

# FAQ - IB Diploma Programme (IBDP)

## What is the IBO?

The International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) is a well-recognised and well-respected leader in the field of international education. The organisation itself was founded in 1968 with its headquarters based in Geneva, Switzerland. The Curriculum and Assessment centre, with which the Diploma Programme has the most contact, is based in Cardiff, Wales. The IBO offer three programmes, and all are available here at RCHK. The **IB Primary Years Programme**, for students aged 3 to 12; the **IB Middle Years Programme**, for students aged 11 to 16; and the **IB Diploma Programme** for students aged 16 - 19.

## What is the IB Diploma Programme?

The **IB Diploma Programme** is an academically challenging and balanced programme of education with final examinations that prepare students for success at university and in life beyond. The IB Diploma Programme is a demanding two year curriculum, taught in English, French and/or Spanish, leading to final examinations and a qualification that is welcomed by leading universities and colleges around the world. The two year curriculum is rigorous and intellectually coherent, encouraging critical thinking through the study of a wide range of subjects while encouraging an international perspective. Beyond completing courses and examinations in six subject areas, IB Diploma Programme students are also required to engage in **Creativity, Action, Service (CAS)**, individual research through the **Extended Essay (EE)** and an inquiry into the **Theory of Knowledge (TOK)**.

## How many subjects do I need to study?

Full Diploma Programme students take six subjects, 3 at higher level and 3 at standard level. Students must choose one subject from each of groups 1 to 5 (see the curriculum model), thus ensuring breadth of experience in languages, social studies, the experimental sciences and mathematics. The sixth subject may be an arts subject chosen from group 6, or the student may choose another subject from groups 1 to 5. Higher Level (HL) subjects have 240 teaching hours approximately which give students the opportunity to study these subjects in great depth, while Standard Level (SL) courses cover 150 teaching hours. At RCHK HL classes have 6 X 40 minute periods per week, and SL classes have 4 X 40 minute periods per week.

## If I don't want to, or can't complete the full Diploma, what can I do?

A student who does not satisfy the requirements of the full Diploma Programme, or who has elected to take fewer than six subjects, is awarded a certificate for the examinations completed. Students who complete more than six subjects receive an extra certificate for the additional subject(s).

## How are IBDP students assessed?

An essential principle of IB assessment is that standards are the same worldwide. IB examiners represent many cultural and academic traditions, yet the organization measures student performance according to established standards and criteria that are consistent from place to place and year to year. Over the two-year teaching period, a variety of assessment methods are used to acknowledge both the content and the process of academic achievement and to take into account different learning styles. Final examinations in each subject take place in either May (northern hemisphere) or November (southern hemisphere). Students' work is assessed by international teams of examiners, who are themselves trained and monitored by the IBO.

The marks awarded for each subject 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 full diploma is awarded to students who gain at least 24 points, and have satisfactory participation in Creativity, Action, and Service (CAS). The highest total that a Diploma Programme student can be awarded is 45 points. Students are assessed both internally and externally. The percentage of internal and external assessment varies from subject to subject.

**External assessment:** Examinations form the basis of assessment for most subjects because of their objectivity and reliability. There are also a small number of other externally assessed pieces of work, for example, Theory of Knowledge essays, Extended Essays and world literature assignments. These are completed by students over an extended period under teacher supervision, and are then marked by external examiners.

- There are a series of written examinations at the end of the course, which may consist of two or three separately written examination papers.
- Conventional external examination techniques are chosen from a variety of options including short responses, structured questions, text responses, data-based questions, essays and multiple-choice questions.
- Taken together, this approach is considered to deliver higher levels of reliability in assessing students.

**Internal assessment:** Internal assessment is an important component of the IB Diploma assessment process. This recognizes the professional role of the teacher and gives students a chance to show what they can do over time, not just in the pressured context of a final examination without access to outside resources.

- Internal assessment usually accounts for 20–30% of the final grade in a subject.

- Marks awarded for internal assessment are externally moderated by IB examiners to ensure international parity.
- Internal assessment typically includes teacher evaluation of work done in class, homework assignments, special projects, notebooks and laboratory procedures.

### **Predicted grades**

The predicted grade is the teacher's prediction of the grade the student is expected to achieve in the subject, based on all the evidence of a student's work and the teacher's knowledge of IB standards. Predicted grades are also required for Theory of Knowledge and the Extended Essay, and may be used as additional information about students who are subject to special consideration.