



The IB Diploma Programme: A guide for universities



The Diploma Programme

The IB Diploma Programme (DP) is an academically challenging and balanced programme of education for students aged 16 to 19. It is designed to address the intellectual, social, emotional and physical well-being of students. The DP aims to encourage students to be knowledgeable, inquiring, caring and compassionate, and to develop intercultural understanding, open-mindedness and the attitudes necessary to respect and evaluate a range of viewpoints. Students are prepared for effective participation in a rapidly evolving and increasingly global society as they:

- develop physically, intellectually, emotionally and ethically
- acquire breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding, studying courses from 6 subject groups (3 taken at higher level)
- develop the skills and a positive attitude toward learning that will prepare them for higher education
- study at least two languages and increase understanding of cultures, including their own
- make connections across traditional academic disciplines and explore the nature of knowledge through the programme's unique theory of knowledge course
- undertake in-depth research into an area of interest through the lens of one or more academic disciplines in the 4,000 word extended essay
- enhance their personal and interpersonal development through the creativity, action and service component

Reach and growth

IB DP students represent a broad range of nationalities from nearly 140 countries and reflect diverse experiences and perspectives, which they apply to their learning. These experiences, in combination with the emphasis on international-mindedness and academic rigour, provide students with a unique set of skills, attitudes and perspectives for success in university and life in the 21st century.

The total number of schools offering the DP increased by nearly 50% from September 2008 to September 2013, and over 127,000 students worldwide received results from the May 2013 examination session. By 2014, more than 1 million students will have participated in the DP since its inception in 1968.

Such a distribution of schools and students is striking in its geographical, cultural and linguistic diversity, and allows universities to recruit a broad range of students from diverse backgrounds while remaining confident in the quality of their pre-university academic experience and credentials.

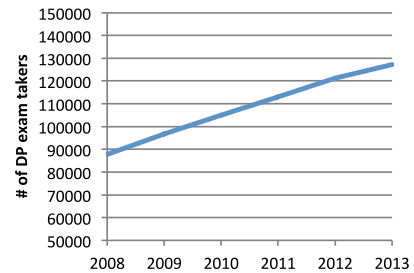


Figure 1. Growth of DP exam takers, 2008-2013 (May exams)

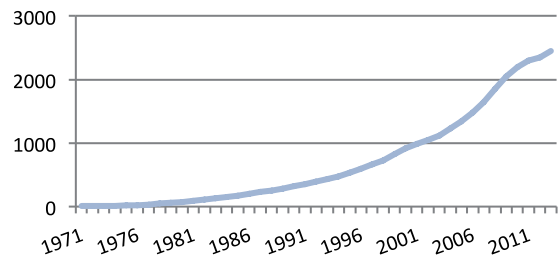


Figure 2. Number of schools offering the DP worldwide

Countries with the largest numbers of DP schools (Sep, 2013)	Countries with the most DP exam takers in 2012	Largest growth rates in the DP exam takers from 2008 to 2012 ¹
US	US	Hong Kong
UK	Canada	UAE
Canada	UK	Ecuador
India	Netherlands	Turkey
Spain	Mexico	Colombia
China	Australia	China
Australia	India	India
Mexico	Singapore	Peru
Ecuador	China	Netherlands
Germany	Spain	UK

Figure 3. Countries where the DP has the largest presence and growth

Curriculum development

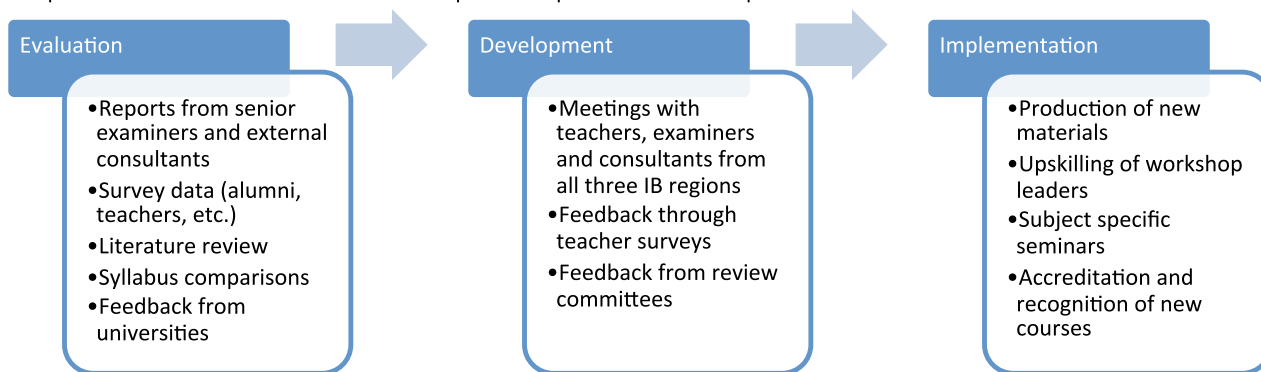
The aim of DP curriculum development is to produce excellent, internationally minded, research-based materials that support schools in enabling students to develop the attributes of the learner profile and the IB mission thereby providing an excellent preparation for life in the 21st century.

The Curriculum review cycle

All DP subjects are reviewed on a seven-year teaching cycle to ensure that each is fit for purpose and incorporates the latest educational research and lessons learned from implementation of the existing curriculum.

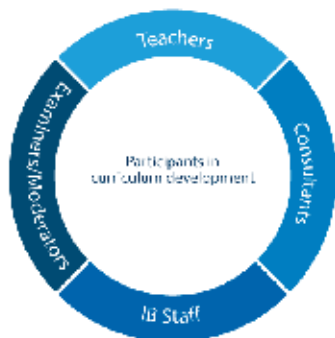
¹ Of countries which had more than 500 DP exam takers in 2012

The process for curriculum review and development is spread across three phases:



Representative and comprehensive feedback from DP teachers, students and universities about the course, an analysis of the effectiveness of the assessment instruments and a thorough review of subject-specific and broader pedagogical literature is incorporated into the evaluation of the existing curriculum. In the development process a wide range of experts are consulted, teacher feedback is solicited and all new assessment instruments are trialed. Final guides and teacher support material are published in the 7th year of the cycle, and implementation of the new curriculum begins.

Students also complete in-school assessment tasks, which are either sent directly to external examiners or marked by teachers and then moderated by the IB. The marks awarded for each course range from 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest). Students can also be awarded up to three additional points for their combined results on theory of knowledge and the extended essay. The diploma is awarded to students who gain at least 24 points, subject to certain minimum levels of performance across the whole programme.



Key tenets of DP curriculum review and development

1. Curriculum development is research-based
2. Curriculum development is a consultative and collaborative process
3. Curriculum must support the IB mission and the international dimension of the programme
4. Assessment plays a critical and ongoing role in curriculum development
5. All stages of the curriculum development cycle are fully planned and documented using a project management approach
6. Curriculum documents and supporting material are of a very high standard and reflect current IB philosophy and policy
7. Curriculum developments inform the provision of professional development opportunities

Assessment

The DP utilizes both internally and externally assessed criterion-related components to assess student performance. Written examinations at the end of the DP form the basis of the assessment for most courses. These include: essays, structured problems, short answers, data or text response questions, case studies, and limited use of multiple choice questions.

DP assessment aims to:

1. Support the curricular and philosophical goals of the programme through the encouragement of good classroom practice and pedagogy and constructive student involvement in their own learning.
2. Have a sufficiently high level of reliability and validity, appropriate to a high-stakes university entrance qualification.
3. Reflect the international-mindedness of the programme, avoids cultural bias, and makes appropriate allowance for students working in their second language.
4. Pay appropriate attention to the higher-order cognitive skills (synthesis, reflection, evaluation, critical thinking) as well as the more fundamental cognitive skills (knowledge, understanding and application). As the rate of development and change in many societies increases, learning to learn becomes increasingly valuable.
5. Include a suitable range of tasks and instruments/ components that ensure all objectives for each subject are assessed.
6. Utilize the professional judgment of experienced senior examiners supported by statistical information.

Assessment in the DP measures the extent to which students master basic and advanced academic skills, such as:

- critical-thinking, reflective, research and independent learning skills
- retaining knowledge
- understanding key concepts
- applying standard methods
- analysing and presenting information
- evaluating and constructing arguments
- solving problems creatively
- intercultural skills and understanding and an international outlook

Consistency

The maximum possible diploma points total, 45 (6 x 7, plus 3), is achieved by very few candidates (less than 1%), with about 5% of all full diploma candidates gaining more than 40 points. The average score for full diploma candidates is around 30 points. The number of students taking DP exams has increased from less than 3,000 in 1980 to over 130,000 in 2013. Over the same period, pass rates have remained at around 80%, highlighting the consistency of Diploma Programme assessment practices.

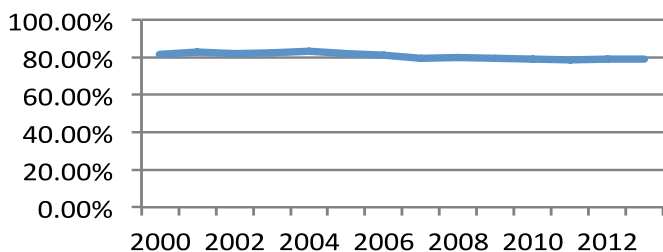


Figure 4. DP pass rate, 2000 to 2013 (May exams)

Reliability

To ensure that student work is assessed fairly and consistently, nearly 8,500 trained examiners worldwide, many of whom are experienced DP teachers, are involved in the assessment process, including the development, marking and moderation of assessments. Each subject has a chief examiner, usually an academic from higher education with international authority in their field, and a rigorous process is applied to the development and marking of assessments. Reliability of marking is ensured through:

- Appointing and retaining only appropriately qualified and experienced examiners who have demonstrated they can mark consistently and objectively according to set standards.
- Providing examiners with comprehensive instruction and training on how to mark.
- Checking the standard of examiner marking through “seeding” every examination session.

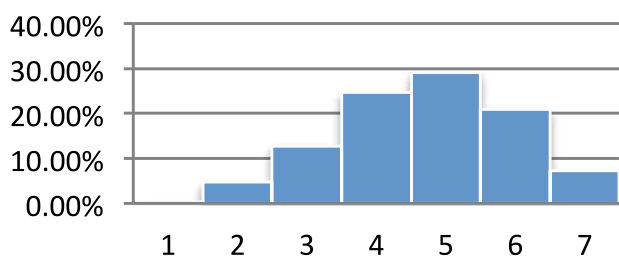


Figure 5. Percent distribution of DP exam scores

Comparing DP curriculum

Over the last ten years several qualifications bodies and research institutions have compared elements of DP course curriculum and assessments with others courses of study. Overall findings from the research have been favorable for the DP. However, as with all the studies cited here, to gain a more complete picture of how the DP compares to other curriculums and assessment in preparing students for success in university and life beyond, one should review the relevant research in detail.

Standards

The Education Policy Improvement Center in the US undertook a four year project to create a set of academic-content standards in 8 DP subject areas, and determined the degree to which these standards aligned with accepted college-readiness standards: Knowledge and Skills for University Success (KSUS).

- DP standards in all subject areas had a high degree of alignment with the KSUS.
- There was complete alignment in several subject areas, and many DP standards were more advanced than those required for success in entry-level college courses.
- DP standards address key cognitive strategies identified by college instructors as central to success (i.e. critical thinking, intellectual inquisitiveness and interpretation skills).²

Breadth vs depth

In 2012 the UK's Ofqual compared A-levels to 19 other assessment systems, including the IB DP. The DP material was highly regarded in a number of areas. Specifically, the report credited the DP's higher level (HL) mathematics exam questions as well constructed, allowing for excellent differentiation; the history assessments for allowing students to demonstrate higher order skills; and the English (Language A) course as standing out for the combination of breadth and depth and encouraging independent thinking and research skills.³ Similarly, in a direct comparison of particular DP and A-level courses, the UK's QCA found, despite some differences in breadth, the assessments placed comparable demands on candidates.⁴

“The Diploma Programme incorporates the best elements of national systems, without being based on any one.”

—Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, UK, 2003

In the US, a comparison of four DP standard level (SL) courses (biology, mathematics, language A and history) and similar Advanced Placement (AP) courses, assigned the DP SL courses equal or higher grades than the AP courses, and concluded that “The ... curricula and exams are certainly much better than nearly all of the state standards and exams ... reviewed in years past.”⁵

² Conley and Ward, 2009: <https://www.epiconline.org/the-international-baccalaureate-diploma-standards-development-and-alignment-project>

³ Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (OFQUAL), 2012: <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/14715/>

⁴ Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), 2003: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+www.ofqual.gov.uk/308.aspx>

⁵ Byrd et al, 2007: <http://www.edexcellence.net/publications/advanced-placement-and-international-baccalaureate-do-they-deserve-gold-star-status>

“Either make state high school exit requirements and assessments more like the AP and the IB—and make performance on the assessments count in the postsecondary world—or allow AP and IB credits to serve as proof that students have met rigorous high school exit expectations.”

—Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2007

The University of Delhi’s comparative analysis of course materials and assessments from the DP, Indian Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE) found that, in comparison, the stated aims and objectives, curriculum and assessment of the DP courses were often more comprehensive and exhaustive, more likely to encourage multiple perspectives and appreciation of different contexts, and more likely to develop analytical, critical and evaluative abilities.⁶

A holistic programme

Significantly, while these comparisons are supportive of individual DP courses, the Diploma Programme as a whole, unlike many other qualifications, is a complete and holistic programme requiring students to study a range of subjects and incorporating an independent research project, a service component, and the theory of knowledge course. Thus DP students are exposed to a much more comprehensive approach to education beyond just the rigour of the individual courses.

Perceptions of university officials

University officials have also enumerated the benefits of the DP. A number of studies which surveyed and interviewed university officials from the UK, US, Europe and Australia found that:⁷

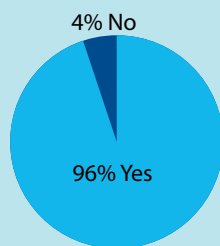


Figure 6. Percent of UK pro vice chancellors who indicated the DP adequately prepares students for undergraduate degree courses.

Admissions officers have noticed an increase in IB applicants over the years, and many actively recruit DP students.

“A strong academic base - a more reliable predictor of scholastic achievement than some other qualifications.”

The DP is highly regarded and seen as excellent preparation which enhances academic competence and capability, the ability to deal with the stresses of first year study, and adaptability to the international nature of university life.

“The students seem to be better able to cope with the transition from school to university than are many of our other students.”

The DP was consistently credited for its breadth and depth of study, holistic, coherent and flexible approach, and for producing well-rounded students who brought a wide variety of perspectives and could think “outside of the box”.

“The difference between IB students and others can be detected and this may be the result of the fact that they have already had experience of handling a diverse programme of study.”

The extended essay and theory of knowledge were seen to provide opportunities to learn about learning rather than focus on specific subjects. UK respondents saw the extended essay as the most important core component, while American responses valued CAS more (although 54% say all are equally important).

“I find it on a whole a very admirable program. I wish that I could have done it myself!!!”

The DP was consistently rated higher than other certificates/curricula on a variety of measures. Most notably: developing the ability to manage independent inquiry and cope with pressure, good self-management, communication and business skills, and fostering an open mind.

“Many seem more mature than other secondary school students.”

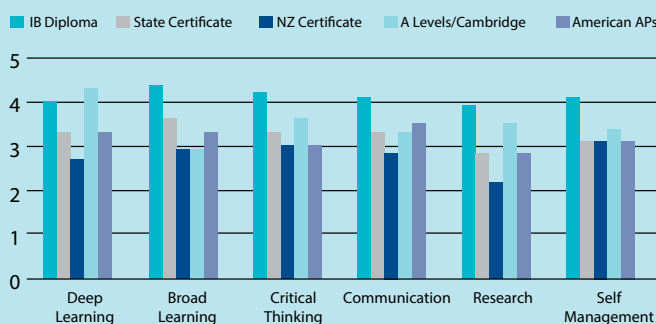


Figure 7. Aus and NZ university staff rated the DP more highly than several other qualifications on nearly all measures.

⁷ ACS International Schools, 2011 & 2012. The 2012 report interviewed 78 UK and 24 US university admissions officers. The 2011 survey included 61 respondents from the UK, 20 from the US and 31 from Europe. <http://www.acs-schools.com/about-acs-international-schools/press-office/acs-research.aspx> Jenkins, 2003. Surveyed 122 pro-vice-chancellors from 71 UK HEIs, and interviewed 34 from 20 HEIs: <http://www.ibo.org/research/policy/programmevalidation/diploma/documents/JenkinsUKPerceptions.pdf> ACER, 2007. Surveyed and interviewed staff at 47 Australian and New Zealand universities: <http://www.ibo.org/programmes/research/resources/acerperception/documents/IBOPerceptionsReportFinal.pdf> Culross and Tarver, 2011. Surveyed and interviewed staff at 20 HEIs selected from US News & World Report’s 2009 list of America’s Best Colleges: <http://jri.sagepub.com/content/10/3/231.abstract>

⁶ T. Geetha, Central Institute of Education, University of Delhi, 2009

Where do DP students go?

The DP has long been considered a rigorous and high quality preparation for university study, and students often choose the DP because they believe it is a pathway into the world's best universities. Recent evidence suggests that DP students do in fact go on to some of the most selective universities in the world, and perform well once there.

Aspirations

In 2012 DP students requested transcripts sent to over 3,300 institutions in nearly 90 countries. The individual institutions most commonly sent transcripts are the University of Toronto, the University of British Columbia and the University of Florida.

Of the 100 individual institutions most frequently sent transcripts in 2012:

- 31 were in the top 100 of 3 major university rankings
- 50 were in the top 100 of at least 2 major university rankings
- 58 were in the top 100 of at least one major university ranking⁸

While these 58 institutions account for less than 2% of institutions receiving DP transcripts, they received nearly 28% of all transcripts sent to individual universities or colleges. All 58 currently have published policies recognizing the achievements of DP students (e.g. both the University of Toronto and Stanford University offer student transfer credit for HL exams with scores of 5 or above⁹).

Admissions and enrollment

Beyond applying to top-tier institutions, evidence suggests that DP students are securing places and enrolling in them as well.

A 2005 Universities and Colleges Admissions Services analysis found applications from IB applicants were more successful than non-IB students in receiving offers at UK institutions (70.3% v 65.8%). Additionally, Russell Group/Pre-92 institutions (considered to be more selective) received nearly half of the total accepted applicants (49.6%).¹⁰

	% of successful applicants	
	IB	non-IB
From the UK	85.2%	81.0%
From the EU	70.3%	59.4%
From non-EU countries	61.0%	57.0%

Figure 8. Success rates of applicants to UK universities and colleges.

⁸ Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), the Quacquarelli Symonds World University Ranking (QSUR) and the Times Higher Education World University Ranking (THEWUR). Given the considerable variation between these rankings, consensus indicates a fair degree of confidence in relative institutional quality. Transcript analysis is somewhat confounded by national and state admissions bodies, because transcripts are sent through these processing agencies rather than the institutions directly. Thus HEIs from these nations (most notably the UK and Aus) are underrepresented.

⁹ <http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/registrar/students/baccalaureate-credit>; http://www.adm.utoronto.ca/adm_pdf_files/ibas.pdf

¹⁰ Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS), Statistics team, 2005

A later UK study also found that IB students were considerably more likely than A level students to enroll in Russell Group and Pre-92 universities (89.9% vs 57.0%).¹¹

Similarly a 2011 Higher Education Statistics Agency study showed IB entrants were much more likely to be enrolled at one of the UK's top 20 HEIs, compared with A-level entrants. Proportion-wise, more than double the amount of IB entrants attended the top HEIs.¹²

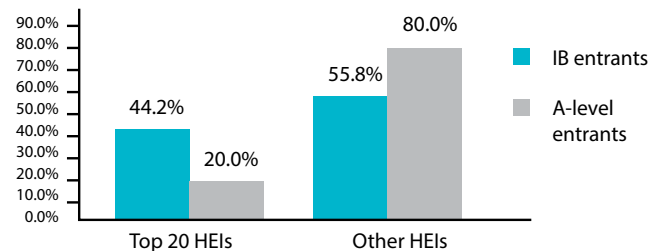


Figure 9. Full-time first degree entrants at UK universities by qualification type, 2008/2009.

Furthermore, an Australian Council for Education Research study saw large increases in the number of DP students applying to two case study universities in Australia in recent years, and greater rates of admission for IB students at the university for which enrolment data was analyzed.¹³

DP students also tend to secure places in more selective US universities. Multiple separate analyses of National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data¹⁴ reached mutually supportive conclusions and collectively provide strong evidence that:

- DP students from US high schools are significantly more likely than other US high school students to enroll full time in a US university (71% vs 56% in 2001/2).
- The majority of the IB students from non-US high schools enrolled in more selective US institutions.¹⁵
- The 2005 cohort of full diploma candidates exhibited a 6% increase in the overall postsecondary enrollment and a 10% increase in full-time enrollment over the 2001/2 cohort.
- University of Florida had the highest DP student enrollment, reflecting the institution's strong recognition policies and scholarship offers explicitly targeting DP graduates.

Data from the University of California (UC) system¹⁶ also revealed that IB students are more likely to enroll at the most competitive schools within the system (ie, UC Berkeley, UCLA and UC San Diego).

¹¹ Green and Vignoles, 2012. Analyzed 2009/10 HESA data on 139,414 IB and A-levels students. Similar students were compared. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03054985.2012.713858.Ui1EZ8Y0Wul>

¹² Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), 2011. Compared students from IB, A-levels and equivalent (other level 3) qualifications. http://www.ibo.org/research/programmevalidation/documents/HESAUKPostsec_Final_Report.pdf

¹³ ACER, 2012. Examined the postsecondary patterns of DP graduates enrolling at two Australian HEIs in 2007 (N=135 at University A and N=19 at University C). <http://www.ibo.org/research/policy/programmevalidation/diploma/documents/ACERIBAustralianHEPathwaysreportFinal120928-revis.pdf>

¹⁴ IBO, 2008; SRI Intl., 2011; IBO, 2013. Four studies analyzed data from the IB and the US National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). In 2008 the IB reported on more than 28,000 US students who took DP exams in 2000 and 2001. In 2011 SRI International reported on over 24,000 US students and nearly 2,000 non-US students who took DP exams in 2001 and 2002. In 2013 the IB reported on nearly 10,000 US Diploma candidates from 2005. <http://www.ibo.org/research/policy/programmevalidation/diploma/>

¹⁵ 2005 Carnegie classifications

¹⁶ IBO, 2010. Examined data on 1,547 DP students who enrolled in the eight UC campuses between 2000 and 2002, and a matched comparison group of 5,253 non-IB UC students. <http://www.ibo.org/research/policy/programmevalidation/diploma/documents/AcademicPerformanceofIBstudentsEnteringtheUniversityofCalifornia2010.pdf>

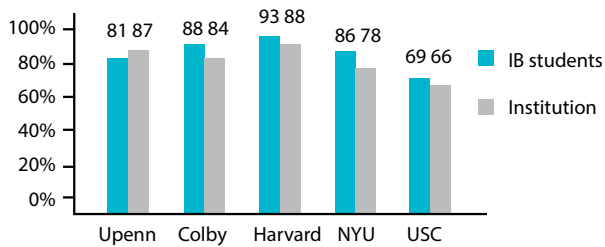


Figure 10. Graduation rates of DP students vs institutional averages for most popular US destinations for students completing high school outside of the US.

DP students from Chicago Public Schools (CPS) were also more likely to enroll in college, enroll in a more selective college and stay enrolled once there, compared to matched students from the same district. This is particularly noteworthy considering the high proportion of these students who come from families or school communities with low rates of college going.¹⁷ This particular research went to significant lengths to match DP students against an appropriate comparison group.

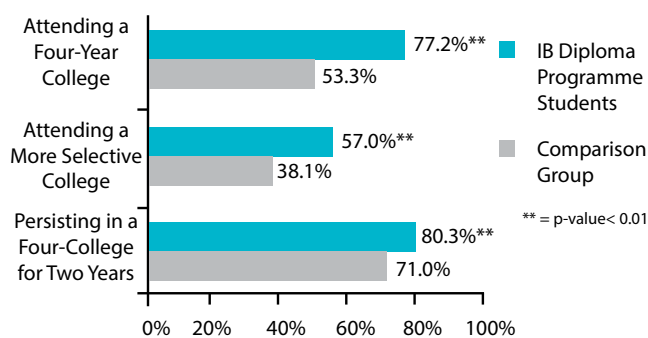


Figure 11. Likelihood of DP students at CPS to enroll in college compared to a matched comparison groups.

A RAND Corporation study found IB students in Mexico enroll in the top ranking university-major combinations (42% enrolled in a #1 ranked program; 82% in a Top 5). Additionally there was some correlation between IB performance and scholarship earning. Perhaps most interestingly, students, teachers and administrators saw DP participation as more important for college preparation than an advantage in admissions.¹⁸

DP students also help to confirm the above trends. In a 2003 survey of US students¹⁹ and in a 2011 survey of students in seven countries,²⁰ respondents indicated that:

- About 99% planned to attend university.
- DP participants, and full diploma candidates in particular, were granted admission at much higher rates the institutional averages.
- A considerable portion of US DP students received special recognition for their achievement in the DP.

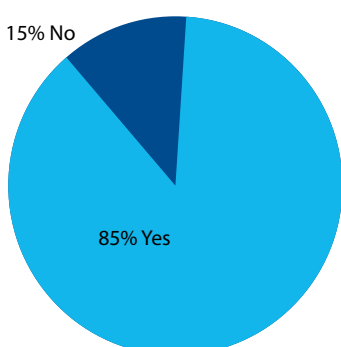


Figure 12. Percent of respondents in the 2011 destination survey who indicated the institution they enrolled in was a top choice.

The student voice

The students themselves, perhaps those in the best position to speak to the DP experience, support the trends identified in this report. Numerous surveys and interviews indicate that the vast majority of respondents felt the DP contributed in positive ways to their development.²¹

Students overwhelmingly responded that the breadth and depth of the DP broadened their horizons, increased knowledge of a wider range of topics, improved their ability to find common themes within and across material, and prepared them well for university life and coursework.

"...it is an all-rounded curriculum with a great focus on the students, preparing them academically as well as mentally for university." (AUS)

The DP is credited for improving critical, creative and flexible thinking; a strong work ethic and study habits; problem solving strategies; organizational, time management, communication and writing skills; and a broader world perspective and intercultural awareness.

"Although the IB program is a tough and rigorous program, I would definitely recommend it to others because of the strong work ethic that it teaches one as well as the desire and love for learning that it creates within each of the students. It is challenging, but that is what makes it so great!" (US)

The core components (creativity, action, service [CAS], theory of knowledge [TOK] and the extended essay) were important benefits of the programme.

"CAS gave me a good insight on being a valuable citizen, the Extended Essay taught me to manage the type of essays required at college level, and TOK made me a more critical thinker. These are all qualities I obtained week-in week-out..." (ACS International Schools)

"In particular, I thought the CAS hours really helped me...I had to take part in activities that I would not have considered joining before. I found out I loved these activities and the people doing them. If I wasn't in the IB program, I don't think I would have had so much fun with my extracurricular activities." (ACS International Schools)

Many felt the DP helped them to move forward in the academic and professional careers.

"It certainly isn't for everyone and it is tremendously harder than I imagined but it does give you so many transferable skills and it makes you so much better educated. I know so much it is unbelievable." (UK)

¹⁷ Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR), University of Chicago, 2009 & 2012. In 2009 CCSR reported on IB graduates, graduates from CPS's selective enrollment high schools, and graduates who took honors and AP courses in neighborhood high schools. The 2012 follow-up examined the high school classes of 2003-2007. <http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/working-my-potential-postsecondary-experiences-cps-students-international-baccalaureate>

¹⁸ Rand Corporation, 2013. Examined DP student enrolment and college preparedness at four Mexican case study schools, and the admissions processes at 12 universities. http://www.ibo.org/research/policy/programmevalidation/diploma/documents/RAND_PR_IBMexicoReport_final_e.pdf

¹⁹ IBO, 2003. Surveyed 6392 US DP students from 131 schools in 29 states.

²⁰ IBO, 2011. The DP Destination Survey received responses from 11.3% of 2011 DP exam takers in US, UK, Canada, Australia, Spain, Mexico and India. <http://www.ibo.org/recognition/resourcesanddocumentlibrary>

²¹ ACS International Schools, 2012. Surveyed 71 alumni from ACS International Schools graduating since 2007. http://www.acs-schools.com/media/26179/alumni_survey_2012.pdf

Culross and Tarver, 2011. Interviewed and surveyed current and former (28 graduates from 2003-2006) DP students from a US public school. See note 7.

Taylor and Porath, 2006. Surveyed DP graduates from 1996 and 2000 from two public schools in British Columbia, Canada (n=16). <http://www.questia.com/library/1G1-159178173/reflections-on-the-international-baccalaureate-program>

CCSR, 2012. Interviewed 105 current and former CPS DP students; analysis focused on a representative sub-sample of 25. See note 17.

IBO, 2011. DP Destination Survey <http://www.ibo.org/recognition/resourcesanddocumentlibrary>

Postsecondary performance

In addition to enrolling in top tier institutions, DP students are more likely to graduate from those institutions, and some evidence suggests they have stronger academic performance while enrolled. This is especially noteworthy given the more academically challenging course work students are likely to encounter at these institutions.

Graduation rates

The findings from the analyses of the US NSC data²² collectively provide strong evidence that participation in the DP leads to higher postsecondary graduation rates:

- US DP students are significantly more likely to receive a bachelor's degree within 4 years than the US national average (64% vs. 36-38%). These rates were even higher for those who earned the full diploma (74%), and students from high schools outside of the US (75%).
- At institutions most popular among DP students, both 4- and 6-year graduation rates for IB students were usually higher than the institutional averages (19 out of 20 cases for US students, and 16 of 20 for international students).
- 76% of diploma candidates from US high schools with high percentages of low-income populations earned a bachelor's degree.
- Performance in the DP is a strong predictor of graduation rates, with 82% of students receiving 28 points or above attaining a bachelor's degree.

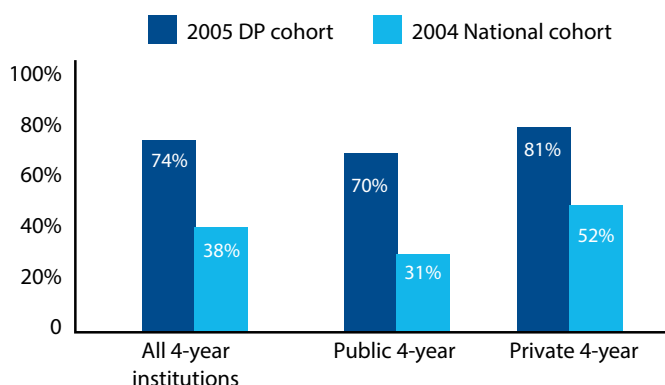


Figure 13. 4-year graduation rates for US DP students by institution type.

The analysis of University of California data also revealed the IB students had consistently higher graduation rates than comparison group students. These differences were especially pronounced among students from lower income families.²³

At one Australian university, IB students, compared to non-IB students at the same university and controlling for demographic variables and previous academic achievement, were found to have higher rates of progression and be more likely to complete their degree within five years (57% vs 41%), while also performing as well as other students in terms of GPA.²⁴

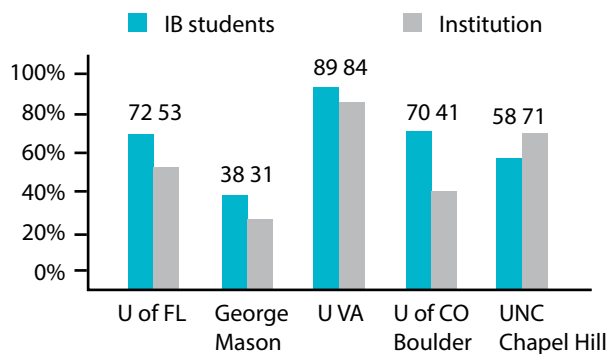


Figure 14. Graduation rates compared to institutional averages at 5 most popular US institutions for US DP students – 2001/2002 cohort.

Academic performance

In addition to being more likely to earn a degree, there is evidence that DP students earn higher postsecondary grade point averages (GPAs). In the University of California system, IB students earned higher GPAs both in their first year and at graduation. The average score earned on subject exams (especially an HL exam) was a statistically significant predictor of college GPA, and was a stronger predictor than other indicators examined, such as SAT/ACT scores, or high school GPA.²⁵

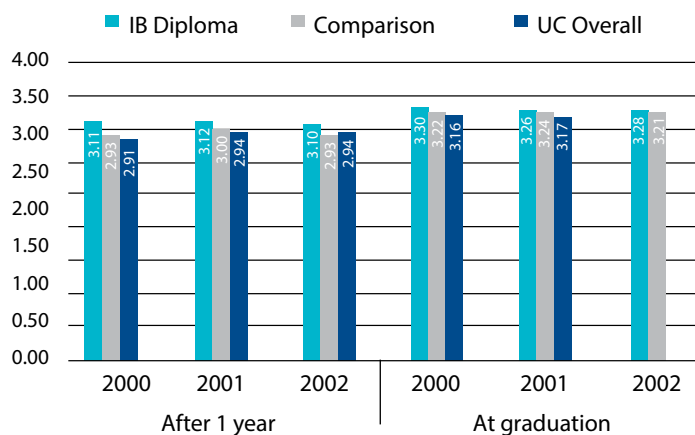


Figure 15. DP students' average GPA in the UC system compared to a matched comparison group and the UC student population overall.

Analysis of data at the University of Florida, also showed DP scores as a strong predictor of postsecondary performance. Students who scored higher on DP exams enrolled in more advanced college courses in those subjects and earned higher grades in those courses. IB students who took HL exams did particularly well. 71% of students who scored a 6 or 7 on an HL exam earned an A in their first college course in that same subject.²⁶

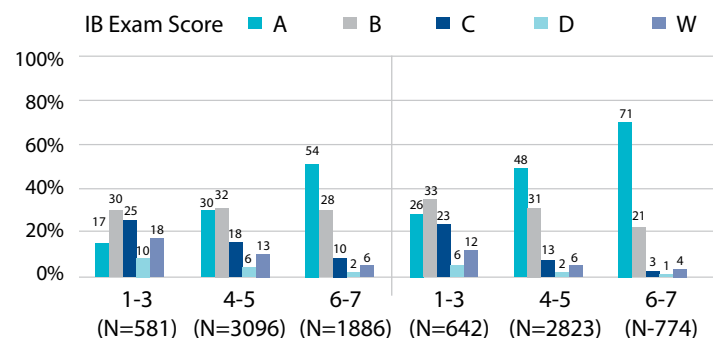


Figure 16. First subject-specific college course grade distribution for DP students at the University of Florida (SL exams, left; HL exams, right)

²² See note 14

²³ See note 16

²⁴ See note 13

²⁵ See note 16

²⁶ SRI International, 2011: <http://www.ibo.org/research/programmevalidation/documents/FLcoursesresearchbrief2011-04-06.pdf>

A similar picture emerges at UK institutions. Studies which compared DP students with A-level and equivalent degree students indicate that:

- After controlling for demographic variables, university attended and subject area studied, IB students were found to have higher degree performance.²⁷
- IB students were, in most subject areas, more likely to achieve first and second upper class honours degrees and to leave with an award.
- DP students were more likely to continue their studies beyond and undergraduate degree, and to be employed in graduate-level jobs and in higher paid occupations.
- Number of IB points was a predictor of likelihood of gaining first class and upper second class honours degrees.²⁸

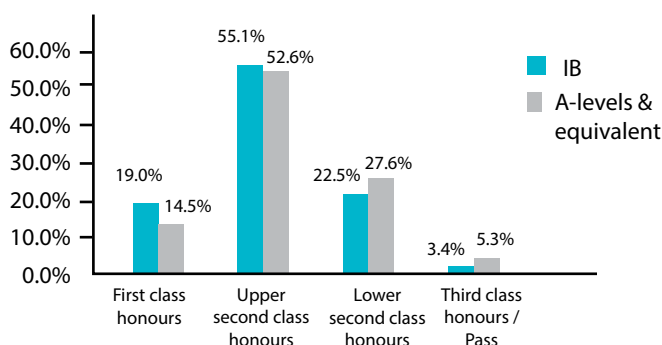


Figure 17. Percent of full-time first degree qualifiers earning degree classes at UK institutions, 2008/2009.

Beyond academics...

It's not just strong academic skills that DP students bring to university campuses. The IB aims to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. The DP develops knowledge, curiosity, open-mindedness, critical thinking, self motivation and a sense of community. This is infused in the DP curriculum and assessment and achieved through the unique elements of the DP core components.

In a survey of all new students at the University of British Columbia, upon entry the DP students were more likely to indicate they planned to be involved with faculty research, study abroad, and undertake a practicum or internship. At the end of their first semester, DP students were considerably more likely to have participated in student leadership activities, student clubs/organizations, volunteer work, and tutoring/teaching other students. New DP students were also at least 20% more likely to rate their research skills, ability to read and comprehend academic material, ability to make and prepare a presentation, and ability to write clearly and effectively as "very good" or "excellent".²⁹

Spotlight: The Extended Essay

The Diploma Programme Core is an integral part of the DP student's pre-university experience. The extended essay (EE), in particular, is an in-depth externally assessed independent investigation into topic of the student's choice. This major piece of formally presented, structured writing (up to 4,000 words), is the result of approximately 40 hours of student work, and is intended to promote high-level research and writing skills, intellectual discovery and creativity. The EE contributes to the overall diploma score through points awarded in conjunction with the theory of knowledge course.

In 2013 the IB commissioned researchers at McGill University (Can), the University of Virginia (USA) and the University of Warwick (UK) to conduct three separate studies on the impact of the EE experience on postsecondary study.³⁰ These studies utilized analyses of student records, questionnaires, student interviews and focus groups to gain a deep understanding of students' experience with the EE. The findings from all three independent studies are mutually supportive and collectively provide evidence that the extended essay does have an effect on students' confidence and engagement with research. Additionally, in all three studies, when compared with their peers, former DP students exhibited more positive learning outcomes.

Overall, DP students were very positive about their EE experience, and were clear that it helped in the development of both content and skills. More specifically, the EE is credited with providing familiarity with the steps of a lengthy essay, increasing confidence in writing and conducting research, improving study awareness and the ability to gather and evaluate evidence, providing preparation for college level writing, and improving time management and organizational skills. At UVA, DP students were also more likely to than the comparison group to indicate that they had been involved in university level research and intended to conduct future research.



Figure 18. The perceptions of IB alumni studying at UVA that the extended essay experience prepared them for college-level work for a variety of facets of the research process

²⁷ Green and Vignoles, 2012. See note 11.

²⁸ HESA, 2011. See note 12

²⁹ Bluhm, 2011.

³⁰ Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, University of Virginia, 2013. <http://www.ibo.org/research/policy/programmevalidation/diploma/documents/finalfullUVAIBreport10-18-12.pdf>
David Wray, University of Warwick, 2013. http://www.ibo.org/research/policy/programmevalidation/diploma/documents/THEIBEXTENDEDESSAYPROJECT_finalreport_Wray.pdf
Department of educational and counseling psychology, McGill University, 2013. <http://www.ibo.org/research/policy/programmevalidation/diploma/documents/EEQuebecSummaryFinal.pdf>

In 2013, an IB commissioned study examined the social, personal and civic impacts of the creativity, action, service (CAS) requirement. Students participated in a wide range of service activities, including tutoring children, meal programs, visiting the elderly, and fundraising. Most believed in engaging in activities which help the community, and reported being motivated by altruistic rather than pragmatic reasons (eg, improving their chances to get into college). They closely associated CAS with personal growth and developing non-academic skills. Personal and social development outcomes cited included an ethic of service, improved self-confidence, maturity, a sense of self-efficacy, becoming more caring, open-minded and reflective, and developing a better understanding of one's place in the world. Alumni also reported that they continued to engage in service occasionally and anticipated doing so in the future.³¹

The IB is unique in its explicit promotion of international mindedness. When the written descriptions of international understanding from DP students in Seattle, WA, were compared with those from AP students from nearby high schools, the DP students' definitions were found to include more elements, be longer, more complex, and richer in ideas. DP students were able to clearly utilize a richness of vocabulary and language to express and personalize their values. More so than the AP students, DP students expressed the belief that particular courses in school had enhanced their international understanding.³²

These are just some of examples of the qualities DP students can bring to your campus.

Importance and benefits of having a recognition policy

The evidence overwhelmingly suggests that DP students have a great deal to offer receiving institutions. While there are indicators that the Diploma Programme is strong preparation, the types of students who choose to do the DP bring a great deal with them when entering the programme. Despite a diverse range of backgrounds and nationalities, DP students all share a desire to take on one of the most challenging academic programmes available to them. A strong IB recognition policy is an effective way for your university to acknowledge their achievements and attract IB students from around the world.

A well-developed IB DP recognition policy demonstrates an understanding and appreciation of the Diploma Programme, including the skills, content knowledge and attitudes developed during the programme that prepare students for university success. The development of an IB recognition policy can assist in recruiting:

- students who are prepared for higher education with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in university
- students who will be engaged in campus life and the community
- a greater diversity of students from different nationalities and backgrounds.

Policies that acknowledge and value IB students and recognize their achievements, offer a possible mix of:

- Recognizing the intellectual rigor of the DP
- Encouraging applications from DP students
- Acknowledging achievement within individual DP courses as well as the programme as a whole
- Valuing the DP core components: theory of knowledge, extended essay and creativity, action, service
- Offering advanced standing or transfer credits for achievement within the programme
- Awarding a designated merit scholarship based on the IB Diploma
- Automatic consideration for other institutional scholarship.

To develop an effective policy, you should consider the following:

- Can you identify your current students who participated in the DP? If so, do you know how they are performing?
- Is participation in the DP considered for admissions purposes?
- Are DP students eligible for admission based on either completion of the programme or their scores in individual DP courses?
- Does your university have different IB course requirements for certain faculties?
- Is performance on the theory of knowledge course or the extended essay considered in admissions decisions?
- Are there other considerations that your university offers for IB students, such as designated scholarships, honours courses or research opportunities?
- Does your university have a language proficiency requirement that can be met by an IB language examination?
- Are anticipated grades for IB examinations submitted by the schools accepted or considered for admissions purposes?
- Do you have a statement on your website for recruitment and admission of IB students?
- Do you have an up-to-date policy on the IB website?



³¹ RMC Research Corporation, 2013. http://www.ibo.org/research/policy/programmevalidation/diploma/documents/CivicMindednessSummaryFINAL_000.pdf

³² Hinrichs, 2003



IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

INQUIRERS

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

KNOWLEDGEABLE

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

THINKERS

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

COMMUNICATORS

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

PRINCIPLED

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

OPEN-MINDED

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

CARING

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

RISK-TAKERS

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

BALANCED

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

REFLECTIVE

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

Where to go to find additional information and support

The IB makes a concerted effort to work directly with universities to supply the information and support needed to effectively develop policies for recognizing the achievements of Diploma Programme students.

- The IB can provide curriculum materials for your faculty to review, including guides, samples of past examinations and other materials.
- Subject briefs and other relevant resources for creating an IB policy are available online.
- Local IB World Schools or associations of IB World Schools can provide information about the DP in their school.
- IB alumni on our network or on your own campus can speak firsthand about their experience in the DP.
- IB staff are available and happy to provide relevant information and answers to your questions.
- The IB website is a central resource for information: www.ibo.org/recognition
- You can view and update your institution's IB recognition policy at: www.ibo.org/informationfor/universitiesandgovernments/universities/

Questions?

Contact us at recognition@ibo.org

