

Frequently asked questions about the Middle Years Programme

What is the Middle Years Programme?

The Middle Years Programme (MYP) is a curriculum framework designed for learners aged 11–16 by International Baccalaureate (IB). The MYP is a five-year programme, which can be implemented in a partnership between schools or in abbreviated two-, three- or four-year formats.

In an MYP classroom, you'll notice that the students are at the centre of learning. They are drawing connections between all subject areas, learning is explicitly linked to the world around them, participation in a foreign language is required, and a variety of formal and informal assessments are used to inform teaching and learning. MYP learning experiences infuse global points of view wherever possible in order to promote understanding of other cultures, an awareness of the human condition and an understanding that there is a commonality of human experience.

The MYP curriculum framework comprises eight subject groups, providing a broad and balanced education for early adolescents. Students take the core courses of language and literature, individuals and societies, mathematics, sciences, physical and health education, language acquisition, arts, and design. A unique feature of the programme is that it extends the traditional curriculum to include immersion in four themes—approaches to teaching and approaches to learning, global contexts and concepts. Students also complete a personal project, which is an independent piece of work that may be an essay, an artistic production or another form of expression.

What are the advantages of an IB education?

- IB World Schools (the only schools authorized to offer IB programmes) are subject to a strict accreditation process monitored by International Baccalaureate, ensuring that schools provide a high-quality education.
- IB teaching methods and curriculums are research-based and draw from the best educational practices from systems around the world.
- IB teachers are required to participate in many professional development opportunities to continually promote their awareness of current educational practices and new thinking.
- IB programmes are recognized internationally and ease the educational transition of students so that their education is not adversely affected if their families relocate.



Do IB teachers receive special training?

All MYP teachers are trained in the IB's approaches to teaching and approaches to learning by certified IB workshop leaders. This is a requirement of IB World Schools implementing the MYP.

Are IB programmes considered "gifted" programmes?

In most cases, the Middle Years Programme requires schoolwide implementation and therefore encompasses all students. All teachers who teach in MYP classrooms are required to participate in collaborative planning and reflection to make their teaching practices consistent and to foster a holistic approach to education. A growing body of evidence suggests a positive relationship between teacher collaboration and student achievement.

Students who complete the MYP are well-prepared to undertake the IB Diploma Programme or Career-related Programme.

Does implementing an IB programme mean my child's school will not teach local or national standards such as the Common Core?

The IB is committed to making sure that students in IB programmes meet and exceed local or national standards. With the implementation of an IB programme, schools are required to examine their curriculum carefully to ensure that there is alignment with local, state or national standards. More information on the IB and the Common Core is available at www.ibo.org.

Have studies been done on the impact of the MYP?

The IB places great value on external validation of its programmes, curriculums and professional development. A recent study found that Middle Years Programme students in a US public school district were more likely to achieve a proficient or advanced performance level on state mathematics and science assessments than their counterparts in five comparison schools. Additional studies on programme impact, quality assurance, programme development and assessment research are available at ibo.org/research.

Are there external assessments in the MYP like in the Diploma Programme?

In the final year of the programme, the optional MYP eAssessment provides a balanced and age-appropriate strategy that schools can use to validate student achievement: Students demonstrate their understanding and skills through classroom performance, onscreen final examinations and a personal project conducted over an extended period of time. Students who undertake external assessment are eligible for IB Course Results and the IB MYP Certificate. Find out more about [MYP assessment](#).

How can I learn more about the IB and PYP?

- Visit the IB website at www.ibo.org
- Attend school meetings and events
- Speak with your school's MYP coordinator
- Speak with your child's MYP classroom teacher.

Frequently asked questions about the Diploma Programme

What is the Diploma Programme?

The Diploma Programme (DP) is a curriculum framework designed by 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 IB. 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.



What kind of student is a good candidate for the DP?

The DP is a rigorous course of study for motivated students. That said, prior academic success is less an indicator of ability to earn the diploma than are a student's determination to do his or her best, willingness to be organized in order to complete the work while leading a full, balanced life, and a strong commitment to learning in and beyond the classroom.

Do DP students have time for anything beyond academics?

Absolutely. Most successful Diploma Programme students lead very full lives. They are often members of athletic teams and involved in a wide range of activities. Time management and organization are key skills the IB develops in students.

Are IB programmes considered gifted programmes?

The IB does not control how schools designate their Diploma Programme. In some instances, schools choose to designate the programme as selective enrolment via application or as a magnet programme. In other cases, the programme is open to any student.

Do DP teachers receive special training?

All Diploma Programme teachers receive professional development in the IB's approaches to teaching and approaches to learning by certified IB workshop leaders. This is a requirement of IB World Schools implementing the DP.

Does implementing an IB programme mean my child's school will not teach local or national standards such as the Common Core?

The IB is committed to making sure that students in IB programmes meet and exceed local or national standards.

With the implementation of any IB programme, schools are required to examine their curriculum carefully to ensure that there is alignment with local, state or national standards. More information on the IB and the Common Core is available at

www.ibo.org.

What's the difference between the diploma and certificates?

Not all students choose to take the full course load leading to an diploma. Instead, some take a few DP courses in areas where they have a particular interest or strength, similar to honours and Advanced Placement classes. Certificates are awarded on a course-by-course basis to students who choose not to do the full programme. Students who satisfactorily complete a DP course earn a certificate and may be eligible for university credit.

How does the IB Diploma Programme differ from other university-preparatory programs such as Advanced Placement and Cambridge?

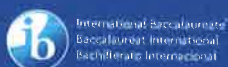
The IB Diploma Programme is a two-year comprehensive curriculum with a culminating set of externally graded final exams. IB, Advanced Placement (AP) and other college-preparatory curriculums like Cambridge are all university preparatory, academically rigorous programmes. There are important differences, however, in the content and exams. The DP is a cohesive and comprehensive programme, not a collection of individual courses as is the case with Advanced Placement. The most important distinguishing factor is the core of the Diploma Programme (CAS, TOK and extended essay).

Can you give a specific example of how the DP prepared students for college?

A 2012 study by the Consortium for Chicago School Research found that Diploma Programme students who graduated from 12 Chicago public schools were more likely to attend college, attend a selective college and persist in college for 2 years than a matched comparison group. Additional studies on programme impact are available at ibo.org/research

How can I learn more about the IB and CP?

- Visit the IB website at www.ibo.org
- Attend school meetings and events
- Speak with your school's CP coordinator
- Speak with your child's CP classroom teachers.





IB and the Common Core State Standards

Over 40 states have adopted and are currently implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes and the CCSS share certain aspects in common. This fact sheet was developed in response to frequently asked questions from IB parents.

In what respects are the IB and the CCSS similar?

- The IB and the CCSS are both focused on setting high standards that seek to challenge and engage students, promote deeper learning and develop critical-thinking skills. In fact, the IB standards were one of five international benchmarks used to compare against the CCSS in an influential study conducted by the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC).
- CCSS and the IB share a mutual emphasis on career and college readiness. Neither the IB nor the CCSS is a curriculum. A curriculum is the detailed plan for day-to-day teaching. Curriculum decisions, including which textbooks and programmes to use, are made by the school or district, not by the IB or the CCSS.

How do the IB programmes and the CCSS differ?

- The effectiveness of IB programmes has been validated by research and by over 40 years of practical experience teaching and assessing student work.
- IB standards and practices are not learning outcomes; they provide a set of criteria that set out specific approaches to teaching and learning. They focus on how learning occurs.
- The CCSS are learning outcomes that specify skills and knowledge that must be acquired by grade level. The CCSS focus on what outcomes should be reached.
- IB emphasizes student-centred learning, focusing on the social, emotional and academic needs of the whole child.
- An IB education incorporates an understanding and appreciation of other cultures and points of view, and a world language competency—precisely the skills in demand by the current global economy.

Will IB programmes change at all in states that have adopted the CCSS?

- IB programmes are taught in schools in over 140 countries in a wide variety of national and state education systems. They are flexible enough to allow for local adaptations in order to meet all US federal, state and local requirements.

I heard that the CCSS is a federal programme. What about the IB?

- The nation's governors and education commissioners, through their representative organizations, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), led the development of the CCSS.
- The IB in the US is brought on by schools and increasingly by school districts at the behest of local boards of education. The CCSS was brought on by governors of states and adopted via a legislative process.
 - CCSS is not a federal program; however, for states to become eligible for a share of the US\$4.35 billion Race to the Top (RTTT) funds, states had to promise that they would fully adopt a set of common college- and career-ready standards supplemented with only 15% of their own standards.



Will my child's IB school have difficulty implementing the CCSS because of the IB programme?

- Feedback from teachers tells us that IB World Schools have an advantage when implementing the CCSS. CCSS represents a shift in teaching from covering a wide breadth of content to a greater focus on depth of understanding and interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning. These very characteristics define what makes an IB education so effective.
- IB teachers receive specialized training to teach in IB classrooms that prepares them to incorporate the CCSS into their instruction.

Will students in IB programmes still have to take CCSS tests?

- Yes, if the school is part of a district that is committed to undertake the CCSS assessments.
- Most students in US public school systems already take state-mandated tests. IB students will continue to take IB exams and state-mandated exams, the same as in the past.

Additional resources

For more information about IB and the CCSS:

<http://www.ibo.org/en/about-the-ib/the-ib-by-region/ib-americas/connecting-ib-to-the-common-core/>

To learn more about an IB education in-depth go to this link:

[What is an IB education?](#)

You can find samples of IB examinations here:

<http://www.ibo.org/en/programmes/diploma-programme/sample-exam-papers/>

The Common Core State Standards Initiative:

www.corestandards.org/

Common Core State Assessments: Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC):

<http://www.parcconline.org/about-parcc>

www.smarterbalanced.org/

If your questions aren't answered here, please contact us at: <https://ibanswers.ibo.org/> or call us on 301-202-3025.