

Frequently asked questions about the Diploma Programme

What is the Diploma Programme?

The Diploma Programme (DP) is a curriculum framework designed by the International Baccalaureate (IB) for students in the last two years of high school.

IB students graduating with the IB diploma are able to study at universities all around the world, often with advanced credit. Students report that their involvement with the IB has given them the tools needed to succeed at college. In particular, students comment on their sense of preparedness, self-confidence, research skills and their ability to manage their time. Even more important, they have developed a sense of the world around them and their responsibility to it.

Diploma Programme students study six subjects (three at standard level and three at higher level) over two years and complete three additional requirements: the theory of knowledge (TOK), the extended essay and at least 150 hours of CAS—creativity, activity and service tasks outside of the classroom. In addition to these requirements, students must earn a minimum of 24 points out of a possible 45 points on the final assessments which are externally marked and moderated by the IB, in order to receive an IB diploma.

Theory of knowledge (TOK)

TOK is an interdisciplinary course designed to help students question and understand how they know what they know. Students study how individuals from various disciplines view the world in order to develop their own ways of thinking. By stimulating analysis of knowledge across disciplines, TOK seeks to help students make sense of school and the world.

Creativity, activity, service (CAS)

CAS is an experiential learning component of the DP. Students complete a wide variety of extracurricular, community service and athletic options to fulfill this requirement.

Extended essay

The extended essay introduces students to the demands and rewards of independent work. Emphasis is placed on doing personal research and communicating ideas effectively in order to write a 4,000-word essay in an area of personal interest.

How do colleges and universities view the Diploma Programme?

The DP is internationally recognized as representing one of the highest standards in university preparatory education. More than 1,000 colleges and universities in North America have recognition policies on how they weigh it in admissions, advanced standing, college credit and scholarships.

A list of colleges and universities that grant credit, scholarships and/or advanced standing for DP diplomas and certificates is available at www.ibo.org.

