ÜSKÜDAR AMERICAN ACADEMY

ISTANBUL-TURKEY

ÜSKÜDAR
AMERICAN
ACADEMY

Welcome to Üsküdar American Academy (ÜAA)

Established in 1876, ÜAA is one of the oldest private schools in the region. It was originally founded by the American Board and now is governed by the Health and Education Foundation, or SEV, a Turkish non-profit foundation. The school is a private co-educational school meeting the needs of the Turkish populace. Students enter the school through a nationally-administered, private schools' entrance exam taken at the end of the eighth grade. Our incoming students consistently rank in the top 1% of all students who take this exam throughout Turkey.

The high school program is academic in nature and provides an English language, college preparatory program for Turkish students. Language development is woven throughout the curriculum. To complement English language development, mathematics and science are taught in English. Turkish is emphasized through language and literature courses as well as through the social sciences classes. A second foreign language, French, German, and Spanish is also required for all students starting with the preparatory year through the tenth grade.

The Applied Studies Department offers courses in art, music, and information technology. In addition, the Physical Education Department sponsors competitive team sports for boys and girls as well as a recreational sports program. Supplementing the required courses are a wide variety of electives, taught in English and Turkish, designed to meet students' interests and needs.

ÜAA has a historical commitment to social service, and many clubs focus on this issue. Each year the school hosts the Turkish International Model United Nations conference (TIMUN), which brings together over 400 students from Turkey, Europe, Asia, and North America. Our students regularly attend MUN events in Europe, Asia, and Africa as well as in Turkey. ÜAA is unique in that our students not only participate in MUN conferences using the English language, but also participate in conferences where French and German are the languages of discourse.

The school participates in national and international activities including science fairs, mathematics competitions, music performances, sporting events, international art and music club trips, the International Schools Theater Association (ISTA) workshops, and the European Youth Parliament.

Incoming students benefit from an extensive orientation program. Prior to entering the classroom, new students participate in team-building exercises, orienteering, field trips, library orientation, technology workshops, and scavenger hunts. This support continues throughout their high school years with programs sponsored by our guidance services and the school administration.

New teacher orientation is just as extensive. New faculty members are introduced to Turkish culture, the educational system, arts, politics and the economy through workshops, lectures, and field trips. In addition, we introduce new teachers to the Bağlarbaşı/Üsküdar neighborhood as well as the city of Istanbul.

The international faculty is composed of Turkish, US, Canadian, French, New Zealand, Brazilian, German, Indian and UK citizens and averages 16 years of teaching experience. ÜAA has five grade-level guidance counselors, two international university counselors, one Turkish university counselor, and a head librarian.

Many of the Turkish faculty are bilingual and teach in English. The school offers language courses for Turkish faculty who wish to learn English as well as for English speaking faculty who wish to learn Turkish.

Once again, welcome to our school.

Eric Trujillo
Headmaster

Over 135 years of history

The First Years

Üsküdar American Academy for Girls was originally founded in 1876 in Bahçecik by congregational missionaries of The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The school was moved to Adapazari where it remained until World War I. The site in Bağlarbaşi was originally the American College for Girls (ACG). ACG vacated the Bağlarbaşı site in 1914 and moved to Arnavutköy on the European side of Istanbul, thus allowing the Bağlarbaşı campus to be used as an Armenian orphanage by the Americans in 1914 and later as a barracks by the Turkish forces from 1915-1918. After searching for a new site, Üsküdar American Academy for Girls moved to Bağlarbaşı, the present site, in the early 1920's. With its new site and in the spirit of the new Turkish republic, the school became dedicated to quality education for girls.

The school was led by energetic and visionary educational leaders who brought the school though the many troubles affecting the world during the 20th century. Their names, Morgan, Martin, Kinney, live on at ÜAA with academic instruction buildings named after them. Without their guidance and dedication throughout the decades, the school would not exist today.

ÜAA in Recent Years

Üsküdar American Academy experienced a radical change in 1990 when it admitted boys for the first time. With this change, Üsküdar American Academy for Girls was renamed Üsküdar American Academy. With the passing of the eight year mandatory education law, Üsküdar American Academy, gradually phased out the middle school, and added an intensive English language preparatory year for the high school followed by a four year program.

Today the school, like the affiliated American schools in Izmir and Tarsus, and the American Hospital in Gaziantep, is under the governance of SEV, which carries full responsibility and authority for operating the school.

Hopefully, the tradition begun so many years ago will continue for many years at Üsküdar American Academy.

ÜAA Objectives

ÜAA Graduates should be:

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS WHO

- Are skilled and articulate communicators in multiple languages
- Understand, analyze, and interpret what is read, seen, or heard
- Write for different purposes and audiences
- Maintain balanced lifestyles that are physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually healthy
- Explore their own talents, motivations, and interests
- Demonstrate confidence, motivation, and self-reliance

COMPLEX THINKERS WHO

- Are numerically literate and able to interpret information presented in a variety of formats
- Use critical and logical thinking skills
- Are creative in generating ideas and solutions
- Collect, evaluate, synthesize, and apply information and knowledge
- Select and use appropriate technology to achieve specific goals

COLLABORATIVE CONTRIBUTORS WHO

- Work effectively as constructive members of a group as a leader or team member
- Understand group dynamics and select appropriate methods to attain a goal
- Develop strong listening skills
- Understand, respect, and articulate the perspectives of others

GLOBAL CITIZENS WHO

- Reflect Atatürk's principles
- Are conscious of and develop a respect for world cultures and religions, including their art, music, and literature
- Comprehend the impact of major trends within history
- Demonstrate concern and respect for others and the environment
- Function as productive, ethical, and contributing members of the global community

Our graduates should function as productive, ethical, and contributing members of the global community.

Council of International Schools (CIS) Accreditation

In 2007, Üsküdar American Academy was accredited by the Council of International Schools after a rigorous multi-year process. For schools of excellence, an internationally recognized and valued school accreditation award is a symbol of the school's commitment to providing the best. ÜAA strived for accreditation due to a strong belief that the evaluation process is the most important aspect of accreditation. During the process, all members of the school community (students, parents, faculty, administration, and Board members) were involved in the Self-Study and the follow-up Implementation Plans.

All facets of ÜAA's operations were analyzed not only by members of the school's community but also by international educators from peer schools who visited the school to ensure that the rigorous standards of CIS accreditation are met in the following areas:

- Philosophy and Objectives
- Curriculum
- Governance and Management
- Staff
- Student Support Services
- Resources
- Student and Community Life

CIS accreditation is fully endorsed by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). NAIS is recognized as the premier independent schools organization in the United States.

Academics

The curriculum is taught through a variety of educational strategies emphasizing active learning through discussions, small group work, student presentations, peer feedback, debates, research, and laboratory work.

Üsküdar American Academy's curriculum includes all of the requirements of the Turkish Ministry of Education program, but has approval to rearrange hours and topics. Our five year academic program is divided into three phases.

The first phase is the mandatory Preparatory year for all incoming students. The objective is to teach students our educational expectations and objectives and this is done through the English language program. The mathematics and sciences are also taught in English. In addition Turkish language and literature, music, art, and physical education courses are required. During the year we also introduce students to research and technology.

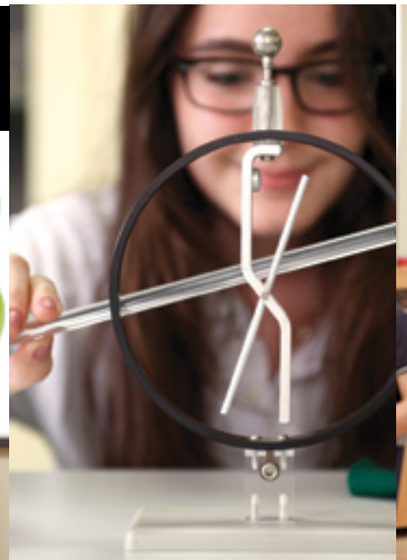
In the second phase, the ninth and tenth grades, students are required to take a diverse selection of subjects and courses that provide the academic foundation students need for success in their curricular concentrations in the eleventh and twelfth grade years.

In the eleventh and twelfth grade years, students enter the third or final phase in which they choose subject area courses based upon their plans for the type of university they wish to attend and the major they wish to pursue; for example, medicine, engineering, business management, to name but a few.

The elective program offers opportunities for students to explore their own creativity, talents, and interests, as well as the general culture in which they live. For this reason students are offered numerous and varied electives throughout the high school program.

Our teachers are encouraged to participate in professional development programs such as online courses, lectures, workshops and seminars organized by local and international schools and universities.

Each student adapts creatively and innovatively to life and work using scientific inquiry, literary and artistic approaches, information technology, and the social sciences.



THE IB DIPLOMA PROGRAME AT ÜAA

ÜAA is proud to announce that the school has been authorized to offer the IB Diploma Program to its students starting with the 2014-2015 academic year.

The IBDP Program is offered in 35 schools in Turkey and in 2483 schools in 140 countries around the world. It is recognized by the top ranked universities in the world for the excellent preparation it offers for life in university, and is even valued by employers such as global firms.

This program presents a blend of balance, depth and breadth of study as the students can select six subjects from six different groups of disciplines of which three must be studied at Higher Level. These topics at Higher Level, when compared to those studied at Standard Level, have more variety and are studied in greater depth.

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP) is a two-year curriculum, taught during high school, allowing some leeway for schools to meet the needs of the local community through the selection of specific courses in some of the subject areas while still meeting the core requirements of the IBDP. The IBDP was originally designed in the late 1960's to cater to the educational needs of globally mobile students attending international schools. It was developed as a compromise between the specialization in some national systems and the breadth preferred in others, without a bias towards any particular national system.

Through the IBDP curriculum, ÜAA is able to develop students who:

- Have excellent breadth and depth of knowledge
- Flourish physically, intellectually, emotionally and ethically
- Study at least two languages
- Excel in traditional academic subjects

Groups	Discipline
1	Literature and Language in the student's first language
2	Literature and Language in a language acquired in school
3	Individuals and Society
4	Sciences
5	Mathemathics
6	The Arts or another subject from one of the above groups

The students must also fulfill three core requirements:

IBDP students are expected to make connections between the different areas of study as well as between what they learn at school and their own lives. They should aspire to become self-learners who can communicate in more than one language. They should also aspire to understand other cultures as well as their own and be ready to take a more active role in the establishment of a more peaceful, sustainable and just world.

The IBDP at ÜAA

The IB Diploma Program at ÜAA offers three packages designated by the school as Engineering, Life Sciences and Management.

IBDP students also write an Extended Essay and complete the TOK and CAS requirements. IB students at ÜAA are selected according to the published performance criteria, through interviews and teacher recommendation.

Groups	Engineering	Life Sciences	Management
1	Turkish A (Lit) SL	Turkish A (Lit) SL	Turkish A (Lit) SL
2	English A (Lang & Lit) SL	English A (Lang & Lit) SL	English A (Lang & Lit) SL
3	Turkey in the 20thCentury SL	Turkey in the 20thCentury SL	Turkey in the 20thCentury SL
4	Chemistry HL	Chemistry HL	Physics HL
5	Mathematics HL	Mathematics HL	Mathematics HL
6	Physics HL	Biology HL	Economics HL

Departments

Mathematics Department

All ÜAA students are required to complete five years of a traditional, and very challenging, math curriculum including College-level Algebra, Trigonometry, Geometry, Pre-calculus and Calculus. Elective courses in Geometry, Analytic Geometry and AP Calculus AB or BC are also offered. All subject matter is taught in English. In all courses, homework is assigned, both online and through worksheets. The department is committed to current instructional technology such as interactive whiteboards and graphing calculators. The common homework, quizzes and exams ensure that all students obtain consistent opportunities to excel. The department offers many additional opportunities to challenge the students' prowess through a very active Math Club that offers international and national math competitions. ÜAA graduates have a tradition of excellent test results on mathematics scores for both the Turkish Universities Entrance Exams and the SAT Math Exam.

Science Department

The science department approaches courses from a holistic point of view, with the belief that science is not based on memorized knowledge, but is composed of integrated systems, concepts and models. The level reached by the end of Grade 12 is approximately equivalent to the American AP although there are some differences in content and emphasis in the Turkish curriculum. AP textbooks are used throughout. On-line homework systems are also used to help the students practice the material studied and to develop a deeper understanding of the topics. In Prep the students take science. The focus of this course is on practical skills such as measurement, data collection and graphing. Scientific terminology is introduced and all students will write formal laboratory reports. All of our students take all three of the sciences, Physics, Chemistry and Biology, in both Grade 9 and Grade 10. In addition all students take a Health course in Grade 9. Although the time in Grade 9 that is allocated to the sciences is short the courses put in place the important foundations needed for success in grade 10 and beyond. In grade 10 for one period each week and in each of the sciences, the classes are divided in two. This allows for small group laboratory and problem solving sessions, both of which are integral to our departmental goals. All ÜAA students will receive a solid introduction to the sciences. At Grade 11 and 12 the sciences are elective classes. About two thirds of ÜAA students take some or all of these advanced courses. Additional elective classes are offered for those students wanting to delve even deeper into the sciences.

English Department

Throughout Turkey, the five-year English program offered at Üsküdar is renowned for the development of language and literary skills. Students become critical, creative, complex, and independent thinkers; practiced oral communicators; active listeners; skilled and inquiring readers of fiction and nonfiction; meticulous researchers; proficient users of technology; and articulate writers.

These skills are introduced in an initial year of language immersion (Prep English). Prep English is divided into three classes, Literature, Language, and Communication. These skills are practiced during grade 9, and reviewed and reinforced during the following three years in grades 10-12. During the final semester of grade 11, all students sit the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). The scores earned assist students in their applications to Turkish and international universities. Supplementary elective courses include drama, cinema studies, Honors World Literature, Honors American Literature, British literature, public speaking, creative writing, readers' theatre, Young Adult Literature, Journalism, English SAT preparation, and grade 9 language support. The department sponsors a chapter of the National English Honor Society (NEHS), the only NEHS chapter in Turkey, and is an active participant in the Turkish chapter of the English Speaking Union. Additional activities and clubs sponsored by the English Department include the following: English Drama, Model United Nations, Journalism, the literary magazine Serçe, Documentary Film Club, and Debate.

Facilities

Laboratory classes are integral to the science curriculum at ÜAA.

Labs

The teacher is frequently supported in the laboratory by an assistant who can help give the students the attention they deserve. In grade 10 the timetable has been arranged to allow for small group laboratory work. In the advanced courses, team teaching occurs in the labs whenever possible. Computer sensors, video cameras and other multimedia resources facilitate experimental work.

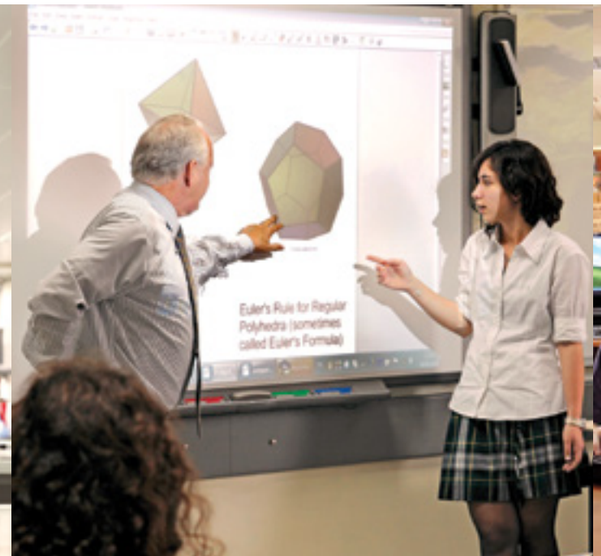
In the physics laboratory, experiments are used to collect and analyze data across the full range of physics topics. The lab is very well equipped; in recent years PCs and data-logging equipment have been used to facilitate detailed investigations.

The chemistry laboratory is the ideal place to relate chemistry to life experiences, thus making chemistry an exciting course. Molecular models and kits encourage visualization of chemical processes.

The biology laboratory is designed to enhance learning. Students become very familiar with the light microscope as a means to understanding how biological systems work. Grade 11 science students increase their knowledge through dissection.

We also encourage students to explore their interests by carrying out a year project. They will, of course, have access to all of the laboratory equipment that we have.

The school has two computer labs with a total of 50 PC computers with the Windows operating system. The labs are used by faculty for teaching language development skills, graphic design, art, and they are open before, during, and after school for individual student use. In the school's library/media center, an additional 24 desktop computers are available for classes to use for research or for individual student use. All classrooms on campus have an interactive smart board, digital projector, integrated sound system and wireless network and internet access. Each full time teacher is provided with a laptop.



Library

We believe that the nurturing of balanced individuals requires an education of the mind, body and spirit, both in and out of the classroom.

The ÜAA library is recognized in the Turkish private school sector for its excellence and service. It is staffed by three full-time qualified librarians, two of whom are bi-lingual. The library provides resources, print and electronic, in English and Turkish, plus a small collection of French, German and Spanish books. The total book collection exceeds 22,000 - volumes. The librarians liaise with faculty members to promote research skills, reading for pleasure, information literacy and the ethical use of information. In addition, they work with faculty members on collection development in English and Turkish, with the aim of providing the resources necessary to meet the information needs of faculty, students and staff. The ÜAA library also gives access to digital resources (Ebrary, SIRS Researcher, EBSCO Host and Questia School via the Follett Destiny program).

Sports

Competitive sports teams

Boys and girls basketball
Boys and girls soccer
Boys flag American football
Boys and girls volleyball
Boys and girls Swimming
Boys and girls Badminton
Boys and girls Table tennis
Boys and girls tennis
Boys futsal

Recreational clubs and activities

Kinball
Dance
Step aerobics
Ultimate Frisbee
Floor hockey

Facilities

The school has the Özdemir Sabanci Sports Hall, which is a purpose-built gymnasium with a full size basketball court, table tennis room which can also be used for dance class or step aerobics. The fitness room is fully equipped fitness center with various weight and cardio machines and was completely renovated in 2011 through USAID-ASHA. In addition to the sports hall, the school also has on campus an outdoor basketball court, a tennis court, and an artificial-turf soccer field.

University Counseling

The ÜAA program is academic in nature and provides an English language, college preparatory program for Turkish students. Annually 100% of our graduating class attends top-tier universities, both within Turkey and internationally. To prepare students and families for the university placement process, the school employs university counselors.

Due to the nature of the Turkish university entrance exam, the Turkish university counselor works with families and students to explain the process. The Turkish university entrance system is explained to students in detail beginning with the 9th grade. A focus is made on GPA and course selection which are essential elements for university selection and entrance. In addition, University presentations, career introduction seminars, and university field trips are organized for students so that they may make informed choices. After the university entrance is taken and results are learned by the families, the students then prepare their applications and major of study in consultation with the counselor and submit to the university.

Approximately 25% to 35% of a graduation class matriculates to colleges and universities abroad, primarily to North America, but also to schools in the United Kingdom, Europe, and the Middle East. The international university counselors work on an individual basis with students and parents throughout the application process and encourage a student-centered approach. Parent nights, small group meetings and workshops are also held regularly. Over 200 university and college admissions officers and representatives visit each year.

The Turkish and international university counselors work in cooperation and use the same university research center where a current library of guidebooks, test prep materials, and catalogs are housed. We use Naviance, a software platform which provides ÜAA with a comprehensive college and career planning system enhancing the university counselor's productivity, and allows for effective school-home-university communication.

Colleges and universities attended by 2009-2014 graduates

Turkey:

BOĞAZIÇI UNIVERSITY
İSTANBUL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
KOÇ UNIVERSITY
SABANCI UNIVERSITY
ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICALUNIVERSITY
YEDITEPE UNIVERSITY
BILGI UNIVERSITY
BILKENT UNIVERSITY

International:

AMHERST COLLEGE
BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC
BOSTON UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY OF BOCCONI
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
BROWN UNIVERSITY
CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
DUKE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY OF EXETER
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
MCGILL UNIVERSITY
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM
UNIVERSITE PARIS IV – SORBONNE
RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN
STANFORD UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
UNIVERSITY IF WARWICK
YALE UNIVERSITY
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Extra Curricular

The extra-curricular program is comprehensive and complements the standard curriculum by allowing students to broaden existing passions or to sample new areas of interest. The school offers over 70 different clubs with membership varying from 4 to over 100. If new interests arise, both faculty and students have the opportunity to create new clubs.

English Drama

- Promotes the development and use of English through drama activities
- Accessible through the Drama Club and through drama courses
- Open to all students and meets after school hours
- Offers opportunities for acting and technical experience

ÜAA is a member of the International Schools Theater Association (ISTA). ISTA has participated in international festivals in the Czech Republic, England, Uzbekistan, Germany and India. In October 2014, an ISTA Festival was hosted by ÜAA.

The English Drama program stages a minimum of one major theatrical experience a year; past plays include “More Light” by Bryony Lavery, “Living with Lady Macbeth” by Rob John, “Mmmmbeth” by Allison Williams, “Telling Wilde Tales” by Penelope Linwood, “Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead” by Tom Stoppard, “This is A Test” by Stephen Gregg, “Check, Please!” by Jonathan Rand and “Atalanta” by Thomas J. Hutton to name but a few of the many performances. The Drama program also stages smaller “pop-up” dramas during the school year.

MUSICALS AT ÜAA
Notre Dame de Paris, Grease, Broadway Musicals: Cats, West Side Story, Evita, Fiddler on the Roof, Les Miserables TURKISH MUSICALS: Keşanlı Ali Destanı, Lüküs Hayat

Turkish Drama:

The Turkish language drama program promotes the development and use of Turkish through drama activities. The drama program annually stages a major Turkish play and participates in festivals in Istanbul.

Music:

The school’s music program offers a variety of musical experiences and training through curricular and extra-curricular activities and teaching. The school has Classical, Pop, Polyphonic chorus, Percussion, Classical guitar, Turkish classical, Turkish folk, Jazz and rock orchestras. Our percussion group has performed at Saint Petersburg’s Russian College of Traditional Culture and over the past four years the school’s chorus and percussion group has performed in Holland, Ukraine, Austria, and Sweden.

The school also has an active Musical program which promotes creativity through the annual musicals. Some of the musicals which have been performed are: Notre Dame de Paris, Grease, Cats, West Side Story, Evita, Fiddler on the Roof, Les Miserables, Kensal Ali Destanı, and Lüküs Hayat.

The ÜAA Model United Nations Club:

ÜAA has one of the strongest Model United Nations (MUN) programs in the region. The purpose of MUN is to educate the student- participants about current events, topics in international relations, diplomacy and the United Nations agenda. Our program is student-run with over 100 student-members. In addition to politics and diplomacy, the ÜAA program also promotes spoken and written English, allows students to develop leadership skills, and participates in conferences in Turkey and internationally. The school is also the host of the annual Turkish International Model UN (TIMUN) conference when we host over 400 students from schools throughout the region. Over the past four years a few of the international conferences our students have attended are: THIMUN at The Hague in Holland, the DSAMUN in Athens, Greece; AMMUN in Amman, Jordan; CACMUN in Cairo, Egypt; MILANMUN in Milan, Italy; JOMUN in Johannesburg, South Africa; and Haarlem MUN in Haarlem, Holland.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Journalism:

The Journalism Club promotes creativity through writing. The students produce Serçe, a literary, cultural and art magazine, which is published three times per year and showcases the school news, poems, stories, narratives, interviews, and literary criticisms. The magazine’s articles are written and published in both English and Turkish by the students.

Social Service:

The historical influence of the school’s founders, the American Board, led to the school having a strong understanding of the underprivileged and disadvantaged in Turkey and the world. The social service program offers students the opportunity for personal involvement through projects. Recent projects include the creation of five computer labs for under-funded Turkish public schools, visiting retired teachers in state retirement homes, books and stationary donations, and raising funds for an international water project in Africa.

Teachers quotes

Kulsoom Rizvi
English Teacher

Teaching at Üsküdar American Academy has allowed me to expand my knowledge of world culture, to strengthen my skills at working collaboratively, and most importantly, has given me the opportunity to meet high-achieving, dynamic, and talented young people. The students at ÜAA are a pleasure to teach, not only because they are brilliant (though that helps!), but because as a whole, they are humble and truly curious about the world around them. It's a dream come true for teachers who want to grow with their students. You will have opportunities to try unique approaches in your lesson planning, gain feedback from trusted and esteemed colleagues, and get to know a diverse community who will become your family away from family. As for the city itself, Istanbul is a cosmopolitan, beautiful place with rich history and a fascinating landscape; to me, living in this gorgeous city is an added bonus. I am proud to be an Üsküdar Tiger and plan to spend a good portion of my career here in Turkey, largely because of the security and happiness this job provides.

Michael Wilkinson
English Teacher

Working at ÜAA has given me the opportunity to work with some very talented, motivated and successful learners. This has made teaching at ÜAA enjoyable and rewarding. Getting to know a country, a school and its students takes time. I have found that my teaching has improved as my understanding of the school, its students and Turkish educational culture has deepened. With greater experience, I have become more confident in the classroom and more skillful in my dealings with students. Through my time here, especially with the extension of my stay past the initial year or two, I believe that I have become a more effective teacher.

Gordon Dobie
English Teacher

Teaching at Üsküdar American is a rewarding experience, as students are very bright and highly motivated. The teaching is enjoyable because the school has a very modern, learning-centered curriculum and provides all the facilities necessary to make teaching and learning both effective and enjoyable. Üsküdar American Academy has a long history and great prestige, and its teachers have a great deal of professional respect in the community. Perhaps more importantly, the school itself has a great sense of community, and colleagues are very supportive both personally and professionally.

The atmosphere in the school is extremely positive and constructive. Students talk easily with teachers and there is a general feeling of co-operative learning, one in which we are all working toward the same goals. The school also places a high value on non-academic activities, all of which involve students and staff enjoying themselves without necessarily involving teaching – very often it's the teachers who are learning from the students.

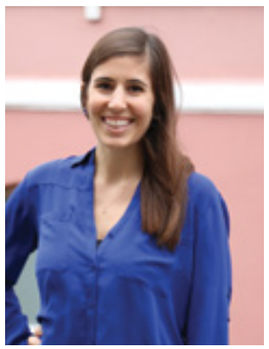
Istanbul is one of the greatest cities in the world to live in. It is vibrant and exciting, noisy and busy in some places, quiet and calm in others. Being on the Bosphorus and with the Princes Islands close at hand in the Marmara Sea, one is always close to the water. Istanbul is also a great travel and transportation hub, with easy and virtually constant access to the rest of Turkey by bus (a Turkish specialty), rail and plane. It is also very well served by international airlines and passenger shipping lines. Even after 22 years living here, hardly a day goes by without a new, unexpected and enjoyable experience.

Heath Currie
Spanish Teacher

In three years of living in Turkey I met wonderful friends and colleges that are graduates of ÜAA. Needless to say the school's reputation for academic excellence and the strong language skills of ÜAA students was apparent in these individuals. I am now proud to have joined the team at Üsküdar American Academy working, teaching such a great group of bright, enthusiastic students. Thus far I have been very pleased with the reaction and shared enthusiasm I receive from my students for Spanish language and culture.

Christopher Schooley
Physics Teacher

Uskudar American Academy is a fantastic school, and Turkey is a beautiful country. If you are interested in experiencing a truly unique culture and working at a highly competitive school full of dedicated students, then ÜAA is a great fit. Located in one of the most ancient and dynamic cities in the world is reward enough, but add to that the commitment to educational exceptionalism that ÜAA embodies and you have a place that is both professionally and personally rewarding. I can think of no better place to live and work.



Allison Rae Kifer
English Teacher

When I first came to Istanbul, I really had no idea how different it could be from everything else I had known before. Being from a small town in Kentucky, and living and working only in relatively small cities, I was definitely not accustomed to the big city life of Istanbul. However, the energy of the people and the endless possibilities for an adventure make this city an exciting place to live. Having the opportunity to work in this city has provided so many memorable experiences - whether it is as grand as whisking off for the weekend to Mediterranean island or simply crossing the Bosporus on ferry taxi. Working at ÜAA is very rewarding as the students are motivated, personable, and cooperative. Most of the students have high expectations for themselves and strive to achieve their goals. Aside from academics, the school is also constantly buzzing with activities - anything from the ever-popular Model United Nations to English drama to the hiking club. I've had the personal pleasure over the last few years to coach the girls soccer (football) club. Helping girls find confidence in a sport that, while is incredibly popular for men, is not typical for girls to play has been very fulfilling. The general feeling of community and family causes ÜAA to be a wonderful place to be a teacher.

Graduates' quotes

I first came to Üsküdar American Academy when I was twelve and by the time I was fifteen I was so attached to the school I couldn't imagine going anywhere else. When I was sixteen I joined the Student Council and learned about the organization from the inside. I was already eighteen by the time I had served in three different positions and it was then time to leave school. After graduating from Üsküdar American Academy, for the first time in my life I felt the need to contribute to a place where I made wonderful friends and where I became part of a tradition, a place that I felt was mine: an institution, a community, my Alma Mater. I felt the need to give back in a meaningful way. The rest came after that.

Gözde Küçük (ÜAA'02, Princeton'06)

Ever since I graduated from Üsküdar American Academy in 2007 the word 'High School' has always evoked a flood of happy memories, bringing a sad smile to my face, as I'm both happy to have been so lucky and sad to know that I will never be able to go back. Like many other students I would later learn that the most important stage of an individual's development happens when they adopt a new home. But even then I knew – if not as much as I know now - that the home I had adopted was one of the best I could have for going through this stage of development. To me, my path towards becoming a grown-up has so much to do with the real life experiences I had during my five years at high school. I feel extremely fortunate to have gone through this time of my life at Üsküdar American Academy where all the difficulties, responsibilities, wonderful moments and achievements were put before me on an extravagant open buffet.

Ferhan Şensoy
(ÜAA'07, NYU Tisch School of Arts'11)

Walking through the doors of ÜAA for the first time with your new and light bag on heavy shoulder that is stiff with anxiety is not a pleasant sensation. My anxiety evaporated, however, when I quickly noticed that I was surrounded by people with whom I shared many values, and who had gone through the same grueling examination process. On this fertile common ground, mutual understanding and lasting friendships was sure to flourish. Our school is challenging, with strict rules and tough classes in a way that aims to prepare us not only for college but also for a successful future. In ÜAA, I immediately realized that I was no longer treated as a kid but as a candidate to be a responsible and accountable adult. I also realized that when I finally walked out these doors five years later, I would not be able to count one day in this school as a waste.

Deniz Tanyolaç (ÜAA'14, Yale'18)

I graduated from a small elementary school. I studied there for 11 years, including the kindergarten. I hadn't changed any schools before and I knew every people back there. So I was really anxious when the high school was starting. New school, new people, new teachers, new environment… However, when I walked through the entrance of the school, my anxiety suddenly disappeared and at that moment, I felt like I was at my home. All of the people welcomed us very warmly. As I joined many clubs and Student Association, I started to feel that we were a family. All of the students, teachers, faculty members; we were all members of this big family. Even though I had difficulties to be successful both academically and socially at first, I came to school happily every day. Today, when I look back to my past 5 years, I see that Üsküdar taught me being self-reliant, being academically and socially strong, helping others, talking in front of people and being a part of a group through its activities and challenging academic curriculum. But most of all, when I look back to my years at Üsküdar, I see the best 5 years of my life.

Cemre Ece Yücel
(ÜAA'13, Boğaziçi University'17)

There are many words to describe my 5 years at ÜAA. Challenging, definitely, but more importantly, empowering and motivating. Motivating me to be a better student, a better friend, a better person. Showing me that I can always be more, always learn more and give more back. Now I'm more than halfway done with the first semester of my freshman year in college, and in this new environment, I can clearly see what Uskudar has taught me over the years. Not only did it give me a very strong foundation to survive in this academically challenging place, but it also mentally prepared me to this new life by showing that I can handle it. I hope this motivation stays with me for years and I can find strength in it when I am faced with newer and harder challenges.

Yasemin Atiyas (ÜAA'14, M.I.T. '18)

Living and Housing

The district around the school is a comfortable and safe neighborhood. There are an abundance of markets and stores which have all the necessities and more. Nearby is "Capitol", a modern mall with multiple floors with internationally recognized brand name stores, a supermarket, fast food restaurants, and a large cinema complex with films in the original language.

The sprawling city of Istanbul, population 15 million and growing, is split down the middle by the Bosphorus, the waterway that connects the Black Sea in the north to the Sea of Marmara in the south. The European side of the city is the location of the great historical sites, tourist hotels and restaurants, universities, diplomatic missions and glassy new high rise business centers. The Asian side of the city is predominately residential, with neighborhoods stretching and expanding ever eastwards into the Anatolian countryside.

Üsküdar, once the terminus of an ancient spice route and more recently the home of Florence Nightingale's famed hospital, is a crowded, noisy, bustling city-within-a-city. At the top of one of Üsküdar's hills is the district of Bağlarbaşı and off the main thoroughfare, behind walls and a gate, is the main campus of Üsküdar American Academy. Public transportation is readily available and travel around the city and the country is easy. Istanbul is a 24 hour-a-day cosmopolitan city with international film festivals, theater performances, jazz and music festivals, museums, art galleries, major sporting clubs who play football, volleyball and basketball in the European leagues.

Apartments are provided for teachers. Some teachers live on-campus in an apartment building which was opened in 1997. Each of the 12 units is approximately 85 square meters and is adequate for either a single or a couple.

The lojman has a large social room containing a TV, billards table and a small communal library. The lojman is located next to the high school campus and faculty members and their spouses may use the work-out facilities in the sports hall after classes, the evenings, or weekends. Faculty members who live 'off-campus' are generally placed in apartments within a ten or fifteen minute walk from the campus and may enjoy the same usage of campus privileges as the lojman residents.

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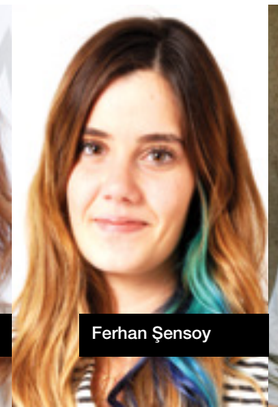
Gözde Küçük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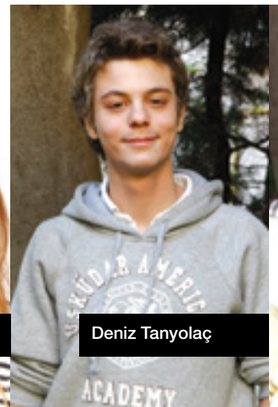
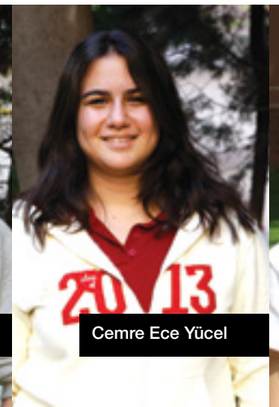

Deniz Tanyolaç


Cemre Ece Yücel

Yasemin Atiyas

Teachers who live "off-campus" are generally housed within a ten or fifteen minute walk to school.

ÜSKÜDAR AMERICAN ACADEMY

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