



IB Diploma Programme guide for parents

The Diploma Programme (DP) is a two-year international education programme that prepares students age 16–19 years for university and higher education. It also prepares students to become creative problem-solvers and lifelong independent thinkers, equipped to succeed in a rapidly changing and increasingly global society.

The DP offers a holistic approach to teaching and learning with a keen focus on developing intercultural awareness. Students learn to explore and understand the world around them through inquiry, critical thinking and open-mindedness.

A well-balanced curriculum and unique DP core

DP students complete courses from six subject groups, ensuring a depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding. By engaging with a range of subjects, they experience a comprehensive education that encourages them to see connections between different academic areas. The study of an additional language is also required, as well as the completion of a compulsory programme core consisting of three components.

Theory of knowledge (TOK) challenges students to reflect on the nature of knowledge and how we know what we claim to know.

Extended essay introduces students to the demands and rewards of independent work prior to entering university, requiring them to produce a self-directed piece of research in an area of personal interest.

Creativity, activity and service (CAS) is an experiential learning component where students engage with a wide variety of extracurricular activities, including community service and athletic options.

University and beyond

The DP is uniquely designed to support all students for success going into, and throughout, university. It is offered in a large number of schools across the world, including private, independent, international, and state-funded schools.

DP graduates are well-equipped to adjust, engage and succeed. They graduate with analytical, writing, communication and presentation skills; research experience; excellent organization and time management; the ability to approach a topic from multiple perspectives; and a deep understanding of academic concepts. This provides an excellent foundation for them to prosper at their chosen university.

By challenging students to complete their studies across the DP curriculum and demonstrate proficiency through a wide range of internationally best practiced assessments, students who earn the IB diploma excel at universities all around the world, regardless of their personal circumstances.

"The changes I saw in my own child going through the IB Diploma Programme were primarily recognizing he could do things that he thought he could never do. It expanded his way of thinking ... a parent can watch your child grow in the many different ways that the IB promotes." - IB parent in the United States

Why the Diploma Programme?

Parents who want the best possible education for their children choose the DP because it offers:

a challenging academic curriculum that serves as outstanding preparation for university and higher education

a student-centred approach to teaching, focused on developing students intellectually, emotionally physically and socially, as opposed to preparation for test-taking only

a focus on international-mindedness, compassion, and understanding intercultural differences

respected, reliable and world-renowned academic preparation. Universities regularly cite DP students as the best prepared for higher education

DP graduates excel at university and often begin their studies with advanced standing.

Strengths of DP assessment

The IB is committed to testing relevant thinking skills by creating meaningful tasks that allow the student to show their understanding of the subject—not just their memory skills. The IB recognizes the importance of examination results as a passport to university, and jobs and provides a worldwide standard which has retained its value and meaning over many years. With a strong tradition of taking a principled approach to assessment, the IB diploma offers a range of examinations and internal assessments that give every student the chance to receive recognition for their individual strengths, including credit where applicable.

The DP community in a global world

To date, more than 1.2 million students worldwide have graduated from the DP. IB students reflect diverse experiences and perspectives, attend IB World Schools in 147 countries representing an even broader range of nationalities.

"I really loved the ethos and rigour of the IB: its focus on independent thinking and the equal value it placed on a range of disciplines made it stand out as the best qualification for me to become a better all-round thinker." - IB diploma graduate from the UK

IB World Schools are located in 147 countries

The figure to the right highlights each country with an IB World School



University admissions

Because of the striking geographical, cultural and linguistic diversity of DP schools and students, universities across the globe can recruit a broad range of students from diverse backgrounds while remaining confident in the quality and consistency of their pre-university academic experience and credentials.

A study by the [Higher Education Statistics Agency \(HESA\)](#) in the UK concluded that IB graduates were more likely to enroll in one of the UK's top 20 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), when compared to A-level and other student groups with similar qualifications.

IB students also were more likely to receive honours degrees or awards, continue on to further studies, and be employed in graduate level positions and higher-paid occupations.

The [Chicago Postsecondary Transition Project](#) has studied the impact of Chicago's IB programmes on post-secondary outcomes and experiences of graduates. DP graduates, compared to similar non-DP graduates, were not only more likely to enroll in university, but also more likely to enroll in selective universities, to stay enrolled, and to perform better throughout their studies.

The study included **18,075** Chicago Public Schools (CPS) graduates from **12 high schools** throughout the city that offered the DP programme, mostly serving low income, racially diverse students.

How does the DP compare to other qualifications?

AP (Advanced Placement)

A 2015 study by the [Educational Policy Improvement Center](#) revealed that students viewed AP only as a means to obtain college credit in high school, while the DP is considered a holistic programme that develops strong life-long learners.

A-Levels

An [Ofqual report](#) from 2012 described the assessments in the Diploma Programme as excellent for allowing differentiation, for encouraging independent thinking and research skills, and for allowing students to demonstrate higher order skills. In 2014, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (Ucas) developed a [new tariff system](#) that gave the International Baccalaureate an official A-level equivalence.

Australian Curriculum and Australian Qualifications Framework

Teachers interviewed for a 2014 study by [Deakin University](#) generally believed that the DP provides better university preparation than the AC. Additional benefits of the DP curriculum included real-work application, clear global dimensions and the development of intercultural understanding.

Indian Central Board of Secondary Education and Council for the Indian Schools Certificate Examination

Researchers at the Central Institute of Education, University of Delhi, found the DP curriculum and assessments were more comprehensive and exhaustive, more likely to encourage multiple perspectives and the appreciation of different contexts, and more likely to develop analytical, critical and evaluative abilities when compared to the CBSE and CISCE.

