CASE STUDY – KOREAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, HONG KONG

Achieved the national Quality in Careers Standard – May 2026

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Overview

Korean International School (KIS) is a private, independent school with an enrolment of over 900 students representing more than 25 nationalities. With a Korean and International section, the all-through school provides education for students from primary through to secondary phase and sixth form within a diverse and academically focused learning environment.

The international school section delivers a broad UK based curriculum alongside a growing and well-structured careers programme that supports students in developing self-awareness, employability skills and informed progression pathways.

KIS places strong emphasis on academic achievement, student wellbeing and global citizenship, while also providing personalised support through careers education, university guidance, employer engagement and enrichment opportunities. The school demonstrates a clear commitment to continuous improvement and to preparing students for higher education, employment and future career success.

This Case Study involves an 'interview' between

- **Sam Ansell, Director of Investor in Careers Ltd (Licensed Awarding Body for the Quality in Careers Standard) and**
- **The School's Careers Leader, Ashleigh Vilk.**

1. What prompted KIS to look at external quality assurance for your careers programme at this point? Was there a specific trigger?

The primary prompt came from a strategic shift driven by our Vice Principal, who wanted careers education to be deeply embedded into the school's core educational strategy—ensuring we support students in their holistic future choices, rather than focusing solely on academic pursuits.

To turn this vision into action, my dedicated role was introduced in 2024, alongside the implementation of specific, timetabled slots for Key Stage 3 students. With these foundational

pillars and our new structured roadmap in place, the specific trigger for seeking external quality assurance was the desire for an objective, rigorous framework to validate our new approach. We wanted to ensure our rapidly evolving programme met the highest international standards.

2. What made you decide an English quality standard was relevant to KIS's context in Hong Kong?

The choice came down to curriculum alignment and international recognition. Because the International Section at KIS delivers the UK Cambridge International Programme (IGCSEs and A-Levels), aligning our careers framework with a premier UK standard made perfect strategic sense.

*The **Quality in Careers Standard** is heavily endorsed by the UK Department for Education and fully maps to the Gatsby Benchmarks - the gold standard for "Good Career Guidance." By adopting this framework, we could guarantee our provision matches the highest British international benchmarks right here in Hong Kong.*

3. What did the day-to-day process actually look like for your team? What did you find most useful about working with Investor in Careers?

*Day-to-day, the process required a thoughtful deep dive into our existing practices. Working with **Investor in Careers** was incredibly useful because they acted as supportive, critical friends. Their structured assessment guide helped us ensure consistency across all year groups. For me as Careers Lead, it was incredibly reassuring to have our decisions and directions confirmed against global standards, giving us peace of mind that we are on the right track for our community. Likewise, receiving recommendations for improvements was invaluable in helping us ensure that our guidance provision remains of the highest standard and that we continue to grow.*

4. What can you do, say or evidence now that you couldn't before achieving the Standard? What has changed — for you, for the school, or for students?

*We can now share the wonderful news with our community that KIS is the first school in Hong Kong to achieve the **Quality in Careers Standard**.*

On a personal note, this achievement is a deeply gratifying reassurance that the curriculum and guidance model we've been building since 2024 is truly doing right by our students.

For the school and our families, it provides a sense of trust and confidence that our provision is grounded in best practice. Ultimately, it means our students are receiving the structured, holistic support they genuinely deserve as they navigate their futures.

5. Have you noticed any difference in how students talk about or engage with careers provision since achieving the Standard?

Definitely. What we are seeing now is the direct result of having our provision designed around this comprehensive framework. The shift in mindset is clear, even down at Key Stage 3. Our Year 9 students are demonstrating real evidence of clear planning and strategic consideration regarding their upcoming transitions. They now understand the reasons to start thinking about their careers early, and they are growing to appreciate school as an environment for broader skills development, rather than just a place to attain good grades.

Higher up in the secondary year groups, students are highly focused and proactively engaged in finding relevant work experience, making sure their practical choices align directly with their future ambitions. It has created a much more purposeful atmosphere, and I fully expect this engagement and mature outlook to grow even further in the next academic years.

6. If a colleague at another international school asked you whether it was worth going for the Quality in Careers Standard, what would you tell them?

I would tell them it is absolutely worth it, but with an important piece of context: every international school operates differently. In any school, teachers come with very different backgrounds and experiences, and not everyone automatically recognises or understands the need for a dedicated Careers Lead.

What makes this process so valuable is that it takes the pressure off the individual. Instead of a Careers Lead constantly having to try and convince colleagues or the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of the value of their endeavours, the framework shifts the entire dynamic. It opens the door for essential, structured conversations to happen organically. Because you are aligning with an objective, internationally recognised framework, the value is already proven. It allows you to discuss global standards directly with SLT, leading to strategic decisions based on best practices rather than personal persuasion. It unifies the school under a shared standard, ensuring everyone - from teachers to leadership - are aligning our efforts toward a shared vision for the students.

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