

CITY HONORS SCHOOL IB DIPLOMA PROGRAM FAQ

How is the IB Diploma Program different from other high school college prep programs?

The Diploma Program is a comprehensive and balanced two-year curriculum and assessment system that requires students to study courses across all disciplines. Through careful subject selection, students may tailor their course of studies to meet their needs. Regardless of the subject selection, all students will explore the connections between the six major subject areas, will study each subject through an international perspective, will reflect critically on what it means to be a 'knower,' will pursue one subject in great detail through independent research, and will have an opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in local and community outreach.

Assessment of student achievement happens in a variety of ways throughout the course of the two-year program. It includes assessment of student work both by outside examiners, as well as the students' own teachers. All assessment undergoes careful review or moderation to ensure that a common, international standard is applied equally to the work of students around the world. Each subject area is also in a seven-year cycle of renewal, guaranteeing the most relevant, contemporary high school curriculum anywhere in the world.

For these reasons, the IB Diploma is recognized as a superior education, preparing students to succeed at post-secondary institutions.

The IB Program sounds like a lot off extra work. What are the advantages of enrolling in the IB Program?

City Honors Graduates who were enrolled in the IB Diploma program report that their involvement with IB has given them the tools needed to succeed at university and to make the most of their post-secondary education. In particular, students comment on their sense of preparedness, their self-confidence, their writing and research skills, their ability to manage their time, and their willingness to be actively engaged in their own learning. Even more importantly, they have developed a sense of the world around them, their responsibility to it, and the skills with which to embrace the complexities of life. The IBO often employs a variety of phrases to describe these traits and abilities: "learning how to learn," "life-long learners," "critical and compassionate thinkers," and "informed participants in local and world affairs."

How many IB exams are there, and when do students take them?

A student will take six IB exams, including one literature course, one foreign language course, one social science course (IB calls these courses individuals & societies) one experimental science course, one math course, and one arts course. The arts course can be replaced by a second social science, a second experimental science, or a third language. Of the six exams, three are taken at the standard level (after a minimum of 150 teaching hours), and three taken at the higher level (after a minimum of 240 teaching hours).

IB students are expected to take their examinations at the conclusion of the two-year Diploma Program. However, the IBO permits students to take up to two standard level examinations in May of junior year. Higher Level exams can only be taken in May of the senior year.

Can an IB exam be taken without having taken the course?

No. Part of the student's final grade comes from work done in the classroom.

May I take IB examinations even if I am not attending an IB school?

No. The IBO permits only students enrolled in and attending IB-authorized schools to participate in an IB program and take IB examinations.

Can students with special needs participate in an IB program?

Yes. The IBO has established policies for accommodating students with special needs.

Can students transfer from one Diploma Program school to another?

Yes, but while the Diploma Program itself is the same from school to school, the subject choices available to students will vary. Timelines and deadlines for a program's central elements - Extended Essay, Theory of Knowledge (TOK), CAS (Creativity-Activity-Service) - usually vary, also.

What is the Extended Essay?

The Extended Essay is a 4,000-word piece of original research conducted by each IB Diploma candidate. It is started in May of junior year and completed in February of senior year. The student researches and writes on a topic of his/her choosing, and has an Extended Essay supervisor.

What is Theory of Knowledge?

Theory of Knowledge, or TOK, is a seminar-type course that explores the linkages between subject areas (courses). It is part existential, philosophical, psychological and metaphysical. Students submit a presentation-tape and reflective paper, in order to successfully complete the course.

What is CAS?

CAS stands for Creativity-Activity-Service. In order to successfully complete the IB Diploma Program, each student must have participated in CAS for an hour or two each week (during junior & senior year). This participation should be fairly evenly split among creative, active, and service-oriented endeavors. Every student inputs her/his information into the online ManageBac system and reflects on how s/he has grown and what s/he has learned from these endeavors. Reflection on these experiences is a key component of CAS.

What does 'Baccalaureate' mean anyway?

In English, it is bachelors: the term typically used in European schools for a high school diploma. The International Baccalaureate has become extremely well known within institutes of higher learning as a program that produces hardworking analytical students who do well in college.

How do IB courses compare to AP courses?

They differ from course to course, but are always highly regarded, typically providing study in much greater depth, and expecting assimilation of information and, especially, an ability to apply that information.

How will I benefit from graduating from the IB Program?

You will be better prepared for university studies and will also have attained a higher level of critical thinking, which is valuable in everyday life.

How important is the IB Program to colleges when deciding whether or not to accept a student?

What is most important to colleges is the rigor of a student's courses. Universities want to see that a student has challenged themselves with the most rigorous course of study available at their school. The IB curriculum represents the highest level of rigor of ANY high school program.

How many credit hours for college do IB students typically earn?

Credits granted by colleges can vary widely, from none to over 30 credits. It is recommended to check out the websites of the universities to see what their policy is for IB (you can simply google: IB, credit, and the name of the college you are interested in researching).

What about weighted courses? And, won't my GPA suffer in the IB Program?

Just like AP courses, all IB courses are weighted courses (worth 1.1). However, please note that all colleges recalculate the GPA's of applicants. For the most part, colleges reward students for the rigor of their high school program. Again, the IB Program is the most rigorous program possible.

What kind of scholarships does IB give to students?

IB gives no scholarships. However, many colleges and universities grant scholarships to students who successfully complete the IB diploma curriculum. Additionally, it makes students attractive to those who offer scholarships. Bear in mind, you must actively seek scholarship opportunities and apply for them.

What is the average amount of time one should expect to spend on homework each night in pre-IB and IB? How should we study?

From one to four hours per night: your study style is your own, but it is advisable to exercise good time-management skills.

How do we decide which SL and HL courses to take?

Read the information provided on the website regarding courses and curriculum, consider your strengths and weaknesses, confer with your teachers, IB upperclassmen, parents, and consider your college & career options.

Do you have the same teacher both years of a Higher Level course?

Sometimes yes, sometimes no, depending upon the subject and your child's individual scheduling needs.

Do all students who attempt the IB Program earn the IB Diploma?

No. In tremendously successful years, there will be approximately 92%, in lesser years there will be 66%. Again, while achieving the diploma is a valuable goal, the process a student goes through to attain it is almost as valuable as student's learn how to think critically, write effectively, and go into college well prepared for the challenges that will face them.

How does one avoid burn-out? How do you know if you should continue in the program?

Focus on one thing at a time: steer clear of negative people: do not be a perfectionist! Don't fret! Time management and effective use of study skills are key tools students use to be successful

Once you are invested, plug along! Incentives become more and more evident the deeper one gets into the program.

If, however, it is necessary to transfer out of the program, it has been demonstrated that the experience, in and of itself, is a marketable commodity, as students still can maintain advanced studies' course selections and high goals. Transitioning out of the program is only allowed at the end of junior year.

COMMON MYTHS ABOUT IB

IB Students have no life other than school:

Whereas academic achievement, and therefore studying, is a priority, IB students enjoy a very rich extracurricular high school experience. IB students have successfully participated in ALL interscholastic sports. They consistently show that they are school leaders on Student Council, Junior Jury, Senior Senate, and the like, and enjoy belonging to a host of school clubs and community activities.

Don't forget CAS does guarantee a very respectable level of non-academic ventures. Also, indications are that IB students enjoy a rather high percentage of leadership posts in the school and community-at-large.

IB students don't get to take Electives:

IB students in grade 11 choose a course of study that is both specific to their skills and interests and consistent with attaining the IB Diploma. Grade 12 IB students also pursue their interests in their individualized courses of study. In addition, IB Diploma Candidates could have an additional elective or two, depending on how the course schedule works out.

IB students also choose to take subjects as Standard Level or Higher Level, as well as choose a topic of interest or expertise in which to write their Extended Essay. All of this points to an impressive array of individualization, while still being in a 'program.'

If one is suggesting that the IB Program is more focused than the traditional school program, that's correct!

There is too much homework in IB:

Recent student surveys have shown that pre-IB students spend an average of 1 to 2 ½ hours of homework per night and IB students spend an average of 2 to 3 ½ hours of homework per night.

IB teachers try to coordinate assignments so that no one night is particularly overwhelming.

There is too much stress in the IB Program

The statement really speaks about 'pressure,' and its source. Because of the nature of studying six advanced studies courses simultaneously, it is critical that students understand that straight "A's" every quarter won't be probable. In fact, IB Coordinators everywhere talk of students & parents 'flirting with a "C",' simply meaning that success and achievement in the program dictates working 'through it' and not 'conquering it' with perfect GPA's.

As soon as students & parents realize that grade evaluations in the IB Program are indicative of the highest, most rigorous standards in the world, and that maintaining a healthy outlook and an exceptional work ethic are more important than getting all A's, the stress will dissipate.

It's truly a different way of looking at achievement, and this adjustment can be tricky for some.

IB students give up many of their long-time friendships:

If a student joins the IB Diploma Program and his/her friends do not then time in classes with them will not continue. However, a vast majority of diploma students continue to be involved in the extra curricular activities they were involved with before they joined the program.

In addition, an IB student is about to join a 'community', a 'team'. As such, he/she will develop bonds of friendship with classmates, united in a program, which will grow tremendously strong. Students from varied backgrounds become united in many wonderful academic and extracurricular pursuits

IB is not all it's made out to be:

IB has some very clear goals for excellence. The program also has some very definite outcomes that it wants to reach. Does it meet all its ideals? No. It still is an imperfect program - with inherent human and systemic weaknesses

Make no mistake about it: IB is the most impressive, results-oriented, humanistic, college preparatory program available.

Over the past few years in the United States, the number of International Baccalaureate Programs has grown at a rate of 10% per year.

Remember that colleges want to see that a student has successfully pursued the most rigorous academic program available to him/her at the secondary school he/she attends. However, some students who are very sure of their path of study in college may find that the IB Diploma Program is not for them because it can, in some instances, interfere with other electives the student may want to pursue in high school to better prepare for college.

**More information on the IB Diploma Program, including course briefs on most IB courses offered at City Honors, can be found on the IB Diploma Program page on the City Honors website at:

<http://www.cityhonors.org/page/ib-diploma-program/>

A COMPARISON OF THE AP AND IB PROGRAM

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

National standard of excellence

College level courses

Encourages academically talented students

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

International standard of excellence

Comprehensive curriculum of college-level work

Encourages academically talented and highly motivated students

COURSES AND EXAMS

Students generally take AP exams in areas of strength

Six exams in six subject areas are required for the IB Diploma

Students must prepare in all areas: strengths as well as weaknesses

Students do not have to be enrolled in an authorized school

Students must be enrolled in an authorized IB World School

Exams are graded externally through ETS and student marks assigned

Scores include teacher assessments as well as external assessments constructed and graded by educators from worldwide

SCOPE

Exams based on specific content of courses, with a major multiple choice component

Exams based on broad general understanding of concepts and fundamental themes. Questions emphasize essay writing

Oral exam in world language

Oral assessments in both native language and second language

Extended Essay (4000 words), Theory of Knowledge, Creativity/Activity/Service

Policies are determined by national educators

Policies are determined by international educators