

International School of London Qatar

Head of School

For August 2027

Further Information and How to Apply

This further information should be read in conjunction with the accompanying candidate information.

This is an exceptional opportunity for an experienced, innovative and committed school leader to guide the International School of London Qatar into an exciting new phase of its development.

What makes this opportunity rare is the chance to make a considerable difference, but without the pressure of an immediate improvement agenda.

ISL Qatar is in very good shape. Enrolment is strong and the school has an excellent reputation in Doha. Dr Sean Areias will be stepping down after six years, during which time he has guided the school towards an understanding of excellence in the specific context of an IB continuum school in Qatar and developed a distinctive Approach to Learning, underpinned by strong and effective systems and processes. There is stable and secure governance and the school's finances are robust. In the first instance, ISL Qatar is seeking a Head of School who will understand the importance of continuity and preserving all that is good about the school.

But there is also a major opportunity. ISL Qatar will move to a new campus that will add significantly to the school's capacity – increasing numbers from 1,200 to 1,700 students – and provide a chance to think carefully about its positioning in Doha and beyond, and about how it can remain relevant in a world that is changing at an unprecedented rate. The new campus will be close to the current site, with all the advantages of that location in terms of access for families. The building will have a strong focus on sustainability, and its designs are intended to ensure education is centred around the child rather than the building. The space and facilities will have the flexibility to evolve as educational thinking continues to develop.

The new Head of School will require the innovative instincts and creativity to think clearly about how the new campus can support ISL Qatar's commitment to an excellent, holistic, IB education. They will need to be keenly interested in contemporary educational thinking, but sufficiently discriminating to understand what will work best for ISL Qatar and to develop a coherent view about new approaches to teaching and learning that blend excellence, relevance, well-being, and a strong sense of community.

However, those innovative instincts must be balanced by a very strong grasp of what it takes to lead a popular, premium IB school and to remain a school of choice in an increasingly competitive market: clarity of vision and purpose; a never-ceasing focus on the highest standards of teaching and learning, supported by good use of data; a balanced programme; strong outcomes; a focus on well-being and a strong culture of safeguarding; good professional development for staff; and a keen understanding of the context. The Head of School must also appreciate the importance of the current school culture, especially its family-feel and the centrality of its values, and commit to sustaining this as the school moves onto its new site.

The successful candidate is likely to have experience leading a similar fully international community – ISL Qatar has students from c.80 countries and staff from more than 50. However, they should also be ready to engage with the idea of an international education that aligns with the context of Qatar and the region, in a school where almost half the students are of Arab origin. The number of Qatari students is relatively small (c.18%), but that does not diminish the importance of the national subjects, not least at a time when the government is seeking to ensure their full integration into every international curriculum and each school's alignment with the National Vision.

The next Head of School must also be comfortable looking outwards. The focus in recent years has been on strengthening the school's offer – attaining excellence and ensuring there are the systems, structure and culture to sustain it. That has made ISL Qatar a school of choice in its market, although its successes have not always been more widely known. The Head should recognise the importance of investing time in good parent engagement, and be confident as an ambassador beyond the school community; they should be a good public speaker and keen to network within Qatar and the region in ways that will benefit the school. The school has typically been modest about its standing, and the new Head of School will have a chance to give it more visibility among international schools in Qatar, in the Middle East, and further afield. The school's growth will, in any case, bring fresh marketing and admissions challenges.

The Head of School will benefit from stable governance and a high level of autonomy. The original International School of London was established in 1972 by Nadim Makerem who was committed to the concept of international education at a time when that was not nearly so common; the school was one of the first in the UK to adopt the IB Diploma. Today, ISL's two schools – in London and Doha – remain in family ownership, with Amin Makerem as the CEO. That conviction about international education remains the guiding spirit of the Makerem family.

The schools must be financially sustainable, but they are not primarily commercial ventures: the ISL Qatar Head will be responsible for admissions numbers, including meeting the increased capacity, and careful budgetary control, but they will not feel pressure constantly to drive down costs and improve profit margin. Although governance structures and board membership are being developed further, the ISL schools will, in many ways, continue to resemble a traditional family ownership model. The Head will speak to Amin Makerem on a weekly basis and report to board meetings; the boundaries between governance and management are well understood and respected. Part of the appointment process will be to find a Head of School who is able to operate in an environment of considerable trust.

The new Head will also enter a school with a strong leadership team, operating with a good culture of responsibility, accountability and trust.

For the right candidate, joining ISL Qatar as Head of School will be a major career step: a chance to join a flourishing school, but with the new campus providing scope to make a very significant difference and help the school stand out further. The successful candidate will have a strong track record of senior leadership and be able to blend outstanding educational leadership, an enthusiasm for the externally-facing aspects of the role, and the innovation needed to help ISL Qatar take advantage of its new home and affirm its position as one of the leading international schools in the Middle East.

The position is available from August 2027.

How to Apply

This recruitment process is being managed by RSAcademics on behalf of The International School of London Qatar. Unless indicated otherwise, all communication about the appointment will be via RSAcademics.

Two members of the RSAcademics team are primarily engaged in this process:

- Keith Clark, Head of International Leadership Appointments: keithclark@rsacademics.com
- Jean Sullivan, Head of International Search: jeansullivan@rsacademics.com

Interested candidates are invited to contact Jean Sullivan for an initial confidential discussion, attaching a copy of their CV/résumé.

Closing date for Applications: 18 September at 10:00 (UK) / 12:00 (Qatar).

Please apply via the Apply Now link alongside the announcement of the position at www.rsacademics.com.

To apply, candidates should complete an application form and submit it electronically to RSAcademics, together with a letter of application, data-sharing consent form and CV/résumé.

Please make sure your letter, addressed to Amin Makerem, CEO, ISL Qatar, explains your interest in the role, the ways in which you think the role aligns with your experience and strengths, and how it resonates with your educational philosophy. A largely generic application letter, or one that does not make the connection between you and the role, is discouraged and may lead to your application not being considered.

Should you have any queries relating to uploading your application documents, please contact Alison Hooper, International Appointments Coordinator:
applications@rsacademics.com / +44 (0) 204 6269 791

The recruitment process will proceed as follows:

- All applications will be acknowledged by email. If you have not received acknowledgement within two working days, please contact RSAcademics by telephone (+44 (0) 204 6269 791).
- Preliminary interviews (by video call with RSAcademics colleagues) will take place in the weeks commencing 21 and 28 September 2026.
- Longlist interviews by video conference with members of the ISL Qatar team will take place in the week commencing 12 October 2026.
- Final interviews will take place in Doha in early November.
- RSAcademics will collect references for candidates invited to attend the final stage. No referees will be contacted until RSAcademics has received your express permission to do so.

ISL Qatar is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, with zero tolerance for any breaches of safeguarding standards. All applicants/new staff must undergo child protection screening, including employment references, prohibition from teaching checks, and a criminal records check (DBS or an equivalent certificate from the applicant's country of residence).

All staff are required to actively support the school's child protection and safeguarding commitments by complying with relevant policies, promoting student welfare, and promptly reporting concerns to Designated Safeguarding Lead(s).

Safeguarding-related questions will form a part of each stage of the appointments process.

RSAcademics is a global executive search and consultancy firm working exclusively with schools. For more than 20 years, we've supported governors and leaders at pivotal moments – whether they are appointing senior staff or making complex strategic decisions. What makes us distinctive is the depth of firsthand experience in schools across our team – as heads, governors, bursars and senior professionals – combined with specialist expertise in areas such as strategy, research, marketing and finance. This blend is continually enriched by our ongoing consultancy and appointments work with schools worldwide, so our advice is always current, practical and evidence led. Please visit www.rsacademics.com for more information.