

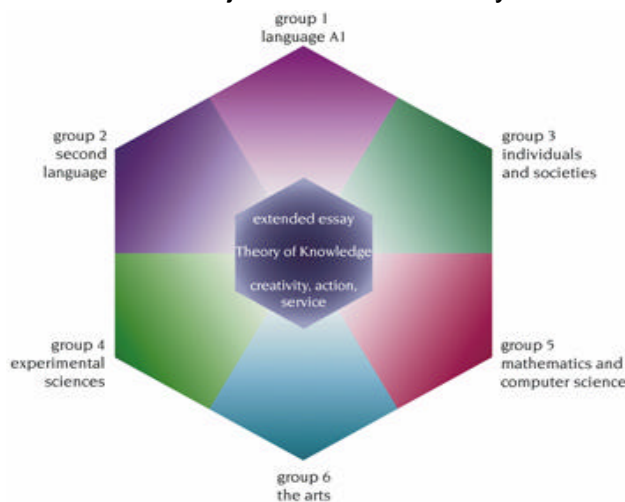
The International Baccalaureate Diploma Program

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program is a rigorous, pre-university course of study for highly motivated juniors and seniors. Diploma candidates actively engage in a liberal arts curriculum that includes such special features as an interdisciplinary Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course, community service activities, foreign language study, and an original research project. The IB program prepares students to think critically about learning, to question what they are being taught and to strive to improve in all academic areas. Universities often recognize the IB curriculum through the granting of advanced course standing and/or the granting of college credit.

Most IB final examinations are based on two years' coursework in each course. Students sit for written exams in most subject areas, oral exams in many areas, and turn in lab books, projects, papers, and other coursework.

Diploma Program students must select one subject from each of the six groups listed below (see substitute course for the Arts in Group 6 description). At least three and not more than four are taken at higher level (HL), the others at standard level (SL). HL courses represent a minimum of 240 teaching hours; SL courses a minimum of 150 hours. Some of the SL courses offered at Myers Park are taught over two years (i.e. Biology, Chemistry and Physics).

The diploma curriculum model allows students to explore some subjects in depth and others more broadly, a deliberate compromise between the early specialization of some national systems and the breadth found in others. The science-oriented student is challenged to learn a foreign language and the natural linguist becomes familiar with laboratory procedures. Active citizenship and global perspectives are encouraged in each area of the curriculum. The subjects are continually reviewed and revised to meet contemporary needs.



Theory of Knowledge (TOK)

TOK is an interdisciplinary requirement intended to stimulate critical reflection on the knowledge and experience gained inside and outside the classroom. The course challenges students to question the bases of knowledge, to be aware of subjective and ideological biases and to develop the ability to analyze evidence that is expressed in

rational argument. TOK is unique to IB and a key element in encouraging students to appreciate other cultural perspectives.

Creativity, Action & Service (CAS)

The International Baccalaureate Organization's (IBO) goal is to educate the whole person and foster responsible, compassionate citizens. The CAS component encourages students to share their energy and special talents with others. Students may, for example, participate in theatre or musical productions, sports and community service activities.

Students should, through these activities, develop greater awareness of themselves, concern for others and the ability to work cooperatively with other people.

An Extended Essay of 4,000 Words

Each student has the opportunity to investigate a topic of special interest. The essay requirement acquaints diploma students with the kind of independent research and writing skills expected by universities.

Students devote a total of about 40 hours of private study and writing time to the essay. It may be written in one of 60 subjects, including many languages.

The essay permits students to deepen their programs of study, for example by selecting a topic in one of their higher level (HL) courses. Or they might add breadth to their academic experience by electing to write in a subject not included in their program choices.

Subject Groups

Group 1 - Language A1

More than 80 languages have been offered for examination as part of the IBO's policy of encouraging students to maintain strong ties to their own cultures. Students ideally develop strong written and oral skills, respect for the literary heritage of their first language, and an international perspective.

Group 2 – Second Language

All diploma students are examined in a second language. Several options accommodate bilingual students with a very high level of fluency, genuine second language learners with previous experience of learning the language, and beginners. The principal aim for the subjects in group 2 is to enable students to use the language in a range of contexts and for many purposes; the courses focus on written and spoken communication.

Latin and classical Greek are also available in group 2.

Group 3 - Individuals and Societies

Subjects included in this group are: Business and Management, Economics, Geography, History, Islamic History, Information Technology in a Global Society, Philosophy, Psychology and Social and Cultural Anthropology.

Group 4 – Experimental Sciences

The subjects available in group 4 are: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Environmental Systems (SL only), Design Technology. Practical laboratory skills are developed and collaborative learning is encouraged through an interdisciplinary group project. Students develop an awareness of moral and ethical issues and a sense of social responsibility is fostered by examining local and global issues.

Group 5 – Mathematics and Computer Science

All diploma students are required to complete a mathematics course, and four options are available to cater for different abilities and levels of student interest. These are: Mathematics HL, Further Mathematics SL, Mathematical Methods (SL) and Mathematical Studies.

Each course aims to deepen a student's understanding of mathematics as a discipline and to promote confidence and facility in the use of mathematical language. Computer Science is an elective subject in group 5; it doesn't count as a math toward the diploma.

Group 6 – The Arts

This group includes visual arts, music and theatre arts, with emphasis placed on practical production by the student and exploration of a range of creative work in a global context. *Instead of a group 6 subject, a student may select an additional subject from groups 1 to 4, or further mathematics SL, or computer science from group 5.*

Students must choose one subject from each of groups 1 to 5, thus ensuring breadth of experience in all areas: languages, the experimental sciences, mathematics and the humanities. The sixth subject may be an arts subject chosen from group 6 or the student may choose another subject from any of the other groups – further mathematics can be chosen as a second subject in group 5 and then only if Mathematics HL has already been selected. Computer Science can only be taken as a second subject in group 5 which means that the students must take a mathematics subject. At least three (and not more than four) subjects must be studied at higher level. The remaining subjects are studied at standard level.

None of the following may be counted towards the diploma: the same subject at HL and SL; the same language for groups 1 and 2; Environmental Systems and Biology (students must choose one or the other); two mathematics subjects (except for Mathematics HL and Further Mathematics SL, which is allowed); more than one school-based syllabus.

Assessing Student Work and Awarding the Diploma

Classroom teachers and IB examiners work in partnership to ensure that students have ample opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned. Grades reflect attainment of knowledge and skills relative to set standards, which are applied equally to all schools. Top grades are not, for example, awarded to a certain percentage of students. Responsibility for all academic judgments about the quality of candidates' work rests with over 5,000 IB examiners worldwide, led by chief examiners with international authority in their fields. Each year approximately 80% of candidates who attempt the diploma succeed in earning it. Examinations are offered in May for Northern Hemisphere schools and in November for those in the Southern Hemisphere.

Written examinations

Written examinations are typically given at the end of the course. A written examination might consist of two or three papers, taken separately and sometimes even on different days. Examinations may include oral (i.e. English, French, German and Spanish) and written, long and short responses, data-based questions, essays, and multiple-choice questions.

Other Forms of Assessment

Specialized forms of assessment appropriate to the nature of a given subject are also used. Visual arts students, for example, submit a "Candidate Record Booklet" containing photographs of their work and a written statement reflecting on the development of their talents and technical skills, but the basis of their examination is an exhibition of their work. Candidates following IB music courses submit recordings of their performances. Similarly, students of a foreign language are tested for fluency, command of vocabulary, grammar and structure.

Internal Assessment

Methods used by examiners external to the local school are complemented by internal assessment of coursework by the teachers responsible for evaluating students over the entire period of instruction. This is an important aspect of the IBO's overall assessment strategy, because it recognizes the professional role of the teacher and gives students a chance to show what they can do over time, not just in the pressured context of a final examination.

Internally assessed work usually counts for a minimum of 20% of the final grade in a subject. Because teachers' grading patterns vary from school to school and country to country, the IBO evaluates teachers' marks and may adjust them so that international parity is maintained. This process is called external moderation of internal assessment.

Internal assessment typically includes teacher evaluation of work done in class, homework assignments, special projects, and notebooks. In some subjects, such as the experimental sciences, students are asked to work cooperatively in group projects to develop a sense of teamwork and shared responsibility for managing the research process and writing up the results.

Criterion-based Grading System

The grading system used by the International Baccalaureate Organization is criterion based. Validity, reliability and fairness are the watchwords of the IBO's international assessment strategy.

The Grading System

Each examined subject is graded on a scale of 1 (minimum) to 7 (maximum). In order to be awarded the diploma, a student must meet defined standards and conditions, including a minimum total of 24 points and the satisfactory completion of the three diploma requirements: TOK, the Extended Essay, and CAS activities.

The minimum score of 24 is based on the notion that a grade 4 represents a passing level in each of the six subjects. Specific rules apply to overall performance and are listed in the regulations that schools agree to observe, and which are available as a separate document. Excellent performance in all of the six subject areas results in a total of 42 points (7 points for each subject).

The maximum diploma point score is 45. TOK and the Extended Essay contribute to the overall score through a matrix system that awards up to three points based on the candidate's combined performance. The quality of work in both TOK and the Extended Essay is measured against assessment criteria, and the results are described according to the following five categories: elementary, mediocre, satisfactory, good and excellent.

Candidates for the diploma normally take all examinations in a single session at the end of the two-year period of preparation, but some choose to take one or two examinations at the end of their first year. Candidates who take their examinations over two sessions are classified as anticipated candidates for the first session. They may take examinations in not more than two subjects, on condition that these subjects are offered at standard level (SL) only and that the recommended number of teaching hours has been completed. Examinations in group 2 ab initio beginner level languages are available only in the candidate's final year of the program.

All students are encouraged to follow the full Diploma Program. Those who fail to satisfy the entire set of requirements or who elect to take fewer than six subjects are awarded a certificate for examinations completed.

Assessment of the Extended Essay

Extended essays are assessed according to both general and subject-specific criteria. The general criteria relate to the appropriateness of the research question, the way in which the material is handled, the level of analysis and the quality of the argument. Subject-specific assessment criteria relate to how candidates manage their chosen topic within the context of the subject in which the essay is registered. Since the purpose of the extended essay is to provide students with an opportunity to engage in independent research, the general assessment criteria are given twice as much weight as the subject-specific criteria.

Assessment of Performance in TOK

Each student is required to submit one essay between 1,200 and 1,600 words, from a list of 10 titles prescribed by the IBO for each examination session. In addition, the student makes a 10-minute presentation to the class and writes a self-evaluation report that includes a concise description of the presentation and answers to questions provided by the IBO.

Monitoring of CAS Activities

Each school appoints a CAS supervisor who is responsible for providing a varied choice of activities for all Diploma Program students. IBO regional offices monitor programs. Students are expected to be involved in CAS activities for the equivalent of at least three to four hours each week during the two years of the program.

A system of self-evaluation encourages students to reflect on the benefits of CAS participation to themselves and to others, and to evaluate the understanding and insights acquired.

Award of the Diploma

Performance in each of the six IB diploma subjects is graded on a scale of 1 point (minimum) to 7 points (maximum). A maximum of 3 points is awarded for combined performance in Theory of Knowledge and the extended essay. The maximum total Diploma Program point score is therefore 45.

All assessment components for each of the six subjects and the additional IB diploma requirements must be completed in order to qualify for the award of the IB diploma, except under the conditions stipulated in section C of these general regulations.

The IB diploma will be awarded to a candidate whose total score is 24, 25, 26 or 27 points, provided all the following requirements have been met:

- (a) numeric grades have been awarded in all six subjects registered for the diploma
- (b) an approved program of CAS has been completed
- (c) grades A (highest) to E (lowest) have been awarded for both Theory of Knowledge and an extended essay, with a grade of at least D in one of them
- (d) there is no grade 1 in any subject
- (e) there is no grade 2 at higher level
- (f) there is no more than one grade 2 at standard level
- (g) overall, there are no more than three grades 3 or below
- (h) at least 12 points have been gained on higher level subjects (candidates who register for four higher level subjects must gain at least 16 points at higher level)
- (i) at least 9 points have been gained on standard level subjects (candidates who register for two standard level subjects must gain at least 6 points at standard level)
- (j) the final award committee has not judged the candidate to be guilty of malpractice

The IB diploma will be awarded to a candidate whose total score is 28 points or above, provided all the following requirements have been met:

- (a) numeric grades have been awarded in all six subjects registered for the diploma
- (b) an approved program of CAS has been completed
- (c) grades A to E have been awarded for both Theory of Knowledge and an extended essay, with a grade of at least D in one of them
- (d) there is no grade 1 in any subject
- (e) there is no more than one grade 2 at higher level
- (f) there are no more than two grades 2 at standard level
- (g) overall, there are no more than three grades 3 or below
- (h) at least 11 points have been gained on higher level subjects (candidates who register for four higher level subjects must gain at least 14 points at higher level)
- (i) at least 8 points have been gained on standard level subjects (Candidates who register for two standard level subjects must gain at least 5 points at standard level)
- (j) the final award committee has not judged the candidate to be guilty of malpractice.

A maximum of three examination sessions is allowed in which to satisfy the requirements for the award of the IB diploma.

Successful IB diploma candidates will receive an IB diploma and the document *Diploma Results* listing the total diploma score, the subject grades, the points awarded for the combination of Theory of Knowledge and the extended essay, and the completion of a CAS program.