

The Western International School of Shanghai

Developing Learners for University and Beyond in the IB

adapted from the IB website www.ibo.org



WISS Educational Goals Through the IB

At the Western International School of Shanghai (WISS), students are given a unique education through International Baccalaureate® (IB) curriculum.

They will:

- be encouraged to think independently and drive their own learning
- take part in programmes of education that can lead them to some of the highest ranking universities around the world
- become more culturally aware, through the development of a second language
- be able to engage with people in an increasingly globalized, rapidly changing world.

IB World School students develop strong academic, social and emotional characteristics. They are also likely to perform well academically – often better than students in other programmes.

The Diploma Programme (DP) – Grades 11 & 12

The International Baccalaureate® (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) is recognized and respected by the world's leading universities, and evidence suggests that higher rates of DP students go on to university and higher education study than non-IB students.

DP students apply to more than 3,300 higher education institutions each year, in close to 90 countries.

The most popular of these institutions are ranked among the top universities in the world.

Universities and colleges benefit from recruiting and admitting students from IB programmes in a range of ways, with IB programmes developing the knowledge, skills and disposition students need to be successful throughout their university careers.

As a result of their time in the IB, students develop:

- time management skills and a strong sense of self-motivation
- a keen interest in civic engagement
- notable academic ability
- strong research and writing skills
- critical thinking abilities
- an international outlook.

Research suggests, for example, that IB students are more likely than their peers to complete their undergraduate degrees and pursue graduate work; and that they are more likely to be engaged in various aspects of university life.

According to the research, IB students are strong on:

- student leadership activities
- working with university faculty on research projects
- finding opportunities to study in other countries
- tutoring other students
- taking part in voluntary and community service
- completing internships.

In order to maximise the opportunities for IB students at their institutions, many universities and colleges develop recognition policies making it clear how IB students gain places on their courses.

As an international programme with students all over the world, higher education institutions are always interested in how the IB safeguards the rigour and consistency of the Diploma Programme (DP), our programme for 16-19-year-olds.

The IB takes several measures to ensure validity and reliability of assessment methods, while measuring a great range of students' skills and abilities – beyond just content knowledge.

As a mark of its rigour, it is noteworthy that average scores and pass rates have remained consistent over several years.

Further, DP curriculum and assessment has been compared with various other qualifications over the last 10 years – with overall findings being very favourable for the DP.

What the Research Shows

Across different studies, researchers have found that:

- Diploma Programme (DP) curriculum and assessment compares favourably to a variety of other respected qualifications
- DP students tend to complete their undergraduate degrees at higher rates than their peers, and often in less time.
- IB students can tend to make more contributions to campus life by participating in activities such as community service, tutoring, assisting faculty in research, study abroad, internships, and joining clubs and other student groups.
- the IB goes to great lengths to ensure the validity and reliability of our assessments. IB assessments have been demonstrated as strong predictors of university performance.

Across the research, DP students have been cited as demonstrating the following skills:

- Interest and experience in research
- Time management and organizational skills
- Critical thinking, inquiry and problem solving
- Strong language and writing skills
- International-mindedness and a sense of responsibility for the community.

Research commissioned by ACS International Schools, the International Baccalaureate (IB) and the IB Schools and Colleges Association (IBSCA) in 2016, asked university admissions officers to rate three exam systems: A Levels, the IB Diploma Programme (DP) and BTEC, ranking them against factors such as 'encouraging independent enquiry', 'encouraging citizenship', and 'developing management skills'. The report finds that:

- UK university admissions officers say the DP provides the best preparation for university for young people in the UK, with 97 percent of admissions officers scoring the DP four or five out of five, compared to 87 percent scoring A Levels similarly
- The DP ranks top in 14 out of 16 different factors that best prepare students for university from self-management to intercultural skills, creativity and an ability to cope with pressure
- 100 percent of UK university admissions officers agree that being able to think and learn independently is the most important factor in students being ready and equipped to thrive at university. Admissions officers believe that the DP is the route that most encourages independent enquiry among its students (95 percent), compared to A Levels (48 percent)
- 63 percent of admissions officers say they would accept a DP student even if they hadn't completed every aspect of the programme because they appreciate the value of the all-round academic education that the DP offers

The research was conducted through telephone interviews with 81 university admissions officers in the UK and 21 from the USA, between 22 February and 12 April 2016. In the UK, the sample covered a third of all UK universities, including 10 percent Russel Group; 12 percent Milton Plus Group; 16 percent 1994 Group.

Choosing IB: Impact on University Admissions

Research suggests that the DP is a strong pathway to university – the impact of studying the DP on admission to university and higher education depends on each student's performance.

Two questions often presented to the IB by parents and universities are:

- How do DP scores equate to other qualifications?
- How is the DP different from other pre-university academic programmes?

Annually, DP students request transcripts sent to over 3,300 institutions of higher education in nearly 90 countries. The degree to which these and other institutions recognize the IB diploma and DP courses varies widely. Even institutions with no formally published recognition policy often still consider DP performance in admissions decisions.

Recognition comes in many forms, but the most common are:

- recruitment—actively recruiting Diploma Programme students
- admission—the IB diploma is fully recognized in the admissions process, addressing Diploma Programme students specifically in documentation and publications
- placement—acknowledging the rigour of IB courses and establishing prerequisites for IB courses that are fair and equitable in comparison with those for state, provincial and/or other examination courses; understanding and acknowledging the English language proficiency of DP students who undertook the programme in English
- credit—providing detailed information on the courses for which credit is possible based on DP scores; specifically understanding and recognizing theory of knowledge, the extended essay and the content of both standard and higher level courses
- scholarships—providing scholarships or scholarship opportunities specifically for IB diploma students

The Diploma Programme is a comprehensive and balanced two-year curriculum and assessment system that requires students to study six subjects and core components across all disciplines. Within this structured framework, the DP provides a great deal of flexibility, accommodating student interests 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 aspects of knowledge, pursue one subject in great detail through independent research, and have the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills through local and community service.

The assessment of student achievements happens in a variety of ways throughout the course of the two-year programme. It includes the assessment of student work both by external examiners as well as the students' own teachers. Internal or teacher assessment normally contributes between 20% and 30% of the subject assessment, but can account for as much as 50% in some of the arts courses. The assessment itself undergoes careful review and moderation to ensure that a common standard is applied equally to the work of all students internationally. All students' work, regardless of which school they attended, are subjects to the same assessment principles.

The IB diploma is widely recognized by colleges and universities around the world as superior preparation for students to succeed at post-secondary institutions.

Success in University Admissions at WISS

WISS has had a very strong record of university admissions. This past year alone, the Class of 2017 with 35 students had acceptances to over 15 universities ranked in the top 100 world-wide by *Times Higher Education* and *US News & World Report*. These universities include:

- Amsterdam University, *The Netherlands*
- Boston University, *United States*
- Durham University, *United Kingdom*
- Georgetown University, *United States*
- Hong Kong University of Science & Technology, *Hong Kong*
- Leiden University, *The Netherlands*
- The London School of Economics & Political Science, *United Kingdom*
- McGill University, *Canada*
- New York University, *United States*
- Northeastern University, *United States*
- University of British Columbia, *Canada*
- University of California – Los Angeles, *United States*
- University of Hong Kong, *Hong Kong*
- University of Manchester, *United Kingdom*
- University of Rochester, *United States*
- University of Toronto, *Canada*

In conversations with university representatives who have visited WISS, they have mentioned time and time again how the IB diploma is well-regarded by universities around the world and that students who come to their campuses from the IB programme are well-prepared for university study.

WISS is proud to offer the full IB programme of study and looks forward to sending more students on to outstanding universities around the world!

