

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) POLICY

POLICY ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

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Staff Lead:	School PD Leader (SPDL) / HR Manager
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INTRODUCTION

GEMS World Academy, Dubai (GWA), recognises the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for all staff to ensure that they are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively support the learning and development of our students. This policy sets out the Academy's commitment to providing ongoing professional development opportunities, which links to the Academy's Improvement Plan 2023-2026 and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of all staff.

Our targets and expectations of our own performance are very high. We are committed to raising standards in education and to doing everything in our power to improve the life chances of young people in this region. To this end, we are committed to the continuing professional development of all staff at GWA to develop and empower and help achieve our overall vision.

We believe that where staff feel *strategically involved and empowered* in their workplace, are in receipt of high quality and appropriate coaching and training, and receive timely support where and when required, our challenging targets are much more likely to be met.

RATIONALE

CPD and performance management require a shared commitment to high performance. It helps focus attention on more effective teaching, learning, and monitoring of achievement to raise the quality of teaching and benefit students and staff. It applies to all staff involved in student instruction; teachers, teaching assistants, learning support assistants, counsellors, and other support staff, with the aim of providing appropriate and effective professional and performance training and coaching to ensure job satisfaction, a high level of expertise, and progression of staff.

In line with the Academy Improvement Plan, the focus on continuing professional development can be found within the following objective;

TL1: PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND EXPERTISE

Enhance the skills and expertise of all adults involved in student instruction, enabling the delivery of consistently higher-quality teaching that enhances student achievement, engagement in learning, understanding, and outcomes.

The aim of CPD at GEMS World Academy:

- Every member of staff at GEMS World Academy has access to effective, high-quality, research-based training via INSET and weekly CPD sessions, pivotal to their roles and responsibilities throughout the academic year.
- To support staff in developing their professional knowledge and skills, both in relation to their current role and in preparation for future career development. All staff should be encouraged and supported to achieve their potential through agreeing on objectives,

undertaking development, and engaging in performance assessment.

- CPD is personalised. Any CPD booked or explored must be relevant to i) the Academy's Improvement Plan and ii) the individual staff member's performance management objective/s and/or the team's goals.
- To enhance the quality of teaching and learning and improve outcomes for our students.
- The Academy will encourage and support staff in pursuing further academic and professional qualifications, particularly IB certification.
- Staff will be expected to engage in reflective practice and share their learning and experiences with colleagues to promote a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.
- The Academy will evaluate the impact of professional development on staff and student outcomes, and use this information to inform future CPD planning and implementation.
- The Academy will keep staff informed of relevant CPD opportunities and encourage them to take an active role in identifying their own development needs and opportunities based on the IB Approaches to Teaching (ATT).

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy covers all staff except supply or cover teachers and those on temporary or short fixed-term contracts of less than one term. It will evolve as part of an ongoing consultation process. The policy sets a framework for all staff to agree on and review professional and personal development priorities and performance objectives within the context of the Academy's Improvement Plan and their own professional learning needs.

This policy recognises how much there is to gain by encouraging teachers and support staff as educational professionals to develop their expertise in teaching and learning and to incorporate new strategies and tools based on the latest educational research. Delivery of CPD will be achieved through effective and engaging approaches.

The breadth of the CPD programme consists of:

In-House Training: The Academy has a wide range of expertise within the collective experience and abilities of its own staff. Sessions are tailored to the needs of the Academy and may focus on specific topics or skills relevant to the individual or department.

Workshops: These are sessions led by academy leaders or lead teachers designed to provide hands-on, practical training to staff. Workshops can be conducted on various topics such as classroom management, assessment, teaching strategies, technology integration, etc.

IB Global Conferences: An IB Global Conference (IBGC) is an annual event organised by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). The conference brings together IB world educators, school leaders, administrators, and other stakeholders. Its purpose is to provide a platform for these professionals to share ideas, best practices, and innovations in IB education. At GWA, the priority for attending an IBGC is usually afforded to IB Programme Coordinators (EYP, PYP, MYP, and DP) and Senior Leaders.

Tellal: Tellal provides a range of Teacher Competency modules, Middle Leader modules, and Teacher Leader modules in English and Arabic. Applications for Tellal training are done through Phoenix, and registration closes 7 days prior to the start date of the course. Requests are approved by the School Professional Development Leader (SPDL). Tellal offers both asynchronous and in-person training. There is no cost to GEMS employees to undertake Tellal training.

Coaching: Instructional coaching is a professional development strategy to improve teaching practices and student learning outcomes through personalised support for teachers. At GWA, we use a partnership approach. Coaching conversations follow the GROW model to identify current realities, goals, and next steps. Jim Knight's "The Impact Cycle" tracks professional development and success to identify, learn, and improve.

Instructional Coaches:

- Build trusting, collaborative relationships with teachers.
- Provide objective, non-evaluative feedback aimed at professional growth.
- Facilitate goal-setting and action planning aligned with school priorities.
- Offer resources, strategies, and professional development tailored to individual teacher needs.
- Foster a culture of reflective practice and continuous improvement.

Teachers:

- Engage actively and openly in the coaching process.
- Reflect on their practice and be willing to try new strategies.
- Set and pursue professional goals that align with their students' needs.
- Collaborate with coaches and colleagues to share best practices.

Mentoring: Mentoring involves pairing an experienced teacher or Middle Leader with a less experienced one to provide guidance and academic support. Within this structure, staff will collaborate, set goals, co-teach, and provide feedback on their teaching practice.

Action Research: Action research involves researching one's teaching practice to improve it. Teachers can design and implement their research projects and collaborate with others to share their findings.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs): PLCs unite teachers to share ideas, resources, and strategies. These groups can be formal or informal and may be facilitated by a coach or mentor. PLGs work well when they are cross-divisional, bringing together a wider range of skills and expertise, interests, and experiences.

External Consultants: External education consultants may visit the Academy at various points in the year. Their role is often developmental and aims to help the Academy improve and achieve our goals. Experts who work with GEMS World Academy are IB World School Advisors and other experts who come from various educational backgrounds, and often with KHDA inspection experience. They can provide a fresh perspective on the challenges and opportunities that the Academy is facing, helping us to better understand ways in which we can move forward in alignment with the IB Standards and Practices and KHDA performance standards.

External Provision: Staff requests for financial support in meeting costs associated with external training provisions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be at the discretion of 1) SPDL, 2) Principals, and 3) CEO/Principal. Staff will only be required to complete BlueSky after approval is given and a PRF is completed and signed by the SPDL and CEO/Principal and submitted to Finance.

For all funded training for the Academic Year 2024/25, staff will be required to sign a training agreement paid for by GEMS World Academy, Dubai. (See Appendix A for a generic training agreement, which can be customised to suit individual circumstances).

APPLYING FOR CPD

As outlined above and further detailed below, staff requests to attend external training provisions must follow the approval steps. Applications for external training are available until 01 June. Once the PD budget closes, staff requests to attend training may not be approved.

Position and Role: Applicants must be currently employed as full-time staff members of GEMS World Academy, holding positions that directly contribute to the Academy's administration, educational (including teachers, counsellors, instructional coaches, and support staff (Teaching Assistants and Learning Support Assistants), or support functions.

Commitment to School Improvement: Applicants must demonstrate a clear connection between the external PD opportunity and the Academy improvement goals. The proposed PD should align with five of the Academy's strategic objectives (*Leadership and Management, Teaching and Learning, Curriculum, Progress and Assessment, Personal Development, Welfare and Behaviour, and Culture and Wellbeing*) and contribute to enhancing the overall quality of education and

student outcomes.

Professional Development Relevance: The proposed PD opportunity must be relevant to the applicant's current job responsibilities and contribute to their professional growth. It should enable them to acquire new skills, knowledge, or strategies that can be directly applied in their role to benefit students, colleagues, and the Academy community.

Alignment with the Academy's Needs: Applicants must outline how the knowledge or skills gained from the PD will address the Academy's specific needs. The application should detail the anticipated positive impact on teaching, learning, student engagement, or overall school performance. (Think actions for DSIB as an example).

Prior Approval and Budget Availability: Applicants are required to obtain prior approval from their immediate Line Manager and their SLT Line Manager before submitting an application for funding. Funding availability is subject to the school's budget constraints and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Application Submission: Completed CPD Absence Forms, including a clear outline of the proposed PD opportunity, its relevance to the applicant's role, expected outcomes, and associated costs, should be submitted by the designated deadline. Incomplete or late applications may not be considered.

Post-PD Sharing and Implementation: Applicants who receive funding for external PD are expected to share their learning and insights with colleagues through presentations, workshops, or other appropriate means. They should also provide a plan for how they intend to implement their newly acquired knowledge or skills within the school setting.

Accountability and Evaluation: Funding recipients will be required to submit a post-PD report outlining how the experience impacted their professional practice and contributed to the SIP. This information will assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the funding programme and guide future decision-making. The report can be uploaded to BlueSky as evidence.

[PRF](#) and [CPD Absence Form](#) (CPD absence form to be submitted no later than 14 days in advance, where possible. If the request is made within this time period, it may be rejected. In some circumstances, however, approval can be given when urgent CPD opportunities become available. Teachers must check with the SPDL: a.houpapa_gwa@gemsedu.com).

1. **Staff:** 1) Seek approval for course attendance with SLT Line Manager; 2) Complete CPD absence form in full, and email it to the SPDL: a.houpapa_gwa@gemsedu.com.
2. **SPDL:** 1) Approve or reject. If approved, email the CPD absence form with signature to the CEO/Principal for final approval; 2) Email confirmation and signed form to staff member, SLT Line Manager and Divisional Secretary.
3. **Staff:** 1) Staff member to register for the course and request an invoice from the Company and email to the Finance team: finance_gwa@gemsedu.com, and Procurement:

s.kariyil_gwa@gemsedu.com and cc the SPDL: a.houpapa_gwa@gemsedu.com. Finance will share further instructions; 2) Arrange cover internally where possible; otherwise, follow up with the divisional Assistant Principal responsible for cover to arrange.

IB Accredited Training for New Staff: IB Programme Coordinators (IBCs) will arrange relevant IB training for new staff when required. Where teachers teach across both the PYP and Secondary, staff must be trained in both divisions. The IB Training Budget covers payment but still requires approval from the SPDL and CEO/Principal in collaboration with the IBCs. Staff are to follow the above steps with the IBC's approval.

When the application is approved, the staff member should book the relevant course with the support of the IBCs. IBCs must keep a whole school record of staff attendance throughout the year, which will be built year-on-year.

COMPLETION OF CPD

Once the course has been attended, the staff member must change the status on BlueSky to *Completed or Attended* and write a brief evaluation. If the course is changed or the staff member is unable to attend, they must inform the SPDL, HR, and their Line Manager as soon as practically possible.

Staff are expected to share their learning with the community. This can be achieved through Teaching and Learning Bytes, Thursday CPD sessions, lesson visits, Professional Learning Communities, and coaching sessions. Staff are also expected to create a portfolio of learning to evidence the impact of their training on school improvement.

The Cycle of Professional Review: This policy's core activity is the annual cycle of performance management, which is outlined in the Performance Management Policy.

GEMS World Academy will implement this policy in accordance with the guidelines outlined above. The Academy will regularly review it to ensure that it remains relevant and effective in meeting the needs of staff and students and fosters a culture of continuous improvement and innovation in all aspects of our operations.

APPENDIX A

GEMS WORLD ACADEMY TRAINING AGREEMENT

In consideration of the training which I will be receiving from GEMS World Academy, Dubai, I agree to remain employed by GEMS World Academy, Dubai, for a minimum period of two full years after completion of the training.

I agree that:

- a) I will remain employed by GEMS World Academy, Dubai, throughout the duration of the Course, and if I voluntarily terminate my employment with GEMS World Academy, Dubai, within two (2) years of completing the Course, I will be liable to repay the total cost of the Course. This amount will be recovered from my final settlement.
- b) I will attend all sessions of the Course, whether in-person or online, and fully participate in all aspects of the Course including testing; and
- c) Present key learning points from the Course to colleagues (e.g. within your team and/or department), and to a wider audience (e.g. other departments within the school) as may be requested by the Line Manager.

This training will end on [date] and if I leave my employment at any time before the end of [above date plus two years] I undertake to refund GEMS World Academy AED [accurate cost of training].

In the event of my failure to pay, I agree that GEMS World Academy has the right as an express term of my Contract of Employment to deduct any outstanding amount due under this agreement from my salary or any other payments due to me on the termination of my employment in accordance with the legislation currently in force.

Course Name:

Signature:

Date: