

Beginner's Guide to International Baccalaureate (IB) Education

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1. Introduction about International Baccalaureate (IB)

The International Baccalaureate (IBO) is a non-profit educational foundation, motivated by its mission, focused on the student.

The International Baccalaureate (IB), formerly the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO), is an international educational foundation headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. Founded in 1968 in Geneva, IB offers three educational programmes for children ages 3–19. Consequently, "IB" can refer to the organization itself, any of the three programmes or the diploma or certificates awarded at the end of the diploma programme.

IBO currently works with 2,827 schools in 138 countries to develop and offer three challenging programmes to over 778,000 students aged 3 to 19 years.

In 1994, the IB added the IB Middle Years Programme, for students between the age group 11 to 16. Also known as the MYP, the middle years programme consists of eight subject areas and five areas of interaction. In 1997, the IB added the IB Primary Years Programme for three to ten year olds. Also known as the PYP, the primary years programme is inquiry-based, and consists of six transdisciplinary themes supported by six subject areas.

2. About JustInternationalSchools.com

JustInternationalSchools was started with an aim to making life simpler for parents. It started with a common goal of providing in-depth, relevant and true information about international schools in India, to all parents of school going children. JustInternationalSchools.com offers various online and print publications & services to international schools in India. JustInternationalSchools.com provides a unique platform for parent-school interaction. One among the various educational boards covered by JustInternationalSchools, IB programme is more practical and application-based.

Ambarish Verma, Proprietor of eduFYI, the parent company of JustInternationalSchools.com says "Today parents are in a dilemma regarding the choice of an international school where their child is imbibed with good values and learns to play and interact with other children. As well as an international school which contributes and nurtures the overall growth and development of their child . IB programmes continue to imbibe international mindedness in students and educators through the IB learner profile. In the 21st century students are faced with the challenges of learning about an interconnected world with ever changing growth opportunities. International School education not only limits itself in the confines of the textbooks but is also taught in an interesting and interactive manner preferably with the help of tools and practical aids" adds Ambarish.

JustInternationalSchools.com will be coming up with information directory services and would be adding different service verticals in near future. JustInternationalSchools.com plans to cover all international schools in India by 2010 year end.

3. Affiliations

The IB is a non-governmental organization (NGO) of UNESCO and has collaborative relationships with the Council of Europe and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF). The IB's alliance with UNESCO encourages the integration of its educational goals into the IB curriculum.

The IB diploma prepares students for entrance into universities in many countries, since it is equivalent to the British 'A' levels, the Australian Higher School Certificate, the German Abitur, the French Baccalaureate and other similar examination-based systems. Schools recognised by the International Baccalaureate Organisation and offering the IB curriculum are known as IB World Schools.

The IB Programme is recognized by all the leading foreign Universities & the association of Indian Universities. IBO accreditation is proposed for the Diploma Programmes of Singapore International School.

4. Subjects and the IB curriculum

IB has a broader spectrum of subjects that lead to all-round development. IB examinations test students' knowledge, not their memory and speed. There are no examinations till the Middle Years Programme (Class 10). The focus of the IB pedagogy is on 'how to learn' rather than 'what to learn'. There are no prescribed textbooks; students can choose their own books. The purpose of IB is to produce global citizens. But sometimes, the IB programme does use the local curriculum as a base. For example, Marathi can be offered as a second language in the IB Diploma Programme. The IB curriculum is more challenging than educational boards like CBSE and ICSE. But the challenge is in the quality of assignments, not in the amount of work assigned.

This internationally-recognised school system is made up of three educational programmes:

- i. **PYP: The Primary Years Programme** (Kindergarten to Class 5)
- ii. **MYP: The Middle Years Programme** (Class 6 to Class 10)
- iii. **DP: The Diploma Programme** (Class 11 to Class 12)

Subjects in the Primary Years Programme (PYP) are:

1. Language
2. Social Studies
3. Mathematics
4. Science and Technology
5. Arts
6. Personal, Social and Physical education

Subjects in the Middle Years Programme (MYP) are:

1. 1st Language
2. 2nd Language
3. Humanities (History and Geography)
4. Sciences (Biology, Chemistry & Physics)
5. Mathematics (Number, Algebra, Geometry, Statistics, and Discrete Mathematics)
6. Arts (Visual Arts and Performing Arts)
7. Physical Education
8. Technology (Computers)

DP students choose one subject from each of the following six 'Subject Groups':

Group 1: First Language (English)- generally the student's native language, with over 80 different languages available.

Group 2: Second Language(French, Hindi, etc).

Group 3: Individuals and Societies(Business and management, Economics, Geography, History, Information technology in a global society (ITGS), Islamic history, Philosophy, Psychology, and Social and cultural anthropology).

Group 4: Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Environmental Systems).

Group 5: Mathematics and Computer Science.

Group 6: Electives(either Visual Arts or a second subject from Groups 3, 4 or 5).

In addition, all DP students must study a two-year course called Theory of Knowledge (TOK); work to produce an Extended Essay (EE); and engage in Creativity, Action, and Service (CAS) (See Core Requirements).

5. Core Requirements (TOK, EE and CAS)

To be awarded an IB Diploma, a student must fulfill three "core requirements," in addition to passing his or her subject examinations:

- i. **Extended essay (EE).** Student's must write an independent research essay of up to 4,000 words in a subject from the list of approved EE subjects. The student's may choose to investigate a topic within a subject they are currently studying, although this is not required.
- ii. **Theory of knowledge (TOK).** This is a course that aims to encourage students to be critical thinkers and to teach them basic epistemology. It is claimed to be a "flagship element" of the Diploma Programme, and is the one course that all diploma student's are required to take. TOK requires 100 hours of instruction, the completion of an externally assessed essay of 1,200–1,600 words (from a choice of ten titles prescribed by the IB), and an internally assessed presentation on the student's chosen topic.
- iii. **Creativity, action, service (CAS).** CAS aims to provide student's with opportunities for personal growth, self-reflection, intellectual, physical and creative challenges, and awareness of themselves as responsible members of their communities through participation in social or community work (service), athletics or other physical activities (action), and creative activities (creativity). The guideline for the minimum amount of CAS activity over the two-year Diploma programme is approximately 3–4 hours per week, though "hour counting" is not encouraged.

6. IB Assessment

All subjects (with the exception of CAS) are assessed using both internal and external assessors. The externally assessed examinations are given worldwide in May (usually for Northern Hemisphere schools) and in November (usually for Southern Hemisphere schools). Each exam usually consists of two or three papers, generally written on the same or successive weekdays. The different papers may have different forms of questions, or they may focus on different areas of the subject syllabus. For example, in Chemistry, paper 1 has multiple choice questions, paper 2 has extended response questions, and paper 3 focuses on the "Option(s)" selected by the teacher. The grading of all external assessments is done by independent examiners appointed by the IB.

The nature of the internal assessment (IA) varies by subject. There may be oral presentations, practical work (in experimental sciences and performing arts), or written works. Internal assessment accounts for 20 to 50 percent of the mark awarded for each subject and is marked by a teacher in the school. A sample of at least five per subject at each level will also be graded by a moderator appointed by the IB, in a process called external moderation of internal assessment.

Points are awarded from 1 to 7. Up to three additional points are awarded depending on the grades achieved in the extended essay and theory of knowledge, so the maximum possible point total in the IBDP is 45.

7. Comparison between IB and other programmes like CBSE, ICSE or the Middle Years Programme of the IB

- The IB programme is more practical and application-based. It has a broader spectrum of subjects that lead to all-round development.
- IB examinations test students' knowledge, not their memory and speed. There are no examinations till the Middle Years Programme (Class 10). The focus of the IB pedagogy is on 'how to learn' rather than 'what to learn'.
- There are no prescribed textbooks; students can choose their own books.
- The purpose of IB is to produce global citizens.
- But sometimes, the IB programme does use the local curriculum as a base. For example, Hindi can be offered as a second language in the IB Diploma Programme.
- The IB curriculum is more challenging than educational boards like CBSE and ICSE. But the challenge is in the quality of assignments, not in the amount of work assigned.

Pursuing the IB programme can be very expensive, with annual fees as high as Rs 250,000. But the IBO vigorously maintains that the IB programme is not elitist.

8. IB Recognition

The rigorousness and high standards of IB ensure that colleges and universities around the worldwide recognise the IB Diploma as a superior academic programme and a strong university entry credential.

Over 50,000 students appeared for the IB Diploma Programme in May 2004.

The Association of Indian Universities (AIU) rates IB at par with Class 12 CBSE, ICSE, NIOS or State Boards. But every now and then, one hears of stray incidents of IB students finding difficulty in getting admission in certain Indian colleges and universities.

9. Parents Concerns: Why should one choose IB curriculum for their children

1. The IB Diploma has earned universal reputation for rigorous assessment, giving students access to the top colleges and universities in India and the world. IB is fast becoming the programme of choice for Indian students preparing to pursue higher education abroad.
2. The IB curriculum equips students with the tools needed to succeed in higher education, such as self-confidence, preparedness, research skills, organisational skills and being actively engaged in own learning.
3. Some universities even offer scholarships to IB diploma holders.
4. University admissions around the world are getting competitive by the day. Admission officers are increasingly looking for other evidence that a student will succeed in the university - such as exposure to quality curriculum, research abilities, international outlook and social service all enhanced by IB.

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An  Venture

The "fyi" logo consists of the letters "fyi" in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font, with a small orange circle above the "i" and a stylized orange and red graphic element to the right.

ABOUT JustInternationalSchools

JustInternationalSchools is a premiere information service provider, started by young entrepreneurs with an aim to cater to all international schools in India. JustInternationalSchools offers services like publications, brand management and advertising which are focused on international schools in India. JustInternationalSchools aims to be the one stop destination for any parent seeking information about international school education in India, by providing readily available up-to-date information to parents in India or parents from other countries who wish to provide international school education in India.

For more information about JustInternationalSchools, please visit www.JustInternationalSchools.com