

Technical Guide for Appointing Teaching Staff

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Teacher Appointment and the 90-Day Rule

Q: What is the scope of this Technical Guide?

A: This technical guide applies to all private schools in Dubai licensed by KHDA, covering the recruitment and appointment of teachers. It ensures fair and transparent hiring processes, safeguards continuity of teaching and learning for students, and sets out clear procedures for teachers and school leaders with teaching responsibilities in line with UAE labour laws and KHDA regulations.

Q: When must schools notify KHDA of a teacher's dismissal, formal warning, or resignation?

A: In any instance where a member of teaching staff receives a verbal or written warning, is dismissed, or resigns, the school must notify KHDA within 24 hours of the warning or dismissal being issued, or the resignation being submitted.

Q: How exactly is the 90 days triggered?

A: This is triggered if a teacher submits their resignation either without sufficient notice (according to their employment contract) or if they subsequently leave, with or without notice, at any time other than the last day of an academic term or semester. In this situation, KHDA will **not** issue a new Appointment Notice for that teacher until the full 90 days have elapsed.

Q: Does the 90-day rule prevent teachers from changing schools at all?

A: Not at all. Teachers can move to a new school without any waiting period if they do so after the last day of a standard term/semester, having served their due notice period. The 90-day rule specifically addresses in-term moves that adversely affect continuity for students. It only applies when a teacher leaves in the middle of a term, which can disrupt students' learning.

Appointment Notice Basics

Q: What is the Appointment Notice, and why is it important?

A: An Appointment Notice is KHDA's formal approval for a teacher to work in a specific private school in Dubai. A teacher must have a valid Appointment Notice before starting any teaching duties. Each notice is tied to one particular school and becomes invalid when the teacher leaves that school.

Q: If a teacher already has a Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation contract, do they still need an Appointment Notice?

A: Yes. The Appointment Notice is a KHDA requirement. Even if a teacher has a valid Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MoHRE) contract, they cannot start working at a private school in Dubai without KHDA's approval and uploading their Emirates ID on the KHDA system.

Q: Does the Appointment Notice transfer automatically if a teacher moves to a new school?

A: No. The Appointment Notice is only valid for the school that requested it. Once a teacher leaves that school, the Appointment Notice is cancelled. The new school must apply for a new Appointment Notice for the teacher before they can legally begin teaching there.

Q: Is the Appointment Notice tied to a specific subject?

A: In most cases, yes, a teacher is only authorised to teach the specific subject listed in the Appointment Notice. However, if KHDA has exceptionally approved a teacher to teach more than one subject, in accordance with the home country's curriculum requirements, then multiple subjects may be listed.

Exit Surveys and their Impact

Q: What is the Exit Survey, and when must it be completed?

A: The Exit Survey is a KHDA requirement for any teacher, including principals and school leaders, who are leaving a private school in Dubai. It must be completed before or shortly after the teacher's final working day. Once the school updates the KHDA system to indicate the teacher's notice period, the Exit Survey is automatically generated and sent directly to the teacher. KHDA will not issue a new Appointment Notice for the teacher until the completed Exit Survey has been submitted.

Q: What happens if a teacher refuses to complete the Exit Survey?

A: KHDA will not issue a new Appointment Notice for that teacher in Dubai. This means the teacher cannot start work at a new private school in Dubai until the Exit Survey is completed and submitted. Effectively, the teacher's move to a new school is on hold until KHDA receives the exit survey.

Q: Is the Exit Survey required if this is the teacher's first teaching job in Dubai?

A: No. If the teacher has no previous teaching position at a private school in Dubai, there is nothing to exit from, so the Exit Survey is not required.

Qualifications and Experience Requirements

Q: Can we hire a teacher who doesn't have prior teaching experience?

A: Yes, but under specific conditions. Newly qualified teachers must complete at least six months of supervised teaching practice. The school must arrange a suitable mentorship and induction plan to meet such requirements.

Q: What about qualifications not entirely aligned to a school subject? For example, can someone with an engineering or other applied degree teach mathematics or science?

A: Often, yes. KHDA typically accepts subject-related degrees—such as engineering degrees—to teach physics or mathematics, provided the school verifies that the degree aligns closely with the curriculum needs. The teacher must also meet any required supervised teaching practice or pedagogical training requirement.

Q: Do all new teachers have to hold at least a bachelor's degree?

A: Yes – for all teachers, except for those working with children under 36 months old.

Q: What about existing teachers, already teaching in Dubai?

A: The qualification requirements apply immediately to new teachers and those moving between Dubai private schools. Existing teachers staying in their current school must, in any event, meet the required thresholds by September 1, 2028 (or April 1, 2029, for schools whose academic year begins in April).

Due Diligence, Interviewing, and Background Checks

Q: Which background checks are mandatory before confirming an appointment?

A: Before confirming an appointment, schools must complete the following checks at a minimum:

- ▶ Two written professional references (including one from the most recent employer).
- ▶ Police clearance (from the UAE, any country lived in during the past five years, and their home country if they have lived there within the past ten years).
- ▶ Confirmation that the candidate is not on KHDA's Deregistration List.
- ▶ Verification of attested academic qualifications.
- ▶ Thorough CV review for gaps or inconsistencies.

Q: If a candidate is a fresh graduate, what references are required?

A: References from their higher education institution (e.g., university or college) generally suffice. However, if the candidate has completed an internship or work placement at a school, a reference from that school may also be submitted and is encouraged. The candidate must still provide valid police clearance(s) and will require close supervision during their initial period of employment.

Q: Does the school owner (or board) need to attend every teacher interview?

A: No. KHDA guidelines require a formal panel interview that must include the principal (or a designated senior leader) and, for specialist roles, at least one subject expert. The school owner/governors may join but are not specifically required to do so.

Professional Development (PD) and Induction

Q: What mandatory training must new teachers complete before they start teaching?

A: New teachers must complete induction training in the following areas before they begin teaching:

- ▶ Code of Conduct for teachers
- ▶ Understanding UAE culture and laws (for teachers new to Dubai)
- ▶ Basic security, health, safety, and well-being
- ▶ Child Protection and Safeguarding
- ▶ Working with Students of Determination (inclusive education)

The school is responsible for organising these training sessions. If external providers are used, schools must refer to the list of KHDA-approved providers, which is available on the KHDA website. This training is subject to audit and evaluation during KHDA visits and inspections.

Q: Do new hires need to retake these trainings if they recently did similar courses elsewhere?

A: Yes. All new staff must complete these trainings, or take an equivalent in-house induction validated by the principal. This ensures consistency of standards across all private schools in Dubai.

Code of Conduct, Discipline, and Deregistration

Q: What is the Code of Conduct, and who must sign it?

A: Every staff member in a private school, including teachers, principals, and support staff, must read and sign the KHDA-approved Code of Conduct. It covers professional behaviour, child protection, safe use of social media, and expected ethical standards in the UAE.

Q: When must a school report a teacher to KHDA for possible deregistration?

A: A school must report a teacher to KHDA if:

- ▶ A teacher is dismissed for misconduct, safeguarding breaches, or serious underperformance,
- ▶ A teacher resigns to avoid a likely dismissal on these grounds.
- ▶ A teacher has been issued with a warning (verbal or written).

KHDA will then examine whether to add the teacher to its Deregistration List, effectively barring them from future teaching roles in Dubai private schools.

Q: Is deregistration permanent?

A: Generally, being placed on the Deregistration List means the individual is disqualified from working in any private school in Dubai permanently. However, full details, including the appeals, are outlined in the Technical Guide on the Deregistration of Educational Staff available on the KHDA website.

Contractual vs. KHDA Requirements

Q: Do these guidelines override a teacher's employment contract if there's a conflict?

A: A teacher must comply with both their employment contract and KHDA guidelines. For instance, if a contract permits a mid-term departure but KHDA's guidelines do not, the teacher will still be subject to the 90-day rule.

Q: Our school term dates differ from the standard. How does that work in relation to the 90-day rule?

A: The 90-day rule still applies to any in-term moves, regardless of your school's term dates. If your school's calendar is different from the standard, coordinate with KHDA to define your official term breaks.

Special Circumstances and Exceptions

Q: Can KHDA waive or shorten the 90-day rule if a teacher leaves mid-term due to an emergency (e.g., severe family illness)?

A: In rare and exceptional cases, KHDA may grant an exemption or reduced waiting period, but only upon receiving strong, substantial evidence from both the teacher and the school.

Q: Does a visa issue (e.g., expiry or inability to renew) exempt a teacher from the 90-day rule?

A: No, not automatically. If visa complications necessitate a mid-term departure, KHDA will consider the circumstances; however, the 90-day rule may still apply unless KHDA explicitly waives it.

Q: If a teacher moves to a non-teaching role (e.g., admin), does the 90-day rule apply?

A: If the new role still requires a KHDA Appointment Notice, then the 90-day rule applies.

Implementation and Compliance

Q: When do these new guidelines take effect?

A: The guidelines apply to all teacher appointments from the date of official publication by KHDA. Schools must align new contracts, recruitment processes, and onboarding procedures as soon as they are notified.

Q: Can KHDA audit our recruitment procedures or teacher files?

A: Yes. KHDA may request to review your due diligence documentation, including references, interview records, and other relevant materials. Schools must maintain accurate, complete, and up-to-date records, which are ready for inspection at any time.

Principal Recruitment

Q: Our school is appointing a new principal—do these same rules apply?

A: Principals are technically included within these guidelines (they are considered teachers under the “teacher” definition for Appointment Notices). However, KHDA has published a separate detailed guide, “Leading the Way: A Technical Guide for School Owners When Recruiting a New Principal”, which outlines additional or more specific requirements—such as leadership experience, references, and specific qualifications—beyond the general teacher guidelines. Schools must refer to both this guide and the teacher recruitment guide to remain fully compliant.

Q: Is there still a 90-day rule for principals leaving one school for another mid-term?

A: Yes. The 90-day rule remains in force. As the highest leadership position in schools, principals are strongly discouraged from making mid-term moves to help maintain school stability.

Q: Where can we access “Leading the Way”?

A: Leading the Way: A Technical Guide for School Owners When Recruiting a New Principal is available on the KHDA website under the Guides section. Schools must follow this principal-specific policy in addition to the teacher appointment guidelines. Link [HERE](#).