

Candidate brief for the position of

# School Director



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# Background

## Over 60 years of Excellence in Education

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The International School of Lausanne (ISL) is a leading, not-for-profit, multilingual international school located in the French-speaking region of Switzerland. The school boasts a diverse community with around 250 dedicated staff members and approximately 850 students from over 60 nationalities, ranging in age from 3 to 18 years. Set on a spacious and open campus, ISL provides a vibrant and inclusive environment for learning and growth.



ISL strives to be a world leader in international education. The school's mission is dedicated to recognising the unique potential of each student, preparing them to play an active and responsible role in a complex, multicultural world.

From this mission stem four key operational objectives:

**1. To offer a world-class, forward-looking, values-based education that is broad, holistic, challenging, and based on research and evidence.**

The quality of teaching has a direct impact on student achievement, engagement, and motivation for learning. A core focus for the future across the entire school will be the continued development of the curriculum and the implementation of an approach to professional learning centred on individual coaching to both support and challenge an outstanding set of teachers.



**2. To make belonging, happiness and mental health a cornerstone of an ISL education.**

By prioritising happiness and mental health, the school aims to enable all members of its community to maximise their individual talents and abilities. Extensive work has been done in developing a well-being curriculum, focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and providing accessible and highly targeted student support to create an environment where all types of success are recognised and celebrated.

Over the next three years, the school plans to continue investing significantly in developing expertise in dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, and ADHD, as well as in provision for students with high potential.



**3. To help young people develop the knowledge, attitudes, skills and competences to find their place in Switzerland, and to be able to make friends, work and collaborate with people locally or internationally, across borders, languages and cultures.**

The Primary School has spearheaded the development of ISL's highly successful dual language programme, which has been extended into the Secondary School. The next stage of this development is the implementation of an immersive bilingual approach in Early Childhood.

This is a particularly exciting time to be joining ISL as the school opens its new Impact Hub. Designed to foster innovation, collaboration, and entrepreneurship, the Impact Hub is a cutting-edge learning environment that empowers students to become resilient problem-solvers. With opportunities ranging from entrepreneurial workshops and global competitions to hands-on projects with industry leaders, the Impact Hub serves as a launchpad for ideas, equipping students with the tools they need to thrive in a rapidly changing world.



## Impact Hub

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A dynamic space where innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship come to life.

**4. To ensure that the campus and the school's practices fully reflect its commitment to excellence.**

How the school functions, just as much as what and how we teach, is an essential part of offering an exceptional educational experience. Fundamental to this is the future development of operational systems based on sustainable and effective practices. The school is partway through a major strategic project led by the Board to develop an overarching sustainability framework.

# Community Expectations

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ISL's community expectations define how the school's five core values are put into practice everyday:

## **HONESTY**

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We believe in gaining trust from others by being true to our word and acting ethically. We do this by giving credit to the work of others and having integrity, being truthful, modelling expected behaviour, and being able to admit when we have made a mistake.

## **RESPECT**

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We believe in treating people with respect and acting with diplomacy and tact. We do this by standing up for others who are vulnerable or discriminated against, respecting the privacy of others, being aware of the language we use, and by considering how it may impact those around us.

## **SELF-CONTROL**

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We believe in being aware of our actions, and creating a positive outcome for ourselves and those around us. We support this by ensuring that self-regulation at school promotes our collective well-being, health, and safety. We foster a culture of approachability where individuals feel comfortable engaging with others.

## **EQUITY**

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We believe in treating people equitably regardless of differences. We are committed to inclusion and to accommodating a wide diversity of identities, including but not limited to gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical ability, ethnicity, nationality, status, etc. We do this by supporting equal opportunity and fair treatment, looking to understand different perspectives and cultures so that we avoid discrimination, bias, and misunderstandings, and by valuing and engaging with the diversity of backgrounds that exist in our community.

## **CARE AND CONCERN FOR OTHERS**

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We believe in positive relationships. We support this by showing kindness, understanding, empathy, and behaving in a constructive manner, by emphasising and cherishing collaboration with one another, by developing and maintaining positive relationships, and by continuously motivating, inspiring, and celebrating each other.

## A dynamic community

The ISL community is diverse, and whether a student, parent, or staff member, each individual is valued and listened to. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is an important part of school life, welcoming new families, coordinating social and cultural events, and enhancing lines of communication. All parents are encouraged to benefit from the school facilities, such as daily adult French classes, talks, and activities such as yoga.



## A diverse and values-based environment

While we want to develop young people’s knowledge, understanding, and skills, above all we want to help them develop their values, learn how to make moral judgements, and distinguish right from wrong. An understanding and appreciation of the richness that diversity brings is an essential part of this, and as a community, we are committed to actively working towards an inclusive environment. Diversity is seen broadly—not just in the fact that ISL has representatives of 60 nationalities who between them speak 40 languages—and students benefit from this diversity in innumerable ways.

The school’s continuing work in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) aims to create an environment where a strong sense of belonging is a product of how we interact with each other, and the terminology in our DEI policy is carefully chosen to say that all members of our community have a role to play in building the environment we want to see. We hope, through this, to contribute to the development of a more just society for all.



## Family life in Lausanne

Lausanne offers a unique living experience in one of Switzerland's most vibrant and dynamic regions, renowned for its international atmosphere and stunning natural beauty.

Nestled between the sparkling waters of Lake Geneva and the majestic Alps, Lausanne, a city of 150,000 residents, offers an unparalleled range of cultural and outdoor activities for students and their families. In the summer, you can swim, sail, or paddle on the lake. In the winter, you can hike, ski, sleigh, or snowshoe in the mountains.

The city boasts excellent public transportation, a high quality of life, and a safe environment, making it an attractive destination for families. It is also the home of the International Olympic Committee as well as many international sports federations, and a thriving innovation and tech industry.

French is spoken locally, but you frequently hear English and many other languages spoken too. Switzerland is a European hub, and Geneva airport is only 45 minutes away.

## Student Life

From student journalism, drama, and music to the Student Council, Model United Nations, Culture Club, and Primary School Umbrella Squad, ISL works hard to create an environment where young people can find their voice and be who they want to be.



## After School Activities

The After-School Activities (ASA) programme encourages students to explore their passions and develop new skills, laying the groundwork to remain active and involved throughout their lives. There are 125 after-school activities to choose from, most of which are included in school fees, with more than 90% of students participating in at least one activity per week.

## The Arts

ISL offers a large variety of arts activities to allow students to express their passions. The school hosts student art exhibitions every year, and primary and secondary school students perform spectacular drama productions throughout the year, such as High School Musical and Romeo and Juliet. A large group of musicians play a wide variety of instruments such as violin, drums, guitar, and more. The many music practice rooms on campus allow students to develop their skills in a professional environment. For those who enjoy performing with others, there is also a concert band, choir, and string ensembles.

## Sports

ISL offers a wide range of sports including basketball, skiing, netball, and gymnastics. The school offers competitive sports, with teams attending seasonal competitions, as well as recreational teams and other chances to get involved throughout the year. ISL participates in approximately 200 competitions throughout the school year, either hosted at ISL, at other Swiss venues, or internationally. A team of dedicated coaches from within the ISL faculty, along with external coaches, ensure that each student has a memorable time.



## Community Engagement

At ISL, both students and staff are encouraged to engage in various community service projects throughout the year. Community service and action are integrated into the curriculum, enabling the ISL community to engage personally and meaningfully in a range of local and global initiatives. These projects create genuine learning opportunities and have tangible effects in improving the natural environment and the lives of others.

# Learning

## at the International School of Lausanne

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### Primary School (Reception 3 to Year 6)

The Early Childhood programme (Reception 3 to Year 1) immerses children into an exceptional multilingual setting. The International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP) encourages children to explore the principles of respect, responsibility, and community. The result is an atmosphere of collaboration where children learn while playing in a welcoming, positive, and safe environment. The philosophy is based on developing the whole child, focussing on the key developmental domains of language, physical development, cognitive development and social and emotional development.

The purpose built Early Childhood building is spread over three floors with each classroom opening out onto an outdoor play area. The top floor is used as a French atelier space and has a kitchen area specifically adapted for the safety and enjoyment of the Early Childhood learners. The Forest school programme ensures students gain an appreciation of the world around them whilst making authentic links to their Units of Inquiry.





Children in the Primary School (Year 2 to Year 6) continue learning according to the principles of the PYP. Through a carefully designed learning environment which places strong emphasis on student well-being, children at ISL are nurtured towards being caring and active participants in a lifelong learning journey.

Grounded in inquiry and concept-based learning, the curriculum aims to achieve a balance between the search for meaning and understanding, and the acquisition of essential skills and knowledge. Character learning, articulated through the learner profile and approaches to learning skills, underpins all that ISL does in its pursuit to develop the whole child.

At ISL, through a curriculum that is both rigorous and significant, children cultivate human connection, physical and emotional well-being, and cultural awareness to ensure that they are well poised to make a positive difference in the world.



## Secondary School (Year 7 to Year 13)

The Secondary School is subdivided into the Middle School (Year 7 to Year 9) and the High School (Year 10 to Year 13).

In the first stage of secondary school, students follow the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP). The MYP focuses on developing students as inquirers and fostering intercultural understanding and communication skills. It integrates eight subject groups: Language and Literature, Language Acquisition, Individuals and Societies, Sciences, Mathematics, Arts, Physical and Health Education, and Design. A distinctive feature of the MYP is its emphasis on interdisciplinary learning, where students explore connections between subjects to address real-world issues. The programme culminates in a Personal Project, where students independently design and execute a project that reflects their personal interests and learning. With a strong emphasis on skill development, global contexts, and conceptual understanding, the MYP prepares students for academic challenges and lifelong learning.

Students then go on to study the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) a rigorous, two-year educational curriculum. The IBDP emphasizes holistic learning, critical thinking, and global awareness. The programme requires students to complete courses in six subject groups: Language and Literature, Language Acquisition, Individuals and Societies, Sciences, Mathematics, and the Arts, though students may choose to substitute a second course from another group in place of Arts. In addition to their coursework, students engage in three core components: the Theory of Knowledge (TOK), which encourages interdisciplinary thinking and reflection on knowledge; the Extended Essay, a self-directed research project culminating in a 4,000-word paper; and Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS), which fosters personal growth through extracurricular activities and community service. ISL is recognized internationally by universities for its academic rigor and the well-roundedness of its graduates.

ISL offers a fully recognised US High School Diploma in addition to the IB Diploma, and is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) as well as by the Council of International Schools (CIS). The IB Diploma and the ISL High School Diploma are two separate qualifications. However, students who complete the IB Diploma also gain the ISL High School Diploma.



# The Role School Director

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The School Director will provide strategic, academic, and administrative leadership. Reporting to the Board, they will collaborate closely with students, faculty, and the wider school community to uphold the school's mission, promote educational excellence, and foster an inclusive, forward-thinking learning environment.

## **Main responsibilities and duties:**

- **Strategic Leadership:** Assess current and future needs of the school to maintain and enhance its reputation among leading IB schools. Develop and implement a strategic plan with the Board, addressing governance, staffing, and academic and extra-curricular programmes.
- **Governance and Compliance:** Establish and uphold high standards of governance, ensuring accountability, transparency, and ethical integrity. Maintain regulatory compliance with Swiss educational laws and international accreditation standards to protect and promote ISL's best interests.
- **Board Collaboration:** Act as the primary advisor to the Board, providing recommendations on strategic priorities, policy development, and institutional direction.
- **Strategic Plan Execution:** Work closely with academic and operational leadership teams to drive the execution of the strategic plan, aligning all initiatives with ISL's mission and vision.
- **Leadership Development and Succession Planning:** Ensure ongoing leadership development, regularly perform risk assessments, and review succession plans.
- **Talent Acquisition and Development:** Attract and retain highly qualified staff by fostering a collaborative and inspiring workplace that supports professional growth and personal fulfilment.
- **School Culture and Community:** Cultivate a positive, caring, inclusive, and collaborative work environment that values diversity, fosters professional growth, and develops a strong community spirit.
- **Health and Well-being:** Foster a culture of well-being that supports the mental, emotional, and physical health of students, staff, and the wider community.

- **Academic Excellence:** Oversee the academic programme to maintain and further develop exceptional standards of teaching and learning.
- **Engagement in Teaching:** Act as the school's pedagogical leader, demonstrating a deep understanding of the educational experience.
- **Student Support:** Oversee the further development of student support services to ensure all students receive appropriate support and access to resources to promote their well-being and development.
- **Dual Language Programme:** Further develop and promote ISL's dual language programme to maximise bilingual education opportunities, meeting the needs of existing families and attracting new families to the school.
- **Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** Lead and develop initiatives to foster a culture of innovation, entrepreneurship, and creative problem-solving among students.
- **Sustainability and Global Citizenship:** Promote environmental sustainability and global citizenship within the school's curriculum and daily operations.
- **Safe and Inspiring Campus:** Oversee facilities to maintain a safe, efficient, and inspiring environment that enhances learning and fosters the well-being of the entire school community.
- **Operational Excellence:** Lead administrative services and support functions with a focus on delivering exceptional customer service, ensuring the needs of students, staff, and families are met promptly and effectively.
- **Financial Oversight:** Oversee budget planning and resource allocation to ensure the school's financial sustainability, focusing on meeting or surpassing budgeted enrolment targets and free cash flow goals to support strategic initiatives.
- **Outward-facing Ambassador:** Strengthen ISL's presence and reputation in Lausanne and the surrounding region by developing and executing a comprehensive strategy to proactively engage international companies, expat and local families, and parents seeking outstanding educational options.

# The Person

This role presents an exciting opportunity for an inspiring and dedicated leader with integrity, care, and a global perspective. The Board invites applications from globally-minded educators who have the vision and leadership qualities to guide one of Europe's, and indeed the world's, leading international schools. The ideal candidate will be a progressive leader, committed to innovation and excellence, and aligned with the values and ethos of the International School of Lausanne.

## Position Criteria

### Key Competencies

- **Extensive Leadership Experience:** A minimum of 10 years of experience leading a significant part of an international school, demonstrating strong organisational skills, with at least 5 years in a recent leadership role at a leading IB school.
- **Governance and Compliance Expertise:** Proven expertise in governance, compliance, and transparency, maintaining the highest standards in all aspects of school operations.
- **Financial and Business Acumen:** Demonstrated financial and business skills, ensuring data led decision-making and efficient resource management.
- **Strategic Planning:** Demonstrated experience in developing and managing strategic, education-oriented plans, with a keen awareness of educational trends and issues.
- **Global-mindedness and Cultural Openness:** Deep appreciation for cultural diversity and multilingual environments, supported by professional experience in at least two international assignments; proficiency in English, with knowledge of another language highly desirable.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** A demonstrated ability to work professionally and thoughtfully with staff, parents, and the broader school community, ensuring all voices are heard and valued while safeguarding the school's reputation.
- **Talent Management:** Demonstrated success in attracting, developing, and managing faculty and staff.
- **Teaching Experience:** A minimum of 5 years of teaching experience within the IB programme (PYP, MYP, and/or DP).
- **Marketing, Admissions, and Alumni Development Expertise:** Skilled in managing marketing and admissions functions, developing effective alumni programmes, and fostering strong community engagement to drive enrolment and enhance the school's reputation.

## Personal Attributes

- **Visionary Leadership:** Demonstrates the ability to articulate an inspiring and relatable vision, translating it into actionable strategies that foster organisation-wide enthusiasm, optimism, and alignment towards shared goals.
- **Strategic Agility:** Possesses the ability to think strategically and adapt to evolving circumstances with agility.
- **Forward-Thinking:** Embraces change, innovation, and new technologies to prepare students for the challenges of an ever-changing world.
- **Values-Based Leadership:** Exemplifies outstanding leadership grounded in strong values.
- **Integrity, Trust and Care:** Upholds the highest standards of integrity, fostering trust within the community by leading with care, approachability, and a genuine respect for others.
- **Drive for Results and Priority Setting:** Shows a relentless drive for achieving the best possible results for students, effectively setting priorities to support this outcome.
- **Adaptability:** Demonstrates flexibility and resilience in navigating change, quickly adjusting to evolving circumstances and challenges while maintaining focus on the school's goals and fostering a positive, supportive environment for staff and students.
- **Collaborative Approach:** Fosters a collaborative environment where diverse perspectives are valued and actively sought, ensuring that decisions and solutions are driven by collective input, shared responsibility, and open dialogue.
- **Coaching and Development:** Commits to the coaching, development and counselling of staff members, fostering their professional growth.
- **Strong Communication Skills:** An outstanding communicator, diplomatic, persuasive, and engaging, capable of representing the school effectively within both the internal and wider community.

## **Qualifications**

- A Degree / Qualification in Education or Educational Leadership.
- A qualified teacher status.

## **Desirable**

- Postgraduate degree in Education and / or Master in Business Administration.
- Affinity with research-based innovation in pedagogy and curriculum development.
- French language proficiency.
- Experience with accreditation renewal (IB, CIS, NEASC).

# How to Apply

## Key Dates

Following a long list meeting of the Selection Panel, successful candidates will be invited to attend preliminary interviews with Odgers Berndtson **weeks commencing 10 and 17 February 2025**. Shortlist interviews will take place on **4 and 5 March**.

The final interview process with International School of Lausanne will take place on **18, 19 and 20 March**.

## How to apply

In order to apply, please submit a comprehensive CV along with a covering letter which sets out your interest in the role and encapsulates the aspects of your experience relevant to the required criteria. Please include current salary details and the names and addresses of three referees. Referees will not be approached until the final stages and not without prior permission from candidates.

The preferred method of application is online at:  
[www.odgers.com/92519](http://www.odgers.com/92519)

All applications will receive an automated response.

Any information collated from the Diversity Monitoring Forms will not be used as part of the selection process and will be treated as strictly confidential.

## Personal data

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and / or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/application documentation will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

## Contact details

For a conversation in confidence, please contact:

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