

GEMS Curriculum Policy

This policy has been approved for operation within:	ALL GEMS Schools		
Status	Required		
Owner	GEMS Education		
Date effective from	August 2025	Date of next review	August 2027
Review period	2 years	Version	1.0

1.1 Introduction

The GEMS Curriculum is the foundation through which we deliver our unwavering commitment to academic excellence, personal growth, and global citizenship. Rooted in evidence-informed practice and aligned with international best standards, The GEMS Curriculum ensures that every student, regardless of background, starting point, or aspiration, receives a world-class education that prepares them to thrive in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

Our approach combines the intellectual rigour of high-performing global education systems with the rich cultural and national priorities of the United Arab Emirates. The GEMS Curriculum expresses *what* we teach: a coherent, knowledge-rich, and sequenced educational entitlement for all students. Through Teach Like a GEM (TLAG), our instructional framework, we define learning is implemented, ensuring that instructional practice across our schools is consistent, evidence-aligned, inclusive, and focused on securing high achievement. This ensures that every child and student knows, remembers and understands more over time.

The GEMS Curriculum fosters curiosity, critical thinking, creativity, and character. It cultivates students who can question deeply, think independently, collaborate effectively, and apply their knowledge with confidence and purpose.

We are committed to ensuring that learning is sequenced, purposeful, and progressive. Through structured tools including At-a-Glance Plans, Learning Journeys, and Knowledge Micro-Maps, curriculum intent is translated into meaningful, coherent experiences that build knowledge cumulatively, strengthen memory, and deepen understanding. This policy outlines the intent, implementation, and impact of our curriculum, establishing the shared expectations that guarantee excellence across all GEMS schools.

Our aspiration is simple and ambitious: that every child and student flourishes, achieving exceptional outcomes and developing the knowledge, skills, and values needed to shape a better future for themselves and for the world.

1.2 Policy Rationale

The GEMS Education Curriculum Policy exists to guarantee a coherent, equitable, knowledge-rich learning experience for every student across our global network of schools. It sets out the educational principles, expectations, and structures required to secure consistently high standards of teaching, learning, and student achievement, regardless of phase, pathway, or context.

A strong, system-wide rationale is critical because research and inspection evidence shows that variability in curriculum quality and instructional practice leads to uneven learner outcomes. Establishing a shared approach ensures that all students benefit from evidence-informed teaching, purposeful sequencing, and well-designed curriculum experiences that promote progression over time. This policy provides the guardrails that minimise unnecessary variation while preserving the professional autonomy teachers need to respond adaptively to learner needs, including multilingual students, Students of Determination, and high-attaining learners.

The rationale is also rooted in GEMS Education's wider strategic priorities, which commit to continuous improvement, high-quality teaching, future-ready skills, and strong learner outcomes. GEMS Education's emphasis on rigorous curriculum planning, digital innovation, robust progress tracking, and empowered learners who are active, confident, and resilient requires a Curriculum Policy that focus's these priorities by embedding them into the design, delivery, and evaluation of curriculum across all schools.

The policy reflects our commitment to nurturing future-ready, globally minded, and culturally grounded learners. Schools exemplify this ambition through a curriculum that is ambitious, inclusive, values-driven, and aligned with UAE national priorities while being grounded in the GEMS School Excellence Framework. Curriculum design must ensure students "know, remember, and understand more over time," with explicit alignment to both substantive and disciplinary knowledge, coherent sequencing, and meaningful connections across subjects and phases.

The GEMS Education Curriculum Policy therefore serves four essential purposes:

- **Clarity of Intent**

It articulates a shared vision of a world-class, knowledge-rich curriculum that empowers all students to achieve exceptional academic and personal outcomes.

- **Consistency of Implementation**

It provides a unified framework, including At-a-Glance Plans, Learning Journeys, and Knowledge Micro-Maps, to ensure curriculum coherence, progression, and fidelity across all GEMS schools. It also identifies TLAG techniques as non-negotiables in the delivery.

- **Alignment to Evidence and Inspection Expectations**

It ensures curriculum and instructional approaches are aligned with the best global research, UAE regulatory frameworks, international benchmarks, and internal QA standards.

- **Equity and Excellence for Every Learner**

It guarantees inclusive design and delivery, ensuring that all students, regardless of starting point, experience challenge, support, and success.

In essence, this policy is the blueprint that secures the high standards and world-class learning experiences that GEMS Education promises to every child. It unites strategic vision, research-grounded practice, and rigorous quality assurance into a single, coherent rationale that drives excellence across the entire organisation.

1.3 Curriculum Vision

At GEMS Education, we envision a curriculum that transforms every learner into a knowledgeable, articulate, and empowered global citizen, one who not only acquires powerful knowledge but is able to **know more, remember more, and understand more** over time. Our curriculum aspires to be a world-leading model of excellence: ambitious in its academic intent, coherent in its design, inclusive in its reach, and deeply connected to the cultural heritage and national priorities of the UAE.

We believe that every student deserves access to a curriculum that builds mastery through carefully sequenced knowledge, rich learning experiences, and evidence-informed teaching. This vision commits us to designing a curriculum where deep understanding is deliberately constructed, where learning is revisited and strengthened through retrieval and practice, and where students develop the intellectual habits, values, and competencies required to lead purposeful, fulfilling lives.

This vision positions the GEMS Curriculum as a powerful, future-focused engine of opportunity, one that ensures every child is equipped not only with what they need to succeed today, but with the knowledge, confidence, and character to shape tomorrow.

1.4 Curriculum Aims

The GEMS Curriculum aims to:

- Deliver a coherent, **knowledge-rich curriculum** that provides all students with the essential disciplinary and substantive knowledge needed to thrive as educated, responsible global citizens.
- Ensure every learner, regardless of background, ability, or starting point, accesses an **ambitious, inclusive, high-quality curriculum** that is carefully **sequenced** to promote strong **progression over time**.
- **Cultivate curiosity, critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving** through rich learning experiences that nurture reflective and independent thinkers.

- Support the development of **character, values, and personal agency**, empowering students to engage confidently with the world and make informed, ethical decisions rooted in empathy, respect, and cultural understanding.
- Embed **UAE national priorities and cultural identity** while aligning with the highest standards of international curricula ensuring local relevance with global ambition.
- Provide **equitable access to the full breadth of the curriculum**, including for Students of Determination and multilingual learners, through intentional adaptation, scaffolding, and universal design for learning.
- Promote **mastery and fluency** through **deliberate sequencing, retrieval, and structured practice**, enabling students to **remember more, understand more**, and apply learning with increasing independence.
- Integrate future-ready learning, including **digital literacy, research skills, and emerging technologies**, to prepare students for an evolving and dynamic global landscape.
- Guarantee statutory compliance and high academic standards by ensuring **alignment with national and international curriculum requirements** across subjects and phases.
- Foster well-rounded **personal development** through rich curricular and co-curricular opportunities that build confidence, leadership, collaboration, and social responsibility.
- Strengthen coherence across the GEMS network by **codifying curriculum plans, At a Glance, Knowledge Micro-Maps, and Learning Journeys** that standardise excellence while enabling contextual innovation.
- Demonstrate that students know, remember and understand more through **Fluency Composites** that assess students with increasing challenge.
- Utilise the **Read Like A GEM** strategy to ensure students can access the curriculum.

1.5 Roles and Responsibilities

GEMS Education School Support Centre leads have responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. The Individual roles and responsibilities are listed below.

Senior Vice President – Academic Excellence

- Leads the strategic design, coherence and quality assurance of the GEMS Curriculum across all school models and systems.
- Sets organisation-wide expectations for curriculum intent, implementation and impact; ensures alignment with GEMS Education Strategy and regulatory requirements.
- Oversees the development of curriculum standards, progression models, and frameworks (e.g., At a Glance, Knowledge Micro-Maps, Learning Journeys).
- Holds executive accountability for ensuring that students know, remember, and understand more across all phases and curricula.

Corporate Head – Academic Excellence

- Drives operational implementation of curriculum strategy across clusters.
- Oversees professional development models (e.g., Teach Like a GEM) to secure fidelity and consistency in instructional delivery.
- Works closely with EVPs, SEFs and Principals to ensure curriculum documentation meets standards and is quality assured.

Executive Vice Presidents (Education)

- Provide system leadership across clusters, ensuring each school meets GEMS expectations for curriculum quality.
- Monitor school-level curriculum performance and hold Principals accountable for delivery and compliance.
- Facilitate cross-school sharing of best practice and support schools requiring rapid improvement.

Brand Ambassadors

- Promote and model the GEMS Curriculum vision, ensuring consistency of messaging and alignment across all brand schools.
- Support communication of curriculum initiatives to parents, staff, and external stakeholders to strengthen brand identity within the curriculum plans.
- Ensure curriculum innovations align with the GEMS Curriculum Plans.

Subject Excellence Fellows

- Lead subject-specific curriculum design, progression mapping, fluency composites, and resource development.
- Provide coaching, moderation, and deep-dive quality assurance with HoDs and Subject Leaders.
- Facilitate professional networks and system-wide subject communities, as reflected in events such as Excellence Fellow Planning.
- Ensure subject curricula are knowledge-rich, sequenced, and drive measurable gains in student learning.
- Develop masterclasses for subject elements to develop staff proficiency.

Local Advisory Boards (LABs)

- Provide governance-level oversight of curriculum effectiveness and alignment with community expectations, as seen in LAB - Visioning Workshop for the Future meetings.
- Scrutinise academic outcomes, compliance with regulatory frameworks, and the school's progress toward curriculum goals.
- Support cultural alignment with UAE values and strategic community engagement.

Principals

- Lead school-level curriculum implementation and ensure fidelity to the GEMS Curriculum Policy.
- Ensure curriculum documentation (At-a-Glance Plans, Micro-Maps, Learning Journeys) is completed, coherent, and reviewed regularly.
- Monitor teaching quality and enact improvement strategies to ensure that every learner knows, remembers, and understands more over time.
- Manage performance of HoDs and Subject Leaders.

Subject Leaders / Heads of Department

- Translate system-level curriculum frameworks into high-quality departmental plans and schemes of learning.
- Lead assessment design, moderation, and departmental QA cycles.
- Ensure sequencing, retrieval practice, and explicit instruction are embedded in every unit.
- Coach teachers to deliver subject-specific pedagogy that drives learner mastery and deep understanding.

Teaching and Teaching Support Staff

- ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.
- keep up to date with developments and research in their subjects by attending subject masterclasses.
- share and exchange information about best practice amongst their colleagues in Trust schools and through subject networks, resulting in a dynamic, innovative curriculum.
- participate in professional development, working with Curriculum Excellence Fellows and other teachers to deepen their subject pedagogy when teaching in the classroom.

Students

- be treated as partners in their learning.
- have their individual needs addressed, both within the school and extending beyond the classroom into the family and community through a curriculum which offers breadth, support and challenge.

- be given additional support if they start to fall behind in their learning, helping them to catch up and keep up quickly;
- receive coordinated support to enable them to make the appropriate choices.

Parents and carers

- be confident that their child is receiving a high-quality, knowledge-rich education that is designed to meet their learning needs and which will equip them with the skills they need to thrive throughout their lives.
- be informed about the curriculum on offer and understand the rationale behind it.

1.6 Curriculum Priorities

Priority 1: Keeping Our Students Safe, Happy and Well

The GEMS Curriculum is intentionally designed to nurture the holistic well-being of every learner, ensuring that they feel safe, valued, and emotionally supported throughout their educational journey. By embedding inclusive practices, personal development pathways, and culturally responsive learning environments, the curriculum actively promotes students' social, emotional, and mental well-being while cultivating empathy, resilience, and mutual respect. This aligns with GEMS' whole-school commitment to developing intellectual, personal, and social maturity through structured layers of learning that keep students safe, happy, and well.

Priority 2: Achieving Academic Excellence

At the heart of the GEMS Curriculum lies an unwavering commitment to academic excellence, delivered through a knowledge-rich, coherently sequenced, and research-informed educational model. Every subject pathway is crafted to ensure students know more, remember more, and understand more over time, with clear end points, ambitious expectations, and rigorous progression from EYFS to Grade 12. Through innovative TLAG instruction, and consistent curriculum standards across all schools, GEMS ensures that academic excellence is not an aspiration but a lived experience for every learner, reflecting the priority of securing world-class outcomes for all students.

Priority 3: Looking After Our GEMS Family

The GEMS Curriculum strengthens the wider GEMS community by fostering a culture of connection, inclusion, and collective responsibility. It is built to honour the diverse identities and aspirations of our students, families, and staff, ensuring that every member of the GEMS family feels supported and empowered. Curriculum pathways intentionally promote collaboration, cultural appreciation, multilingualism, and shared values, while teachers are equipped with adaptations and strategies that ensure all learners can participate meaningfully. This priority reinforces that education is not only about academic achievement, but also about nurturing a cohesive, caring, and thriving GEMS community that grows together.

1.7 Careers guidance, work related learning and enterprise skills

GEMS Education is committed to delivering a world-class careers, enterprise and work-related learning programme that equips every learner with the knowledge, competencies, and character attributes required to succeed in the dynamic global landscape of the 21st century. In full alignment with UAE national priorities—including the National Agenda, Emirati Child Wellbeing Framework and MOE requirements for holistic learner development, our Careers and Enterprise provision is intentionally embedded across curriculum planning at every phase.

At the heart of this provision is the **GEMS for Life** programme, our signature, system-wide framework that supports learners from early years through graduation with personalised pathways in careers exploration, university and scholarship readiness, industry connections, and future-skills development. **GEMS for Life** extends the curriculum beyond the classroom by providing structured access to guidance counsellors, psychometric tools, employer encounters, workplace learning, virtual and in-person internships, mentorship opportunities, and alumni networks.

Through **GEMS for Life**, every student engages with future pathways in a purposeful, coherent, and developmentally appropriate way, ensuring that they make informed decisions and graduate with clarity, confidence, and ambition.

Work-related learning is systematically integrated into subject-level curriculum intentions and long-term plans, enabling students to connect disciplinary knowledge with real-world applications—particularly in priority UAE sectors such as technology and innovation, entrepreneurship, sustainability, health sciences, engineering, logistics, tourism, and AI-driven industries.

Students engage with authentic tasks, problem-solving challenges, and project-based learning opportunities that strengthen enterprise skills such as leadership, collaboration, ethical decision-making, financial literacy, creativity, communication, and design thinking. These opportunities are expanded through **GEMS for Life's** partnerships with universities, industry leaders, scholarship providers, and global organisations.

Our careers guidance programme is impartial, inclusive, and evidence-based. It offers structured exposure to a full spectrum of academic and vocational pathways, including TVET, international university admissions, UAE universities, apprenticeships, and emerging future-industry qualifications. The programme is documented, quality-assured, and evaluated through regular curriculum reviews, leadership monitoring, and student-voice mechanisms. It is further supported by GEMS' emphasis on personal and social maturity within its curriculum planning frameworks, ensuring that careers education is integrated with wellbeing, safeguarding, inclusion, and character development.

Through this comprehensive approach, strengthened by the reach and ambition of **GEMS for Life**, GEMS Education ensures that every learner graduates not only with strong academic foundations, but with the enterprise skills, global competencies, and future-readiness needed to lead fulfilling, meaningful and successful lives.

1.8 Curriculum Enrichment

Curriculum Enrichment at GEMS Education plays a central role in fulfilling our mission to provide a world-class, holistic education that nurtures the academic, social, emotional, and personal growth of every learner. Enrichment is not positioned as an optional supplement to the curriculum; rather, it is an integrated and essential dimension of our educational model, designed to broaden horizons, celebrate talent, inspire curiosity, and ensure that every student experiences a rich, well-rounded education.

Guided by the leadership of the **GEMS Head of Talent and Enrichment** our enrichment strategy ensures coherence, ambition, and impact across the network. Centres of Excellence provide high-quality, inclusive pathways in areas such as performing arts, sport, innovation, STEM, entrepreneurship, and global citizenship. They connect students to expert practitioners, industry partnerships, and real-world experiences, ensuring that enrichment is both aspirational and accessible to all learners.

As demonstrated through the **GEMS Genius** ecosystem, curriculum enrichment is underpinned by structured processes for identification, provision, tracking and evaluation. These frameworks ensure that high-potential learners are challenged and supported, while also guaranteeing that enrichment opportunities strengthen wellbeing, agency, confidence, and a sense of belonging for all students.

Schools are expected to monitor impact through academic outcomes, participation data, student voice, wellbeing indicators, and wider achievement evidence, demonstrating that enrichment contributes to accelerated growth, deeper engagement, and enhanced personal development.

The GEMS Enrichment Model ensures that every school provides a balanced, inclusive and forward-looking offer that includes:

- **Curricular enrichment**, where subjects integrate authentic experiences, competitions, industry links, cultural capital, and opportunities for application of knowledge beyond the classroom.

- **Co-curricular enrichment**, offering diverse clubs, teams, societies, and pathways that develop creativity, leadership, service, and resilience.
- **Talent and performance** pathways, strengthened through the **Centres of Excellence** and GEMS Genius Programme, enabling students with exceptional potential to access targeted support, masterclasses, specialised coaching and extended opportunities.
- **Community and global engagement**, encouraging students to contribute meaningfully to social, cultural, environmental and entrepreneurial initiatives aligned to UAE priorities.

Through this integrated, ambitious, and expertly led approach, Curriculum Enrichment ensures that every learner encounters opportunities that spark passion, ignite talent, and build the competencies needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world. It reflects our belief that exceptional learning happens not only in the classroom, but through the rich, diverse and deeply human experiences that shape character, identity, aspiration and lifelong success.

1.9 Organisation and Optimising Learning Opportunities

The **GEMS Curriculum** organises learning through a deliberately engineered set of structural documents, **At-a-Glance curriculum plans, Learning Journeys, Knowledge Micro-Maps, and Fluency Composites**, which together define the what, when, why and impact of student learning across every phase and subject. At-a-Glance Plans establish long-term sequencing and end points; Learning Journeys map how knowledge builds over time; Knowledge Micro-Maps break learning into precise, lesson-level components; and Fluency Composites articulate the core knowledge and disciplinary thinking students must recall, connect, and apply. These curriculum artefacts ensure coherence, progression, and intellectual rigor, reducing unnecessary variation and guaranteeing that all learners follow a clearly structured, knowledge-rich pathway.

Teach Like a GEM (TLAG) functions as the unified implementation process that brings this structure to life in the classroom. As outlined in the Teach Like a GEM Playbook, TLAG provides predictable lesson architecture, routines and technique “chains” that reduce cognitive load and maximise clarity, ensuring students can focus on processing, retaining, and understanding new material rather than navigating instructional inconsistency. TLAG’s shared language and common instructional expectations allow teachers to deliver the curriculum with fidelity while still exercising adaptive expertise. School-level evidence from GAA, DAA and GWA shows that TLAG is systematically evaluated through lesson observations, planning reviews, practice clinics, and leadership monitoring processes, confirming its role as the engine that drives high-quality curriculum implementation at scale.

Together, the structural strength of At-a-Glance Plans, Learning Journeys, Knowledge Micro-Maps, and Fluency Composites, combined with the instructional coherence of TLAG, ensures that the GEMS Curriculum is not only well-designed but consistently and powerfully enacted, enabling every learner to know more, remember more, and understand more over time.

1.10 Professional Development

GEMS Education is committed to ensuring that all staff, teachers, subject leaders, and school leaders, maintain strong, current, and research-informed curriculum knowledge through a comprehensive and continuous programme of professional development. Our Curriculum CPD model is grounded in international best practice, focusing on the principles of coherence, progression, disciplinary expertise, and evidence-informed design.

Curriculum CPD ensures that educators understand not only what students must learn, but why content is sequenced in particular ways, how knowledge builds over time, and what high-quality curriculum enactment looks like in the classroom.

To achieve this, staff engage in a structured cycle of professional learning that includes:

- **Curriculum Theory and Principles:** Regular engagement with research on curriculum design, cognitive science, knowledge progression, and effective sequencing ensures every teacher understands the underlying rationale of the curriculum they deliver.
- **Subject-Specific Pedagogical Knowledge:** Teachers participate in specialist training and masterclasses that strengthens understanding of disciplinary concepts, threshold knowledge, common misconceptions, and subject-specific ways of thinking and working.
- **Collaborative Planning and Moderation:** Departments and phase teams engage in ongoing joint planning, comparative judgement, task design workshops, and moderation activities to ensure consistency, rigour, and shared professional standards.
- **Assessment Literacy:** Staff are supported to design, interpret, and use assessments effectively—including formative, diagnostic, and summative approaches—ensuring that curriculum decisions are informed by accurate understanding of student learning.
- **Professional Inquiry and Reflective Practice:** Teachers are encouraged to engage in enquiry cycles, action research, and reflective dialogue, strengthening their capacity to evaluate curriculum impact and adapt practice responsibly.
- **Leadership of Curriculum:** Middle and senior leaders receive specific development in curriculum mapping, progression modelling, evidence-led review, and quality assurance so they can lead subject improvement confidently and strategically.

This approach ensures that curriculum knowledge is continuously refreshed, teaching remains aligned with TLAG, and all staff uphold the GEMS ambition of delivering a rich, coherent, and intellectually rigorous curriculum that enables students to know more, remember more, and understand more over time.