

THE PAVE HANDBOOK

# The reasoning, the research, the 225 sessions.

Every session in this curriculum is grounded in a named framework — Holland's RIASEC, Super's Life-Span theory, Gottfredson's Circumscription, the Gatsby Benchmarks. This handbook lays out which framework underpins which session, and why each happens at the age it happens.

12 frameworks

6 grade bands

225 sessions

~25 minute read

## Pave K-12 Career Curriculum

**Handbook • The reasoning, the research, and the sessions**

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**A note on this edition.** This handbook documents the curriculum as first published: 180 sessions across Grades 1–12 in five bands. Since then the programme has grown to **225 sessions across thirteen year groups, from KG**, in six bands — KHDA's FutuReady framework applies from KG, and the Foundation band was built for it: no reading, no writing, no screens, an adult capturing each child's own words. The reasoning in these pages is unchanged and applies to every session, old and new. The platform itself always shows the current curriculum; a revised edition of this handbook is in preparation.

## How to read this handbook

This document does three things:

**Lays out the research and frameworks** every session draws on. Not aspirational citations — actual, named, dated frameworks with traceable sources.

**Walks the twelve-year arc** band by band, explaining why each band exists at the age it exists, with reference to the developmental research.

**Maps every one of the 180 sessions** to the framework that underpins it, so you can answer "where does this come from?" for any session a parent, counselor, or inspector points to.

If you're a school counselor, skim Part I (frameworks), then Part III (the band rationale). The session-by-session mapping in Part IV is reference material — useful when a specific question lands.

If you're a KHDA inspector or curriculum reviewer, Part I and Part V are most relevant. The session list in Part IV provides full traceability.

If you're a parent, Part II gives the human story; Part III explains why this work exists at each age.

# **Part I • The frameworks this curriculum is built on**

The Pave curriculum is not invented from scratch. It draws from sixty years of career development research, fifty years of vocational psychology, and twenty years of evidence on what actually works in school-based career education. Below are the named frameworks the sessions are built on, in approximate order of how foundational each is to the design.

# 1. Donald Super's Life-Span, Life-Space Theory of Career Development (1953, refined 1990)

**Why it matters here.** Super's theory is the reason Pave starts in Grade 1, not Grade 11. Super established that career development is a lifelong, age-staged process — not a single decision made at 17. He identified five stages, the first of which (**Growth**, ages 4–13) maps directly onto our Awareness and Exploration bands.

Within the Growth stage, Super named three sub-stages:

**Fantasy** (4–10): children try on career identities through play

**Interest** (11–12): preferences begin to crystallize

**Capacity** (13–14): students begin to assess their own abilities realistically

The Pave curriculum's structure follows this map:

**Grades 1–5** support fantasy and early interest

**Grade 6 onward** introduces formal capacity assessment (RIASEC, VIA)

**Grades 9–10** map to Super's **Exploration** stage (15–24)

**Grades 11–12** support the entry to **Establishment**

Super, D. E. (1953). *A theory of vocational development*. *American Psychologist*, 8, 185–190. Super, D. E. (1990). *A life-span, life-space approach to career development*. In D. Brown, L. Brooks & Associates (Eds.), *Career choice and development* (2nd ed., pp. 197–261). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

## 2. John Holland's Theory of Vocational Personalities (1959, refined 1997) — RIASEC

**Why it matters here.** Holland's RIASEC framework is the most widely-used career typology globally, embedded in the U.S. Department of Labor's O\*NET database, the SDS (Self-Directed Search) used by millions, and most career counseling software. Sessions G6.S2 and G6.S3 introduce and administer RIASEC; Session G8.S1 re-administers it to detect drift.

The framework asserts that people and work environments can be described along six dimensions: **Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, Conventional** — and that person-environment congruence predicts satisfaction and persistence. The hexagonal arrangement (R-I-A-S-E-C) reflects that adjacent dimensions are more similar than opposite ones.

**Why we wait until Grade 6 to introduce it.** Holland-style typologies require sufficient self-awareness to answer "I would enjoy..." items meaningfully. Research suggests reliable RIASEC self-assessment becomes possible around ages 11–13.

Holland, J. L. (1997). *Making vocational choices: A theory of vocational personalities and work environments* (3rd ed.). Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.

### 3. Linda Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise (1981, 1996)

**Why it matters here.** Gottfredson's research is the single strongest argument for early intervention — and the reason Grades 1–5 are not "too early" for career education.

Gottfredson found that children **eliminate career options long before they consciously consider careers**. They do so based on three dimensions in sequence:

**Sex-role stereotypes** (ages 6–8) — children rule out careers they perceive as inappropriate for their gender

**Social class / prestige** (9–13) — children narrow based on perceived "fit" with their social class

**Interests and abilities** (14+) — only at this stage do interests dominate

By age 14, the **circumscription** is largely complete. Most students entering high school have already narrowed their options without realizing it — and most of that narrowing is based on stereotype, not self-knowledge.

The Pave Awareness band (Grades 1–2) and Exploration band (Grades 3–5) are designed to deliberately counter this. By exposing children to wide and unstereotyped career imagery early, we leave more options open at age 14.

Specific sessions designed in response to Gottfredson:

**G1.S6, G3.S3** (construction): show women and men in trades

**G3.S8** (skilled trades): explicitly resists the "trades are lesser" narrative

**G3.S11** (education): includes male teachers and non-classroom roles

**G4.S3–S5** (guest speakers): deliberately balance gender and role-type

Gottfredson, L. S. (1981). *Circumscription and compromise: A developmental theory of occupational aspirations*. *Journal of Counseling Psychology Monograph*, 28(6), 545–579. Gottfredson, L. S. (1996). *Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise*. In D. Brown & L. Brooks (Eds.), *Career choice and development* (3rd ed., pp. 179–232). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

## 4. Social Cognitive Career Theory — Lent, Brown & Hackett (1994)

**Why it matters here.** SCCT is the theory that explains *how* career interests form and *how* they translate to action. It applies Bandura's self-efficacy theory to career development.

Three core mechanisms:

**Self-efficacy beliefs** ("I can do this") shape interest formation

**Outcome expectations** ("if I do this, X will happen") shape goal-setting

**Mastery experiences** (actually doing things) build self-efficacy more than any other source

This is the theoretical basis for the curriculum's emphasis on doing, not just reflecting:

**G5.S6–S8** (micro-skill arc): a deliberate mastery experience

**G7.S2** (values card sort): forces evidence-based self-claiming

**G8.S5–S8** (shadow day): direct exposure to mastery and outcome expectations

**G9.S7–S10** (informational interviews): vicarious learning, a major SCCT mechanism

**G9.S11** (volunteering as career testing): mastery + outcome observation

**G10.S5–S7** (side-project sprint): the flagship mastery experience of the curriculum

Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1994). *Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance*. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 45(1), 79–122. Bandura, A. (1977). *Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change*. Psychological Review, 84(2), 191–215.

## 5. Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development (1968)

**Why it matters here.** Erikson identified **Identity vs. Role Confusion** as the central developmental task of ages 12–18. The Self-Discovery band (Grades 6–8) and Direction band (Grades 9–10) are designed around this stage.

Erikson argued that adolescence is when individuals integrate their experiences, abilities, and roles into a coherent sense of self — and that career choice is a primary domain through which this integration happens. Adolescents who lack the time, prompts, or structured support for this integration risk **identity diffusion**: making choices without a coherent sense of who they are.

The Pave portfolio model is an Eriksonian artifact. By the time a student writes their college application essay in Grade 11, they have a multi-year record of who they've been becoming — material from which authentic identity statements can be drawn.

Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: Norton.

## 6. VIA Character Strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004)

**Why it matters here.** Sessions G6.S10 and G6.S11 use the VIA framework — 24 character strengths organized under 6 virtues (wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, transcendence). Unlike personality typologies that label, VIA describes **what people *do* well across contexts**.

VIA was chosen over Gallup's CliftonStrengths for three reasons: (1) it's free for educational use under the VIA Institute's research license, (2) it has a validated youth version (96 items), and (3) the 24 strengths are framed as universally valued character qualities rather than proprietary "themes."

VIA's reliability and validity are extensively documented. Test-retest reliability for the VIA-Youth ranges from .65–.85 across the 24 strengths.

Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. Oxford University Press. Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2006). *Moral competence and character strengths among adolescents: The development and validation of the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths for Youth*. *Journal of Adolescence*, 29(6), 891–909.

## 7. The 16 Career Clusters Framework (U.S. Department of Education / Advance CTE)

**Why it matters here.** Sessions G7.S7–S14 use the 16 Career Clusters as the structure for mapping the world of work. The framework groups all occupations into 16 high-level clusters (Health Science, STEM, Business Management, Hospitality & Tourism, etc.), each with its own career pathways.

We use this framework rather than Holland's RIASEC alone because RIASEC describes *type of work*, while clusters describe *industry territory*. Both are needed — RIASEC tells you what kind of work suits you; clusters tell you where that work lives in the economy.

The 16 Clusters framework is maintained by Advance CTE (the U.S. association of state directors of career-technical education) and is the basis for most state CTE pathways in the U.S. It's free to reference and use.

Advance CTE. *National Career Clusters Framework*. <https://careertech.org/career-clusters/>

## 8. ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success (American School Counselor Association, 2014, revised 2021)

**Why it matters here.** ASCA's framework defines what K-12 students should know and be able to do in three domains: academic, career, and social/emotional. The 35 standards inform our learning outcomes at each grade.

Key ASCA standards Pave addresses:

**M 1, M 2** (mindsets): self-confidence; positive attitudes toward work and learning

**B-LS 1–9** (learning strategies): critical thinking, time management, organization

**B-SS 1–9** (self-management): self-discipline, balanced lifestyle, working with others

**B-SMS 6** (social skills): self-advocacy

And specifically the career standards under the **Behaviors-Self-Management Skills (B-SMS)** strand

The career-specific standards in the ASCA framework directly inform our band-level outcomes.

American School Counselor Association. (2021). *ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success*. Alexandria, VA.

## 9. The Gatsby Benchmarks (Holman, 2014)

**Why it matters here.** Sir John Holman's Gatsby Foundation review of international career guidance programs identified eight benchmarks for "good career guidance." These benchmarks now inform UK statutory career education guidance and have been widely adopted internationally.

The eight benchmarks:

- A stable careers programme
- Learning from career and labour market information
- Addressing the needs of each pupil
- Linking curriculum learning to careers
- Encounters with employers and employees
- Experiences of workplaces
- Encounters with further and higher education
- Personal guidance

Each benchmark directly addresses each:

- #1** is the entire 12-year curriculum
- #2** appears in G3.S5, G5.S9–S11, G8.S9, G10.S8–S9 (compensation, lifestyle math, regional/global trends)
- #3** is the per-student portfolio + counselor 1:1 model
- #4** is the integration with subject choice (G8.S11, G9.S3–S6)
- #5** is the guest speaker arc (G4.S3–S5) and informational interviews (G9.S7–S10)
- #6** is the shadow day (G8.S5–S8) and side-project sprint (G10.S5–S7)
- #7** is the university shortlisting and applications work (G11)
- #8** is the counselor 1:1 cadence built into G9–G12

Holman, J. (2014). *Good career guidance*. Gatsby Charitable Foundation, London.

## 10. John Krumboltz's Happenstance Learning Theory (2009)

**Why it matters here.** Krumboltz's theory directly counters the idea that career choice is a single, well-informed decision. He argued careers emerge through a series of **planned and unplanned events** — and that the best preparation is teaching students to be **curious, persistent, flexible, optimistic, and willing to take risks**.

This is the theoretical justification for:

**G9.S1** (the "career hypothesis" mindset): hypotheses, not commitments

**G10.S5–S7** (side-project sprint): testing hypotheses through doing

**G10.S11** (narrowing with evidence): updating beliefs as new data arrives

**G12.S10** (gap year): genuine openness to non-default paths

Krumboltz's framing is also why we don't ask "what do you want to be?" The right question is "what's the next thing to test?"

Krumboltz, J. D. (2009). *The happenstance learning theory*. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 17(2), 135–154.

## 11. The OECD Career Readiness Project (2020–2022)

**Why it matters here.** The OECD has been studying teenage career certainty and exposure across PISA-participating countries for over a decade. Three findings shape the Pave curriculum:

**Teenage aspirations are narrowing:** only 47% of 15-year-olds in OECD countries express interest in just 10 jobs (largely traditional ones), even as the economy diversifies. (Mann et al., 2020)

**Career exposure correlates with adult outcomes:** teenagers who reported career-related conversations, workplace visits, and job shadowing had 2x better adult employment outcomes 10 years later, controlling for socio-economic background. (Mann et al., 2017)

**One-off events don't help;** sustained, varied engagement does. (Hooley & Dodd, 2015)

This is why the curriculum doesn't rely on a one-time "career day" — it's a 12-year progression with multiple, varied employer encounters.

Mann, A., Denis, V., Schleicher, A., Ekhtiari, H., Forsyth, T., Liu, E., & Chambers, N. (2020). *Dream jobs? Teenagers' career aspirations and the future of work*. OECD. Mann, A., Kashefpakdel, E. T., Rehill, J., & Huddleston, P. (2017). *Contemporary transitions: Young Britons reflect on life after secondary school and college*. Education and Employers Research, London.

## 12. KHDA Inspection Framework (Dubai)

**Why it matters here.** This curriculum is built for KHDA-regulated schools in Dubai. It's designed to map cleanly onto the **Personal Development** and **Innovation Skills** judgements of the KHDA inspection framework, and to satisfy the moral, social, and cultural studies overlap.

Specific KHDA performance standards Pave directly addresses:

Personal responsibility for learning (visible in the portfolio model)

Self-reliance, self-discipline, work ethic (side-project sprint, shadow days)

Innovation, enterprise, entrepreneurship (G10.S4 founder mindset, G10.S5–S7 sprint)

Moral education and Emirati identity (G8.S12 Emiratisation, regional context throughout)

Innovation and use of learning technologies (the AI integration itself)

KHDA. *Inspection Handbook 2023–2024*. Knowledge and Human Development Authority, Dubai.

## **Part II • The case in plain language**

For parents, students, and people new to this work.

## Why career discovery has to start before Grade 11

Most students choose their university major at 17, based on a self-portrait they wrote a few weeks earlier. The college counselor who guides them often meets them for the first time three weeks before the Common App deadline. The result: decisions made on no data, by people who haven't yet had time to know themselves.

Career discovery in most schools is treated as an emergency intervention in the senior year. By then, the work that should have happened over the prior decade has been compressed into three months. The student writes an essay claiming a passion they haven't tested. The university makes an offer. The student arrives, often discovers the major doesn't fit, and either persists in a wrong direction or transfers — both costly.

The research shows the alternative is possible. Students who experience structured career exploration starting in middle school have measurably better adult employment outcomes a decade later (Mann et al., 2017). The OECD's longitudinal data is striking: it's not the prestige of the school that predicts adult thriving — it's whether the student arrived already knowing themselves.

Pave is built on the premise that a student should arrive at the senior year having already tested 3–5 career hypotheses, having had a real conversation with at least one adult in their hypothesised field, and having built a portfolio of self-knowledge that the personal statement can be drawn from.

## Why the early grades matter

Linda Gottfredson's research (1981, 1996) is the strongest argument for K-5 career education. By age 14, children have already narrowed their career options — and most of that narrowing happens based on **stereotypes about gender and social class**, not interests or abilities.

A girl who decides at 8 that engineering is "for boys" rarely revisits that decision at 18. A child from a working-class family who learns at 10 that "people like us don't become professors" has often closed that door before reading their first real book about academic life. The narrowing happens silently. By Grade 9 it's done.

The Pave Grades 1–5 curriculum doesn't push children toward specific careers. It does the opposite: it deliberately shows them work in many shapes, by many kinds of people, with explicit care to break the patterns that would otherwise close doors prematurely.

## Why we don't ask "what do you want to be?"

Donald Super's research established that asking children to commit to a career identity at age 13 — or even 16 — is developmentally premature. The right work for adolescents is to **explore, test, and update** — not to choose.

Pave's Grade 9 curriculum introduces the **career hypothesis mindset** explicitly. Students don't choose careers. They write testable claims about themselves that they can update as evidence accumulates. By Grade 12, they've cycled through multiple hypotheses, retired some, sharpened others, and arrive at university with a working theory of who they are — not a brittle commitment.

This is also John Krumboltz's argument: careers emerge through cycles of planned and unplanned events. The right preparation is teaching students to be curious, persistent, and flexible — not to pick correctly at 17.

## **Part III • The five-band arc, and why each exists**

The 180 sessions are organised into five bands, each named for what the developmental research says is the right work at that age.

## Band 1 — Awareness (Grades 1–2)

**The work:** exposure. Children learn that work exists in many shapes, done by many kinds of people.

**Sessions per year:** 15 (~25 min each) **Output:** A "Jobs I've heard of" journal with ~60–80 jobs encountered.

**Why this band exists.** Donald Super's *Fantasy* sub-stage (4–10) is when children try on career identities through play and storytelling. Linda Gottfredson's *circumscription* research shows children are already filtering options by gender stereotypes at 6–8. The Awareness band is built to widen the frame before it narrows.

We do not test, evaluate, or push children toward careers in this band. We do not ask "what do you want to be?" The single most important thing this band achieves is making the invisible work of the world *visible* — including the cleaner, the gardener, the night-shift driver, the falconer — and refusing the implicit hierarchies children otherwise absorb from their environment.

**Frameworks specifically active in this band:**

Super's Growth/Fantasy stage

Gottfredson's circumscription (counter-design)

ASCA Mindset M 1 (positive attitudes toward work and learning)

## Band 2 — Exploration (Grades 3–5)

**The work:** industry-by-industry investigation, then guest speakers and skill-naming. **Sessions per year:** 15 (~30 min each) **Output:** An interest profile updated annually; first formal interest inventory in Grade 5; first skills journal.

**Why this band exists.** Super's *Interest* (11–12) and early *Capacity* (13–14) sub-stages map onto Grades 5–6, but Grades 3 and 4 do critical preparation: exposing children to specific industries with specific people doing specific work, so that interest preferences can begin to crystallize against real exemplars.

Grade 3 visits 11 industries. Grade 4 brings in 3 real adults as guest speakers and 2 virtual workplace tours. Grade 5 introduces the first formal interest inventory — a 24-item Likert covering 6 high-level domains.

### Frameworks specifically active in this band:

Super's Growth/Interest sub-stage

Gatsby Benchmarks #5 (encounters with employers — the guest speaker arc)

ASCA Behaviors B-LS 1, B-SMS 4 (curiosity, learning strategies)

Bandura's mastery experiences (the Grade 5 micro-skill sprint)

## Band 3 — Self-Discovery (Grades 6–8)

**The work:** formal self-knowledge — RIASEC, character strengths, values, lifestyle preferences, financial literacy. Plus first real-world exposure (shadow day in Grade 8). **Sessions per year:** 15 (40–45 min each) **Output:** Personality + strengths snapshot (G6); top 5 career clusters with reasoning (G7); top 3 clusters + shadow day evidence (G8).

**Why this band exists.** This band is the heart of the curriculum. It maps to Erikson's *Identity vs. Role Confusion* stage (12–18) and Super's late-Growth/early-Exploration transition. It's also when students can reliably engage with formal psychometric tools.

Three frameworks dominate:

**Holland's RIASEC** (introduced in G6.S2, formally administered G6.S3, retaken G8.S1)

**VIA Character Strengths** (introduced G6.S10, administered G6.S11, integrated G6.S12)

**The 16 Career Clusters** (introduced G7.S7, deep-dived G7.S9–S13)

We sequence them deliberately. Personality and strengths first (G6) because students must know themselves before they can evaluate clusters. Values second (G7) because clusters can't be evaluated without value alignment. Synthesis third (G8) because by then the inputs are rich enough to narrow to top 3.

**Frameworks specifically active in this band:**

Holland's RIASEC

VIA Character Strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004)

16 Career Clusters Framework

Erikson's Identity stage

Gatsby Benchmark #6 (workplace experience — the shadow day)

KHDA Personal Development standards

## Band 4 — Direction (Grades 9–10)

**The work:** hypothesis-testing through informational interviews, volunteering, internships, and a substantial side-project sprint. **Sessions per year:** 15 (45 min each + ongoing 1:1) **Output:** 3–5 written career hypotheses with confidence and evidence ratings; a 2-year action plan; a completed side-project tied to one hypothesis.

**Why this band exists.** Super's *Exploration* stage (15–24) begins here. The work shifts from describing self to testing claims about self. SCCT (Lent, Brown, Hackett, 1994) provides the theoretical mechanism: hypotheses get strengthened or weakened through mastery experiences, vicarious learning, and verbal persuasion.

The flagship activity of this band is the **side-project sprint** in Grade 10 (sessions S5–S7) — a deliberate, time-bounded mastery experience tied to one of the student's career hypotheses. The student ships something. They learn whether they actually like the work. The hypothesis updates.

The other major activity is the **informational interview arc** in Grade 9 (S7–S10): a real conversation with a real adult in a hypothesised field. This is direct vicarious learning in the SCCT sense, and meets Gatsby Benchmark #5.

### Frameworks specifically active in this band:

Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown, Hackett, 1994)

Krumboltz's Happenstance Learning Theory

Super's Exploration stage

Gatsby Benchmarks #5, #6, #7

## Band 5 — Decision (Grades 11–12)

**The work:** from hypotheses to a balanced university list; standardized testing; essays; recommenders; activities; submission; decisions; transition. **Sessions per year:** 15 (50–60 min each + monthly 1:1) **Output:** A submitted application portfolio; a chosen university; a financial plan; pre-university skills; relationships maintained.

**Why this band exists.** Super's *Establishment* stage begins around 25, but its preparation begins in late adolescence. The Decision band is where the prior 10 years pay off: the personal statement is built from authentic portfolio material, not invented under pressure.

This is also where Pave's existing 11–12 product lives. The redesign integrates the 10 prior years of portfolio data into the application work. Specifically: G11.S9 (essay discovery) explicitly mines the portfolio for material, surfacing moments of change, real-world contact, tensions, specifics, and convictions from the student's own writing.

### Frameworks specifically active in this band:

Super's late-Exploration / early-Establishment

Gatsby Benchmark #7, #8 (encounters with HE, personal guidance)

KHDA standards for personal responsibility and self-direction

## Part IV • The 180 sessions, with the framework each draws on

Below is every session, grouped by grade, with the primary framework or research source it draws from. The framework keys at the end of each row indicate the dominant influence — many sessions touch multiple frameworks.

### Framework keys:

- SUP** — Super's Life-Span Theory
- HOL** — Holland's RIASEC
- GOT** — Gottfredson's Circumscription
- SCC** — Social Cognitive Career Theory
- ERI** — Erikson's Identity stages
- VIA** — VIA Character Strengths
- CCF** — 16 Career Clusters Framework
- ASC** — ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors
- GAT** — Gatsby Benchmarks
- KRU** — Krumboltz's Happenstance Learning
- OECD** — OECD Career Readiness research
- KHD** — KHDA Inspection Framework
- BAN** — Bandura self-efficacy / mastery experiences

## Grade 1 — Awareness, Year 1

| #   | Title                            | Framework  | Why this session at this age                                                     |
|-----|----------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| S1  | Jobs in our school               | GOT, ASC   | Make invisible school workers visible — counter early stereotype-based filtering |
| S2  | Jobs in our home                 | GOT        | Surface domestic work as work — gender-balanced examples                         |
| S3  | Jobs in our neighbourhood        | GOT, GAT#5 | Local role models, including migrant workers as skilled adults                   |
| S4  | Helpers when we are sick         | SUP, ASC   | Healthcare beyond "doctor" — broaden the team picture                            |
| S5  | Helpers who keep us safe         | SUP        | Civic services framed as work, not background                                    |
| S6  | People who build things          | GOT        | Trades positioned as skilled, named, gendered-balanced                           |
| S7  | People who grow our food         | SUP, GAT#2 | Supply chain — work that's invisible because it's distant                        |
| S8  | People who tell stories          | SUP, GOT   | Creative careers as real careers, not hobbies                                    |
| S9  | People who fix things            | BAN        | Early mastery: trying a small fix builds self-efficacy                           |
| S10 | People who care for animals      | SUP, KHD   | Includes falconry — Emirati cultural connection                                  |
| S11 | Visible vs invisible jobs        | GOT, ASC   | Direct teaching of how perceptions hide work                                     |
| S12 | Tools and uniforms               | SUP        | Anti-stereotype: same tool, many roles                                           |
| S13 | A job I tried at home            | BAN        | First reflection on self-attempt                                                 |
| S14 | My family's jobs                 | ASC, KHD   | Cultural diversity of work; norms-setting against comparison                     |
| S15 | "Jobs I've heard of" celebration | SUP        | Year-end reflection; tracking growth over time                                   |

## Grade 2 — Awareness, Year 2

| #   | Title                      | Framework     | Why this session at this age                               |
|-----|----------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| S1  | The world has so many jobs | SUP, GOT      | Widen aperture before age-7 circumscription locks in       |
| S2  | Indoor / outdoor jobs      | SUP           | First categorical thinking about work environments         |
| S3  | Daytime / nighttime jobs   | GAT#5, ASC    | Visibility of shift workers — anti-stereotype              |
| S4  | Jobs that use machines     | SUP           | Tool literacy + tech awareness                             |
| S5  | Jobs that use words        | SUP, ASC      | Verbal-strength children find themselves here              |
| S6  | Jobs that use numbers      | SUP           | Counter "math is hard/boring" with tool framing            |
| S7  | Jobs that use art          | SUP, GOT, KHD | Arts as career; Arabic calligraphy named explicitly        |
| S8  | Jobs that travel           | SUP           | Lifestyle framing — first hint at trade-offs               |
| S9  | Desert, sea, and city jobs | KHD, SUP      | UAE-specific heritage and present economy                  |
| S10 | Old jobs and new jobs      | OECD          | Generational change — pearl divers to logistics            |
| S11 | Pretend jobs vs real jobs  | GOT, SUP      | Bridge fantasy to reality without crushing imagination     |
| S12 | A grown-up I want to ask   | GAT#5, BAN    | First interview prep — early agency-building               |
| S13 | The interview debrief      | SCC, ASC      | Vicarious learning + reflection                            |
| S14 | Drawing my future job      | SUP           | Captures imagination at age 7; revisited in Grade 5, 8, 12 |
| S15 | Year-end celebration       | SUP, ASC      | Family ritual; cumulative awareness                        |

## Grade 3 — Exploration: Industries

| #   | Title                        | Framework | Why this session at this age                               |
|-----|------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| S1  | Welcome to the world of work | SUP       | Transition to active exploration                           |
| S2  | Healthcare deep-dive         | CCF, SUP  | First industry investigation — non-doctor roles emphasized |
| S3  | Building & construction      | CCF, GOT  | Trade visibility; women in construction included           |
| S4  | Creative & media             | CCF, GOT  | Creative work as serious career                            |
| S5  | Business & money             | CCF, SUP  | Includes small/family business — culturally relevant       |
| S6  | Science & discovery          | CCF, KHD  | UAE Mars / space programme referenced                      |
| S7  | Technology                   | CCF, OECD | Beyond "be a coder" — diverse tech roles                   |
| S8  | Trades & skilled work        | CCF, GOT  | Direct counter to "trades are lesser" stereotype           |
| S9  | Public service & government  | CCF, KHD  | Honors Emirati cultural value of national service          |
| S10 | Hospitality & tourism        | CCF, KHD  | UAE economy reflected; service as craft                    |
| S11 | Education & learning         | CCF, GOT  | Beyond "teacher" — many education roles                    |
| S12 | Sports & wellness            | CCF       | Beyond athletes — physios, broadcasters, etc.              |
| S13 | Comparing two industries     | SUP       | First analytical comparison muscle                         |
| S14 | My first interest map        | SUP, ASC  | Snapshot for trajectory tracking                           |
| S15 | Family showcase              | ASC, KHD  | Family engagement; cumulative review                       |

## Grade 4 — Exploration: People

| #   | Title                                    | Framework  | Why this session at this age                  |
|-----|------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| S1  | What does a "day in the life" look like? | GAT#5, SCC | Observation framework for vicarious learning  |
| S2  | Asking great questions                   | ASC        | Communication skill — practical               |
| S3  | Guest speaker A                          | GAT#5, SCC | Real-world exposure; mastery model            |
| S4  | Guest speaker B                          | GAT#5, SCC | Counterweight role to Speaker A               |
| S5  | Guest speaker C                          | GAT#5, SCC | Third leg — pattern recognition emerges       |
| S6  | Workplace virtual tour A                 | GAT#6      | Workplace experience without travel           |
| S7  | Workplace virtual tour B                 | GAT#6      | Contrast workplace types                      |
| S8  | Comparing three guests                   | SUP        | Synthesis muscle; cross-cluster patterns      |
| S9  | Skills I noticed everyone uses           | ASC, SCC   | Cross-cluster ("21st-century") skills surface |
| S10 | Problem-solving as a skill               | ASC, BAN   | Named, practiced — explicit cognitive skill   |
| S11 | Teamwork as a skill                      | ASC        | Direct ASCA Behaviors-Social Skills standard  |
| S12 | Communication as a skill                 | ASC        | Listening explicitly taught as harder half    |
| S13 | My skills journal                        | SUP, ASC   | Self-rating with evidence requirement         |
| S14 | Interest profile v1                      | SUP        | Trajectory artifact (compares to G3)          |
| S15 | Family showcase                          | ASC, KHD   | Family engagement                             |

## Grade 5 — Exploration: Skills + Self

| #   | Title                               | Framework          | Why this session at this age                          |
|-----|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| S1  | Interest vs skill                   | SUP, ASC           | Critical conceptual distinction for the next 7 years  |
| S2  | Interest inventory — round 1        | SUP, HOL precursor | First formal Likert inventory                         |
| S3  | Strengths spotting in classmates    | VIA precursor, ASC | Peer-spotted strengths — high reliability             |
| S4  | "I can already..." list             | BAN, ASC           | Mastery accumulation made visible                     |
| S5  | Hard skills vs soft skills          | ASC                | Workforce vocabulary; balance reflection              |
| S6  | Micro-skill week 1                  | BAN, KRU           | Deliberate mastery experience kicks off               |
| S7  | Micro-skill week 2                  | BAN                | Mid-sprint adjustment — meta-cognitive                |
| S8  | Reflecting on the micro-skill       | BAN, ASC           | What the meta-skill of "learning to learn" feels like |
| S9  | Money basics                        | GAT#2              | Labour market information at age-appropriate depth    |
| S10 | Lifestyles and choices              | SUP                | Career-as-lifestyle framing                           |
| S11 | Jobs that didn't exist 20 years ago | OECD               | Workforce change concept                              |
| S12 | Jobs that might exist in 20 years   | OECD, KRU          | Future-orientation; Krumboltz's optimism trait        |
| S13 | Updating my interest profile        | SUP                | Three-year trajectory comparison                      |
| S14 | Curiosity goal for Grade 6          | KRU, ASC           | Forward-looking question-setting                      |
| S15 | Transition to middle school         | ERI precursor, SUP | Sealed letter — identity-formation prep               |

## Grade 6 — Self-Discovery: Personality

| #   | Title                               | Framework     | Why this session at this age                        |
|-----|-------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| S1  | Welcome to middle-school discovery  | ERI           | Frame the year as identity work, not career-picking |
| S2  | RIASEC introduction                 | HOL           | Pre-inventory exposure to Holland's 6 dimensions    |
| S3  | RIASEC inventory                    | HOL           | First formal psychometric self-assessment           |
| S4  | Decoding your code                  | HOL           | Evidence-based interpretation, not labelling        |
| S5  | Personality vs preference           | ERI, SUP      | Distinguish stable patterns from passing interests  |
| S6  | Introvert/extravert continuum       | ERI           | Energy preference, not identity label               |
| S7  | Environment audit                   | BAN, ASC      | Agency over conditions of work                      |
| S8  | How I learn best                    | ASC, BAN      | Meta-cognition; mode awareness                      |
| S9  | Strengths/Interests/Values triangle | HOL, VIA, ERI | Foundational diagram for next 7 years               |
| S10 | VIA Character Strengths intro       | VIA           | Card sort with evidence step                        |
| S11 | VIA inventory                       | VIA           | Formal psychometric administration                  |
| S12 | My top 5 character strengths        | VIA, ASC      | Strengths-with-overuse — sophisticated framing      |
| S13 | Personality + strengths snapshot    | ERI           | First identity artifact                             |
| S14 | Sharing the snapshot                | ASC, GAT#8    | Trusted-adult conversation                          |
| S15 | End-of-term reflection              | SUP, ERI      | Sealed letter to Grade 7 self                       |

## Grade 7 — Self-Discovery: Values + Clusters

| #   | Title                                | Framework       | Why this session at this age                         |
|-----|--------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| S1  | What are values?                     | ERI, ASC        | Distinguish values from preferences, rules, emotions |
| S2  | Values card sort                     | ERI, ASC        | Tactile sort with evidence requirement               |
| S3  | Ranking values                       | ERI, SUP        | Forced trade-offs surface honest hierarchy           |
| S4  | Lifestyle values                     | SUP             | Tuesday-at-27 visualization                          |
| S5  | Impact values                        | ERI, KHD        | Moral education overlap; impact-rung framework       |
| S6  | Compensation values                  | GAT#2, OECD     | Labour market info + values trade-off                |
| S7  | 16 Career Clusters intro             | CCF             | Industry framework introduction                      |
| S8  | Clusters round 1 — first impressions | CCF, HOL        | Gut + data cross-reference                           |
| S9  | STEM deep-dive                       | CCF, GAT#5      | Sub-shapes within STEM; guest speaker                |
| S10 | Health Science deep-dive             | CCF, GAT#5      | Beyond "doctor"; guest speaker                       |
| S11 | Arts/AV/Communications               | CCF, GAT#5, GOT | Honest income/lifestyle data                         |
| S12 | Business/Finance                     | CCF, GAT#5, KHD | UAE-relevant; family business honored                |
| S13 | Human Services + Education           | CCF, GAT#5      | Money-meaning math made concrete                     |
| S14 | Top 5 clusters with reasoning        | CCF, ASC        | Reasoning required, not just preference              |
| S15 | Parent conversation guide            | ASC, KHD        | Structured family dialogue                           |

## Grade 8 — Self-Discovery: Synthesis

| #   | Title                                  | Framework     | Why this session at this age        |
|-----|----------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| S1  | Returning to RIASEC, strengths, values | HOL, VIA, SUP | Drift detection over 2 years        |
| S2  | AI synthesis — meet your profile       | ERI, ASC      | Profile as artifact for editing     |
| S3  | Critiquing the AI profile              | ASC, OECD     | Critical AI literacy                |
| S4  | Top 3 clusters — first cut             | CCF, ASC      | Narrowing with reasoning            |
| S5  | Job shadowing prep — behaviour         | GAT#6, ASC    | Professional norms                  |
| S6  | Job shadowing prep — what to look for  | GAT#6, SCC    | Five-lens observation framework     |
| S7  | Shadow day debrief A                   | GAT#6, SCC    | Capture without conclusion          |
| S8  | Shadow day debrief B                   | GAT#6, SCC    | Integration matrix; thank-you note  |
| S9  | Financial literacy                     | GAT#2, OECD   | Real numbers, real careers          |
| S10 | Lifestyle math                         | GAT#2, SUP    | UAE budget tool; alignment check    |
| S11 | Subject choice preview                 | GAT#4         | Curriculum-careers linkage          |
| S12 | Emiratisation / GCC growth             | KHD, OECD     | Regional context; national pathways |
| S13 | Top 3 clusters — final                 | CCF, ASC      | Comprehensive write-up + defence    |
| S14 | Portfolio handoff                      | ASC           | High-school counselor transition    |
| S15 | Transition to high school              | ERI, SUP      | Sealed letter to Grade 12 self      |

## Grade 9 — Direction: Subject Mapping + Hypothesis

| #   | Title                                | Framework   | Why this session at this age          |
|-----|--------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| S1  | The career hypothesis mindset        | KRU, SCC    | Hypothesis-not-commitment framing     |
| S2  | Clusters to specific roles           | CCF, OECD   | Role library; pace/density/decisions  |
| S3  | Subject choices overview             | GAT#4       | IB/A-level/AP system explanation      |
| S4  | Mapping subjects to careers          | GAT#4       | Subject-role mapping with citations   |
| S5  | Breadth vs depth                     | GAT#4, SUP  | Strategy choice with counter-argument |
| S6  | Cost of closing doors                | GAT#4       | Reversibility analysis                |
| S7  | Informational interview — what it is | GAT#5, SCC  | Vicarious learning introduction       |
| S8  | Preparing                            | GAT#5, ASC  | Research + question design            |
| S9  | Conducting (homework)                | GAT#5, BAN  | Real adult conversation               |
| S10 | Debrief                              | SCC, ASC    | Hypothesis update with evidence       |
| S11 | Volunteering as testing              | GAT#6, SCC  | Mastery experience design             |
| S12 | Internship landscape                 | GAT#6, OECD | Realistic options for under-16s       |
| S13 | 2-year action plan v1                | ASC, KRU    | Milestone-based testing schedule      |
| S14 | Sharing with parents/counselor       | GAT#8       | Structured stakeholder dialogue       |
| S15 | Term close — hypothesis review       | KRU         | Updated hypotheses with verdicts      |

## Grade 10 — Direction: Testing + Refinement

| #   | Title                                       | Framework     | Why this session at this age              |
|-----|---------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------|
| S1  | Reviewing last year's hypotheses            | KRU, ERI      | Cold-read with cause attribution          |
| S2  | What changed?                               | ERI, ASC      | Evidence pattern self-awareness           |
| S3  | University vs vocational vs entrepreneurial | OECD, GAT#7   | Path-type analysis                        |
| S4  | Founder mindset                             | KRU, BAN      | Entrepreneur-as-mindset framing           |
| S5  | Side-project sprint kickoff                 | BAN, SCC, KRU | Mastery experience launch                 |
| S6  | Sprint check-in                             | BAN           | Mid-sprint adjustment                     |
| S7  | Sprint showcase                             | BAN, GAT#6    | Public shipping = high SCCT signal        |
| S8  | Regional career trends                      | KHD, OECD     | UAE Vision 2031 / Saudi 2030 / GCC        |
| S9  | Global trends                               | OECD          | AI / climate / demographics               |
| S10 | "10 years out" exercise                     | ERI, SUP      | Felt-sense check on hypotheses            |
| S11 | Narrowing to 3-5 hypotheses                 | KRU, ASC      | Evidence audit with honesty prompt        |
| S12 | Standardized testing landscape              | GAT#7         | Test infrastructure                       |
| S13 | 2-year action plan v2                       | ASC, KRU      | Refined milestones                        |
| S14 | Counselor 1:1 prep                          | GAT#8         | Active-agenda 1:1s                        |
| S15 | Term close — Grade 11 handoff               | SUP, ASC      | Direction band → Decision band transition |

## Grade 11 — Decision: Shortlist + Applications

| #   | Title                                     | Framework   | Why this session at this age      |
|-----|-------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| S1  | Welcome to the decision year              | SUP, GAT#8  | Calendar + commitment             |
| S2  | From hypotheses to a university shortlist | GAT#7, OECD | Long-list generation              |
| S3  | Fit / reach / safety                      | GAT#7       | Probability calibration           |
| S4  | Geography matters                         | GAT#7, KHD  | UAE/UK/US/other choice            |
| S5  | UK course-first model                     | GAT#7       | UCAS application strategy         |
| S6  | US major declaration vs liberal arts      | GAT#7       | Common App application strategy   |
| S7  | Cost, scholarships, financial aid         | GAT#2, OECD | Financial decision support        |
| S8  | Standardized test plan                    | GAT#7       | Test calendar                     |
| S9  | Personal statement discovery              | ERI, ASC    | Portfolio mining for material     |
| S10 | Essay drafting workshop A                 | ASC         | Peer + counselor review           |
| S11 | Essay drafting workshop B                 | ASC         | Voice check, polish               |
| S12 | Recommenders                              | GAT#5, ASC  | Adult relationships activated     |
| S13 | Activities list                           | ASC         | Story-shape, not list-shape       |
| S14 | Summer plan                               | KRU, BAN    | Mastery + rest                    |
| S15 | End-of-year readiness review              | ASC, GAT#8  | ED/EA strategy + worst-case plans |

## Grade 12 — Decision: Execute + Transition

| #   | Title                           | Framework    | Why this session at this age                |
|-----|---------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------|
| S1  | Welcome back                    | GAT#8, ASC   | Communication agreement with parents        |
| S2  | Final essay polish              | ASC          | Line-level editing                          |
| S3  | Supplemental essays             | ASC          | Reuse map; writing schedule                 |
| S4  | Interview preparation           | GAT#5, GAT#7 | Story-based answers                         |
| S5  | Application submission week     | GAT#7        | Methodical submission                       |
| S6  | Waiting well                    | ASC, ERI     | Mental health protective habits             |
| S7  | Scholarship hunting             | GAT#2        | Niche scholarship matching                  |
| S8  | Decision day — comparing offers | GAT#7, ASC   | Decision matrix + cognitive trap check      |
| S9  | Financial decision              | GAT#2        | 4-year cost analysis                        |
| S10 | Gap year                        | KRU, SUP     | Productive vs drift gap years               |
| S11 | Pre-university skills           | ASC, BAN     | Independence, money, cooking, study         |
| S12 | First 100 days at university    | SCC, ASC     | Predictable rhythm + protective plans       |
| S13 | Staying connected — networks    | GAT#5        | Long-game relationship maintenance          |
| S14 | 12-year reflection              | ERI, SUP     | Sealed letter opening; identity narrative   |
| S15 | Graduation handoff              | SUP          | Curriculum closes; self-direction continues |

## **Part V • Implementation, KHDA alignment, modular adoption**

## Where this lives in the school timetable

**Primary (1–5):** PSHE / homeroom / morning circle. 20–30 min per session. ~12–15 sessions per year.

**Middle (6–8):** Dedicated career period (recommended) or PSHE. 35–45 min per session. ~15 sessions per year.

**Secondary (9–12):** Career period + 1:1 counselor time. 45–60 min per session + monthly 1:1.

## **KHDA performance standards directly addressed**

The Pave curriculum maps to specific KHDA judgements:

**Personal responsibility for learning** — visible in the per-student portfolio model.

**Self-reliance, self-discipline, work ethic** — visible in the side-project sprint (G10) and shadow-day prep (G8).

**Innovation, enterprise, entrepreneurship** — explicit in G10.S4 (founder mindset) and ongoing AI literacy.

**Moral education and Emirati identity** — embedded throughout, with explicit sessions at G8.S12 (Emiratisation), G2.S9 (desert/sea/city heritage), G1.S10 (falconry), and others.

**Innovation and use of learning technologies** — the AI integration is itself evidence.

## Modular adoption — what to build first

Schools rarely adopt all twelve grades at once. The recommended sequencing:

**Year 1 (months 1–9):** Grades 6–8 + 9–10. The highest-value bands. Self-discovery and direction-setting are where the curriculum's distinctive value is most visible to families.

**Year 1 (months 9–12):** Grade 11–12 integration. For schools with existing senior-year college counseling, this is integration work, not new build. The portfolio from G6–10 becomes input.

**Year 2:** Grades 1–5. Adds primary once school relationships and processes are mature.

The data model handles partial portfolios gracefully. A student who joins Pave in Grade 7 has fewer artifacts than one who joins in Grade 1, but the curriculum still works.

## Teacher development and certification

The single biggest predictor of whether this works in a school is whether the teacher delivering it feels confident. The certification path has three tiers:

**Tier 1** (Awareness, Grades 1–5) — 1-day workshop + 4 self-paced modules + 1 observed delivery. Annual refresher. **Tier 2** (Self-Discovery, Grades 6–8) — 2-day workshop + 6 modules + 2 observed deliveries + quarterly community-of-practice calls. **Tier 3** (Direction & Decision, Grades 9–12) — 4-day workshop + 10 modules + shadowed practice with a Pave specialist + monthly community calls.

Each tier corresponds to ASCA professional standards for school counselor competencies in the relevant domain.

## **The KHDA-savvy advisor (a non-optional role)**

A separate role from facilitators. This person reviews all student-facing content before publication for KHDA alignment, attends at least one inspection per partner school per year, and is on retainer at ~10 hours/month. Hire before authoring sessions for the regulated grades.

## Part VI • Sources and further reading

This is the full bibliography. The most foundational sources are starred (★).

## Career development theory

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- ★ Gottfredson, L. S. (1981). Circumscription and compromise: A developmental theory of occupational aspirations. *Journal of Counseling Psychology Monograph*, 28(6), 545–579.
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- ★ Krumboltz, J. D. (2009). The happenstance learning theory. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 17(2), 135–154.

## Self-efficacy and identity

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Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2006). Moral competence and character strengths among adolescents: The development and validation of the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths for Youth. *Journal of Adolescence*, 29(6), 891–909.

## School counselor frameworks

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## Career education evidence

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[gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/reports/pdf/gatsby-sir-john-holman-good-career-guidance-2014.pdf](https://gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/reports/pdf/gatsby-sir-john-holman-good-career-guidance-2014.pdf)

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Mann, A., Kashefpakdel, E. T., Rehill, J., & Huddleston, P. (2017). *Contemporary transitions: Young Britons reflect on life after secondary school and college*. Education and Employers Research.

Hooley, T., & Dodd, V. (2015). *The economic case for career guidance*. Careers England.

OECD. (2021). *Career readiness in the pandemic: Insights from new international research for secondary schools*. OECD Publishing.

## Industry / cluster frameworks

Advance CTE. *National Career Clusters Framework*. [careertech.org/career-clusters](https://careertech.org/career-clusters)

U.S. Department of Labor. *Occupational Information Network (ONET)\**. [onetonline.org](https://onetonline.org)

## UAE-specific context

KHDA. (2023). *Inspection Handbook 2023–2024*. Knowledge and Human Development Authority, Dubai. [khda.gov.ae](https://www.khda.gov.ae)

UAE Cabinet. *We the UAE 2031 Vision*. [u.ae/en/about-the-uae/strategies-initiatives-and-awards/strategies-plans-and-visions/we-the-uae-2031](https://u.ae/en/about-the-uae/strategies-initiatives-and-awards/strategies-plans-and-visions/we-the-uae-2031)

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## Adolescent development and decision-making

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McKinsey & Company. (2017). *Jobs lost, jobs gained: Workforce transitions in a time of automation*.

## Appendix • How to verify a session's framework grounding

Any session in this curriculum should be traceable to a named framework. If you encounter a session and want to verify its source:

Find the session in Part IV (the master table).

Note the framework code(s) listed.

Cross-reference Part I for the framework's primary citation.

The session file at `career-curriculum/grade-XX/sessions/session-NN-*.md` carries the same framework reference at the top.

This traceability is non-negotiable. A session without a citable source doesn't belong in this curriculum. We do not invent pedagogical methods; we apply established ones.

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