

Dhahran Academy

Dhahran, Saudi Arabia



Founded in 1962 for US Consulate families, this Eastern Province campus now pairs AP Capstone rigor with a full IB Diploma pathway.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	57/100
Academic outcomes	58/100
University placement	56/100
Prestige & heritage	57/100
Alumni network	56/100
Facilities	61/100
Transparency	47/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Dhahran Academy has a pedigree few Gulf schools can match: it opened in ****1962**** for US Consulate families and still carries the stamp of an American international school with serious academic intent. The defining point now is breadth at the top end. This is not a school that stops at a standard US high-school diploma. It runs an American curriculum alongside the IB and offers a full IB Diploma pathway, with AP Capstone in the mix according to the school’s own positioning. That combination puts it in a **small, exacting niche**: families who want US-style schooling without closing off the IB, and who value a campus with institutional memory rather than a freshly launched premium product.

Its market position is clear. At an average annual day fee of ****93,043 SAR**** across ages 3 to 18, Dhahran Academy sits in the premium end of the Eastern Province market, and it needs to justify that with substance rather than spectacle. The substance here is academic structure and external validation. The school holds Middle States accreditation, IB World School status, US State Department OSA recognition and NESAC affiliation. That is a ***serious accreditation stack***, and it matters more than polished branding. Parents looking for glitter, grand claims and inflated lifestyle language will find stronger theatre elsewhere; parents looking for a school with a long institutional track record, English-medium teaching and a credible American-plus-IB academic route will put this on the shortlist.

The pupil who fits Dhahran Academy is straightforward to identify. This is for children who can handle a ***demanding academic runway***, especially in the secondary years, and for internationally mobile families who want optionality between US and IB trajectories. It also suits parents who care about continuity: a non-religious day school in Dhahran serving ages ****3-18**** under one roof, with English as the language of instruction, gives families a stable through-school rather than a patchwork of phases. Students who need a softer, less structured environment, or whose strengths sit far more in vocational or highly specialised creative pathways, will find tighter fits elsewhere. For academically ambitious families in Saudi Arabia’s Eastern Province, this is a ***credible, grown-up option*** with more depth than flash.

STRENGTHS

- Offers a dual-curriculum pathway (American high school diploma and IB), giving families flexibility on university destinations.
- Operates as a day school, avoiding boarding fees and suiting expatriate families placed in the Eastern Province for defined work postings.
- Located in Dhahran, a long-established expatriate hub historically linked to Saudi Aramco's international workforce and schooling needs.
- Part of the ISS (International Schools Group) network in Saudi Arabia, giving some institutional continuity and shared administrative infrastructure.

TRADE-OFFS

- Editorial rank of 1219 indicates a limited international profile compared with globally benchmarked schools.
- Candidate tier status reflects a lack of independently published inspection reports, exam outcome data or accreditation detail available for public review.
- Catchment is effectively tied to Dhahran's expatriate population, which may limit the diversity or scale of extracurricular and peer networks compared to larger international hubs like Riyadh or Jeddah.
- Published fee schedules and detailed admissions statistics are not transparently available online, making cost and competitiveness hard to verify in advance.

ADMISSIONS

Admission points typically run from early years through secondary, following standard Saudi international-school intake cycles (usually August start). Applications are processed through ISS's central system, with places sometimes prioritised for children of sponsoring employers in the Eastern Province, including Aramco-linked families. Entry requirements generally include previous school records and, at times, an assessment or interview for older students. Because detailed fee tables and seat-availability data are not publicly published, prospective families should confirm current costs, waiting lists and required documentation directly with the school before assuming automatic entry.

WTS RATING 

This profile summarises editorial research by World's Top Schools. Verify all admissions dates directly with the school before submitting. Sources are cited in the full online profile at WorldsTopSchools.com/schools/sch_0d69737039.