

International baccalaureate: the best course of study

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The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma is a highly prestigious, respected program of study for high school students that are in average seventeen years old, but required to think like twenty-year-olds. Of course, the amount of advantages that this program brings is close to limitless, since the IB is designed almost flawlessly to keep the students focused on their studies all the time. And we do mean all the time. Yes, even Christmas. This is an admirable accomplishment that the IB has reached thanks to its effective set of requirements that keeps the students in the path towards a better, brighter future, all while maintaining them on a healthy state of constant alert that prepares them for life..

. or even a shooting. The whole essence of the IB Diploma is to have college-level courses in High School, and therefore knocking down two bird with one stone. Except the students still have to fulfill the six years of studies to become an Architect, so that doesn't change much, but that's not the IB's fault. Everyone knows that it is so much better to learn things in High School when the students are still confused teenagers and will remember all their traumas, therefore remembering the lessons as well, than to learn things in college, when not only the student knows exactly what to do with their life and the anxiety does not take part of the learning, but also the professors have been teaching that subject for, I don't know, their entire life, knowing it so well it's boring to hear them blabbering about it. Therefore, if we get all the potential of new topics in college and stick them into a High School curriculum, the students will cover the information that is usually spread over four years in just a few months, and for six different classes.

Of course, college at 16 does mean harder education, but that is why the IB has designed an extremely effective grading tool: the curve. Thanks to this completely innovative creation, a student is only required to score an average of seventy/eighty percent right in any test for the maximum IB grade, making it possible for all students to actually pass their classes. Sure, it is quite the task to even get sixty percent right, but if the student does, at least it counts for more than sixty, right? This way, the IB offers the student an only-slightly-too-high program of studies and system of education, all while still letting them graduate with an only-slightly-too-low grade point average, and all just in exchange of two years worth of absolute stress. It's an offer quite difficult to resist. The IB Diploma and its very-well-thought set of requirements forcibly push the student that extra mile that all teachers seek for by focusing on every detail and aspect of the students' lives, and extracting the best from them under situations of extreme terror and paranoia (also known as "tests").

For these, the students must study everything in such excruciating detail and keep it all in their head until the test, that they will a good sense of what "extra careful" means. For the IB, it is all about the extras. For Physics, it does not really matter if you got the right answer right, since it is common knowledge that is much more important to know how many significant digits you need to write your number with than to know the fully-thorough application of Newton's second law. The IB also looks towards rounding the students' education as much as they can, requiring a decent range of courses that will benefit the students for the rest of their lives. One example of these course requirements are the Fine Arts course requirement.

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The IB understands how important it is for a young man or woman to understand and be able to express themselves through any kind of liberal art, no matter the actual interests of the students. Even if a student wants to be an engineer and has absolutely no interest for the arts whatsoever, what harm could it do to take and IB Art class that only takes up forty percent of your weekends? It's not like it's going to damage his/her grade point average or anything. And the only thing better than a well-rounded education is a well-rounded life, and the IB takes care of that too! With the system known as "CAS" (Creativity, Action, Service), the students are highly encouraged- and by highly encouraged we mean required to, with no room for negotiations-to take part in activities they would not normally participate in. With a minimum requirement of fifty hours for each category, the students can get a really good feel of what they have been missing on and later decide if they truly do not like it. It is evident that sixteen years of life is not sufficient to come to this conclusion, but fifty concise, IB-focused hours will be the final decider.

But that is not the only advantage of the "CAS" system. Since the required Physical Education or Art courses do not count for these hours, the students are to get the 150 hours outside of the school, and together with the Extended Essay (a solo investigation and write-up project), it teaches the students the importance of responsibility, time-management, and long weekends. There is no better way than this to accomplish that extra mile, wanted or not. The IB Diploma is focused on the well-being of the young men and women that it is shaping, and because of this, it is the number one priority for the students to be healthy and lead a good life despite all odds.

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Because of this, the IB requirements mark the way for the students to follow. By having great amounts of homework for a great number of courses, the students become accustomed to sleep less every time, learning not to need nearly as much nightly hours as any other students.

Studies have shown that what we call sleep is in fact a chemical reaction that takes place inside the head and assimilates that of drug use, which is why humans enjoy it so much. Everybody has gotten addicted to it during the first years of life, since it is the only thing that comes close to the nine months of comatose state that babies are developed in. The IB is aware of this, and helps students fight the withdrawal symptoms, tiredness and sleepiness, with deadlines and homework, pushing the amount of sleep of the IB candidates to a healthy 4hrs/night. Another favor that the generous IB Diploma requirements do for the teenagers is dealing with the removal of the need of a social life. It is well-known that weekends were made for projects, not parties, and the IB Diploma takes it as its duty to steer the confused teenagers into the right direction.

It is not an easy task, which is why the requirements make an emphasis on Internal Assessments (IA's), which are long-term projects that remove completely the temptation from the minds of the students, simply not allowing them to have a social life outside of getting together with other IB candidates to go over the course syllabus. No partying, no trouble, no headaches; IB candidates are the closest students can get to being the perfect young men and women. Instead of wasting brain cells on thinking arbitrary things like " maybe I should take a shower today," the students are

constantly reflecting about their life as cognitive creatures, a skill learned thanks to the deep, mind-blowing classes of Theory of Knowledge (TOK). All this thinking causes a natural layer of stress over the minds of the students, and since stress burns up as much calories as exercise, the IB gets students the healthy quality of a life of exercise, even when the students are not filling up their Action CAS hours. Lastly, the characteristics of the IB that could be considered the most important ones: this course of study prepares students to face life.

Juggling a minimum of three High Level (HL) and three Standard Level (SL) courses teaches the students better than any personal trainer or private tutor the art of multitasking. This is the amazing capability, a knowledge passed on through the generations of candidates, of writing two essays in different languages, designing a lab, working on the group project, and still manage to get the math homework done for the next day, because instead of lining them up in order, these students have learned to do them all at the same time. The brain of an IB student recognizes what needs step-by-step processing, like Math and Physics, and what needs inspiration and deep thinking, like English or Fine Arts, separating these into the two categories and different processes, and habilitating the student to do one of each at the same time. This is a skill that will definitely come in handy for the students, since they will be able to easily work on their university projects at the same time that they calculate the expenses of the six years of architecture school. But that is not the only real-life aspect of the IB.

Through a difficult grading system and specific ways to lower the grade of outstanding students, IB examiners prepare the students for the harsh reality of the rest of their lives, in which it will not matter how much they try, their efforts will never be enough for a hundred percent. IB candidates are by default accustomed to failure, since they will all get less than a seventy on a test at least once during the two years of the IB, and will therefore handle it better than any of their co-workers. Thanks to this diploma, they will understand this horrible world, and be able to handle it to the best of their ability, which will still not be good enough, but it will be better than others. The International Baccalaureate Diploma is the best way to go when it comes to choosing the students' high school course of study. There is no better preparation for life, and it is by far the best tool for the shaping of character. It has been suggested that it would be better if it recognized that these are teenagers and therefore help them with the stress of their studies, but what would be the point in that? The IB assures any student a good life of education with almost no secondary effects. It is a good challenge that students should pursue, and although it can be scary and nerve-wracking at times, making students think that maybe they are not IB material, they should not worry, because I can assure them, nobody is.