GEMS Cambridge International Private School Sharjah
Curriculum Policy 2023-24

Last Amended: September 2023
Policy Review Date: August 2024

Our Mission Statement

GEMS Cambridge International Private School Sharjah provides a world class, outstanding education whilst ensuring individual and collective excellence in learning, teaching and leadership. We empower lifelong learners for their future.

Our Aims

We provide a high-quality curriculum which will build on the firm foundations created in the Foundation Stage. Each child is valued as a unique individual, and teaching and learning activities are based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

We aim to:

- Provide an inclusive, welcoming and safe environment in which every student is valued, cared for and supported
- Offer a broad and creative curriculum that recognises the uniqueness of every student and provides challenge and enjoyment through a personalised learning approach
- Ensure that all students are able to realise their potential through high quality learning experiences that promote and value all achievement and raise self-esteem
- Promote a culture of respect, inclusion and equality whilst celebrating the rich cultural diversity within our school, empowering all students to succeed
- Inform and encourage all students to adopt a healthy lifestyle by promoting healthy eating, regular enjoyable exercise and physical and mental well-being
- Develop an appreciation of our community, the world in which we live and an awareness of our environment to encourage students to be responsible citizens of the future

The Primary Curriculum

The British National Curriculum is organised on the basis of key stages:

Key Stage	Year Groups	Ages
Early Years Foundation Stage	FS1 - FS2	3 – 5
Key Stage 1	Years 1 – 2	5 – 7
Key Stage 2	Years 3 – 6	7 – 11

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years published by the DfE has been in place since August 2021, with some modifications to take into account our international setting and international body of children. The rich, play-based Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum supports children's physical, emotional, social and linguistic development, whilst also providing the foundations for literacy and numeracy. Knowledge, skills and understanding are developed through children's interests and curiosity.

The 'Early Years Foundation Stage' (EYFS) has four guiding principles that shape our practice. These are:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or careers.
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

There are seven areas of learning and development in the EYFS. All areas are important and interconnected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development Personal
- Social and emotional development

We also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

All classes are mixed ability and lessons are differentiated in each class. There are also specialist lessons for Music, P.E. and Arabic.

Our creative approach to curriculum development is designed to enable all children to reach the highest possible standard of personal achievement.

Key Stages 1 and 2

In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 students learn the following subjects:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- French (Y4-6)
- Computing
- Topic
- Physical Education (PE)
- Moral Education
- Design Thinking/STEAM
- Arabic

- Islamic Studies (for Muslim students only)
- Social Studies and Moral Education

SUBJECTS TAUGHT BY CLASS TEACHERS

Mathematics
Mathematics is essential in everything we construct, everything we calculate and almost every problem which we have to solve in our daily lives. This is reflected in school where the use of mathematical knowledge, skills, understanding and language is required in many areas of the curriculum. Children's knowledge, skills, understanding and language in mathematics develop as they use it in practical activities, to solve relevant, real life and meaningful problems and to explore the patterns and relationships on which mathematical concepts depend.

Science
We aim to provide opportunities for all our pupils to develop scientific skills. Children are taught and encouraged to use a wide range of questioning skills and through first-hand experience form appropriate hypotheses and control a range of factors in scientific experiments.

Science is about children developing a sense of enquiry and extending their knowledge and understanding. It is concerned with investigations using scientific skills of observing, predicting, hypothesising, recording and drawing conclusions.

Pupils should develop the skills required in the scientific enquiry component through experimental and investigative science namely:
- Planning and performing tests
- Reporting on and presenting findings
- Using evidence for conclusions
- Using results
- Making hypotheses

These methods should be developed within contexts derived from our termly topics.

Phonics
Phonics is taught once a day to children in Key Stage 1. In the first term, parents are invited to a presentation on phonics by our phonics coordinator to learn more about how phonics is taught in school. Once children have a firm grasp of phonics, they move on to develop a more advanced understanding of spelling strategies, for example understanding more complex letter patterns; understanding how words relate to each other or where they originate from. In Key Stage 2, children are allocated a spelling group and learn ten words every week which they are tested on. Spelling test books may be sent home at a parent's request.

Reading
In Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils will be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding of reading through a range of activities, contexts and purpose, as outlined in the Programme of Study. Pupils will be taught to read with fluency, accuracy, understanding and enjoyment - to make sense of what they read. Children will be encouraged to enjoy reading and will be given opportunities to share a wide range of books and other reading materials.

Topic
Children will develop contextual knowledge of the location of globally significant places – both terrestrial and marine – including their defining physical and human characteristics and how these provide a geographical context for understanding the actions of processes. They will understand the processes that give rise to key physical and human geographical features of the world, how these are interdependent and how they bring about spatial variation and change over time.

Moral Education

The School's Moral Education Curriculum covers the four pillars of teaching and learning outlined in the Ministry of Education Framework:

- Character and Morality
- The Individual and the Community
- Civic Studies
- Cultural Studies

Social Studies B
The School's Social Studies B Curriculum covers the expectations of the MOE Curriculum and is followed as per guidelines.

SPECIALIST SUBJECTS

English
Many of our children learn English as an additional language. The most effective way to learn another language is to be immersed in it. Children learn to express themselves with growing confidence and are given opportunities to speak to a widening range of audiences; their teacher, the class, to visitors and at formal occasions such as school productions. Listening is an important part of learning and children are taught to listen attentively for increasing lengths of time.

Children will be encouraged to write independently from Reception and they will be shown how to find the spelling of unknown words using dictionaries and word banks. They will be given 'real' reasons for writing whenever possible. They will write for a range of audiences and will be given the opportunity to read their written work to the class and to their year group, in assembly.

Throughout school children will be given opportunities to draft and re-draft their written work. Key Stage 1 children will do this in discussion with the teacher, often in shared writing sessions. Key Stage 2 children will be given frequent opportunities to be involved in the whole writing process of planning, 12 drafting, re-drafting and presentation, in both shared and guided writing sessions. Children will be taught how to structure their writing and how to use a rich vocabulary to interest their reader. The key characteristics of different types of writing will be taught in English lessons and will be developed in cross-curricular contexts. The content of writing will be valued. The correct use of punctuation will be taught and encouraged but will not dominate marking and assessment.

Physical Education (PE)
Children have access to PE lessons every week and develop skills in a variety of areas such as gymnastics, dance, athletics, fitness, invasion games and net games.

Music
In our music programme, children learn how to use their voices expressively and creatively by singing songs and speaking chants and rhymes. They learn how to play tuned and un-tuned instruments musically as well as developing skills in composing themselves. In Key Stage 2, children develop their understanding of music by learning about the history of music as well as about famous composers and examples of their work.

Computing
All children use our computing suites once a week to enable them to use equipment and software confidently and purposefully. The computing curriculum is divided into three main elements of programming, designing and creating programs and E-Safety and Digital Citizenship (learning how to use technology safely, respectfully and responsibly).

Arabic – from FS2 onwards

Islamic – from Year 2 onwards

Social Studies A – from Year 2 onwards

The Secondary Curriculum

Students study a broad and balanced curriculum that is carefully planned and sequenced to ensure knowledge, skills and understanding are embedded within each Key stage. We follow the British curriculum which is taught in year groups as shown in the table below.

Key Stage	Year Groups	Ages
Key Stage 3	Years 7 – 9	12 – 14
Key Stage 4	Years 10–11	14 - 16
Key Stage 5	Years 12-13	16 - 18

Aims of Our Curriculum
The curriculum at GCS aims to create independent learners equipped with the qualifications, knowledge and skills to flourish in the modern world and make positive contributions throughout their lives and in their communities. We aim to offer a broad and creative, Design Thinking curriculum that recognises the uniqueness of every student and provides challenge and enjoyment through a personalised and collaborative learning approach.

The curriculum aims to develop the schools' values of Kindness, Honesty, Integrity and Respect, along with the Islamic Values ensuring the academic, social and emotional progress of all our pupils. The curriculum encourages high expectations and a belief that GCS pupils can achieve in any field they choose but this requires hard work – there are no shortcuts to success. At GCS, we believe in a clear, sequenced curriculum allowing pupils the opportunity to use and commit to long term memory their prior learning, knowledge and skills; this will enable them to access further concepts in both the same academic year, across key stages, and ultimately at GCSE and A Level. There is, in all subjects, a strong emphasis on reading and communication.

Key Stage 3 (Year 7 - 9) focuses on the learning of key knowledge and skills through high quality engaging teaching. We foster a love of learning, introducing students to the widest variety of subjects through our Design Thinking approach. The cycle of Dream and Define, Discover, Create and Test prepare students to become independent, creative learners who are solution focused and can communicate eloquently and effectively. We believe together with our key values students can attain both the cultural capital and the academic underpinning they require in order to excel in their lives whilst a student at GCS and beyond.

Key Stage 3 students learn the following subjects:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Art
- Computing
- French
- Humanities
- Music

- Physical Education (PE)
- Moral Education
- Arabic
- Islamic (for Muslim students only)
- PSHE (for Non-Muslim students only)
- Social Studies

English
The Key Stage Three English Curriculum at GCS has been designed to spark students' interests and creativity, whilst also providing them with a solid basis of preparation to meet the rigours of Key Stage 4 and 5. It is designed to challenge students, promote valid and respectful discussion and debate, as well as introduce them to a wide range of different texts and genres. The overarching intention is that students are able to confidently discuss, analyse and make their own judgements about a piece of writing. Within different units, students will develop a wide variety of skills. These will include analysing language and its impact on the audience/ reader; discussing how structure within a text is used for effect and how context helps to impact writers and their work.

Students will also study a wide range of non-fiction texts including newspaper articles and speeches and learn how to use language and structure to argue their own point of view successfully. Students will also have opportunities to write creatively, both within the texts and genres they are studying and beyond. Through this work students will also learn subject-specific vocabulary to be employed within their own writing, as well as how to structure their work successfully and with flair.

Mathematics
The Maths Department at GCS follows Pearson's Maths Progress International scheme of learning that is purposefully designed to create a strong foundation of knowledge and allow a seamless transition from KS3 to KS4.

Mathematics is a creative and highly inter-connected discipline that has been developed over centuries, providing the solution to some of history's most intriguing problems. It is essential to everyday life, critical to science, technology and engineering, and necessary for financial literacy and most forms of employment. The Maths Department at GCS, in line with the National Curriculum, seeks to provide a high quality mathematics education that therefore provides a foundation for understanding the world, the ability to reason mathematically, an appreciation of the beauty and power of mathematics, and a sense of enjoyment and curiosity about the subject.

The aims of the KS3 Curriculum at GCS, in line with the National Curriculum for Mathematics aims to ensure that all students: become fluent in the fundamentals of mathematics, including through varied and frequent practice with increasingly complex problems over time, so that students develop conceptual understanding and the ability to recall and apply knowledge rapidly and accurately. reason mathematically by following a line of enquiry, conjecturing relationships and generalisations, and developing an argument, justification or proof using mathematical language can solve problems by applying their mathematics to a variety of routine and non-routine problems with increasing sophistication, including breaking down problems into a series of simpler steps and persevering in seeking solutions.

Science
The Science curriculum is structured to provide a comprehensive overview of scientific knowledge and skills across all phases of school. It encompasses the three main streams of biology, chemistry, and physics. Science plays a pivotal role in shaping our world and is

essential for our future well-being. Thus, all students will be exposed to fundamental aspects of scientific knowledge, methodologies, processes, and applications.

Through building up a body of key foundational knowledge and concepts, student will be encouraged to recognise the power of rational explanation and develop a sense of excitement and curiosity about natural phenomena. They will be encouraged to understand how science can be used to explain what is occurring, predict how things will behave, and analyse causes.

The Science curriculum has the following objectives:

1. **Development of Scientific Knowledge and Conceptual Understanding:** Students will explore into the specific disciplines of biology, chemistry, and physics to foster a deep understanding of scientific principles and concepts.
2. **Understanding of the Nature, Processes, and Methods of Science:** Through various scientific inquiries, students will learn to investigate and answer questions about the world around them. They will grasp the intrinsic nature of scientific processes and methodologies.
3. **Equipping Students with Scientific Knowledge:** The curriculum aims to equip students with the scientific knowledge necessary to comprehend the applications and implications of science, both in the present and the future.

In key stage 3, topics will be studied in-depth, providing the essential knowledge required to excel in iGCSE Science. The Key Stage 3 curriculum has been meticulously designed to robustly prepare students for advanced study at GCSE Science. It ensures that students possess the knowledge and skills necessary for success at this level.

Our Science curriculum seeks to not only impart knowledge but also to instil a passion for scientific inquiry and exploration. We aim to nurture the next generation of scientists and thinkers who will contribute to the advancement of our society and the world as a whole.

Art

Art should engage, inspire and challenge students, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to experiment, invent and create their own works of Art. They should be able to think critically and develop a deeper understanding of Art and Design by analysing the work of artists and linking them to their own artwork. Students will have the opportunity to develop skills in drawing, painting, printmaking and sculpture using a variety of media, techniques and processes. Students will also focus on their presentation skills and refine their control of materials, this will support students' preparation for GCSE.

Computing

Throughout their KS3 journey learners will develop fundamental skills in ICT and Computing. Through exciting programming activities and complex problem solving, basic skills and knowledge ensuring they have a strong understanding of the digital world. E-Safety and Digital Citizenship is at the core of the curriculum and students learn how to use technology safely, respectfully and responsibly. The Computing curriculum at Key Stage 3 has been designed to prepare students for Key Stage 4 and beyond. With problem solving, practical applications and key skills embedded throughout, learners will have the digital literacy to use online systems safely and ethically as well as the ability to create interactive products. Understanding how networks, hardware and software form a vital infrastructure for the world around us, learners will have the confidence to use ICT and Computing both now and in the future.

French

At GCS, we offer French as a modern foreign language. By the end of Key Stage 3, a successful linguist, will be confident in the receptive skills of listening and reading and the productive skills of speaking, writing and translation. This will enable them to listen for detail, infer meaning, tackle larger texts, speak spontaneously and translate accurately and convey meaning. The

most successful linguists will be able to apply existing knowledge to new situations and produce language creatively.
Grammar is the foundation of all language learning and our KS3 topics expose students to the necessary structures and vocabulary needed to be a competent linguist. These topics allow students to develop their understanding in order to further succeed at GCSE level. They also provide the basis for by allowing them to interact with people from a wide variety of backgrounds. Our up to date resources contain current cultural references and students are encouraged to research further. This not only enables them to understand what it is to be a global citizen but also improves their literacy in the English language. Languages are your passport to the world and we offer various routes to travel.

Geography
By the end of KS3 we want students to understand the breadth and relevance of geography in their present and future lives. We want them to understand the importance of a good balance between human and physical phenomena and that, being educated in these areas allows them to look at the world from a number of lenses and critically evaluate their observations. We want our students to comfortably use academic terminology when discussing and writing about geographical concepts and use all the knowledge they have gained to inform their future opinions. Our curriculum deliberately includes a balance of units from human and physical geography, which often overlap and layer knowledge within topics.

Every unit has been created with the aim of enhancing students' ability to thrive in their understanding of the key geographical concepts of place, space, scale, interdependence, physical processes, environmental interaction, sustainable development, cultural understanding and diversity.

These are important as they will help our students have a better understanding for the wider world around them, how it functions and the implications human actions are having on the natural world. By the end of KS3 they will know how migration and globalisation are interconnected and how the concept of interdependence is tied in with this. They will also learn about the causes and impact of flooding and plate tectonics, understanding the delicate balance between human and physical geography.

These concepts are fundamental in becoming a successful geographer and to make the most out of GCSE and A 'level. The curriculum has been written with challenge in mind with the ambitions and expectations that students will take geography further. It has been influenced by the current KS5 and KS4 curriculums with the necessary skills and knowledge they need to be successful through their academic experience of the subject.

History
In Key Stage 3, we encourage a vibrant school community in raising their global awareness and cultural knowledge. History Curriculum at GCS is a vitally important and challenging phase of students' learning. It is designed to be ambitious, enjoyable and knowledge rich; sparking students' curiosity and passion for learning about the past. The overarching intention is that students become articulate and deeply knowledgeable subject specialists. Students are expected to write, speak and adopt the habits of historians, for example making substantiated judgements, having a deep respect for evidence and using academic vocabulary confidently.

The history curriculum is designed to ensure students develop the crucial subject-specific knowledge and disciplinary understanding and beyond by providing a solid foundation, embedding critical knowledge and skills and providing opportunities for students to problematise the discipline's second-order concepts: change and continuity, causation, significance, interpretations, evidence and diversity. As such, each unit is framed by an overarching, challenging enquiry question and lessons are sequenced and designed to ensure

student make progress by acquiring the knowledge needed to answer that question effectively as a means of assessment. KS3 as a journey is a process of acquiring the knowledge, skills and habits of an expert historian. By the end of Key Stage Three we expect students to understand the significance of studying history, its relevance for understanding the world today and its importance in key areas such as developing tolerance, respect and understanding towards others.

Music
Playing an integral part of everyday life, music should be celebrated and studied thoroughly in school. In Music, students will explore a variety of mediums and genres, including rap, pop, and a variety of cinematic soundtracks, ranging from horror, science fiction, and animation.
In addition, the lessons will provide a strong cross curricular connection, as students will write lyrics to an original song, study and write music reviews and critiques, and finally use professional software to compose their song, resulting in an individual album for each form group.

Physical Education
Physical Education aims to create active, healthy, confident individuals who enjoy taking part in physical activity and can make informed decisions about their own and others' performances. Students will develop knowledge of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle as well as being able to work effectively as an individual and within in a team. By the end of KS3 pupils should have a basic understanding of skills, tactics and rules in a variety of sporting activities.

Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11)
Our curriculum is designed to meet the needs and future needs of our students; their talents and interests. It builds on the breadth of knowledge and skills they have acquired at Key Stage 3. All students study a Core curriculum and then choose from a selection of option subjects that are tailored to the needs of the specific cohort.

Core subjects:

- Arabic A/B (MOE Curriculum)
- iGCSE Biology
- iGCSE Chemistry
- iGCSE English Language (1st or 2nd Language)
- iGCSE Mathematics
- iGCSE Physics
- Islamic A/B (Muslim students) (MOE Curriculum)
- Moral Education (MOE Curriculum)
- PSHE (Non-Muslim students) (MOE Curriculum)

Optional subjects:

- iGCSE Arabic
- iGCSE Art and Design
- iGCSE Business Studies
- iGCSE Computer Science
- iGCSE Economics
- iGCSE English Literature
- iGCSE French
- iGCSE Geography
- iGCSE History
- GCSE Psychology

Sixth Form Key Stage 5 (Year 12 - 13)
All our sixth form subjects ensure students can apply for university entrance. We offer our students a wide range of subjects allowing each student comprehensive opportunities to effectively 'Choose their Future', by studying A-Levels in subjects they are passionate about. All learning is delivered through traditional face-to-face classes and supported by independent study, combining the best of academic and digitally enhanced learning, leading directly to university or high-end employment.

Studying A-Levels, offer students an opportunity to specialise in four subjects in Year 12 and then focusing on their best three subjects in Year 13.

A-levels are assessed by a series of examinations although, for some subjects, there is a coursework element included as well.

Entry to the A-Level provision will be subject to entry requirements which will be discussed on an individual basis.

Ministry of Education Subjects

Arabic
The Ministry of Education has embarked on building the Arabic language curriculum scientifically, planned and studied in accordance with international standards in building curricula in an accumulative and conscious manner that considers its texts, themes and treatment are representative of the language competencies that a student of the twenty-first century must possess to be able to deal with the requirements of the times.
The Arabic language curriculum standards are divided into six areas: basics of reading, reading literary text, reading informational text, writing, listening and speaking.

At GEMS Cambridge International School Sharjah, we remove all obstacles our students might face and introduce them to the Arabic language curriculum in an interesting way that suits the requirements of the modern era, and enables the students to use the language in their daily life smoothly and effectively.

In Key Stages 3, 4 and 5, students should show an understanding of the rules of the Arabic language and its literature, they should express themselves and the issues of their society, using the different types of literature such as story-telling, novels, poetry and using functional writing in the Arabic language to express oneself in different ways.

Islamic
Islamic Education aims to confirm the national identity of the learners, and to strengthen the bonds of love and cooperation among them. It also aims to prepare students to participate actively in building society, to keep pace with global changes, and to be consciously open to other cultures. Islamic Education includes everything related to the students' life, existence, values and heritage.

Islam remains the main resource for the upbringing of a generation of believing students equipped with basic knowledge about their religion and the ability to apply it in their lives, and from this standpoint, the standards of Islamic education from Year 2 to Year 13 - which were developed by a technical team of experts specializing in education in the United Arab Emirates It provides a framework that ensures bridging the gap between faith and action. It will also provide the student with the cognitive skills necessary to solve difficulties, resist challenges, solve problems, and contribute positively to society. The standards focus on six areas of

learning that represent the components of the subject, such as: Divine revelation, belief, the values and etiquette of Islam, the rulings and purposes of Islam, the biography and personalities, identity and issues of the age, and these areas fall under and branch out from a group of axes, or "main themes", and specific standards have been set for each class stage within each axis, work is done They are supported by learning outcomes that are more specific and measurable.

Social Studies A (Arabic) / Social Studies B (English)
The social studies course provides an in-depth systematic study of information, skills and concepts in each of the specialisations of history, geography, political science, economics, anthropology, psychology, law, archaeology and social studies, which are majors that focus attention on the links and relations between different peoples and nations and the relationship between science, technology and society, how to practice good citizenship. In addition, social studies help young people develop their various knowledge and skills, which are necessary to make good decisions as active members in a society dominated by cultural diversity within an interconnected world.

Students will have a deeper understanding of social, political and economic systems, as well as an optimal understanding of events, trends, personalities, movements and historical movements, whether local, national or global, and they will learn local, national and global geography, and they will also understand how the concepts and principles of social studies contribute in explaining the behaviours of people, which prepares them for career and life-long learning experience. The new standards require students to understand the facts, concepts, principles, and perspectives that shape social studies majors.

They should have a deep knowledge of this information in order to better understand their world and surroundings, and they should be able to apply their new skills and knowledge in various situations and highly complex contexts. In order to prepare them for these future challenges, the Standards also require students to master the skill of critical thinking on various important issues.

The Social Studies Standards have been developed within a prescribed and sequential curriculum, beginning with Year 2 and up to Year Eleven, which provides students with powerful tools and methods for clear and disciplined thinking to help them achieve success in today's world that is described as a dynamic and changing world.

Moral Education A (Arabic) / Moral Education B (English)
Moral Education is an innovative, engaging curriculum designed to develop young people of all nationalities and ages in the UAE with universal principles and values, that reflect the shared experiences of humanity.

The UAE is committed to developing responsible, cultured, engaged adults ready for society. In reinforcing this commitment, Moral Education endorses an ethos of giving and volunteering that prepares responsible and resilient youth, who will contribute to the advancement of society and the wider world. The program develops in students, the modern skills needed to compete and become productive members of the UAE community.

For students across the UAE, Moral Education helps to create a strong foundation of moral purpose, an ethical outlook, character development and an understanding of shared values of humanity. It will help prepare youth to compete in a rapidly changing environment and make meaningful contributions to society. The program also teaches students practical life skills that will encourage them to develop into well-adjusted adults.

All students will have Arabic, Social Studies and Moral Education lessons which are based on the MOE curriculum. All Muslim students will have Islamic Studies according to MOE regulations.

PSHE

In PSHE (Personal, social, health and economic education), students will learn about life. Students will be taught about three main topics, Health and wellbeing, Relationships and Community and Living in the wider world.

The PSHE curriculum has been devised to facilitate pupil wellbeing and develop resilience and character that we know are fundamental to pupils being happy, successful and productive members of society.

Design Thinking

Design Thinking is both an ideology and a workflow, concerned with solving complex problems in a highly user-centric way. Design Thinking is a mindset and approach to learning, collaboration, and problem solving. In practice, the design process is a structured framework for identifying challenges, gathering information, generating potential solutions, refining ideas, and testing solutions.

Phase 1: Empathise / Feel

Empathy provides the critical starting point for Design Thinking. The first stage of the process is spent getting to know the user and understanding their wants, needs and objectives. This means observing and engaging with people in order to understand them on a psychological and emotional level. During this phase, the designer seeks to set aside their assumptions and gather real insights about the user. Learn all about key empathy building methods here.

Phase 2: Dream / Define

The second stage in the Design Thinking workflow is defining the problem. The key here is to frame the problem in a user-centered way. Once you've formulated the problem into words, you can start to come up with solutions and ideas — which brings
us onto stage three.

Phase 3: Discover / Ideate

With a solid understanding of your users and a clear problem statement in mind, it's time to start working on potential solutions. The third phase in the Design Thinking process is where the creativity happens, and its crucial to point out that the ideation stage is a judgement-free zone! Designers will hold ideation sessions in order to come up with as many new angles and ideas as possible. There are many different types of ideation technique that designers might use, from brainstorming and mind mapping to
bodystorming (roleplay scenarios) and provocation— an extreme lateral-thinking technique that gets the designer to challenge established beliefs and explore
new options and alternatives. Towards the end of the ideation phase, you'll narrow it down to a few ideas with which to move forward.

Phase 4: Create / Prototype

The fourth step in the Design Thinking process is all about experimentation and turning ideas into tangible products. A prototype is basically a scaled-down version of the product which incorporates the potential solutions identified in the previous stages. This step is key in putting each solution to the test and highlighting any constraints and flaws.

Phase 5: Test / Evaluate

After prototyping comes user testing, but it’s important to note that this is rarely the end of the Design Thinking process. In reality, the results of the testing phase will often lead you back to a previous step, providing the insights you need to redefine the original problem statement or to come up with new ideas you hadn’t thought of before.