



# The IB Diploma Programme



# The Diploma Programme: preparing students for success in higher education and to be active participants in a global society

## What is an IB education?

The IB continuum of international education for students aged 3 to 19 years old is unique because of its academic and personal rigour. We challenge students to excel in their studies and in their personal development. We aim to inspire a love of learning throughout life that is marked by enthusiasm and empathy. The IB aspires to help schools develop well-rounded students, who respond to challenges with optimism and an open mind, are confident in their own identities, make ethical decisions, join with others in celebrating our common humanity and are prepared to apply what they learn in real-world, complex and unpredictable situations.

## Approaches to teaching and learning

IB programmes are taught by teachers who explicitly help students learn how to develop the attitudes and skills they need for both academic and personal success.

### Approaches to teaching

There are six key pedagogical principles that underpin all IB programmes. Teaching in IB programmes is:

- based on **inquiry**
- focused on **conceptual understanding**
- developed in local and global **contexts**
- focused on effective teamwork and **collaboration**
- **differentiated** to meet the needs of all learners
- informed by **assessment** (formative and summative).

### Approaches to learning

This area covers essential skills that include skills of behaviour and emotional management, skills that allow the student to monitor their own effectiveness in their learning and skills that allow them to process information effectively (often called “study skills” in a school environment). Although these skills may be in use when developing a certain natural ability or talent, they are different from both ability and talent themselves because proficiency in any skill can be increased through the deliberate use of techniques and strategies, feedback and challenge. Skills are therefore highly teachable.

**Teaching and learning in the Diploma Programme** therefore incorporates the development of:

- thinking skills
- communication skills
- social skills
- self-management skills
- research skills.

Although these are presented as distinct categories, there is some overlap and close connections between them. These categories should be seen as interrelated as well as linking closely with the attributes highlighted in the IB learner profile.

IB students work to become inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective. These attributes represent a broad range of human capacities and responsibilities that go beyond intellectual development and academic success.

## What is the IB Diploma Programme (DP)?

The IB Diploma Programme (DP) is an academically challenging and balanced programme of education with final examinations that prepares students, aged 16 to 19, for success at university and in life beyond. It has been designed to address the intellectual, social, emotional and physical well-being of students. The programme has gained recognition and respect from the world's leading universities.

## The curriculum

DP students must choose one course from each of five subject groups delivering a breadth of knowledge and understanding in their best language, additional language(s), individuals and societies, the sciences and mathematics. Furthermore, students must also choose either an arts course from the arts group or a second course from one of the other subject groups.

DP courses can be taken at higher level or standard level. At least three and not more than four are taken at higher level (240 teaching hours), while the remaining courses are taken at standard level (150 teaching hours). Students can study and take examinations in English, French or Spanish.

Two courses are classified as interdisciplinary meaning that they satisfy the requirements of more than one subject group:

- literature and performance (group 1 and group 6)
- environmental systems and societies (group 3 and group 4)

In addition to disciplinary and interdisciplinary study, the DP features three core elements that broaden students' educational experience and challenge them to apply their knowledge and skills.

## The Diploma Programme core

**The extended essay asks students to engage in independent research** through an in-depth study of a question relating to one of the DP subjects they are studying. The world studies extended essay option allows students to focus on a topic of global significance which they examine through the lens of at least two DP subjects.

**Theory of knowledge (TOK) develops a coherent approach to learning** that unifies the academic disciplines. In this course on critical thinking, students inquire into the nature of knowing and deepen their understanding of knowledge as a human construction.

**Creativity, activity, service (CAS) emphasizes helping students to develop their own identities**, in accordance with the ethical principles embodied in the IB mission statement and the IB learner profile. CAS complements a challenging academic programme in a holistic way, providing opportunities for self-determination, collaboration, accomplishment and enjoyment. It involves students in a range of activities alongside their academic studies throughout the DP. The three strands of CAS are creativity (exploring and extending ideas leading to an original or interpretive product or performance), activity (physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle) and service (collaborative and reciprocal engagement with the community in response to an authentic need).



## Diploma Programme subject groups

### Studies in language and literature (Group 1)

- Language A: literature—55 languages offered
- Language A: language and literature—16 languages offered
- Literature and performance (also group 6)—3 languages offered

### Language acquisition (Group 2)

- Language B—23 languages offered
- Language ab initio—12 languages offered
- Classical languages —2 languages offered

### Individuals and societies (Group 3)

- Business management
- Economics
- Environmental systems and societies (also group 4)
- Geography
- History
- Information technology in a global society
- Philosophy
- Psychology
- Social and cultural anthropology
- World religions (SL only)

### Sciences (Group 4)

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Computer science
- Design technology
- Environmental systems and societies (also group 3)
- Physics
- Sports, exercise and health science (SL only)

### Mathematics (Group 5)

- Further mathematics HL
- Mathematical studies SL
- Mathematics SL
- Mathematics HL

### The arts (Group 6)

- Dance
- Film
- Literature and performance (also group 1)
- Music
- Theatre
- Visual arts

## Diploma Programme courses online

Students can enrol in a range of authorized DP courses online offered via their IB World School through Pamoja Education Ltd.

## Assessment

Students take written examinations at the end of the programme which are marked by external IB examiners. Students also complete assessment tasks in the school which are either initially marked by teachers and then moderated by external moderators or sent directly to external examiners.

The marks awarded for each course range from 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest). Students can also be awarded up to three additional points for their combined results on theory of knowledge and the extended essay. The diploma is awarded to students who gain at least 24 points, subject to certain minimum levels of performance across the whole programme and to satisfactory participation in the creativity, activity, service requirement. The highest total that a DP student can be awarded is 45 points.

Assessment is criterion-related, which means student performance is measured against specified assessment criteria based on the aims and objectives of each subject's curriculum, rather than the performance of other students taking the same examinations. The range of scores that students have attained remains statistically stable, and universities value the rigour and consistency of Diploma Programme assessment practice.

*"The Diploma Programme has inspired me beyond my original talents, not only by demanding and encouraging more, but also by providing me with great opportunities to fuel my drive. It has been challenging work, but the results have been more than gratifying. My devoted teachers have given me the opportunity to grow and reach my potential".*

—Andrew Abrahamsen, DP music student at Dwight School, New York, USA.

## Quality assurance and professional development

Any school, or group of schools, wishing to offer one or more IB programmes must first be authorized as an IB World School. The requirements are the same for all schools, and the procedure is designed to ensure that schools are well prepared to implement the programme(s) successfully. All IB World Schools are required to participate in an ongoing process of review and development, using the same programme standards and practices. As part of its ongoing commitment to the development of a highly skilled global learning community, the IB provides a wide range of high-quality professional development opportunities to help new, experienced and expert school leaders and educators understand, support, and successfully deliver IB programmes reflecting IB standards and practices.

### The IB Mission

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end, the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Learn more about the process of becoming an IB World School at [www.ibo.org/become](http://www.ibo.org/become) or email [ibid@ibo.org](mailto:ibid@ibo.org).

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| • Become an IB student         | Support our mission and join the             | or contact your IB Global Office: |  |
| • Teach at an IB World School  | IB community at                              | IB Africa, Europe, Middle East    | <a href="mailto:ibaem@ibo.org">ibaem@ibo.org</a> |
| • Become an IB World School    | <a href="http://www.ibo.org">www.ibo.org</a> | IB Asia-Pacific                   | <a href="mailto:ibap@ibo.org">ibap@ibo.org</a>   |
| • Volunteer or work for the IB |  | IB Americas                       | <a href="mailto:iba@ibo.org">iba@ibo.org</a>     |

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