

Introduction

IB INNER HEXAGON

As well as their six subjects, students are required to take CAS, Theory of Knowledge and the Extended Essay, collectively known as the Inner Hexagon.

Students must pass all three components in order to be awarded the Diploma. CAS is pass or fail, based on the successful completion of 150 hours of evidenced activities. The Theory of Knowledge and the Extended Essay together contribute a maximum possible total of three diploma points. All three disciplines offer students the freedom to personalise their Diploma programme by focussing on areas of personal interest. The Inner Hexagon is highly prized by universities and higher education institutions as preparation for further study and it is an important factor in the UCAS tariff which compares A-level grades to IB points for the purpose of university entrance.

1. CAS

CAS is an extra-curricular element which requires each student to choose a variety of activities – Creativity (for example musical instrument practice or performance, art, model-making); Action (some kind of sport) and Service (for example reading in Primary schools, helping out at open-evenings, charity shop work or fundraising etc.). The activities can be new to the student or activities which are already up and running. The aim is to develop personal qualities such as confidence and open-mindedness whilst maintaining physical fitness. An important requirement is that the student gathers evidence and reflects upon the activities (for example by setting targets, considering difficulties etc.). Students must accumulate evidence for 150 hours of activities across the three areas (creativity, action and service). CAS is inspired by the educational ideas of Kurt Hahn, who also helped develop the Duke of Edinburgh Award. An important part of the creativity, action and service course is to complete an extended project, with an international element. The IB students went on a trip to Morocco in November 2009, and we have a proposed trip to China for 2010.

2. Theory of Knowledge

The Theory of Knowledge asks “How do we know?” It is a taught course of three periods in the first year and one period in the second. The focus throughout is on the analysis of different types of claims to knowledge through different means – reason, emotion, language and sense perception and in different contexts – humanities, sciences, arts, ethics, maths and sciences. It offers students the chance to broaden the scope and depth of their knowledge and to acquire and develop greater understanding of topics of contemporary interest and importance. Different subject areas are explored and combined in a coherent way. The course has a core of critical reasoning skills, investigating types of knowledge and argument which students will find useful in other subjects. The aim is to foster free thinking, objectivity and critical reasoning skills.

3. The Extended Essay

The Extended Essay is a research project over nine months during which the student selects an area of interest and, with the support of an individual Supervisor, researches and develops a 4,000 word essay to be presented in an academic format. It is an opportunity for students to specialise in an area which will help them in the future, particularly if going onto university.

Assessment

The **CAS** programme is carefully monitored. Students must regularly submit a diary record of their activities for review. The diary needs to contain dates and times as well as detailed self-reflection on 150 hours (minimum) of activities as well as other evidence such as photographs and documents. A witness signature is required for every completed activity. The **Theory of Knowledge** course is assessed both internally, by means of a teacher-marked Presentation on a topic chosen by the student on a knowledge-related issue and externally by means of a 1,600 word essay chosen from a prescribed list of essay titles published by the IB. Finally, students must produce an externally-marked 4,000 word **Extended Essay** on a topic of their own choosing. Support is provided by individual Supervisors with whom students need to stay in close touch whilst writing the essay. It is imperative that students meet all published deadlines for the Inner Hexagon assessment process.

Further Information

The Inner Hexagon is central to the IB's ethos of a coherent programme of education. It has been referred to as the "beating heart" of the Diploma programme – in many ways it brings together strands from the different Subject Areas and enables students to reflect upon and further develop their learning process.

Progression

The Inner Hexagon is ideal preparation for the rigours of Higher Education.

You are expected to take 3 subjects at higher level and 3 at standard level.

The IB subjects | 2010

You are expected to take 3 subjects at higher level and 3 at standard level.

