

United Nations International School of Hanoi

UNIS GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS: An Introduction

UNIS Foundation Documents

The United Nations International School (UNIS) was established under a 1988 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Government of Viet Nam and the United Nations¹. The MOU required UNIS to adopt a Constitution. A Certificate of Incorporation for UNIS was issued 7th April 1989, and amended 14th December, 1999.

The UNIS **Constitution** was first adopted in September 1989, and was last amended 21st May, 2013. The **Constitution** is the principal governance document for the School, providing an overarching framework, fundamental rules and principles that form the foundation for the School's stability. The Board is responsible for upholding the Constitution and can amend it, subject to the approval of United Nations Resident Coordinator in Viet Nam, following processes outlined in the Constitution and Board Operating Regulations.

Current Governance Documents

Current governance documents guiding the work of the Board and the School are as follows:

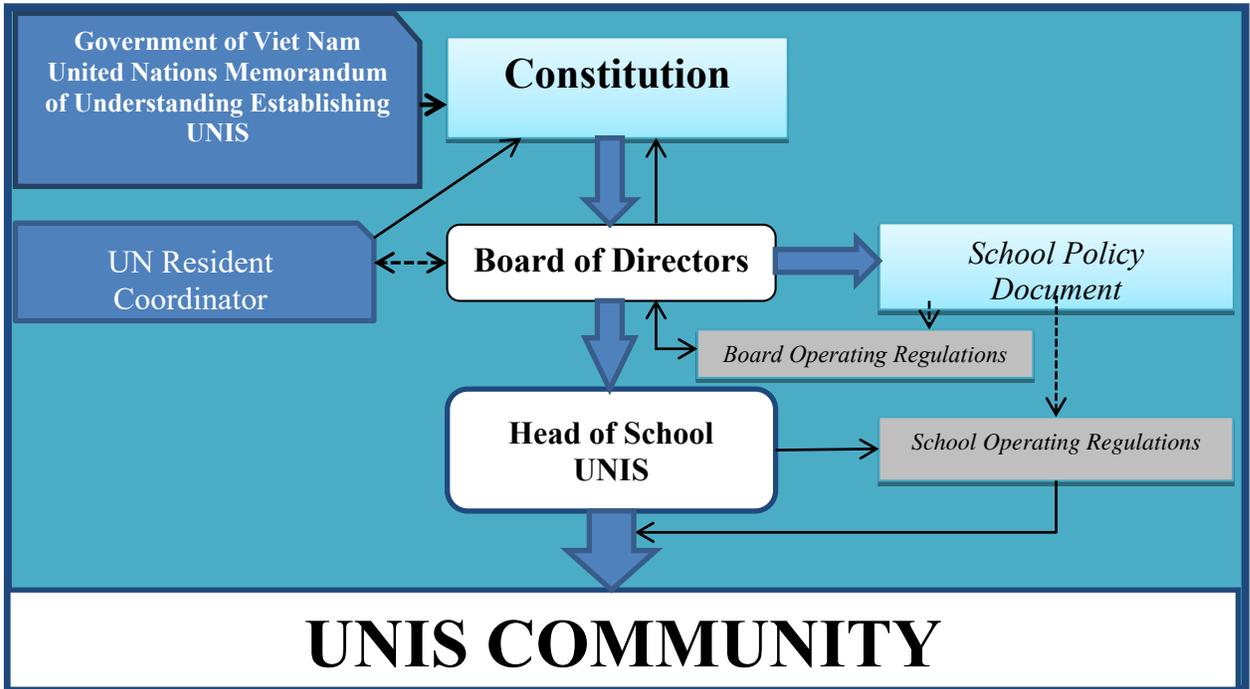
- A. **UNIS Constitution** (Adopted September 1989 and last amended 9th April, 2013).
- B. **UNIS School Policy Document (SPD)**. (Adopted June 2009, last revised 21st May, 2013). School policies are directives adopted by the Board on the purpose, direction, or limitation which serve as parameters within which the school operates that enable the school to achieve its mission. School policies guide the school administration and other stakeholders as to the Board's official intent or position on a given issue.
- C. **UNIS Board Operating Regulations (BOR)** (First approved March 2010, 21st May, 2013). The BORs are approved by the Board to govern the way the Board operates.
- D. **School Operating Regulations (SOR)** (under development). The SORs are prepared and approved by the HOS to provide detail how school policies are to be implemented.

The SPD, the BOR, and the SOR are consistent with the UNIS Constitution (which forms the foundation of the governance system) and relate to each other as depicted below.

¹ The Government decision underpinning the MOU is Ministry of Education Decision No. 373 (7th June, 1988). The MOU between the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and the United Nations was signed 20th June, 1988. These two documents constitute the agreement with the Vietnamese Government for UNIS to be founded.

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Figure: UNIS Governance Structure



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1. Overarching Policy

1.1 The School is a non-political, secular, not-for-profit, educational institution that promotes the ideals and principles of the United Nations.

1.2 The School will maintain its status as a United Nations affiliated School.

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1.3 The School has a clearly defined Mission, Vision and Values Statement

2. Education Policy

2.1 Students

- 2.1.1 Student's interests and needs are prioritised and the rights of individual students and the student community are recognised and promoted.
- 2.1.2 Students are expected to behave in a manner that represents the Mission and Values of the School and serve as a model for other students at UNIS, in the host country and internationally.
- 2.1.3 Student behaviour is guided by a code of conduct that sets out roles, rights and responsibilities, accountability and consequences and defines expectations of behaviour.
- 2.1.4 The School will seek to provide a safe and secure environment, both on campus and at all school-sponsored activities off-campus.

2.2 Admissions Policy

- 2.2.1 The size of the School is approved by the Board.
- 2.2.2 The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, political or other opinion, in its admission practices.
- 2.2.3 The School admits, according to available resources, students whose learning needs can be effectively supported by the School.
- 2.2.4 The School gives admissions priority to students based on cultural diversity, English language proficiency and prioritisation as follows:
 - 2.2.4.1 No single nationality may exceed 20 per cent of the total student enrolment. An effort is made to maintain cultural diversity within each grade level.
 - 2.2.4.2 English as an Additional Language (EAL) regulations limit the percentage of EAL students who may join in any one grade.
 - 2.2.4.3 Priority is given in the following order to; (1) families working for the United Nations and in the diplomatic corps, Scholarship Students and UNIS Hanoi faculty children; (2) Siblings of enrolled students; (3) Returning Alumni students; (4) expatriate families temporarily resident in Hanoi. All decisions are based on

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admissions considerations and at the discretion of the Head of School.

- 2.2.5 Applicants who are dependents of Vietnamese senior members of the Vietnamese Diplomatic Corps who have attended English medium schools abroad and who meet the School's admissions criteria may request from the Head of School a waiver of 75 per cent of tuition and capital fees per annum for up to two children per family for a period of three years. No more than five students can be admitted under this tuition waiver at one time.

2.3 Faculty and Staff

- 2.3.1 The School does not discriminate on the basis of sex, religion, or race in its human resource management.
- 2.3.2 The School is an equal opportunities employer.
- 2.3.3 The School recruits, develops and retains well-qualified and talented professionals and staff to fulfil the School's Mission, with an aim for diversity of background and gender balance.

2.4 Parents

- 2.4.1 The School encourages and facilitates parents to be partners in the education of their children.

2.5 Accreditation and Authorisation

- 2.6.1 The School maintains accreditation with the Council of International Schools (CIS) and Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).
- 2.6.2 The School maintains International Baccalaureate (IB) authorisation to provide the Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) and IB Diploma Programme.

2.6 Curriculum

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- 2.6.1 The Curriculum is aligned with the School's Mission statement and is not affiliated with any single national educational programme.
- 2.6.2 The Curriculum provides an engaging, challenging, holistic academic programme, which is coherently articulated for all grades with appropriate assessments and benchmarks, designed to prepare successful transition into tertiary education.
- 2.6.3 The School provides a co-curricular programme that fully supports, and allows students to extend themselves beyond the regular Curriculum.
- 2.6.4 The Curriculum reflects advances in learning theories, methodologies and technologies.
- 2.6.5 The School year calendar provides a sufficient number of instructional days to support the delivery of the Curriculum, and contains no less than 175 days and no more than 180 days.
- 2.6.6 Provision for mother tongue languages development is supported within the limits of the School's programme, resources, and facilities.
- 2.6.7 English as an Additional Language (EAL) programme is offered.

3 School Services Policy

3.1 Facilities

- 3.1.1 The School endeavours to provide a safe, secure and supportive educational environment with high quality, purpose-built facilities to meet the holistic development needs of its students and the UNIS Hanoi community.
- 3.1.2 School facilities can be utilised by others in the broader community in accordance with the ideals and principles of the United Nations subject to availability and maintenance requirements.

3.2 Environment

- 3.2.1 The School wherever possible, reduces the negative impact of its facilities and activities on the environment, and actively promotes the culture of environmental responsibility.
- 3.2.2 The School maintains a smoking-free environment. The possession, consumption or sale of alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs is prohibited on

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the School campus. However, at the discretion of the Head of School, alcoholic beverages may be served to adults at social events held on the campus outside the School day.

4 Governance Policy

4.1 The UNIS Board of Directors (The Board)

- 4.1.1 The Board is responsible for (i) hiring, nurturing and evaluating the Head of School; (ii) developing and approving strategic plans, and monitoring implementation of these plans and overall School performance; (iii) developing and approving School policy; and (iv) ensuring the financial health of the School.
- 4.1.2 The Board adheres to international school governance best practices.
- 4.1.3 The Board recruits and develops its members and supports standards of their behaviour consistent with the Values and Mission of the School.

4.2 Head of School (HOS)

- 4.2.1 The Head of School, while accountable to the Board, is the responsible leader to ensure that teaching, learning, and student wellbeing are supported and that the School's mission is achieved.
- 4.2.2 The Head of School implements Board policy, executes Board decisions and keeps the Board informed about School operations and problems.

4.3 Board and HOS Relationship

- 4.3.1 There is a co-operative and effective working relationship between the Board and Head of School so as to establish and sustain high morale, quality relationships, and a positive climate for teaching, learning, and student wellbeing throughout the School.

4.4 School Policy and Regulations

- 4.4.1 The Board develops and adopts: (i) overarching policies for the School in the School Policy Document (SPD), and (ii) policies and procedures for its own

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operations and activities in the Board Operating Regulations (BORs) and these will be applied to bring consistency and clarity to School operations.

- 4.4.2 School policies are directives adopted by the Board on the purpose, direction, or limitation which flow from the Constitution and serve as parameters within which the School operates that enable the School to achieve its Mission.
- 4.4.3 School policies guide the School administration and other stakeholders as to the Board's official intent or position on a given issue.
- 4.4.4 The operation of any section or sections of the School Policy Document may be temporarily suspended by a two-thirds vote of Board members.
- 4.4.5 School policies must be provided in writing in the School Policy Document (SPD).
- 4.4.6 The Head of School ensures that written School Operating Regulations (SOR) detailing how School policies are implemented are current.
- 4.4.7 The Board ensures that written Board Operating Regulations (BOR) governing board operations are current.
- 4.4.8 The UNIS Hanoi Constitution, the SPD, SOR and BOR must be readily accessible by students, staff, and parents.

4.5 Grievances.

- 4.5.1 The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that transparent grievance procedures are in place (and defined in the school operating regulations) to ensure that all School stakeholders (especially students, staff, and parents) have due process to appeal decisions taken by the School.
- 4.5.2 The Board does not hear grievances relating to implementation of school operating regulations. The Head of School's decisions regarding implementation of School Operating Regulations are final.

4.6 Strategic Planning and Oversight

- 4.6.1 There is a five year Strategic Management Plan (SMP) with goals and objectives that are linked to the achievement of the Vision and Mission of the School. The SMP includes a monitoring framework. The Board conducts a mid-term review of the five year SMP to ensure that it remains relevant,

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assess progress towards meeting the objectives and determine any adjustments required.

- 4.6.2 The SMP guides the Head of School in the development of detailed annual action plans for Board approval, which outlines actions to be undertaken to further the goals and objectives identified in the SMP.

4.7 Financial Planning and Oversight

- 4.7.1 The School maintains a strong financial position to ensure financial stability and allow for future growth whilst mitigating financial risks.
- 4.7.2 The School has a risk management framework for identifying, assessing and managing risks.
- 4.7.3 The School complies with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).
- 4.7.4 The School is annually audited by an internationally recognised auditor.
- 4.7.5 The School shall prepare School Operating Regulations on procurement and other financial decision making processes, with appropriate checks and balances, in line with international best practices.
- 4.7.5.1 Board approval is needed for all financial decisions above thresholds specified in the Board Operating Regulations.
- 4.7.5.2 The School should submit any other financial decisions or information to the Board for consideration where the School sees that this would be in the best interests of transparency and/or the School's reputation.

5 Advancement

- 5.1 Advancement at UNIS Hanoi is a Board led, School managed programme and as such the Board's role in Advancement activities is detailed in the Board Operating Regulations
- 5.2 The School seeks to engage all constituency members to enrich its learning community.
- 5.3 Effective communication underlies all the School's endeavours. The School strives to improve its interaction with and amongst all constituency members.
- 5.4 The School will generate additional revenue through fundraising programmes in order to advance the School's Mission and Vision
- 5.4.1 Specifically with respect to fundraising, the Board or a Board Executive Committee's approval is required for:

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- a. Sponsorships or donations above thresholds specified in the Board Operating regulations,
 - b. Sponsorship or donations likely to impact on the image and reputation of the School,
 - c. Naming rights associated with donations or sponsorships.
- 5.4.2 The Board reserves the right to return, to decline and/or return any donation and in exceptional cases, to withdraw naming rights at any time if the continued association of UNIS Hanoi with a given name would damage the reputation of the School.

6. Revisions to the School Policy Document

Section:	Subject:	Date of Board approval:
Section 4.5	New section on grievances	9 th April, 2013
Section 6	Revisions to the SPD: new section to track edits approved to the SPD since the last major review in April 2012	N/A
Section 4.4.4	New statement on suspension of Board policy	21 st May, 2013
Section 4.75	New statement about financial procurement and decision thresholds	21 st May, 2013
Section 5.1 Section 5.4.1 Section 5.4.2	New opening statement about Advancement New statements about sponsorship, donations and naming rights and decision thresholds New statement about right to return/decline a donation	21 st May, 2013
Section 2.2.4.3	Priority is given in the following order to; (1) families working for the United Nations and in the diplomatic corps, Scholarship Students and UNIS Hanoi faculty children; (2) Siblings of enrolled students; (3) Returning Alumni students; (4) expatriate families temporarily resident in Hanoi. All decisions are based on admissions considerations and at the discretion of the Head of School.	9 th December, 2015

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Section 2.1.4	The School will see to provide a safe and secure environment, both on campus and away.	
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