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Working Together: Schools and IECs

Benefits, Realities, and Best Practices
for Collaboration



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Today's Journey

Middle East Reality

Agents vs. IEC

When Schools Refer to IECs

Understanding the right moments for collaboration

Communication Realities

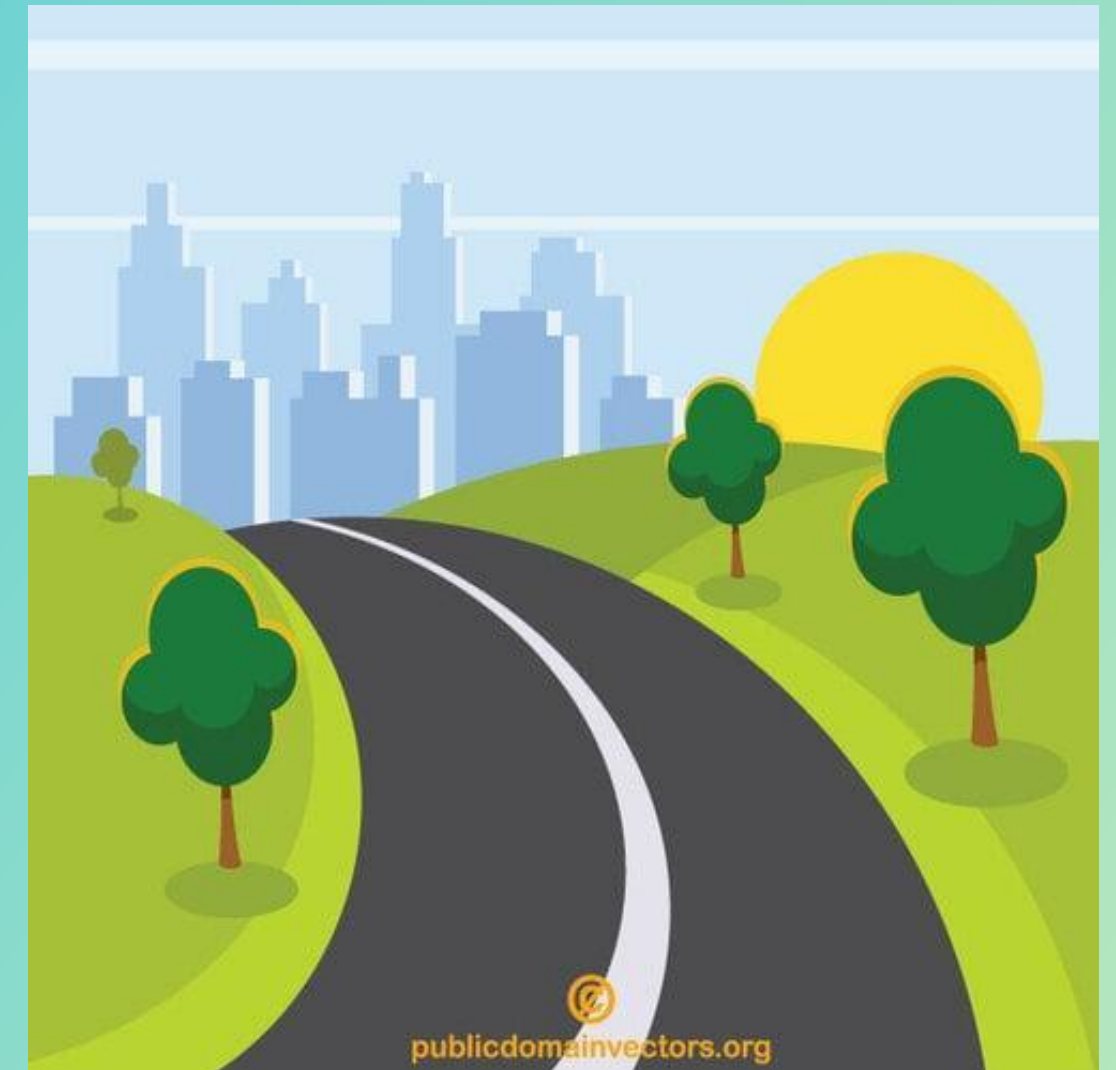
The ideal vs. what actually happens

University Perspectives

Helping admissions understand our roles

Key Takeaways

Best practices for successful partnerships



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Let's get our brains moving.....

Question 1: What is an IEC (Independent Educational Consultant)?



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Let's get our brains moving.....

**Question 2: Why are we here
talking about this?**



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Let's get our brains moving.....

Question 3: Common issues that arise with IEC's?



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Middle East Reality...

expat market
international schools
varying curricula
quality vs quantity
agencies

Over **250 international schools** just
in Dubai

**Almost a quarter mln international
students in the UAE**

**522 educational consultancies in
the UAE as of May 2025**

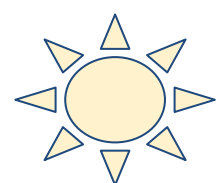


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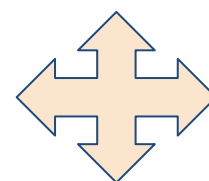
When Schools Might Refer Students to IECs

Extra Individualized Support



When families need specialized guidance beyond what school counselors can provide within their capacity constraints

Country-specific expertise



Students applying across different educational systems where expert knowledge of varying requirements is crucial

Specialized/specialised areas of practice



Support for complex essays, creative portfolios, or interview preparation requiring specialized experience



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Example of Specialized Practice

Student: Miranda

Miranda desperately wants to be a fashion designer, but her school counsellor does not have experience with this area, nor have they seen a successful portfolio for fashion design school. This is where a school counsellor may refer to an IEC - That's All.



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Case Study

Student: Patrick

Patrick is a high-achieving student who has constant questions and takes up an hour of his school counsellor's time, even in Year 11.

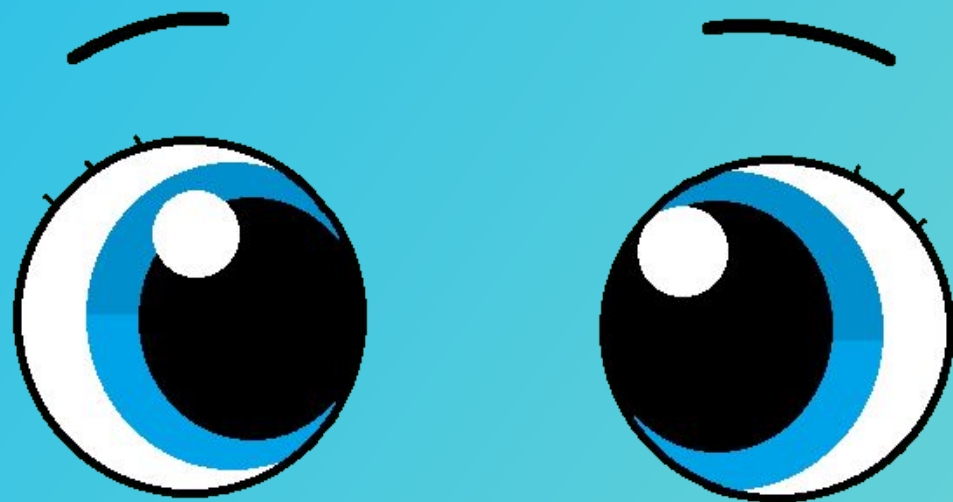


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But let's be real....

Reality Check: Not all students benefit equally from IEC support. Sometimes it overlaps with school guidance or adds unnecessary complexity to the process.



As educators, we must thoughtfully evaluate *when* an IEC partnership truly serves the student's best interests, and more importantly, *which* IEC has the right expertise and approach for each individual case.



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How to find the best fit...

- Professional network affiliation (IACAC, IECA, NACAC, HECA)
- University guidance experience
- Credentials and education background
- Counseling Certificate Courses (UCLA, Lehigh, UPenn)
- References and success stories
- Personality and workflow fit

When choosing to work with an IEC, consider your needs and goals. Before making a decision, reputable counselors will always provide you with a free introductory session to check fit and if they are able to support your needs.



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If the World Was All Flowers and Daisies...

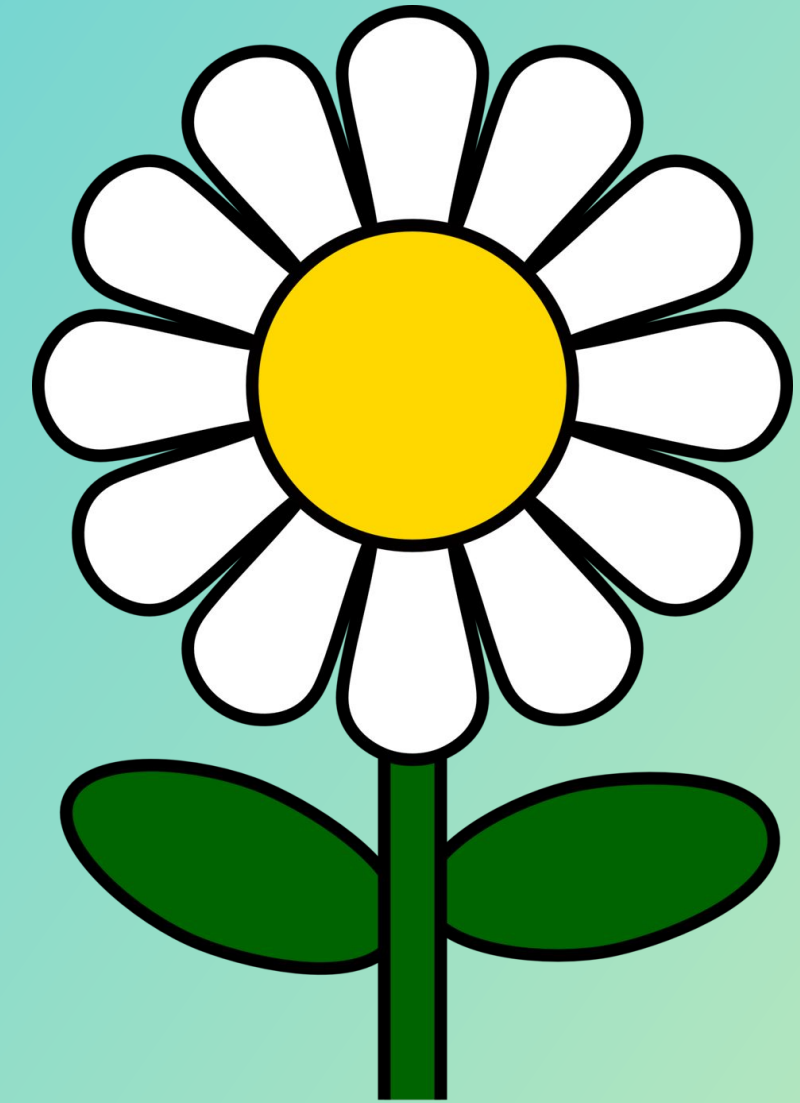
How Schools and IECs *Should* Communicate

Seamless Coordination

Email, calls, and shared platforms for tracking deadlines, documentation, and student progress updates

Strategic Collaboration

Joint planning on essays, recommendations, and comprehensive application strategy development



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Helping universities understand the IEC role

What We Need to Clarify:

Independence: IECs are impartial advisors, not university recruiters with hidden agendas

Support Focus: We prepare students for success, not influence admissions decisions

Professional Standards: Ethical IECs maintain integrity throughout the process

The Challenge: Some universities still see IECs as an "extra layer" rather than valuable partners. We're often the in-between—no commission from universities, but also no direct school affiliation. So what exactly are we?



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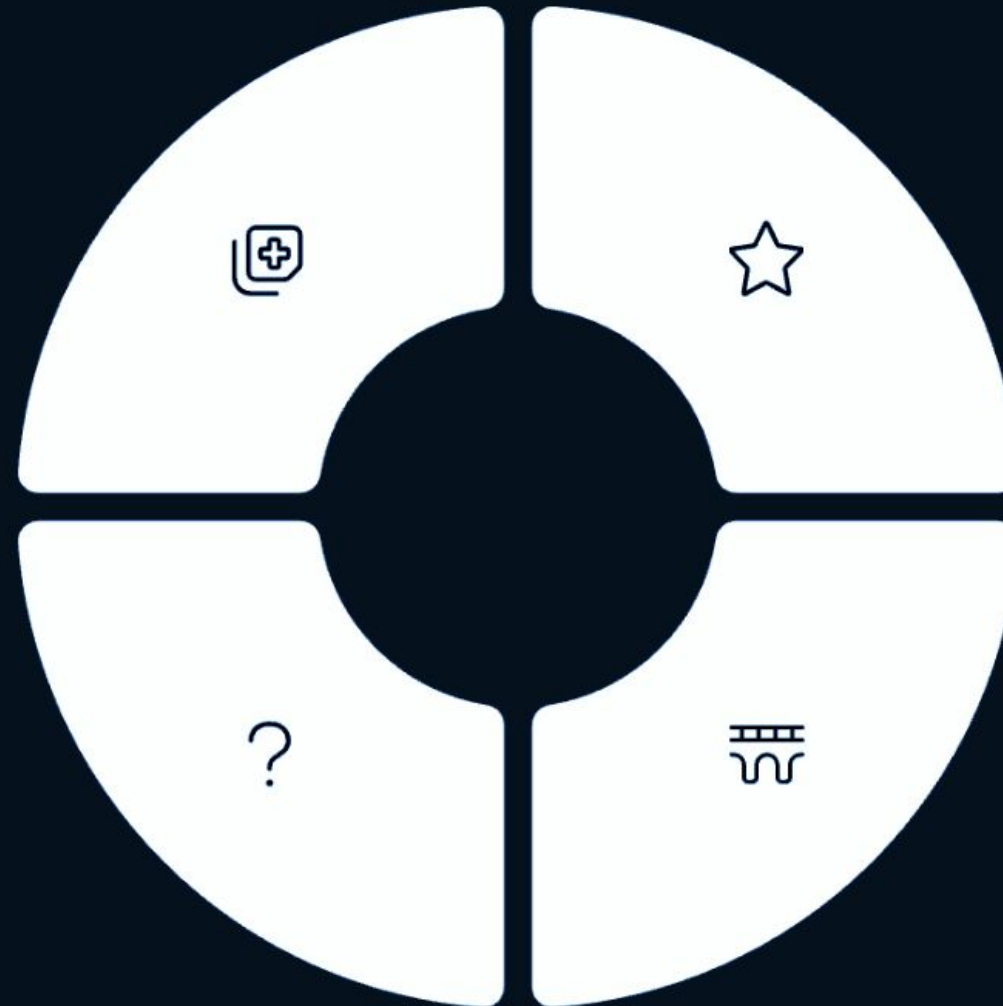
What we want you to know

No Commission

We don't earn money from university placements like some agencies

The Big Question

How do we define our value when we don't fit traditional categories?



Independent Status

We're not employed by schools, giving us different perspectives

The Bridge Role

We connect students, schools, and universities as neutral facilitators



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Key takeaways for success

- **Crystal Clear Roles**

Define who does what from the beginning. Transparency prevents conflicts and ensures smooth collaboration.

- **Balanced Expectations**

IECs enhance student success and reduce stress, but schools and families must understand potential costs and conflicts.

- **Careful IEC Selection**

Evaluate expertise, student fit, professional integrity, and ability to complement—not compete with—school counseling.



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*Need to vent...carry on.....but not
for too long....*



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