation or the one credit calculation. Based on the website, the school offers only 2 AP courses (Anon, 2021).**

*** This is an example to one of the limitations of the study*

• **School 16 – Greenhill School – Texas** – This school has detailed information about the offered courses with their relevant credits from Grades 9 to 12. The website has all the

needed information about the credit hours for graduation but not for the one credit calculations (www.greenhill.org, 2022).

❖ **Comparison Among the Private Schools in the USA**

For the four schools in the USA examined via their official websites, presented in Table 28 below, it can be concluded that there is not any evident information about the equivalence of one credit hour to the instructional time. This could be due to the fact that the researcher is not aware about how the calculations are produced for these schools in the USA. Furthermore, out of the four schools, only one school has detailed information available about the credits per course. Moreover, the AP courses are offered in three schools only and the number of courses vary greatly, where they are either limited to two courses only, or has a wide range of courses offered, up to 27 courses.

	School 13	School 14	School 15	School 16
State	California	Connecticut	Virginia	Texas
Credit Hours for Graduation	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Available
One Credit Calculations	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
Offered AP Courses	Not Available	27	2	15

Table 28 – Comparison Among Private Schools in the USA (Source: Author)

❖ **Comparison between the American Schools in the UAE and the Private Schools in the USA**

Based on the previously mentioned information about the twelve private American schools in the UAE and the four private schools in the USA (summarized in Figure 8 below), a few conclusion can be made:

- Ten schools lack information about the specific credit hours needed for graduation.
- Fourteen of the sixteen schools do not have enough information about how a credit hour is calculated with respect to instructional time
- Nine schools lack the information about the AP courses offered. For the seven schools that have the number of AP courses offered in their school available via

their website, the number of courses vary greatly. Four schools offer limited number of AP courses, and three schools offer a huge number of AP courses.

School	Emirate (UAE) or State (USA)	Credit Hours	One Credit Calculations	Number of AP Courses Offered
School 1	Dubai	22	Available	6
School 2	Dubai	25	Not Available	25
School 3	Dubai	22	Available	4
School 4	Dubai	26	Not Available	Not Available
School 5	Abu Dhabi	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
School 6	Abu Dhabi	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
School 7	Al Ain	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
School 8	Al Ain	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
School 9	Sharjah	Not Available	Not Available	4
School 10	Ajman	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
School 11	Fujairah	18	Not Available	Not Available
School 12	Ras Al Khaimah	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
School 13	California	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
School 14	Connecticut	Not Available	Not Available	27
School 15	Virginia	Not Available	Not Available	2
School 16	Texas	Available	Not Available	15

Figure 8. Comparison Among American Private Schools in the UAE and the USA
(Source: Author)

4.3 Summary

Throughout this chapter, the researcher candidly collected the information about different schools in the UAE without any bias or personal interests. The main purpose is to delve deep into the governmental and official documents available about graduation requirements in the UAE as well as the official websites for the schools. Although this has been a prolonged and rigorous process, it sets alarms and calls for opening eyes to what is actually happening in the schools as an action for the implantation of the ministerial resolution.

Chapter 5 –Conclusion, Recommendations, and Limitations

This chapter concludes the research with the key findings in relation to the research aim and the research questions. Moreover, it will propose limitations of the study as well as some recommendations that will aid in closing the gap in the literature and propose openings for future research.

5.1 Conclusion

The UAE has a high percentage of private schools with students of different nationalities graduating every year. As a country that promotes a knowledge-based economy, there has been continuous efforts to improve the quality of education and schooling by supporting teaching and learning improvements, as well as curricular improvements to meet the twenty-first century era of technology and innovation. Any private school operating in the UAE must abide by these expectations and work towards offering the students a quality of education that reflects the efforts of the UAE. The schools must also abide with the relevant laws and regulations.

The research examines the graduation requirements of different private American schools in the UAE – namely accreditation body, school rating by the relevant regulatory authority, graduation credits, one credit calculations, and the equivalency requirements. It has been revealed to the researcher that the sampled schools do not abide by the expectations of the MoE and its ministerial resolution, where students are graduating without fulfilling the graduation credits nor meeting the graduation requirements. Moreover, some schools include the word “American” in its name and assume to award the high school diploma, but they are not meeting the requirements of graduation.

Based on the purpose of the study to comparatively analyze the graduation requirements of various American private schools in the UAE, examine their fulfilment of the graduation requirements as per the ADEK, KHDA, and MoE requirements, the main question with its three subsequent questions were addressed:

- For the main research question “*What graduation requirements are necessary to ensure successful graduation of high school students from American schools in the UAE?*” – The answer is basically abiding by the “*Ministerial Resolution No. (883) of 2019* –

Concerning the System of Equivalence of Private School Certificates – Articles Two, Four, and Five”. The school can have any additional graduation requirements, besides the ministerial resolution requirements.

- For subsequent Question 1 “*What are the graduation requirements for American schools in the UAE?*” – Based on the studied schools, every school has its own graduation requirements based on the accreditation body and the educational program. Nevertheless, none of the schools provided evidence of complying with the ministerial resolution.
- For subsequent Question 2 “*What are the graduation requirements for schools in the USA?*” – The high schools diploma requirement is awarded by a school in agreement with the local state requirements or provincial government requirement. These requirements vary by jurisdiction and differ by stream or level of high school graduation. Due to time limitations of the study, only four schools were examined, and it has been concluded that the graduation requirements differ based on the state requirements.
- For subsequent question 3 “*What is the graduation policy needed to be in place to secure meeting the graduation requirements?*” – Based on the data and results of the study, it has been disclosed that there is a pressing need to have a policy in place about the details of the ministerial resolution, its implementation, as well as following up with the schools with respect to implementation and quality assurance.

5.2 Recommendations

This research highlights the need for monitoring private schools, mainly the American schools, operating in the UAE, to ensure meeting the graduation requirements and readiness of the students to be issued the UAE equivalency. The researcher puts into place some recommendations that might be of importance in ensuring that American school graduates are meeting the UAE graduation requirements:

- *The Ministerial Resolution*: An additional point is suggested to be added for improvement to the decree about the AP courses. There is a need to identify whether the student needs to complete just the AP course (which is a university level course) or is it a mandate to sit for the standardized exam offered by the College Board for this course. The reason is to ensure that the schools are offering the AP courses to the intended expectations and not covering the course superficially.
- *A Policy*: There is a need for policymakers to review the current policies about the graduation requirements from American schools in the UAE in concurrence with the

ministerial resolution to safeguard the graduation of students. Moreover, there is a need to include an indicator to monitor graduation requirements in these schools (course taking, course content, credit hours, and number of hours per credit).

- *Quality Assurance*: The quality assurance sector of the MoE in the UAE, as well as the regulatory authorities, need to have specific measures for ensuring the implementation of the mandates set by the *Ministerial Resolution No. (883) of 2019 – Concerning the System of Equivalence of Private School Certificates*.
- *School's Official Website*: The MoE, along with the regulatory authorities in the UAE (KHDA, ADEK, and SPEA), and their team of inspectors have to set transparent rules about the clarity of the information included in the official website of a school that is licensed to operate in the UAE. The website must clearly state the name of the accreditation body, the school rating, the graduation policy in alignment with the ministerial decree requirements, the credit hours needed for graduation with the details of the credits, and the readiness to meet the UAE equivalency requirements.
- *School's Graduation Policy*: Every school must have (via its website and any formal publication) a clear graduation policy in alignment with the ministerial decree, with all the details about the credits, the offered courses in general, and the offered AP courses (that must include AP Calculus AB and AP Physics C: Mechanics and Electricity & Magnetism as part of the UAE equivalency requirements).
- *MoE Website*: Information about all private American schools operating in the UAE, with its seven Emirates, need to be available in one place via the MoE website. This will ensure that parents have a trusted and legitimate source for the necessary information about any school in the UAE.
- *USIF, ADEK, KHDA, and SPEA*: The standard related to academics and student attainment needs to be revisited to include the ministerial resolution requirements that ensure that the graduates will be eligible for the UAE equivalency.
- *On the School Level*: Awareness sessions must be conducted to the parents and the students to explain the ministerial resolution and the effort of the school to ensure readiness of the students for the graduation requirements and the equivalency.
- *MoE Holistic Data*: Based on the ministerial resolution, it is recommended to have sufficient information about the distribution of the students in the private schools among the streams (Elite, Advance, and General) to be able to have future statistical data about the impact of the resolution and the effort of the schools to meet its outcomes.

- *Curricular Alignment:* The curricula in the private schools need to be reviewed to be aligned with the graduation requirements and expectations.
- *The offered AP Courses:* The MoE needs to monitor and regulate the AP courses offered to be in alignment with the ministerial resolution.
- *Students' Progress and Successful Graduation:* It is recommended to have an improved mechanism to inform about the student's progress and successful graduation from the private American school in the UAE to reflect on the impact of the ministerial resolution and how the schools acted upon to ensure abiding by the mandates of the resolution.

This study is part of numerous research studies that have been conducted to inform about the importance of fulfilling high school graduation requirements. There is a noticeable gap in research on the availability of data about local graduation policies. The study will provide a positive addition to the literature about graduation requirements from private American schools in the UAE while recommending policy improvement for graduation that will result in securing UAE equivalency requirements and students joining higher education. Consequently, this research can be used as a focal point for future disquisitions that address various other educational systems, other than the American schools, this includes, but is not limited to, the British system, the International Baccalaureate system, as well as the Indian system. With the availability of future information via the MoE's official website, further statistical data can be collated to inform about the needed improvements to ensure securing the graduation of the students from any school system in the UAE.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

As a researcher in the field of education, the study had some limitations. First of all, the research methodology adopted in this study was a new approach to the researcher that required a lot of time to ensure meeting the expectations of all well-detailed and sufficient research paper for the British University in Dubai. Next, time limitation was a main obstacle, due to the scarcity of clear and concise information via the official websites of the sampled schools. As an example, a school might have been selected but when putting its website address via the Harvard system of Referencing, the result was (Anon, n.d.) (as the case for School 15) which is not an accepted in-text citation. Additionally, the schools' websites are presented in different ways that required a large amount of time from the researcher to extract the information and validate it. Throughout the research phase, more than 100 school

websites were visited to be able to select the ones included in the research. A third limitation is the scarcity of information via the official website for MoE, ADEK, and KHDA, where many of the resources required governmental access. Moreover, the ministerial resolution was originally published in Arabic and an English version was not available. The researcher managed to find a translated copy via one of the schools' websites. Moreover, during the phase of data collection for schools in the USA, the researcher faced a huge limitation with respect to understanding how these schools prepare the students for graduation based on the local and state requirements, and this is definitely out of the scope of the study. Finally, the availability of one source that can provide information about the graduation requirements for all the American schools operating in the UAE was the major limitation.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Organising Regulations of Private Schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi Annexed to the Chairman of the Executive Council Resolution No. (26) of 2013. (Chapter III – Schools Licensing – Articles 7 to 16)

Compulsory licensing

Article (7)

1. Any natural or legal person is prohibited from establishing an educational institution before obtaining a private school license in advance from the Council and pursuant to the terms and provisions contained in this resolution and the resolutions issued in implementation of the same.
2. If the applicant for a private school license takes the form of a company, the following conditions shall be met:
 - The percentage of contribution by Nationals to the share capital shall not be less than 51%.
 - Registered with one of the competent governmental entities.
 - Having sufficient financial ability to meet all financial requirements set forth in the Council policies and regulations.
 - Appoint a person to be its representative provided that this person meets the conditions set forth in clause (3) of this Article.
3. If the applicant for a private school license is a natural person, the following conditions shall be met:
 - Be a National of the State or one of the citizens of Arab Countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council of The Arabian Gulf pursuant to the Cabinet Resolution No. (6) of 2004 amended by Resolution No. (26) of 2005.
 - Not to be less than the age of 25 years.
 - Enjoy full legal capacity.
 - Not to have been sentenced by a custodial penalty in a felony or a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude or dishonesty unless the said person has been rehabilitated pursuant to the law.
 - Have sufficient financial ability to meet all financial requirements set forth in the Council policies and regulations.

Granting a general license

Article (12)

- In order to remain operational, the school shall obtain a general license within two years from the date of commencement of educational operations at the school. The general license shall be valid for two years and may be renewed by a resolution of the Director-General.
- The Council grants such license for each school that is inspected and received an estimation of no less than (satisfactory).

General license renewal

Article (13)

The Private School shall apply for the general license renewal sixty days before its expiry date. The Council may conduct inspection visits whenever the need arises and when examining the general license renewal application.

Granting accredited license

Article (14)

The Director-General may grant the accredited license after the school has undergone an inspection and evaluation by the Council or any other party authorised by the Council, provided that the school meet the minimum accreditation standards specified by the Council pursuant to the provisions of this resolution. The accredited license shall be valid for a period not exceeding five years.

Licenses cancellation

Article (15)

The Director-General may cancel the temporary, general or accredited license at any time pursuant to the provisions of this resolution.

License fees and financial guarantees

Article (16)

- The Council shall specify the value of the fees required for licensing applications as well as for the issuance of any of the aforesaid licenses in this resolution. The Director-General shall issue a resolution specifying the value of those fees after being approved by the Executive Council.
- The Council may demand the non-accredited schools to provide a bank

Licenses categories

Article (8)

Licenses are divided into three categories as follows:

1. A temporary license for new schools.
2. A general license.
3. A school license accredited by the Council.

Granting a temporary license for a new school

Article (9)

The Director-General may grant a temporary license to operate a new school based on a written application that meets the requirements and standards, and is submitted to the Council in accordance with the licensing provisions contained in the Private Schools Policies Manual and Guide. The temporary license shall be valid for one renewable year subject to the rules and regulations established by the Council, provided that all temporary license applications shall have the approval of the Director-General if they meet all relevant requirements. In case of failure to comply with one of the conditions and standards, the application can be re-submitted.

Approving the operational plan

Article (10)

At the discretion of the Director-General concerning submitted applications seeking the approval of issuing the temporary license, such application and any other conditions imposed by the Council shall, in this case, become the proposed and approved operational plan. The school shall comply with this plan without any modification, unless the Council approves any other subsequent modifications.

Temporary license renewal

Article (11)

The application for temporary license renewal shall be submitted sixty days before its expiry. The Council shall ascertain and consider the school's achievements with regard to its operational plan and the extent of its commitment to the implementation stages. The Council has the right to conduct field inspections and supervisions when necessary when examining the renewal application. The temporary license shall not be renewed for more than one academic year from the date of commencement of educational operations at the school.

guarantee to the order of the Council so as to cover the value of the compensations, due to the school non-commitment to any of the provisions of this Resolution, to be reimbursed to guardians, any school staff or any other party. The Private Schools Policies Manual and Guide shall specify the conditions relating thereto. The bank guarantee value shall be equal to (5%) of the total annual school fees for the maximum absorptive capacity of the school, as per the licensing application approved by the Council.

Appendix 2 – Knowledge and Human Development Authority (Permits of Private Schools in Dubai)



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Permits for private schools in Dubai

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Expand All

How to Apply for Your Educational Services Permit

Below is an overview of the application process for an Educational Services Permit. For a full list of the required documents, please log in to the [e-Service portal](#).

What are the prerequisites?

1. Complete the process with the concerned commercial authority to obtain an Initial Approval.
2. In order to secure a name for your school, check its availability with the commercial authority and obtain a Trade Name Reservation certificate from them.
3. An Academic Plan following the academic criteria (available on e-services) , outlining the details of the proposed location.

Once you have satisfied these pre-requisites, KHDA will review your application and provide an initial approval and NOC. This will allow you to obtain a commercial license from the commercial authority.

Once a school has received the initial approval and NOC, the candidate for the principal position will be invited to interview with KHDA's academic team. The Educational Services Permit will be issued once the principal is appointed by KHDA and permit fees are paid. At this stage, you can begin your marketing campaign, which requires prior approval from KHDA. Please review the [Marketing and Advertising Guidelines](#).

The compliance team will schedule a final visit to verify the school's operational readiness.

What comes next?

1. The Academic Calendar
2. [The Parent-School Contract](#)
3. [Teacher appointment](#)
4. Student Registration

To help you fulfill these requirements, you'll have the support of the relevant KHDA teams.

Service fee: AED 50,000 for for-profit schools and AED 20,000 for nonprofit schools

This process requires 18 working days, submissions that are incomplete or contain errors may take longer.

If you have any questions, please [contact our team](#).

[How to Renew Your Educational Services Permit](#)

[How to Cancel Your Educational Services Permit](#)

[How to Amend Your Educational Services Permit](#)

[Advertisement Approval](#)

Related Links

- [E-Services](#)
- [Educating Hearts & Minds : How To Open A Private School In Dubai](#)
- [Guidelines For KHDA Tagline](#)
- [KHDA Guidelines For Advertising And Marketing](#)

Appendix 3 – Sharjah Private Education Authority (Licensing Department – Institutional Licenses)

GOVERNMENT OF SHARJAH
هـيئة الشارقة للتعليم الخاص
SHARJAH PRIVATE EDUCATION AUTHORITY



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Licensing Department

Institutional licenses

Licensing services (schools, nurseries, institutes and training centers):

1. Issuing a new license
2. License renewal
3. Modifying license data
4. Approving tuition fees
5. Issuing approval for advertisements for educational sectors (schools, nurseries, centers)
6. Inclusion of people of determination
7. Approval of cash allowance certificates

Appendix 4 – The Ministry of Education E-Services (Service Catalog – Organizations Licensing)



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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

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Attestation

Equivalency

Accreditation

Registration

Scholarships

Organizations licensing

Suggestions portal

EmSAT

Vocational institutions

Educational Professions Licensure



Did you know?

Request a license for a private general education institution

Start Service

Service Details



Did you know?

Amend or add to a private school building request

Start Service

Service Details



Did you know?

Request for a higher education institution license

Start Service

Service Details



Did you know?

Request to renew the license of a higher education institution

Start Service

Service Details



Did you know?

Request to Approve an Advertisement for a Private Education institution

Start Service

Service Details



Did you know?

Request of Renewing a Private School License

Start Service

Service Details

Appendix 5 – Ministerial Resolution No. (883) of 2019 – Concerning the System of Equivalence of Private School Certificates (Articles Two, Four, and Five)

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER



الإمارات العربية المتحدة
وزارة التربية والتعليم
مكتب الوزير

تابع القرار الوزاري رقم (883) لسنة 2019م

قرار وزاري رقم (883) لسنة 2019م

بشأن نظام معادلة شهادات المدارس الخاصة

المادة الثالثة

يخضع طلبية المدارس الخاصة التي تطبق منهاج الوزارة إلى النظم واللوائح المعمول بها في التعليم العام، ويتقدم طلبها إلى امتحان شهادة الثانوية العامة، ويمنح الناجحون منهم شهادة الثانوية العامة الصادرة عن الوزارة في المسارات المحددة (العام أو المتقدم أو النخبة) في التعليم العام.

المادة الرابعة

- تعادل شهادات إتمام المرحلة الثانوية من المدارس الخاصة التي لا تطبق منهاج الوزارة وفق الشروط العامة التالية:
1. أن يكون النظام التعليمي والمناهج المطبق معترفاً بهما ومرخصاً لهما في الدولة.
2. أن تكون الجهة التعليمية المانحة للشهادة معترفاً بها ومرخصاً لها للعمل في الدولة.
3. أن تكون المدرسة معترفاً بها ومرخصاً لها للعمل في الدولة.
4. أن تكون المدرسة معتمدة من الجهة التعليمية المانحة للشهادة.
5. أن يتساوى السلم التعليمي في الدولة المانحة للشهادة مع السلم التعليمي في الدولة.
6. أن يكون الطالب قد أكمل اثني عشر (12) سنة دراسية نظامية ما بعد مرحلة رياض الأطفال (ستة).
7. أن يكون مستوى الشهادة في السلم التعليمي للدولة المانحة للشهادة مؤهلاً للقبول في جامعات تلك الدولة.
8. أن يتم إكمال المتطلبات الوطنية حسب القوانين والقرارات المنظمة ذات العلاقة.

المادة الخامسة

- تعادل شهادات إتمام المرحلة الثانوية من المدارس الخاصة التي تطبق النظام الأمريكي وفق الشروط العامة التالية:
 - أ. أن تطبق الشروط العامة المنصوص عليها في المادة الرابعة من هذا القرار.
 - ب. أن يجتاز الطالب بنجاح الصفوف (التاسع والعاشر والحادي عشر والثاني عشر) على ألا يقل العدد الإجمالي للساعات عن ثمانية عشر (18) ساعة دراسية معتمدة أو ما يعادلها، ولا تقل الباقية الصغرى للنجاح في كل مادة عن D أو 60%، ولا تحتسب التربية الإسلامية واللغة العربية من ضمنها.
 - ج. أن يحصل الطالب على شهادة إتمام المرحلة الثانوية بمعدل لا يقل عن D أو 60%.
 - د. أن يتم اجتياز اختبارات الإمارات القياسية للصف الثاني عشر بنجاح حسب القوانين والقرارات المنظمة ذات العلاقة.
- تعادل شهادات إتمام المرحلة الثانوية من المدارس الخاصة التي تطبق النظام الأمريكي بالمعيار العام وفق الشروط العامة التالية:
 - أ. أن تطبق الشروط العامة المنصوص عليها في البند (1) من هذه المادة.
 - ب. أن يجتاز الطالب بنجاح المواد التالية خلال الصفوف (التاسع والعاشر والحادي عشر والثاني عشر):
 - اللغة الإنجليزية (بما لا يقل عن أربع (4) ساعات دراسية معتمدة).
 - الرياضيات (بما لا يقل عن أربع (4) ساعات دراسية معتمدة).
 - مواد العلوم (بما لا يقل عن أربع (4) ساعات دراسية معتمدة)، على أن تتضمن مادة الفيزياء.
 - الدراسات الاجتماعية أو العلوم الإنسانية (بما لا يقل عن ثلاث (3) ساعات دراسية معتمدة).

وزير التربية والتعليم

- بعد التوافق على القانون الاتحادي رقم (1) لسنة 1972م، بشأن اختصاصات الوزارات وصلاحيات الوزارة ولعديلاته،
- وعلى المرسوم بقانون اتحادي رقم (3) لسنة 2007م، بشأن التعليم الخاص،
- وعلى المرسوم بقانون اتحادي رقم (11) لسنة 2008م، بشأن الموارد البشرية في الحكومة الاتحادية ولعديلاته،
- وعلى المرسوم بقانون رقم (15) لسنة 2016م، بإشياء مؤسسة الإمارات للتعليم المدرسي،
- وعلى قرار مجلس الوزراء رقم (29) لسنة 2008م، بشأن اللائحة التنظيمية للتعليم الخاص،
- وعلى قرار مجلس الوزراء رقم (28) لسنة 2016م، بشأن الهيكل التنظيمي لوزارة التربية والتعليم،
- وعلى قرار مجلس الوزراء رقم (1) لسنة 2018م، بشأن اللائحة التنفيذية للمرسوم بقانون اتحادي رقم (11) لسنة 2008م بشأن الموارد البشرية في الحكومة الاتحادية وتعديلاته،
- وعلى القرار الوزاري رقم (699) لسنة 2016م، بشأن الهيكل التنظيمي للإدارات والمكاتب والأقسام واختصاصاتها ومهامها بوزارة التربية والتعليم،
- وعلى القرار الوزاري رقم (848) لسنة 2018م، بشأن نظام معادلة شهادات المدارس الخاصة،
- وعلى القرار الوزاري رقم (199) لسنة 2019م، بشأن نظام معادلة شهادات المدارس الخاصة في الفترة الانتقالية حتى نهاية العام الدراسي 2020-2021م،
- وعلى ما تقتضيه المصلحة العامة،

قرر ما يلي:

المادة الأولى

في تطبيق أحكام هذا القرار يقصد بالكلمات والعبارات الآتية المعاني المبينة قرين كل منها ما لم يفرض سياق النص غير ذلك:

الدولة: دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة.

الوزارة: وزارة التربية والتعليم.

الوزير: وزير التربية والتعليم.

المدرسة الخاصة: أي منشأة تعليمية غير حكومية تقدم خدمات تربوية وتعليمية من مرحلة رياض الأطفال إلى نهاية مرحلة التعليم الثانوي.

المادة الثانية

تندرج المدارس الخاصة الموجودة في الدولة تحت الفئات التالية:

- مدارس تطبق منهاج الوزارة.
- مدارس تطبق النظام الأمريكي.
- مدارس تطبق النظام البريطاني.
- مدارس تطبق نظام الكالوريا الدولية.
- مدارس تطبق النظام الكندي.
- مدارس تطبق النظام الأسترالي.
- مدارس تطبق نظام الكالوريا الفرنسية.
- مدارس تطبق مناهج أخرى.

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من: ب. ص. 3962، Box 3962، دبي، الإمارات العربية المتحدة UNITED ARAB EMIRATES، Dubai، دبي، +971 4 217 6187، FAX +971 4 217 6187، TEL

تابع القرار الوزاري رقم (883) لسنة 2019م

- تعادل شهادات إتمام المرحلة الثانوية من المدارس الخاصة التي تطبق النظام الأمريكي بالمعيار المتقدم وفق الشروط العامة التالية:
 - أ. أن تطبق الشروط العامة المنصوص عليها في البند (1) من هذه المادة.
 - ب. أن يجتاز الطالب بنجاح المواد التالية خلال الصفوف (التاسع والعاشر والحادي عشر والثاني عشر):
 - اللغة الإنجليزية (بما لا يقل عن أربع (4) ساعات دراسية معتمدة).
 - الرياضيات (بما لا يقل عن أربع (4) ساعات دراسية معتمدة) على أن تتضمن مادة AP-Calculus AB.
 - مواد العلوم (بما لا يقل عن أربع (4) ساعات دراسية معتمدة)، على أن تتضمن مادة الفيزياء (Calculus Based) وإحدى مادتي الكيمياء أو الأحياء، وأن تكون إحدى مواد العلوم هذه في مستوى AP.
 - الدراسات الاجتماعية أو العلوم الإنسانية (بما لا يقل عن ثلاث (3) ساعات دراسية معتمدة).

4. تعادل شهادات إتمام المرحلة الثانوية من المدارس الخاصة التي تطبق النظام الأمريكي بمعيار النخبة وفق الشروط العامة التالية:

- أ. أن تطبق الشروط العامة المنصوص عليها في البند (1) من هذه المادة.
- ب. أن يجتاز الطالب بنجاح المواد التالية خلال الصفوف (التاسع والعاشر والحادي عشر والثاني عشر):
 - اللغة الإنجليزية (بما لا يقل عن أربع (4) ساعات دراسية معتمدة).
 - الرياضيات (بما لا يقل عن أربع (4) ساعات دراسية معتمدة) على أن تتضمن مادة AP-Calculus AB.
 - الفيزياء متضمنة:
 - AP Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism
 - AP Physics C: Mechanics
 - الكيمياء أو الأحياء في مستوى AP.
 - أي مادة أخرى في مستوى AP، ولا تحتسب التربية الإسلامية واللغة العربية من ضمنها.



**Ministerial Resolution No. (883) of 2019
Concerning the System of Equivalence of Private School Certificates**

Minister of Education;

- Upon Review of Federal Law No. (1) of 1972 concerning the Competencies of Ministries and Powers of Ministers, as amended;
- Federal Law by Decree No. (3) of 2007 concerning the Private Education;
- Federal Law by Decree No. (11) of 2008 concerning the Human Resources in Federal Government, as amended;
- Federal Law by Decree No. (15) of 2016 Establishing the Emirates Schools Establishment;
- Cabinet Resolution No. (29) of 2008 concerning the Organisational Regulation of the Ministry of Education;
- Cabinet Resolution No. (28) of 2016 concerning the Organisational Structure of the Ministry of Education;
- Cabinet Resolution No. (1) of 2018 concerning the Executive Regulation of Federal Law by Decree No. (11) of 2008 concerning the Human Resources in Federal Government, as amended;
- Ministerial Resolution No. (699) of 2016 concerning the Organisational Structure of the Departments, Offices and Sections and their competencies and responsibilities at the Ministry of Education;
- Ministerial Resolution No. (848) of 2018 concerning the System of Equivalence of Private School Certificates;
- Ministerial Resolution No. (199) of 2019 concerning the System of Equivalence of Private School Certificates in the Transitional Period until the End of the Academic Year 2020-2021, and
- And as required by the public interest;

Resolved the following:

Article One

In application of the provisions of this Resolution, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings assigned to each of them, unless the context indicates otherwise:

The State : The United Arab Emirates.

The Ministry : Ministry of Education

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Article Two

Private Schools located in the State fall under the following categories:

- Schools applying the Ministry curriculum.
- Schools applying the American System.
- Schools applying the British System.
- Schools applying the International Baccalaureate System.
- Schools applying the Canadian System.
- Schools applying the Australian System.
- Schools applying the French Baccalaureate System.
- Schools applying other curricula.

Article Three

Students of Private Schools that apply the Ministry curriculum shall be subject to the rules and regulations of public education. Students thereof shall apply for the general secondary school certificate examination, and the successful graduates shall be awarded the general secondary certificate issued by the Ministry in the specific courses (general, advanced or elite) in public education.

Article Four

Secondary school certificates from Private Schools not applying the Ministry curriculum shall be equivalenced in accordance with the following general conditions:

1. The educational system and curriculum applied shall be recognised and licensed in the UAE.
2. The educational institution that gives the certificate shall be recognised and licensed in the UAE.
3. The school shall be recognised and licensed in the UAE.
4. The school shall be accredited by the educational institution that grants the certificate.
5. The educational ladder in the State granting the certificate shall be equal to the educational ladder in the State.

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6. The student shall have completed twelve (12) regular academic years after the kindergarten phase (two years).
7. The level of certificate in the educational ladder of the State granting the certificate shall be eligible for admission to universities in that State.
8. National requirements shall be completed in accordance with relevant laws and regulations.

Article Five

1. Secondary school certificates from Private Schools applying the **American System** shall be equivalenced in accordance with the following general conditions:
 - A. The general conditions stipulated in Article Four of this Resolution shall be applied.
 - B. The student shall successfully pass grades (ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelve), provided that the total number of hours is not less than eighteen (18) credits or equivalent, and the minimum success grade in each subject shall not less than D or 60%, noting that the Arabic language and Islamic education are excluded.
 - C. The student shall obtain the Secondary School Certificate at a grade not less than D or 60%.
 - D. The UAE standard tests for grade 12 shall be successfully passed according to the relevant laws and regulations.
2. Secondary school certificates from Private Schools applying the American System **in the general course** shall be equivalenced in accordance with the following general conditions:
 - A. The general conditions stipulated in Clause (1) of this Article shall be applied.
 - B. The student shall pass the following subjects during grades (ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth):
 - English (with at least four (4) credits).
 - Mathematics (with at least four (4) credits).
 - Science subjects (with at least four (4) credits), including Physics.
 - Social studies or Humanities (with at least three (3) credits).

3. Secondary School Certificates from Private Schools applying the American system in the advanced course shall be equivalenced in accordance with the following general conditions:
 - A. The general conditions stipulated in Clause (1) of this Article shall be applied.
 - B. The student shall pass the following subjects during grades (ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth):
 - English (with at least four (4) credits).
 - Mathematics (with at least four (4) credits), including AP-Calculus AB.
 - Science subjects (with at least four (4) credits), including Physics (Calculus Based) and Chemistry or Biology; and one of these science subjects shall be at the AP level.
 - Social studies or humanities (with at least three (3) credits).
4. Secondary school certificates from Private Schools applying the American System **in the elite course** shall be equivalenced in accordance with the following general conditions:
 - A. The general conditions stipulated in Clause (1) of this Article shall be applied.
 - B. The student shall pass the following subjects during grades (ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth):
 - English (with at least four (4) credits).
 - Mathematics (with at least four (4) credits), including AP-Calculus AB.
 - Physics including:
 - AP Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism.
 - AP Physics C: Mechanics.
 - Chemistry or Biology at the AP level.
 - Any other subject at the AP level, excluding the Islamic education and the Arabic language subjects.

Appendix 6 – Private Schools Policy and Guidance Manual 2014-2015 (Policy 46)

Policy 46: Promoting Students to the Next Grades or Retaining Them to Repeat

Corresponding to Article (51) of the Organising Regulations

DEFINITION(S):

For the purpose of this policy, the **promotion of students to the next grade** is understood as moving individual students sequentially from the current grade to the next grade, after fulfilling promotion requirements. **Retention** is where students are held back in their current grade or year, rather than moving up with the rest of their peers due to their failure in meeting requirements of promotion to the following grade, and after following the guidelines included in this policy.

The **Academic Review Committee (educational)** is a School sub-committee responsible for determining whether or not a student should be retained, and is convened by invitation of the School Principal.

PURPOSE(S):

- To emphasise that students should normally be educated in a group consisting of students of the same age group, because research indicates that requiring students to repeat a grade level does not generally lead to the improvement of students' educational level, attainment and achievements.
- To set out clear guidelines with regard to students who are considered exceptions to the general rule set out in Policy (45), in order to safeguard their interests.

POLICY:

Promotion or Retention

It is typically right for students to be promoted with others of the same age sequentially from year to year. It is the School's responsibility to ensure that students remain on track.

Each School will develop a Promotion and Retention Policy. In this policy, Schools shall include a clear statement of the age requirements for each year-group or grade level according to the Council's requirements, and an explanation of the processes and criteria that the School will use in determining the need to retain a student in the same year group.

Kindergarten and Cycle 1 (Grades 1 to 5)

- All students in KG and Cycle 1 will be promoted to the next grade, except in rare circumstances. The decision to retain a student in the same grade will be taken after considering the guidelines included in this policy.

Cycles 2 and 3 (Grades 6 to 12)

- All students in grades 6 to 11 will be promoted to the next grade except when they do not meet the promotion requirements as per the Council-approved curriculum. A student cannot be retained in a certain grade more than two consecutive times as a maximum, and no more than two different grades during the entirety of his

School education. The School must provide such student with the necessary learning support.

- The Council follows the Ministry's graduation requirements for Grade 12 students in Schools adopting the Ministry's curriculum. The other Schools shall follow the graduation requirements for Grade 12 students as per their approved curricula's requirements.

Appendix 7 – Knowledge and Human Development Authority and New England Association of Schools and Colleges (Section Two – KHDA Requirements)

KHDA Requirements of “US Curriculum” Schools

The following set of requirements is considered essential for ‘US curriculum’ schools in Dubai. These requirements are mandatory and schools must meet or exceed all the KHDA requirements, including accreditation from NEASC, in order to be categorized as an “American Authorized School”.

The Curriculum

1. The curriculum must be compliant with KHDA requirements for the teaching and learning of Islamic Education and Arabic.
2. English must be the language of instruction in the school.
3. Curriculum expectations must meet or exceed the US Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and mathematics.
4. Curriculum expectations for other subjects must be aligned with the standards of a named state or the American Education Reaches Out (AERO) standards.
5. The curriculum must include quality extra-curricular activities, which address the broad spectrum of student interests in all phases of the school.

Assessment and Graduation Requirements

1. Internal assessments in English Language Arts and mathematics must be aligned with the US Common Core standards and expectations.
2. Internal assessments for other subjects must be aligned with the curriculum standards and expectations of the named state or AERO standards.
3. Schools must use the following standard conversion chart to convert high school percentage grades to letter grades. This chart must also be used to calculate cumulative grade point averages (GPA).
4. All high school students (those studying in Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12) must take recognized standardized tests as appropriate to their needs and grade level. Choices must also be linked to university and national equivalency requirements.

The following is a list of recognized standardized tests associated with US curriculum expectations:

Acronym	Description	Grade level appropriateness
PSAT	Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test	Grades 10 and 11
SAT I	Scholastic Assessment Test (English and mathematics)	Grades 11 and 12
SAT II	SAT Subject Tests	Grade 12
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language	Grades 11 and 12
IELTS	International English Language Testing System	Grades 11 and 12
AP	Advanced Placement Test	Grade 12

Note: the school can also use other recognized standardized/ international tests.

5. Any student seeking UAE equivalency status for his/ her High School Diploma must sit for SAT I math component (minimum score of 400) and TOEFL (minimum score of 173 computer based; minimum score of 61 internet based).
6. Elective courses, including arts, must be available to high school students.
7. Each school must have clear High School graduation requirements, which will be shared with the students and parents in the high school section.
8. Graduation requirements must be aligned with the following minimum expectations spread over the four years of the High School phase (Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12):

Letter Grade	Percent Grade	4.0 Scale
A+	97-100	4.0
A	93-96	4.0
A-	90-92	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	65-66	1.0
D-	Below 65	0.5
F/F	Below 60	0.0
AP/ IB courses	An addition of 0.25 to the standard weighting	

Subject	Units or credits Each full unit or credit is considered as a subject studied throughout the academic year for at least three 50 minute periods per week (except for Islamic Education)
English	4
Science	3
Math	3
World Language	2
Social Studies	2
Physical Education	2
Visual/ Performing Art	0.5
Electives	5.5
Arabic	4
For Arab Nationals - Mandatory These units can replace a combination of credits or units from the elective and world language components	
Islamic Education	2
For Muslim Students - Mandatory These units can replace a combination of credits or units from the elective and world language components	
*A credit or a unit is 120 classroom hours of instructions	

Appendix 8 – School 1 – GEMS Dubai American Academy (DAA)



HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM OF STUDIES 2022/23

Table of Contents

Curriculum	5
Advanced Placement (AP) Courses	5
AP Courses Offered at DAA	6
The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP)	6
IB Learner Profile	6
The DP Curriculum	7
DP Subject Groups	7
IBDP Subjects Offered at DAA	8
Assessment and Exams	9
Who is the DP for?	9
IB Approaches to Learning	9

Curriculum

Dubai American Academy High School offers a diverse curriculum, which includes US High School, International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), and Advanced Placement courses. All students who successfully complete the prescribed course of study receive an accredited **US High School Diploma**. Academically challenging pre-university US High School courses are offered to students in Grades 9-12. The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme is offered for students in Grades 11 and 12. This course of study will lead to the award of both a US High School Diploma and IB Diploma at the end of Grade 12. Students may also enroll in individual IB courses, the successful completion of which will lead to the award of an IB Certificate in that course. Additionally, Advanced Placement (AP) courses are available to students in Grades 9-12.

To be successful, students must consider their career aspirations and educational plans for their years after high school and then set realistic goals for their academic program at Dubai American Academy.

In addition, students are encouraged to participate in co-curricular activities to supplement their academic program. At Dubai American Academy, it is expected that students assume responsibility for their own achievements in education while working in partnership with teacher and parent guidance.

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses

Advanced Placement (AP) is a College Board program that offers high school students the opportunity to take rigorous, college-level courses and the potential to earn college credit while in high school. Students engage in intense discussions, solve problems collaboratively, and learn to write clearly and persuasively.

AP Courses Offered at DAA

AP program offerings are reviewed annually and subject to change based on student demand and staffing considerations.

For details of the AP courses offered at DAA refer to the [AP course overviews](#).

Course	Grade Level(s)
AP Human Geography	9, 10, 11, 12
AP World History	10, 11, 12
AP English Language and Composition	10, 11, 12
AP Macroeconomics	10, 11, 12
AP Statistics	10, 11, 12
AP Chemistry	11, 12

High School Graduation Requirements

Students enroll in courses according to graduation requirements, the student's abilities and interests, and previous educational experience. Students earn credit for the successful completion of courses.

According to the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), one credit is equivalent to 120 hours of instructional time. While most courses are one academic year in duration, courses are divided into two distinct semesters for grading purposes. Each semester constitutes 60 hours of instruction, or 0.5 credit hours.

At least twenty-two (22) credits are required for graduation. It is in the student's best interest to research universities to determine the number of credits needed for admission to that university.

Subject	DAA Graduation Required Credits	Credits Recommended for University
English	4	4
Science	3	3-4 (lab science)
Math	3	4
World Language	2	2 (same language)
Social Studies	2	3-4
Physical Education	2	2
Visual/Performing Art	0.5	1
Electives	5.5	
Arabic	4	
For Arab Nationals - Mandatory These units can replace a combination of credits or units from the elective and world language components.		
Islamic Education	2	
For Muslim Students - Mandatory These units can replace a combination of credits or units from the elective and world language components.		
* A credit or unit is 120 classroom hours or instruction. * Each full unit or credit is considered as a subject studied throughout the academic year for at least three 50 minute periods per week (except Islamic Education).		

Arabic language is a required course for all Grade 9 students. All students holding an Arab passport must take Arabic every semester throughout high school, as per KHDA regulations.

All Muslim students are required to take Islamic Education every semester as per KHDA regulations.

UAE Equivalency

Equivalency may be required, depending on a student's post-graduation plans. Equivalency is the process by which the Ministry of Education officially endorses qualifications, in this case high school qualifications, and declares the document to be equal to UAE standard. Equivalency typically involves attestations from relevant authorities, following which the letter of Equivalency is issued from the Ministry of Education. **Equivalency requirements are above and beyond DAA/KHDA High School graduation requirements.** There are two pathways to Equivalency at DAA, the US High School Diploma or the IB Diploma. Further details regarding UAE Equivalency can be found in the [UAE Equivalency presentation](#).

US Diploma and Blended Pathway (US Diploma with IB/AP courses) Equivalency Requirements:

- Achieve US Diploma
- Pass 18 credits in Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 with a 60% or above (does not include Arabic or Islamic)
- Must complete 4 credits in Science (must include Physics in Grade 11 or 12)
- Must complete 4 credits in Math
- Must complete 3 credits in Social Studies
- Complete EmSAT and/or SAT requirements

IB Diploma Requirements:

- Achieve IB Diploma
- EmSAT is not required

Equivalency is required if:

- Applying to a university within the UAE; check the university admission requirements to see if Equivalency is required.
- Applying to a university, institution, or Ministry of Education within a country outside of the UAE requires it.
- You are a UAE National male and wish to pursue only 12 months of mandatory national service.
- You are a UAE National and are pursuing scholarships for UAE Nationals.

Appendix 9 – School 2 – American School of Dubai (ASD)



**American School
of Dubai**

[WORK AT ASD](#) [LOGIN](#) 

Credit Requirements & Changes

IN THIS SECTION

- [HS Course Catalog](#)
- [Credits & Changes](#)
- [By Department](#) ▾

The American School of Dubai (ASD) is an international U.S. curriculum school that inspires students to be global citizens and positive contributors. The curriculum offers a comprehensive, personalized, and rigorous program of studies that prepares students to pursue global opportunities.

Our academic program builds self-directed and passionate learners through college-preparatory courses and college-level courses. Our advisory, elective, experiential learning, and extracurricular offerings build important skills and competencies that allow students to discover and develop their abilities and interests. ASD offers a block schedule in which students can earn credits during the year. Semester and year-long courses are offered with a standards-based cumulative grading system.

25 Total Credits Required for Graduation

**Defined as the completion of one full credit per year of high school.*

***All students registered with an Arab passport must take Arabic Language Arts in accordance with UAE law. This may count towards their language progression credit.*

****Design and Innovation courses can be counted as Visual & Performing Arts credits OR Information Technology credits.*

*****Any core subject course beyond the minimum ASD requirement.*

Course	Min. Credits
English*	4
Mathematics	3
Science	3
Social Studies	3
World Languages**	2

Course	Min. Credits
Physical Education and Health	2
Visual & Performing Arts***	2
Information Technology***	0.5
Core Electives****	3
Non-Core Electives	2.5

Appendix 10 – American International School (AIS)

American International School
المدرسة الأمريكية الدولية

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About Us ▾ Learning ▾ Admissions ▾ Student Life ▾ For Parents ▾ Contact Us ▾

High School
[Home](#) > [Learning](#) > High School

Learning

[Curriculum Overview](#)

[Kindergarten](#)

[Elementary School](#)

[Middle School](#)

[High School](#)

[Professional Development](#)

HIGH SCHOOL



CAT 1: Innovation Fair
Date: 22nd April, 2019
A Working Prototype of an
Invention idea related to
curriculum standards.

CAT 2: Science
Date: 28th April, 2019
A 3 level Science competition:
Biology + Chemistry + Physics
Pursued and to unlock the
challenge of the next level.

CAT 3: Technology
Date: 28th April, 2019
A 3 level competition:
Geography + Programming +
Robotics.

The High School at AIS comprises Grades 9 to 12. At this stage, students are ready to become the leaders and the innovators of the future.

They are also starting to think about their future after high school, and to make some choices about where their interests, talents, and energies lie. AIS has a robust program of elective subjects which begins in grade 10.

Students continue with the core subjects, and have choices for elective subjects including Economics, Business, Accounting, Social Studies, ICT, specialized Science streams, Music, and Art.

At this stage, students also consider whether they want to pursue AP (Advanced Placement) courses in the Sciences, Mathematics, or Arts. Students and families work closely with academic and college counselors to make informed decisions about their futures.

As is the case in all sections of the school, elements of UAE heritage, history, and Islamic culture are incorporated during teaching and learning activities across all disciplines.

KHDA EXPECTATIONS RELATED TO US HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Subject	Required Credits*
English	4
Science	3
Math	3
World Language	2 (Arabic counts as a world language-1 credit or 2 credits)
Social Studies	2
Physical Education	2
Visual/ Performing Art	0.5
Electives	5.5 (Arabic-2 credits and Islamic Studies-2 credits counted as elective credits)
	22 credits

*A credit requires 120 classroom hours of instruction


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[Learning](#)
[Admissions](#)
[Student Life](#)
[For Parents](#)
[Contact Us](#)

High School

Home > Learning >

- Curriculum Overview
- Kindergarten
- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School

Learning

- Curriculum Overview
- Kindergarten
- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School
- Professional Development



High School

The High School at AIS comprises Grades 9 to 12. At this stage, students are ready to become the leaders and the innovators of the future.

They are also starting to think about their future after high school, and to make some choices about where their interests, talents, and energies lie. AIS has a robust program of elective subjects which begins in grade

[Enquire](#)
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https://www.aishuae/uploads/documents/files/AIS_KG-12_Curriculum_Overview.pdf



AIS High School Curriculum Overview

The curriculum in AIS incorporates all the learning experiences within the school and includes not only knowledge and skills but the attitudes, beliefs and values which underpin the relationships within our school community. Following our students' transition from middle school, we at AIS aim to offer a broad curriculum to our older students by exposing them to the wide variety and range of subjects taught by subject specialists where they can develop the important skills of teamwork, reflection, self-management and critical thinking. By exposing our high school students to the full range of subjects within the curriculum, they are given the opportunity to find their particular talents and, further, select subjects that reflect their interests, strengths and weaknesses. Pupils are encouraged to achieve their full potential during their time here, leaving AIS equipped with the necessary skills for success in the wider world. AIS aims to be inclusive in all aspects of its work and students' individual needs and learning styles will be accommodated in the classroom. AIS offers a broad range of electives based on the American curriculum with an international perspective. Refer courses below of our high school curriculum. Please note, electives will run depending on student enrollment in the course.

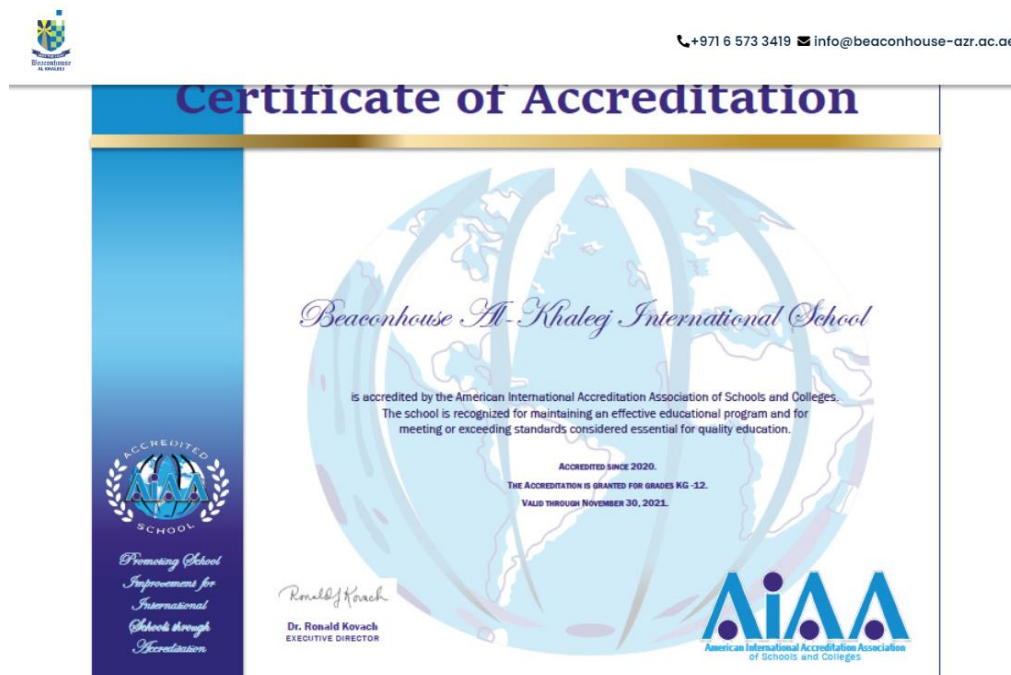
IN HIGH SCHOOL, STUDENTS WILL CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING COURSES:

- English
- Drama
- Journalism
- Algebra I
- Geometry
- Algebra II
- Statistics
- Business Math
- AP Calculus AB
- Business
- MOE Social Studies
- Marketing
- Accounting
- Economics
- World History
- Sociology
- Psychology
- Global Issues
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- French
- ICT
- AP Biology
- AP Chemistry
- AP Physics
- Art
- Physical Education
- Regular Arabic
- Islamic
- Special Arabic
- Other Electives

At AIS, our secondary students are enrolled in a rigorous American curriculum that both encourages and inspires students to reach their full potential. Our academic program uses a distinctive Core Sequence, an approach to teaching that is geared to each discipline, advanced coursework, high standards, and thoughtful feedback that in the hands of expert instructors to shape students into exceptional thinkers, accomplished scholars, and engaged citizens. Our curriculum has clearly defined goals that allow families and teachers to work together to ensure that our students succeed academically, grow emotionally and develop the critical thinking skills needed for college and career readiness. In order to be granted an American High School Diploma, the student must complete all credits as per the graduation requirement.

The school offers career and guidance counselling to enable students to understand the graduation requirements and make the right choices regarding their course selections including electives and their respective minimum credit requirements of 22 credits. In high school, students have the option to enroll in a total of 27 credits. Advanced Placement (AP) courses are offered throughout the 4-year high school program.

Appendix 11 – Beaconhouse Al-Khaleej International School (BAKIS) - Sharjah



إتقان ITQAN



هيئة الشارقة للتعليم الخاص
SHARJAH PRIVATE EDUCATION AUTHORITY

ITQAN Program

Distance Learning Review Visit Report for Beaconhouse Al Khaleej International Private School

Distance Learning Provision March – July, 2020
(AY 2019 – 2020)

Overall Judgement during
Phase 1 of the implementation of distance learning is
Developed

Beaconhouse Al Khaleej International Private School

Distance Learning Provision March – July, 2020 (AY 2019 – 2020)

Overall Judgement during Phase 1 of the implementation of distance learning is Developed

Distance Learning Profile

Dear Principal,

Sharjah Private Education Authority would like to thank you for engaging with our team during the recent review visit at your school on 08/06/2020.

This Distance Learning Review Visit (DLRV) was performed by two reviewers via online platforms. The review was conducted using the UAE Distance Learning Evaluation Tool - Stage 1 that consists of three (3) Zones, thirteen (13) themes and thirty-nine (39) descriptors.

The purpose of the visit was to review the school's distance learning provision, implementation of distance learning solutions and to ensure the continuation of teaching and learning during the exceptional circumstances due to COVID-19 pandemic. The review seeks to highlight the school's response as it relates to Phase 1 of the implementation of distance learning with the objective of supporting schools in the journey to a more sustainable and flexible learning option phase. The review focused on the students' learning and wellbeing, teaching and monitoring of students' learning, as well as leading and managing students' learning.

The overall schools' distance learning judgement during Phase 1 of the implementation of distance learning was arrived at as specified below:

Judgement	Definition
Developed	At least 9 Themes are Developed & none are Not Developed
Partially Developed	At least 10 Themes are Developed or Partially Developed & no more than 3 Themes are Not Developed
Not Developed	4 or more Themes are Not Developed

During the online visit, reviewers engaged in a range of activities, including discussions with senior and middle leaders, review of documents and samples of students' work, observation of virtual lessons and analysis of feedback from stakeholders.