

International Baccalaureate Diploma Program FAQs

What is the IB Program?

“IB” stands for “International Baccalaureate”. The IB Diploma Program is a rigorous college preparatory curriculum for high school students completed during their 11th and 12th grade years. An accelerated preliminary IB program is offered during the 9th and 10th grades to increase student success in IB Diploma Program.

What is ‘international’ about this program?

The IB Program is run by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), which is based in Geneva Switzerland. IBO administers this curriculum to students in 131 countries around the world. The curriculum stresses international mindedness as well as an appreciation of our own culture.

What are the requirements for the IB Diploma?

Complete course work and exams in six areas and the core requirements. The core requirements are an extended essay, theory of knowledge (TOK) and creativity, action and service (CAS).

Can I still play sports or be in the band?

Yes, you will be able to play sports or be in the band.

Do I still get a regular diploma?

Yes. You will meet the requirements for a Texas diploma.

How will I get to Thurgood Marshall High School?

Fort Bend ISD will provide bus transportation to students accepted in the program.

May I take IB examinations even if I don’t attend Thurgood Marshall High School?

No, the IB permits only students enrolled in and attending IB-authorized schools to participate in an IB Program and take IB examinations.

How is the Diploma Program different from other pre-university academic programs?

The Diploma Program is a comprehensive and balanced two-year curriculum and assessment system that requires students to study courses across all disciplines. Within this structured framework, the Diploma Program provides a great deal of flexibility, accommodating student interest and abilities. Through careful subject selection, students may tailor their course of studies to meet their needs. Regardless of the subject selection, all students explore the connections between the six major subject areas, study each subject through an international perspective, reflect critically on what it means to be a knower, pursue one subject in great detail through independent research, and have the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills through local and community outreach.

Assessment of student achievement happens in a variety of ways throughout the course of the two-year program. It includes assessment of student work both by outside examiners as well as the students’ own teachers. The assessment itself undergoes careful review and

moderation to ensure that a common standard is applied equally to the work of all students internationally.

For these reasons, the IB Diploma is recognized by colleges and universities around the world as a superior education, preparing students to succeed at post-secondary institutions.

Will my classes be with IB students only?

For the most part, all of your classes will be with your IB cohort only. However, in some instances such as band for example, your classes may include other students.

Are IB classes given a weighted grade point?

Yes. Due to the rigor of the curriculum, IB classes are weighted.

How will class rank be determined? Will IB students be ranked separately from the other students?

Rank is done by grade level and uses the weighted grade point for determination. IB students will be included in the ranking with all other students in their grade level.

Will I get college credit for doing the IB Diploma Program?

You can receive college credit by doing the IB Diploma Program. Colleges and universities in the State of Texas will give you a minimum 24 college credit hours when you earn the IB Diploma. Universities worldwide also grant college credit for students with the IB Diploma. The grades on exams in the six areas are what colleges use to determine the number of hours they will grant for a particular subject.

Is a lot of extra homework involved in the Diploma Program?

IB courses are typically more challenging than regular high school courses, and so students may be asked to do more homework. The challenge, however, is not always in the amount of homework assigned; rather, it is in the quality of the assignments and the extent to which students engage those assignments. The added benefit here is that students take greater responsibility for their own learning while they acquire the valuable skills of time management and organization.

Diploma students do not have to forego other important parts of high school life. They may still remain involved in sports, student government, clubs, theater, music, community events, and other extra-curricular activities. Such activities are incorporated into the Diploma Program through the “CAS” (Creativity, Action, and Service) requirement.

The IB Diploma Program sounds like a lot of extra work. What are the advantages of enrolling in an IB program?

Students with IB Diplomas who now attend universities report that their involvement with IB has given them the tools needed to succeed at university and to make the most of their post-secondary education. In particular, students comment on their sense of preparedness, self confidence, research skills, the ability to manage their time, and the willingness to be actively engaged in their own learning. Even more importantly, they have developed a sense of the world around them, their responsibility to it, and the skills with which to embrace the complexities of life. The IB often employs a variety of phrases

to describe these traits and abilities: “learning how to learn”; “life-long learners”; “critical and compassionate thinkers”; and “informed participants in local and world affairs”.

How does the IB’s Diploma Program compare with The College Board’s Advanced Placement Program?

Both programs provide students with rich and challenging curricula and both enjoy national and international college and university recognition. The College Board and the IB issued a joint publication in 2005, *IB & AP*, which compares and contrasts both programs. To decide which program is right for them, students are encouraged to compare their own interests, abilities, and goals with the requirements of both programs.

What preparation do students need in order to succeed in the Diploma Program?

Students prepare for the Diploma Program in a number of ways. We have established a preliminary program, designed to assist students in developing a solid background in such subjects as languages and mathematics.

What do colleges and universities think about the Diploma Program?

Colleges and universities throughout North America view the IB Diploma Program as providing outstanding preparation for university work. Additionally, many of the most selective institutions have established policies that recognize the work students have done. Some universities also offer scholarships to IB graduates.

How does taking difficult courses improve my chances for scholarships and admission to universities?

At a time when increasing numbers of college and university applicants are presenting equally impressive GPAs or percentages, admissions officers must look for other evidence that the student will succeed in the challenges of the new academic environment. Admissions officers look for such factors as the quality of the courses represented on the transcript, the balance of courses across all disciplines, the record of the student’s research abilities, and the details of school and community involvement – all requirements of the Diploma Program.

Research conducted at several North American universities has demonstrated that IB Diploma holders do enjoy success at their postsecondary studies, often earning higher grades than their colleagues. Increasingly, universities are actively recruiting IB students by offering enhanced recognition or scholarships for successful IB work.

Does an IB Diploma allow students to go abroad for university?

Yes, in many cases. One of the founding ideals of the Diploma Program was to establish an internationally recognized system of curriculum and assessment that would be accepted by universities and ministries of education around the world. The Diploma Program is currently accepted by universities in more than 100 countries. We encourage you to visit the University and Government page of the IB website. There you will be able to research the IB recognition policies of post-secondary institutions throughout the world. The IB website is www.ibo.org.