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**"Enter to learn; leave to make the world a better place"**

# BISC
# IB Diploma Programme
# 2018-2019 Handbook

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**Acronyms**

| | |
|---|---|
| CAS: | Creativity Action Service |
| DP: | Diploma Programme |
| EAL: | English as a Additional Language |
| EE: | Extended Essay |
| "E" grade: | Elementary |
| HL: | Higher level |
| IA: | Internal assessment |
| ILP: | Individual Learner Plan |
| IB: | International Baccalaureate |
| IBO: | International Baccalaureate Organization |
| "N" grade: | No submission |
| SEN: | Special Educational Needs |
| SL: | Standard level |
| TOK: | Theory of Knowledge |

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Dear Students/Parents,

We are happy to welcome you to our IB Diploma programme, which we have been delivering since 2005. The aim of this handbook is to give you a better understanding of how BISC delivers the programme, what subjects we offer, what policies are in place to support our students. We pride ourselves on our ability and professional expertise to cater the programme to the unique interests of our students. In fact, we would maintain that there is no *one* single programme but a whole host of programmes - students can, our timetable pending, choose a programme that is custom-made.

The Diploma programme is a rigorous pre-university course of studies. BISC graduates have gone on to pursue their studies in some of the best universities, from St Andrews to Singapore. BISC teachers have graduated from such universities, and are encouraged to develop professionally as they go. Our driving motto ("Enter to learn; leave to make the world a better place") aligns closely with the IB mission statement:

*"The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect."*

At the same time, we believe that any contribution we do make needs to begin at home. Our CAS programme, for instance, is aimed to give our students contact with the local community. It is through such contacts that young people are empowered. We therefore recommend that students, while identifying with the countries they come from, extend their understanding and open-mindedness to embrace other cultures. We feel that our IB programme, by virtue of being taught by a multicultural team stretching from Ireland to Japan, is ideally placed to infuse those values which the IB deem to be essential in today's world.

We hope that you take the time to read through this handbook and come to understand what makes the programme here at BISC so unique. Part 1 of the handbook begins by looking at the diploma programme model and its basic features. This section also includes a useful list of frequently-asked-questions with answers. Part 2 attempts to describe the policies which we hope give each IB student meaningful access to the curriculum. Part 3 gives the reader a brief description of subjects on offer, including important information about prior knowledge. Finally, Part 4 gives the reader an idea of the higher education landscape, in particular in the UK.

We are confident that you will find in our programme something to accommodate your interests, but we are of course open to feedback about how we can further develop the programme we offer. For at the end of the day, we are of the belief that success in the programme is a shared responsibility between all stakeholders: the IBO, the school management team, parents, teachers and students. Should you have any questions or queries about our IB programme, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to welcoming you into our school. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

The IB Team
British International School of Cracow
ibcoordinator@bisc.krakow.pl

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# Part 1: The IB programme

**The Diploma Programme (DP) explained**

There are six groups (academic areas) which enclose a central core. Groups include a first language, a second language, a humanities, an experimental science, mathematics and a creative arts (this last can be substituted by studying a subject from another group). Students choose to study three subjects at Higher Level (HL) and three at Standard Level (SL). This ensures depth as well as breadth. All DP students take the three core elements: Theory of Knowledge; Extended Essay; Creativity Action Service.

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## Frequently asked questions

### What, in brief, is the Diploma Programme?

- Students choose 6 subjects: 3 subjects at Standard Level (SL) and 3 subjects at Higher Level (HL). It is possible to take two subjects at SL and 4 subjects at HL.
- SL subjects take up 150 teaching hours; HL subjects take up 240 teaching hours
- One of the two subjects at standard level (excluding languages ab initio) can be completed and assessed at the end of the first year of the DP
- The six subject groups are: studies in language and literature; language acquisition; individuals and societies; sciences; mathematics; the arts
- Students may opt to take an additional sciences, individuals and societies, or languages courses instead of a course in the arts
- Students follow a Core programme including Theory of Knowledge (TOK), the Extended Essay (EE) and Creativity Action Service (CAS)

### What is Theory of Knowledge? (TOK)

- TOK is a compulsory course in practical philosophy, designed to provoke critical reflection on the nature of knowledge, and on how we know what we claim to know (ways of knowing in TOK include language; sense perception; emotion; reason; imagination; faith; intuition; memory)
- All students will have two 50-minute lessons of TOK per week
- There is no exam in TOK but the IB requires that they complete a 1,600 word essay and give a presentation on which students are graded

### What is Extended Essay (EE)

- Each Diploma candidate writes an 'Extended Essay' which is a 4,000 word self-directed piece of research on a topic which they are interested in
- The topic would normally fall within one of their subject choices and is due in the first term of the second year
- Students can choose to write their extended essay in 'World Studies', which must focus on a topic of global significance
- The school provides a suitable supervisor

### What is Creativity Activity Service? (CAS)

- CAS involves students in a range of activities alongside their academic studies
- It is not formally assessed. However, students reflect on their CAS experiences, and provide evidence of achieving the seven learning outcomes for CAS (these are to identify own strengths and develop areas for growth; demonstrate that challenges have been undertaken; demonstrate how to initiate and plan a CAS experience; show commitment to and perseverance in CAS experiences; recognise the benefits of working collaboratively; demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance; and recognise and consider the ethics of choices and actions).
- Students are required to undertake a CAS project, which challenges students to show initiative, demonstrate perseverance, and develop skills such as collaboration, problem solving and decision making
- The school provides a CAS coordinator to guide and help

### What is the IB learner profile?

The IB learner profile serves as the lynchpin of the DP. It is a collection of 10 attributes which helps to inform a student's behaviour throughout the programme and beyond, because they serve to promote personal integrity. IB learners strive to be: inquirers; knowledgeable; thinkers; communicators; principled; open-minded; caring; risk-takers; balanced; and reflective.
For more information about this, please click on the following link:

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http://www.ibo.org/benefits/learner-profile/

## How is the IB assessed?

- Students receive grades ranging from 7 to 1, with 7 being the highest.
- All subjects, except for the core, are assessed through final examinations.
- All subjects have an Internal Assessment (IA) component, which counts towards 20-25% of the final grade
- A student's final result is made up of the combined scores of each subject. The Diploma is awarded to students who gain at least 24 points, subject to certain minimum levels of performance and to successful completion of the core
- Students can achieve a maximum of three additional points for their diploma from a combination of TOK and EE (see diploma points matrix below). It is important to note that a student cannot obtain the diploma if they achieve an "E" grade in either TOK or the EE.

| ToK/EE | A | B | C | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | Failing condition |
| B | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | |
| C | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | |
| D | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| E | Failing condition | | | | |

## What requirements are there to enter the IB programme?

- the most recent school report
- a copy of any qualifications obtained (e.g. IGCSE examinations)
- all candidates need to take an English language test to determine (a) their readiness to study the IB diploma programme and (b) what areas they will need further support in
- for certain subjects and levels (please see subject descriptions in Part 3), candidates will need to demonstrate their readiness through either (a) obtained qualifications or (b) testing
- for details on our admission policy, please see Part 2

## For applicants who do not qualify, does BISC provide a pre-IB programme?

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- Yes. While students were previously recommended to follow the Year 11 programme (which culminates in IGCSE examinations), students can now avail of a custom-made timetable which better reflects their strengths and interests. This timetable will most likely combine subjects from Y11 and IB1, and will include CAS. The pre-IB programme does not however guarantee entrance to the IB diploma programme. An alternative to the diploma programme is what the IB terms 'Courses', which allows students a choice in the subjects they wish to be assessed in. Please note that it is school requirements that all students follow the CAS programme, regardless of the programme for which they are registered.

## What are the responsibilities of the school?

The responsibilities of the school are found in the *General Regulations of the Diploma Programme*[1]. A copy will be sent to parents at the start of the IB programme. According to this document, the school:

- is responsible for informing candidates and legal guardians about the general characteristics of the DP and how the school implements it
- must comply with the details, deadlines and procedures stated in the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme* for the relevant examination session
- is responsible for ensuring that candidates comply with all assessment requirements for the DP

*Note: while the school will do everything in its power to prepare candidates for the examination, it is the individual teacher's discretion to follow the syllabus requirements as reflected in the subject guide for that subject.*

- will communicate to candidates and parents in good time if students have not met the first year requirements so that students/parents can look for suitable alternatives.
- will provide candidates and parents with predicted grades prior to submitting university applications. These normally will be provided in early October of the second year but will be updated following mock examinations.

## Are there any internal examinations?

Towards the end of the first year, BISC holds end of year exams to assess whether or not a student should be recommended for progression to the final year of the IB programme. The school also holds mock examinations in January of the second year. The purpose here is twofold: (1) to gauge what a student has learned and what still needs to be learned; (2) to give students the experience of taking examinations in authentic exam conditions. With regard to the end of year exams and in order to progress to the final year, students **must achieve a total score of 20 points**.

In addition, students will not automatically progress to IB2 if any of the following occurs:

1. There is a grade 1 awarded in a subject/level
2. Grade 2 has been awarded three or more times (HL and SL)
3. Grade 3 or below has been awarded four or more times (HL or SL)
4. There are serious concerns with CAS/EE/TOK

## What subjects are offered at BISC in school year 2018/2019?

To satisfy IB requirements, students are required to choose one subject from each of the following 'blocks':[2]

[1] https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/become-an-ib-school/dp-general-regulations-sept-16-en.pdf

[2] Please note that Biology is now in 'Block 6' whilst Chemistry is now in 'Block 4'

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| BLOCK 1 | BLOCK 2 | BLOCK 3 | BLOCK 4 | BLOCK 5 | BLOCK 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. English A (SL or HL)<br>2. English B (SL or HL) | 1. Language A (SL or HL)<br>2. Spanish B (SL or HL)<br>3. French B (SL or HL)<br>4. German B (SL or HL) | 1. History (SL or HL)<br>2. Geography (SL or HL)<br>3. Business Studies (SL or HL) | 1. ESS SL<br>2. Biology (SL or HL)<br>3. Physics (SL or HL) | 1. Mathematical Studies SL<br>2. Mathematics SL<br>3. Mathematics HL | 1. Visual Arts (SL or HL)<br>2. Theatre (SL or HL)<br>3. Computer Science (SL or HL)<br>4. Psychology (SL or HL)<br>5. Chemistry (SL or HL) |

- As you can see above, the English language is now made compulsory by virtue of being the language through which all out students complete the diploma programme. Students can either choose English A or English B. If English B is chosen, then students can either opt for Polish A or another language which can be taken as a 'self-taught' subject.
- The choice of subjects is determined by interest, ability, university-entrance requirements (see Part 4), etc. It is very important that students make an informed decision about this as changing subjects in the middle of the programme is 'costly' as students will have to catch up what has been missed. To guide students, the IB coordinator will discuss subject choice with each prospective student but it is equally important that this be discussed at home.

## How can I find out more about each subject?

- See part 3 in this handbook for a brief introduction to each subject.
- For further information (in terms of how our teachers organise the content for each subject and what features they choose to teach) please visit our website at http://bisc.krakow.pl/ib.html where you can find subject course descriptions.
- Our teachers would be happy to answer any questions about their subjects. Please see here for their email addresses: http://bisc.krakow.pl/school-staff.html.
- You may also wish to read the 'subject briefs' on the IB website here: http://www.ibo.org/university-admission/ib-recognition-resources-and-document-library/#briefs. Please click on DP subject briefs.

## What are the failing conditions for the DP?

- If a student has not met CAS requirements
- If a student's total points are fewer than 24
- If an N has been given for TOK, EE or for a contributing subject
- If a grade E has been awarded for one or both of TOK and the EE
- If there is a grade 1 awarded in a subject/level
- If grade 2 has been awarded three or more times (HL or SL)
- If grade 3 or below has been awarded four or more times (HL or SL)
- If a student has gained fewer than 12 points on HL subjects
- If a student has gained fewer than 9 points on SL subjects

## What can I do to ensure that I am successful?

- It is key that students communicate their thoughts or concerns to their teachers and to develop a trusting relationship with their form tutor. It is never a good idea to shrug off difficulties, because this can have deleterious consequences for the student.

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- To be successful in the DP one needs to develop study skills (e.g. note-taking; prioritising; working to deadlines). The reason behind this is that the IB is as much about growing in maturity (many secondary school exit exams in various countries are still know as the 'matura', including Poland) as it is about academic ability.
- At the end of the day, it is partly the student's responsibility to take advantage of the programme and what it has to offer. There is a lot of flexibility in the DP (e.g. in the CAS project; in the chosen topic for the EE; in chosen topics for IAs; in the TOK presentation and essay), and with a little reflection a student can turn the DP into a custom-made programme to suit their interests and talents.

### What support is available to help me succeed?

- We pride ourselves on having introduced a tutorial system whereby each student will meet with their respective form tutor at least twice a term. The aim of this is to gauge how students are progressing and what support structures are needed if any.
- We understand the centrality of academic skills to the programme and have structured the timetable to include an academic skills class (to meet one period per week) for students who do not take English HL.
- BISC has established a number of policies (see Part 2 for details), all of which aim to support students in their studies

### Does the school have a university advisor?

- We appreciate that this is where most students aim to go once having completed the IB diploma programme. As such, the diploma is an excellent qualification in that the skills and knowledge it cultivates provides ideal preparation for university level education. The IB coordinator, who is also the university advisor, will meet each student before the programme and during the programme to gauge what aspirations students have and offer advice.

*Note: BISC does not take responsibility for application deadlines missed if the career advisor has not previously been informed.*

### How does the school communicate information to me?

- The IB coordinator sends monthly updates to parents by email with important information about the IB programme (and with any changes to the IB calendar).
- All parents are encouraged to maintain regular contact with form tutors.
- School news will be communicated on the school's portal (Schoology).
- All parents are welcome to email teachers. Please find staff email addresses here: http://bisc.krakow.pl/school-staff.html.

### What is Schoology?

- Schoology is the online portal that the school has adopted. It is used for the following functions: to create IB subject courses with materials; to post homework (very helpful for students who are absent); to maintain an online register of students; to post grades and achievements; to communicate school news to the BISC community.

### What is the timeline of key events in the school's DP?

- The following is a list of events throughout the two-year programme, which will be reflected in the IB calendar. The calendar is sent to students and parents at the start of the programme. Any changes will be emailed to students and parents in monthly updates.

| DP year 1 | |
|---|---|
| **Year start** | Introducing course expectations |

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| DP year 1 | |
|---|---|
| **Semester 1** | IB preparation course<br>CAS programme starts<br>Detailed explanation of EE process with timeline |
| **Semester 2** | *Interim Reporting*<br>TOK presentations<br>EE First Reflection Session (February)<br>Formal CAS interviews with students<br>Group 3 IAs first draft due (March)<br>EE Second Reflection Session (April)<br>Year 1 examinations<br>*End of Year Reporting* |

| DP year 2 | |
|---|---|
| **Semester 1** | CAS programme and interviews continue<br>Group 3 IAs due (September)<br>Draft EE due (September)<br>EE Final Reflection Session (November)<br>Draft TOK essay due (December)<br>Draft 5 IAs due (November)<br>*Predicted grades submitted (December)* |
| **Semester 2** | Group 5 IAs due (January)<br>Mock examinations (January)<br>*Interim Reporting*<br>Group 1 and 2 IAs due (January)<br>TOK course completed<br>Group 1 and 2 orals<br>Group 4 IAs due (February)<br>CAS presentations (March)<br>Study Leave<br>Visual Arts Exhibition (April)<br>Final DP written examinations<br>*End of Year Reporting* |

### Why are deadlines in place?

- The IB diploma programme is demanding in that both the core components (EE/TOK/CAS) and individual subjects require that students submit work. Deadlines are built into the calendar so as not to unduly tax students, especially near the end of the programme.

### What consequences do students face if they do not meet deadlines?

- Students are required to meet deadlines as established by the IB coordinator. If there is a valid reason why they are unable to submit work by the due date, an extension needs to be obtained by the IB coordinator. Any late submissions that have not been previously arranged will be reflected in school reports and an official notice will be sent to students and their parents.

### Can the IB coordinator refuse to submit my work?

- The IB coordinator will refuse to submit work if it is deemed not to be the work of the student or if the student has not submitted work by the cut-off date by which all work needs to be submitted.

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## Is there an alternative to the IB diploma?

- Students can take individual DP IB courses (including the core) which leads to the award of course results

## What are the advantages of taking the DP?

- It is because the DP programme is so rigorous that it challenges students at an academic level, but also at a cognitive and an emotional level.
- DP students develop life skills which are transferable
- the DP programme is well-respected by universities throughout the world

## Can the school guarantee that I take those subjects I like?

- No. While we pride ourselves in our ability to accommodate the interests of our students, we cannot guarantee that students take all the subjects they would like to take. This depends on numerous factors, such as teacher availability and the school timetable.

## What does a week at school look like?

Here is a sample timetable:

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 08:35 - 09:25 | CHE IB1(SL+HL) 21 KO<br>ESS IB1(ESS) 44 IW<br>GEO IB1(HL) 37 MV<br>PHY IB1(SL+HL) 41 JSW | BUS IB1(HL) 46 FMT<br>HIS IB1(HL) 47 PL<br>PSY IB1(HL) 44 MM | CHE IB1(SL+HL) 41 KO<br>ESS IB1(ESS) 43 IW<br>PHY IB1(SL+HL) 46 JSW | MAT IB1(HL) 43 AT<br>MAT IB1(SL) 41 AP | BUS IB1(SL+HL) 46 FMT<br>HIS IB1(SL+HL) 49 PL<br>PSY IB1(SL+HL) 44 MM |
| 09:25 - 10:15 | GEO IB1(HL) 37 MV | | | | |
| 10:30 - 11:20 | AW IB1(AW) 46 SD<br>EN A IB1(HL) 47 TTH | FR B IB1(SL+HL) 35 MW<br>GER IB1(SL+HL) 49 AS<br>JAP A IB1(HL) 48 KSA<br>PO A IB1(SL+HL) 45 AZ<br>SP IB1(SL+HL) 40 JC | FR B IB1(HL) 35 MW<br>GEO IB1(HL) 37 MV<br>GER IB1(HL) 49 AS<br>JAP A IB1(HL) 48 KSA<br>PO A IB1(HL) 45 AZ<br>SP IB1(HL) 40 JC | BUS IB1(SL+HL) 46 FMT<br>HIS IB1(SL+HL) 49 PL<br>PSY IB1(SL+HL) 44 MM | EN A IB1(SL+HL) 47 TTH<br>EN B IB1(SL+HL) 36 SD |
| 11:20 - 12:10 | CAS / TUT IB1 45 SD<br>SD UOD | | | | |
| 12:10 - 13:00 | | | | | |
| 13:00 - 13:50 | ART IB1(SL+HL) STUD KT<br>BIO IB1(SL+HL) 21 IW<br>COM IB1(SL+HL) 04 JE<br>TH IB1(SL+HL) 48 CR | EN A IB1(SL+HL) 47 TTH<br>EN B IB1(SL+HL) 36 SD | EN A IB1(HL) 45 TTH<br>EN B IB1(HL) 36 SD | CHE IB1(HL) 21 KO<br>MAT IB1(ST) 36 AP<br>PHY IB1(HL) 41 JSW | MAT IB1(HL) 43 AT<br>MAT IB1(SL) 21 AP |
| 13:50 - 14:40 | | | ART IB1(HL) STUD KT<br>BIO IB1(HL) 43 IW<br>COM IB1(HL) 04 JE<br>TH IB1(SL+HL) 48 CR | | |
| 14:40 - 15:30 | ART IB1(HL) STUD KT<br>BIO IB1(HL) 21 IW<br>COM IB1(HL) 04 JE<br>TH IB1(HL) 48 CR | MAT IB1(HL) 43 AT<br>MAT IB1(ST) 41 AP | ART IB1(SL+HL) STUD KT<br>BIO IB1(SL+HL) 43 IW<br>COM IB1(SL+HL) 04 JE | TOK IB1 46 FMT | FR B IB1(SL+HL) 35 MW<br>GER IB1(SL+HL) 49 AS<br>JAP A IB1(HL) 48 KSA<br>PO A IB1(SL+HL) 45 AZ<br>SP IB1(SL+HL) 40 JC |
| 15:30 - 16:20 | GYM IB1(15:30 - 17:00) IB2(15:30 - 17:00) AN<br>SWIM IB1(15:45-16:15) IB2(15:45-16:15) AN | | TH IB1(HL) 48 CR | | |

## Can I change subjects during the school year?

- While it is strongly recommended that students take time to consider their subject choices before the start of the academic year, for various reasons it may be necessary to change subjects during the programme. Students can **do so in the first tree months** of the programme. Under no circumstances may candidates change their subjects and levels without prior consultation with the IB coordinator together with the form tutor.

## Apart from the regular school fees, what are the costs involved in taking the DP?

- Examination registration fee (payment per exam session): equivalent of 98 GBP in PLN
- Subject fee (payment per individual subject registered under): equivalent of 68 GBP in PLN
- Courier costs (payment for courier costs during an examination session): approximately 20% of the total IB exam costs

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# Part 2: School Policies

BISC has developed a number of policies in order to help students achieve success in the diploma programme and beyond. We recognise that the IB curriculum is not 'one-size-fits-all', and we believe that each student should have meaningful access to the curriculum. This is achieved through the following five policies:

## 1. Admissions policy

BISC is proud to consider itself an inclusive school. This means that we honour the IB's standards, in particular standard A.9 which states that "the school supports access for students to the IB programme and philosophy." (Programme Standards and Practices, 2014: 21).

Notwithstanding, as the diploma programme is considered "an academically challenging"[3] programme of education in order for students to fully benefit we feel it important that prospective students fulfil our own standards as outlined in our admissions policy. Once accepted, students are then supported by the other policies outlined below.

All prospective students are assessed in terms of their English language proficiency, which allows the EAL department to gauge their readiness to undertake the diploma programme. The assessment must be carried out on school grounds prior to the academic year in which the student wishes to be enrolled. The EAL coordinator assesses this according to standards established by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Students need to have obtained at least B2 ('Independent user') in order to be able to benefit from the diploma programme.

Students who have been assessed by means of external tests, like IELTS or Cambridge B2 First, are exempt from being assessed if these tests were undertaken within a year of being enrolled. For IELTS, we ask that students obtain not below 5.5 in any of the language skills.

In addition, several subjects will ask for additional requirements. For example, in order to study Mathematics HL students will either need to show evidence of ability (A* in IGCSE) or take our entry test. Again, this must be taken on site. Any students interested in taking Mathematics HL will be sent an information pack. Please see Part 3 of this handbook for more information on individual subjects requirements. Requirements will also be found in subject descriptions, which can be found here: https://bisc.krakow.pl/ib.html

Finally, we ask that applicants also make known to us any documents that provide evidence of learning needs. See section 4 below for more information.

## 2. Language policy

Most students who take the IB programme are not English-native speakers and therefore the demands imposed on students following a curriculum through English can be considerable. More significantly perhaps, irrespective of what a student's first language is it is imperative that a student develops 'academic literacy'; that is, the language which is necessary for students to become literate in the language of a particular subject. The following are in place to ensure that students achieve academic literacy:

[3] https://www.ibo.org/programmes/diploma-programme/who-is-the-diploma-for/

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- An experienced EAL Coordinator is appointed to provide language support to students who are joining the IB programme in the first year. This support takes the form of an academic skills course which is compulsory for all students not taking English A at higher level. The EAL Coordinator will monitor the progress of each student by drawing up an individual learner plan (ILP). More information about the course can be found on our website.
- The EAL Coordinator provides training to other teachers who do not necessarily have a language teaching background. This training takes the form of whole-school workshops, parallel teaching (where the EAL coordinator or other designated teachers complement in their focused lessons what is done in other subject lessons) and team teaching (where the EAL coordinator or other designated teachers co-teach a lesson in a particular subject).
- Finally, teachers are encouraged to plan differentiating activities that take account of diverse learner needs

## 3. Assessment policy

The practice of assessing students has moved from what has traditionally been 'summative assessment' (which assesses students in end-of-year exams, for example) to 'formative assessment' (which assesses students with the express purpose of identifying areas for further improvement). To this extent, each subject in the IB programme comes with a set of marking criteria which show progression along different bands. The marking criteria for each subject is made known to students so that they know where they are at any given time, and what they need to improve on in order to reach the higher bands. The following are in place to ensure that teachers and students understand how assessment works in the IB programme:

- Students are given copies of the marking criteria for each component (including IAs, TOK and EE), which show them the indicators of each band
- Teachers regularly 'test' students by means of essays or structured tests, and subsequent teacher feedback allows students to gauge where they are along the marking scale
- For ease of reference, teachers use a standard template by which they give feedback
- Teachers attend workshops in their subjects and are encouraged to join local regional associations of IB schools, which allow them to better understand the marking criteria of the subjects they teach
- Teachers are sent subject reports for their subjects, which gives them valuable information on assessment as applied by the IB
- Certain teachers are IB examiners, who are arguably better placed to understand what constitutes success in the IB examinations

A key aspect of the IB programme is the IA. While the larger share of the assessment for the IB is carried out through external examinations (because if the greater degree of objectivity and reliability), the IB acknowledges that students should have the right to 'test' themselves through more project-like work. Hence the IA in each subject.

Finally, the EE and TOK (as discussed above) are also assessed and do not take the form of examinations. The EE is an extended project while TOK includes an essay and a presentation, both of which are internally assessed by the teacher.

## 4. Inclusion/Special Educational Needs policy

Much like language backgrounds, students come to BISC with a range of experiences and different learning styles or needs. An inclusive philosophy guides a school which endeavours to give meaningful access to such differences. The following are in place to enable the school to be inclusive:

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- An experienced SEN Coordinator is appointed to provide support to individual students who are identified as needing support
- Once it has been established that a student requires support, an ILP is drafted which outlines how the means by which support is to be achieved and the outcomes to which support is headed
- The SEN Coordinator conveys information - through workshops and morning briefings - to teachers and coordinators on the most effective strategies to help learners achieve desired outcomes
- Much like the language policy, teachers are encouraged to plan for differentiating activities to take account of learning styles or needs
- The IB Coordinator is able to request assessment access requirements from IBO if deemed necessary
- For students in need of more focused support, a school psychologist is available

## 5. Academic honesty policy

In order to be successful in an academic community, students need to be given an opportunity to experiment with ideas and to take risks. They need to feel secure that the ideas they express are worthy and '[add] to the substance of the universe', as Data in Star Trek claimed of himself. But for this to take place they need to recognise that others too have ideas. There are accepted academic conventions which permit students to acknowledge the ideas of others. The following are in place to ensure that students both see the necessity of and practise these conventions:

- At the start of the IB programme students attend an introductory talk and engage in an activity on academic honesty
- Students return to the issue of academic honesty in the TOK class and during tutorials
- Prior to finalising their topics for the extended essay students are sent a manual which outlines a recommended referencing convention
- Prior to end-of-year examinations, mock exemptions and the IB examinations, the IB Coordinator will send by email a poster which outlines expected conduct during examinations
- A designated notice board in the school will include information about examinations
- Students need to acknowledge in writing that the work they are submitting towards the IB diploma is theirs and that they have acknowledged the work of others
- Parents are sent the document *General Regulations: Diploma Programme* which gives important information about the IB programme including academic misconduct

All of the above is carried out in order to promote personal integrity which we believe to be the foundation of success. A person acting with integrity stands a better chance of positively impacting our world.

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# Part 3: Subjects

## LANGUAGE A: LITERATURE

- **What is the nature of the subject?**

*"The course is built on the assumption that literature is concerned with our conceptions, interpretations and experiences of the world. The study of literature can therefore be seen as an exploration of the way it represents the complex pursuits, anxieties, joys and fears to which human beings are exposed in the daily business of living. It enables an exploration of one of the more enduring fields of human creativity, and provides opportunities for encouraging independent, original, critical and clear thinking. It also promotes respect for the imagination and a perceptive approach to the understanding and interpretation of literary works. Through the study of a wide range of literature, the language A: literature course encourages students to appreciate the artistry of literature and to develop an ability to reflect critically on their reading." (Literature Guide, 2013: 5)*

- **What prior knowledge is needed?**

An A or a B in GCSE English literature is certainly desirable. However, the most successful students and the ones that find the course the most enjoyable are the students who have a genuine passion for literature (novels, poetry and plays). Ask yourself the following:
1. Do you read novels for pleasure at home?
2. Do you enjoy reading and analysing poems?
3. When you have been given homework to read passages of a play or a novel, was it a pleasure that you could not wait to start? Or was it a chore to be left until Sunday evening?

- **What is the difference between SL and HL?**

SL students are required to study 10 works whilst HL students study 13 works. In addition, two assessment tasks are more challenging for HL students: the individual oral commentary (HL students present a formal oral commentary on poetry and engage in a discussion on the other two works studies whilst SL students present a forma oral commentary on two works) and Paper 1 (HL students write a literary commentary with no guiding questions whilst SL students write a literature analysis with guiding questions)

- **How is it useful apart from enabling you to get an ID diploma?**

*"Literature wonders about infinity, wonders why God permits evil, wonders what will happen to us after we die. Literature admits that we get our hearts broken, that people sometimes cheat and get away with it, that the world is a strange and probably incomprehensible place. Literature, in other words, takes on all the big and small issues of what it means to be human." (Thomas E. Barden of the National Council of Teachers of English)*

- **Where can I find more information?**

Please see the subject brief for this subject here:
SL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/1_languagea_sl_2011.pdf
HL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/1_languagea_hl_2011.pdf

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## LANGUAGE A: LITERATURE (SELF-TAUGHT)

- **What is the nature of the subject?**

The nature of the subject is the same as it is for the Language A component above. However, the difference is that a student whose first language is different than those for whom a designated class is allocated (English/Polish/French/German/Portuguese) and who would like to develop an appreciation of their own culture's literary productions can choose the self-taught module. Languages include (but are not limited to) Chinese, Czech, Dutch, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Romanian, Slovak, Spanish, Swahili, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese. The school will appoint a full-time teacher of Language A to supervise and advise the self-taught candidate. In order for the candidate to gauge their competence in the language vis-a-vis the syllabus requirements a part-time external teacher needs to be sought.

- **What prior knowledge is needed?**

An A or a B in GCSE English literature is certainly desirable. However, the most successful students and the ones that find the course the most enjoyable are the students who have a genuine passion for literature (novels, poetry and plays). Ask yourself the following:
1. Do you read novels for pleasure at home?
2. Do you enjoy reading and analysing poems?
3. When you have been given homework to read passages of a play or a novel, was it a pleasure that you could not wait to start? Or was it a chore to be left until Sunday evening?

- **What is the difference between SL and HL?**

Self-taught students may study language A: literature at SL only. They will be expected to meet the same syllabus requirements as for taught Literature SL students, but with the exception that in part 4 of the course all three works must be chosen from the IBO document entitled the *Prescribed List of Authors*.

- **How is it useful apart from enabling you to get an ID diploma?**

The Language A: Literature (self-taught) course allows students to

- **Where can I find more information?**

Please see the subject brief for this subject here:
SL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/1_languagea_sl_2011.pdf

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# LANGUAGE B

## • What is the nature of the subject?

*"Language B is an additional language-learning course designed for students with some previous learning of that language. It may be studied at either SL or HL. The main focus of the course is on language acquisition and development of language skills. These language skills should be developed through the study and use of a range of written and spoken material. Such material will extend from everyday oral exchanges to literary texts, and should be related to the culture(s) concerned. The material should be chosen to enable students to develop mastery of language skills and intercultural understanding. It should not be intended solely for the study of specific subject matter or content."* (Language B guide, 2014: 5)

## • What prior knowledge is needed?

Language B SL and HL are language courses for students with some background in the target language.
'A' to 'C' at GCSE for SL
'A' and preferably 'A*' at GCSE for HL

## • What is the difference between SL and HL?

SL and HL are differentiated by the teaching hours, the depth of syllabus coverage, the study of literature at HL, the level of difficulty and the demands of assessment.

The core, which is common to both SL and HL, consists of three topics: communication and media; global issues; social relationships.

In addition, teachers select two options from a choice of five: cultural diversity; customs and traditions; health, leisure; science and technology

At HL two works of literature are studied.

## • How is it useful apart from enabling you to get an ID diploma?

Learning a foreign language helps students develop their language skills in a variety of contexts and gives a broad understanding of the culture of countries and communities where the language is spoken. It encourages enjoyment of language learning and the recognition that language skills enable everyone to take their place in a multilingual society.

## • Where can I find more information?

Please see the subject brief for this subject here:
Ab initio: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/2_langabinitiosl.pdf
SL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/2_langbsl.pdf
HL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/2_langbhl.pdf

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# BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

## • What is the nature of the subject?

*"The Diploma Programme business management course is designed to develop students' knowledge and understanding of business management theories, as well as their ability to apply a range of tools and techniques. Students learn to analyse, discuss and evaluate business activities at local, national and international levels. The course covers a range of organizations from all sectors, as well as the socio-cultural and economic contexts in which those organizations operate."* (Business Management guide, 2015: 6)

## • What prior knowledge is needed?

None is needed except an interest in the subject matter. Students are required to be able to write in continuous prose and to express ideas clearly and fluently in English.

## • What is the difference between SL and HL?

There is a core curriculum for both SL and HL consisting of five obligatory units (business organisation and environment; human resource management; finance and accounts; marketing; operations management) with common content and learning outcomes. HL students complete extension areas of study in all five units. The other notable difference is the IA: SL students write a written commentary (1500 words) while HL students research and report on an issue (2000 words).

## • How is it useful apart from enabling you to get an ID diploma?

The course is about learning to investigate factors that lead businesses to making certain decisions, as well as interpreting information in a business context. Students are expected to show judgment in weighing up the relative importance of different points or sides of an argument in order to reach a conclusion. This will be of use to them later in life in any situation from work to domestic finances.

## • Where can I find more information?

Please see the subject brief for this subject here:
SL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/businesssl2016englishw.pdf
HL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/businesshl2016englishw.pdf

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# GEOGRAPHY

## • What is the nature of the subject?

*"Geography is a dynamic subject that is firmly grounded in the real world and focuses on the interactions between individuals, societies and the physical environment in both time and space. It seeks to identify trends and patterns in these interactions and examines the processes behind them. It also investigates the way that people adapt and respond to change and evaluates management strategies associated with such change. Geography describes and helps to explain the similarities and differences between spaces and places. These may be defined on a variety of scales and from a range of perspectives.*
*Within group 3 subjects, geography is distinctive in that it occupies the middle ground between social sciences and natural sciences. The Diploma Programme geography course integrates both physical and human geography, and ensures that students acquire elements of both scientific and socio-economic methodologies. Geography takes advantage of its position between both these groups of subjects to examine relevant concepts and ideas from a wide variety of disciplines. This helps students develop an appreciation of, and a respect for, alternative approaches, viewpoints and ideas." (Geography guide, 2009: 2)*

## • What prior knowledge is needed?

This is the first time that BISC offers the course and so we welcome all students with an interest in Geography, irrespective of their prior experience.

## • What is the difference between SL and HL?

Students at SL and HL are exposed to common core topics as well as optional topics, but HL students study seven additional topics as their HL extension. Core topics are populations in transition; disparities in wealth and development; patters in environmental quality and sustainability; and patterns in resource consumption. Optional topics include freshwater-issues and conflicts; oceans and their coastal margins; extreme environments; hazards and disasters-risk assessment and response; leisure, sport and tourism; the geography of food and health; and urban environments. Compulsory topics in the HL extension include measuring global interactions; changing space-the shrinking world; economic interactions and flows; environmental change; sociocultural exchanges; political outcomes; and global interactions at the local level.

## • How is it useful apart from enabling you to get an ID diploma?

The study of Geography taps into an interest we share about people and their societies. Michael Palin the noted comedian and traveller, believes that in geography "students hold the key to the world's problems" (Royal Geographical Society website)

## • Where can I find more information?

Please see the subject brief for this subject here:
SL&HL: http://www.ibo.org/contentassets/5895a05412144fe890312bad52b17044/geography-sl-hl-2017-en.pdf

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# HISTORY

- **What is the nature of the subject?**

*"History is a dynamic, contested, evidence-based discipline that involves an exciting engagement with the past. It is a rigorous intellectual discipline, focused around key historical concepts such as change, causation and significance. History is an exploratory subject that fosters a sense of inquiry. It is also an interpretive discipline, allowing opportunity for engagement with multiple perspectives and a plurality of opinions. Studying history develops an understanding of the past, which leads to a deeper understanding of the nature of humans and of the world today.*

*The IB Diploma Programme (DP) history course is a world history course based on a comparative and multi perspective approach to history. It involves the study of a variety of types of history, including political, economic, social and cultural, and provides a balance of structure and flexibility. The course emphasizes the importance of encouraging students to think historically and to develop historical skills as well as gaining factual knowledge. It puts a premium on developing the skills of critical thinking, and on developing an understanding of multiple interpretations of history. In this way, the course involves a challenging and demanding critical exploration of the past." (History Guide, 2015: 6)*

- **What prior knowledge is needed?**

While History can be demanding as far as reading and writing are concerned, an interest in the subject can help students to quickly develop these skills and become successful historians.

- **What is the difference between SL and HL?**

Both SL and HL students study core topics. These are conflict and intervention in Rwanda and in Kosovo, followed with a thematic investigation of the causes and effects of 20th century wars and the Cold War. HL students choose a depth study on a region and need to study three sections from the chosen regional option.

- **How is it useful apart from enabling you to get an ID diploma?**

Studying history and gaining an IB qualification in the subject gives prospective university students an advantage because of their heightened knowledge of world affairs, their advanced understanding of economic, social and political concepts and their ability to write high quality, analytical prose which flows wonderfully, building to well considered conclusions. They develop objective approaches to sources of information of all kinds enabling them to make the most sound judgements in any situation. These things, combined, make students of history some of the most sought after applicants by just about any kind of organization and profession. The subject leads directly towards a career in law, journalism, public administration, tourism and business. In support of other subjects, history augments the qualities acquired by young people throughout their journey through life.

- **Where can I find more information?**

Please see the subject brief for this subject here:
SL: http://www.ibo.org/contentassets/5895a05412144fe890312bad52b17044/history-sl-2016-english-final-web-updated.pdf
HL: http://www.ibo.org/contentassets/5895a05412144fe890312bad52b17044/history-hl-2016-english-final-web-updated.pdf

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# PSYCHOLOGY

## • What is the nature of the subject?

*"Psychology is the systematic study of behaviour and mental processes. Psychology has its roots in both the natural and social sciences, leading to a variety of research designs and applications, and providing a unique approach to understanding modern society.*

*IB psychology examines the interaction of biological, cognitive and sociocultural influences on human behaviour, thereby adopting an integrative approach. Understanding how psychological knowledge is generated, developed and applied enables students to achieve a greater understanding of themselves and appreciate the diversity of human behaviour. The ethical concerns raised by the methodology and application of psychological research are key considerations in IB psychology."* (Psychology Guide, 2009: 4)

## • What prior knowledge is needed?

No prior knowledge is required. It tends to be easier for students who have done biology but it is not a requirement. The assessment is essay-based, so if you have no trouble putting your thoughts in writing you should enjoy psychology.

## • What is the difference between SL and HL?

The core, including biological, cognitive and sociocultural level of analysis, is the same for both levels. HL students study qualitative research learn more about psychological research, study an extra option and write more challenging Internal Assessment. Options include abnormal psychology, developmental psychology, health psychology, psychology of human relationships, and sport psychology.

## • How is it useful apart from enabling you to get an ID diploma?

*"Focusing on the complexities of human behavior and the factors that contribute to individual and group wellbeing, psychology students learn about the interventions and strategies that can be applied to help people lead happier, healthier and more productive lives.*

*In addition to this detailed understanding of human behavior, psychology students also graduate with other important skills which can be applied in a variety of fields. These include advanced communication skills, the ability to design, conduct and analyse research, and the use of high level problem solving and critical thinking skills."* (Australian Psychological Society website)

## • Where can I find more information?

Please see the subject brief for this subject here:
SL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/3_psychology_sl_2011.pdf
HL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/3_psychology_hl_2011.pdf

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# BIOLOGY

## • What is the nature of the subject?

*Biologists attempt to understand the living world at all levels using many different approaches and techniques. At one end of the scale is the cell, its molecular construction and complex metabolic reactions. At the other end of the scale biologists investigate the interactions that make whole ecosystems function. Many areas of research in biology are extremely challenging and many discoveries remain to be made. Biology is still a young science and great progress is expected in the 21st century. This progress is sorely needed at a time when the growing human population is placing ever greater pressure on food supplies and on the habitats of other species, and is threatening the very planet we occupy.* (Biology guide, 2015: 13)

## • What prior knowledge is needed?

Standard level requires a IGCSE in Chemistry of at least a C grade of the extended paper and IGCSE in Biology of at least a B grade. If students join from a different system they need to have the equivalent but the final decision is with the Head of Science. Higher Level Biology requires Biology IGCSE of at least A grade or equivalent and Chemistry IGCSE of at least a C grade at extended level.

## • What is the difference between SL and HL?

While the skills and activities of group 4 science subjects are common at both SL and HL, at HL students study some topics in greater depth, in the additional HL material and in the common options. The core topics are cell biology, molecular biology, genetics, ecology, evolution and biodiversity, and human physiology. Additional HL topics include nucleic acids; metabolism, cell respiration and photosynthesis; plant biology; genetics and evolution; and animal physiology. Optional topics include neurobiology and behaviour, biotechnology and bioinformatics, ecology and conservation, and human physiology.

## • How is it useful apart from enabling you to get an ID diploma?

As indicated above, great progress in biology is expected in the 21st century, especially in addressing issues of global significance such as climate change. As a result, many international bodies - ranging from the United Nations to hundreds of international bodies - now exist to promote science. It has been recognised

## • Where can I find more information?

Please see the subject brief for this subject here:
SL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/biologysl2016englishw.pdf
HL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/biologyhl2016englishw.pdf

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# CHEMISTRY

## • What is the nature of the subject?

*"Chemistry is an experimental science that combines academic study with the acquisition of practical and investigational skills. It is often called the central science, as chemical principles underpin both the physical environment in which we live and all biological systems. Apart from being a subject worthy of study in its own right, chemistry is a prerequisite for many other courses in higher education, such as medicine, biological science and environmental science, and serves as useful preparation for employment" (Chemistry guide, 2015: 13)*

## • What prior knowledge is needed?

Students wishing to enter the IB Diploma HL Chemistry course should have an entrance grade of A* or A in both IGCSE Chemistry and Mathematics. For those wishing to take the IB Diploma SL Chemistry course, an entrance grade of at least a C in both Chemistry and Mathematics is recommended. Students with no background in Chemistry are still encouraged to study the subject at SL. The final decision, however, remains with the Head of Science.

## • What is the difference between SL and HL?

While the skills and activities of group 4 science subjects are common at both SL and HL, at HL students study some topics in greater depth, in the additional HL material and in the common options. Core topics include stoichiometric relationships, atomic structure, periodicity, chemical bonding and structure, energetics/thermochemistry, chemical kinetics, equilibrium, acids and bases, redox processes, organic chemistry, and measurement and data processing. Additional HL topics include atomic structure, the transition metals of the periodic table, chemical bonding and structure, energetics/thermochemistry, chemical kinetics, equilibrium, acids and bases, redox processes, organic chemistry, and measurement and analysis. Optional topics include materials, biochemistry, energy, and medicinal chemistry.

## • How is it useful apart from enabling you to get an ID diploma?

Apart from being a subject worthy of study in its own right, chemistry is a prerequisite for many other courses in higher education, such as medicine, biological science, and environmental science, and serves as a useful preparation for employment.

## • Where can I find more information?

Please see the subject brief for this subject here:
SL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/chemistrysl2016englishw.pdf
HL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/chemistryhl2016englishw.pdf

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# COMPUTER SCIENCE

## • What is the nature of the subject?

*"Computer science requires an understanding of the fundamental concepts of computational thinking as well as knowledge of how computers and other digital devices operate. The Diploma Programme computer science course is engaging, accessible, inspiring and rigorous. It has the following characteristics.*
*• draws on a wide spectrum of knowledge*
*• enables and empowers innovation, exploration and the acquisition of further knowledge*
*• interacts with and influences cultures, society and how individuals and societies behave*
*• raises ethical issues*
*• is underpinned by computational thinking"* (Computer Science Guide, 2016: 4)

## • What prior knowledge is needed?

Students can study computer science at SL successfully with no background in, or previous knowledge of, computer science as long as they are well motivated learners. The study at HL demands a higher level of problem-solving skills and an ability to understand abstract concepts. Although no previous knowledge of computer science is required, some exposure to programming is desirable.

## • What is the difference between SL and HL?

Both SL and HL study a common core of activities, but HL students are required to study additional topics in the core, a case study and extension material of a more demanding nature in the option chosen. Students at SL and HL in computer science study a common core consisting of:
• four topics: system fundamentals; computer organization; networks; and computational thinking, problem-solving and programming
• one option (databases; modelling and simulation; web science; or object-oriented programming)
• one piece of internally assessed work, which includes a computational solution.
The HL course has three additional elements:
• three further topics (abstract data structures; resource management; control)
• additional and more demanding content for the option selected
• an additional component based on a pre-seen case study of an organization; this requires students to research aspects of the subject—which may include new concepts and subject content—in depth.

## • How is it useful apart from enabling you to get an ID diploma?

This subject teaches you how to think about and analyze what you learn, rather than simply memorize and regurgitate facts. You will be well-prepared for the higher-level thinking required at university.

## • Where can I find more information?

Please see the subject brief for this subject here:
SL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/4_computersl.pdf
HL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/4_computerhl.pdf

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## ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS AND SOCIETIES

- **What is the nature of the subject?**

"*The prime intent of this course is to provide students with a coherent perspective of the interrelationships between environmental systems and societies; one that enables them to adopt an informed personal response to the wide range of pressing environmental issues that they will inevitably come to face.*" (Environmental Systems and Societies Guide, 2008: 4)

- **What prior knowledge is needed?**

This is the first time that BISC offers the course and so we welcome all students with an interest in environmental studies, irrespective of their prior experience. As an interdisciplinary subject, the Environmental Systems and Societies course will appeal to students who are interested in the way the humanities interact with the sciences while addressing pressing issues in today's world.

- **What is the difference between SL and HL?**

The Environmental Systems and Societies course is offered at SL only. Topics include systems and models; the ecosystem; human population, carrying capacity and resource use; conservation and biodiversity; pollution management; the issue of global warming; and environmental value systems. Like in the sciences, there is also a practical hands-on aspect to the course which is carried out in the laboratory and/or out in the field.

- **How is it useful apart from enabling you to get an ID diploma?**

An understanding of the importance of Environmental Systems and Societies can be conveyed through the stated aims of the course. These are to:

*"1. promote understanding of environmental processes at a variety of scales, from local to global*
*2. provide a body of knowledge, methodologies and skills that can be used in the analysis of environmental issues at local and global levels*
*3. enable students to apply the knowledge, methodologies and skills gained*
*4. promote critical awareness of a diversity of cultural perspectives*
*5. recognize the extent to which technology plays a role in both causing and solving environmental problems*
*6. appreciate the value of local as well as international collaboration in resolving environmental problems*
*7. appreciate that environmental issues may be controversial, and may provoke a variety of responses*
*8. appreciate that human society is both directly and indirectly linked to the environment at a number of levels and at a variety of scales." (Environmental Systems and Societies Guide, 2008: 7)*

- **Where can I find more information?**

Please see the subject brief for this subject here:
SL: http://www.ibo.org/contentassets/5895a05412144fe890312bad52b17044/envyr-systems-2016-english-final-web.pdf

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# PHYSICS

## • What is the nature of the subject?

*"Physics is the most fundamental of the experimental sciences, as it seeks to explain the universe itself from the very smallest particles—currently accepted as quarks, which may be truly fundamental—to the vast distances between galaxies … Alongside the growth in our understanding of the natural world, perhaps the more obvious and relevant result of physics to most of our students is our ability to change the world. This is the technological side of physics, in which physical principles have been applied to construct and alter the material world to suit our needs, and have had a profound influence on the daily lives of all human beings.*
(Physics Guide, 2015: 12-13)

## • What prior knowledge is needed?

Anybody who had previously studied IGCSE/GCSE Physics. Grade A* is usually a good recommendation for HL, Grade A or B should be enough for SL. Those who are thinking about Physics HL should take Mathematics HL as well. Fluency in English is not required although good writing skills are an asset. Bullet type concise, simple writing style is preferred over descriptive, structured sentences. For anyone who thinks seriously about engineering studies, university pure science such as Math and Physics, experimental interdisciplinary sciences (i.e. biomaterials, nanotechnology) applied sciences and technology Physics SL or HL is a must.

## • What is the difference between SL and HL?

Both SL and HL courses have a common core syllabus, a common IA and some overlapping elements in the options. Students at HL are required to study topics in greater depth, in the additional HL material and in the common options. Core topics include measurements and uncertainties; mechanics; thermal physics; waves; electricity and magnetism; circular motion and gravitation; atomic, nuclear and particle physics; and energy production. Optional topics include relativity, engineering physics, imaging, and astrophysics. Additional HL topics include wave phenomena; fields; electromagnetic induction; and quantum and nuclear physics.

## • How is it useful apart from enabling you to get an ID diploma?

*"Courses in physics reveal the mathematical beauty of the universe at scales ranging from subatomic to cosmological. Studying physics strengthens quantitative reasoning and problem solving skills that are valuable in areas beyond physics. Students who study physics or engineering physics are prepared to work on forefront ideas in science and technology, in academia, the government, or the private sector."* (Stamford University Department of Physics website)

## • Where can I find more information?

Please see the subject brief for this subject here:
SL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/physicssl2016englishw.pdf
HL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/physicshl2016englishw.pdf

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# MATHEMATICAL STUDIES

## • What is the nature of the subject?

*"It is designed for students with varied mathematical backgrounds and abilities. It offers students opportunities to learn important concepts and techniques and to gain an understanding of a wide variety of mathematical topics. It prepares students to be able to solve problems in a variety of settings, to develop more sophisticated mathematical reasoning and to enhance their critical thinking. The individual project is an extended piece of work based on personal research involving the collection, analysis and evaluation of data."* (Mathematical studies Guide, 2012: 4)

## • What prior knowledge is needed?

IGCSE grade A-C or equivalent is recommended. The course itself prides itself on being practical, and as such a theoretical understanding of mathematics is less important than the SL or HL course.

## • What is the difference between SL and HL?

This course is available only at standard level. Topics include number and algebra; descriptive statistics; logic, sets and probability; statistical applications; geometry and trigonometry; mathematical models; introduction to differential calculus. The course also includes a project.

## • How is it useful apart from enabling you to get an ID diploma?

*"Students taking this course are well prepared for a career in social sciences, humanities, languages or arts. These students may need to utilize the statistics and logical reasoning that they have learned as part of the mathematical studies SL course in their future studies."* (Mathematical studies Guide, 2012: 4)

## • Where can I find more information?

Please see the subject brief for this subject here:
SL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/5_mathstudiessl.pdf

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# MATHEMATICS SL

## • What is the nature of the subject?

*"The course focuses on introducing important mathematical concepts through the development of mathematical techniques. The intention is to introduce students to these concepts in a comprehensible and coherent way, rather than insisting on the mathematical rigour required for mathematics HL. Students should, wherever possible, apply the mathematical knowledge they have acquired to solve realistic problems set in an appropriate context.*

*[The] course caters for students who already possess knowledge of basic mathematical concepts, and who are equipped with the skills needed to apply simple mathematical techniques correctly. The majority of these students will expect to need a sound mathematical background as they prepare for future studies in subjects such as chemistry, economics, psychology and business administration." (Mathematics SL Guide, 2012: 5)*

## • What prior knowledge is needed?

Mathematics is a linear subject, and so it is expected that students will have studied the subject for at least 10 years. The following list of topics are considered to be prior learning for the Mathematics SL course:

| Topic | Content |
|---|---|
| **Number** | Routine use addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, using integers, decimals and fractions, including order of operations<br>Simple positive exponents<br>Simplification of expressions involving roots (surds or radicals)<br>Prime numbers and factors, including greatest common divisors and least common multiples<br>Simple applications of ratio, percentage and proportion, linked to similarity<br>Definition and elementary treatment of absolute value (modulus)<br>Rounding, decimal approximations and significant figures, including appreciation of errors<br>Expression of numbers in standard form (scientific notation) |
| **Sets and numbers** | Concept and notation of sets, elements, universal (reference) set, empty (null) set,complement, subset, equality of sets disjoint sets<br>Operations on sets: union and intersection<br>Commutative, associative and distributive properties<br>Venn diagrams<br>Number systems: natural numbers, integers, rationals, and irrationals real numbers<br>Intervals on the real number line using set notation and using inequalities.<br>Expressing the solution of a linear inequality on the number line and in set notation<br>Mappings of the elements of one set to another. Illustration by means of sets or ordered pairs, tables, diagrams and graphs |

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| Topic | Content |
|---|---|
| **Algebra** | Manipulation of simple algebraic expressions involving factorisation and expansion, including quadratic expressions<br>Rearrangement, evaluation and combination of simple formulae. Examples from other subject areas particularly the sciences, should be included<br>The linear function and its graph, gradient and $y$-intercept<br>Addition and subtraction of algebraic fractions<br>The properties of order relations<br>Solution of equations and inequalities on one variable, including cases with rational coefficients<br>Solution of simultaneous equations in two variables |
| **Trigonometry** | Angle measurement in degrees. Compass directions and three figure bearings<br>Right-angle trigonometry. Simple applications for solving triangles<br>Pythagoras' theorem and its converse |
| **Geometry** | Simple geometric transformations: translation, reflection, rotation, enlargement. Congruence and similarity, including the concept of scale factor of an enlargement<br>The circle, its centre and radius, area and circumference. The terms "arc", "sector", "chord", "tangent" and "segment"<br>Perimeter and area of plane figures. Properties of triangles and quadrilaterals, including parallelograms, rhombuses, rectangles, squares, kites and trapeziums (trapezoids); compound shapes<br>Volumes of prisms, pyramids, spheres, cylinders and cones |
| **Coordinate geometry** | Elementary geometry of the plane, including the concepts of dimension for point, line plane and space. The equation of a line in the form $y = mx + c$<br>Parallel and perpendicular lines<br>Geometry of simple plane figures<br>The Cartesian plane: ordered pairs $(x, y)$, origin, axes<br>Mid-point of a line segment and distance between two points in the Cartesian plane and in three dimensions |
| **Statistics and probability** | Descriptive statistics: collection of raw data; display of data in pictorial and diagrammatic forms, including pie charts, pictograms, stem and leaf diagrams, bar graphs and line graphs<br>Obtaining simple statistics from discreet and continuous data, including mean, median, mode, quartiles, range, interquartile range<br>Calculating probabilities of simple events |

- **What is the difference between SL and HL?**

The SL course follows the core syllabus which covers six topics: algebra, functions and equations, circular functions and trigonometry, vectors, statistics and probability, and calculus. Students are also taught effective use of GDC. The HL course follows the core syllabus covering all the topics above in extended version with addition of complex numbers. It also covers an optional topic, as prescribed by IBO.

- **How is it useful apart from enabling you to get an ID diploma?**

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Studying Mathematics will enable you to communicate efficiently in various contexts; develop logical, critical and creative thinking; develop patience and persistence in problem solving; improve your ability of abstraction and generalisation; apply and transfer skills to alternative situations and other areas of knowledge; appreciate the contribution to other disciplines, particularly in the TOK course.

- **Where can I find more information?**

Please see the subject brief for this subject here:
SL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/5_mathsl.pdf

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# MATHEMATICS HL

## • What is the nature of the subject?

*"This course caters for students with a good background in mathematics who are competent in a range of analytical and technical skills. The majority of these students will be expecting to include mathematics as a major component of their university studies, either as a subject in its own right or within courses such as physics, engineering and technology. Others may take this subject because they have a strong interest in mathematics and enjoy meeting its challenges and engaging with its problems."* (Mathematics HL Guide, 2012: 5)

## • What prior knowledge is needed?

Requirements to enter Higher Level course are to achieve a grade A* in the IGCSE exam or pass the Entry Test with a mark of 80%. See below for information regarding the contents of the Entry Test.

Algebra: expressions (expanding, factorisation, simplifying), algebraic fractions, linear and quadratic equations and simultaneous equations, equations and graphs of straight lines and quadratics, surds and powers.

Geometry: angle properties, circle theorems, similar/congruent shapes, Pythagoras Theorem, trigonometry.

Handling data: organising data, measures of centre and spread, statistics of grouped data, cumulative frequency.

Most topics are included in IGCSE Extended Level syllabus. Higher Level IB course requires high ability –confidence and a fast working pace.

**Entry Test for IB High Level Mathematics course – Topics**

1. Surds and radicals.
- ? Simplifying radical expressions
- ? Rationalizing the denominator

2. Scientific notation (standard form).
- ? Conversion between numbers in scientific notation and ordinary decimal numbers
- ? Calculations with numbers in scientific notation (with or without a calculator)

3. Number systems.
- ? Subsets of the set of real numbers
- ? Calculations with rational numbers

4. Algebraic simplification.
- ? Collecting like terms
- ? Simplifying expressions with brackets
- ? Laws of indices

5. Linear equations and inequalities.
- ? Linear equations with variables on both sides, brackets and/or fractions

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- Linear inequalities
- Solving systems of two linear equations with two variables using method of elimination, substitution and graphical

6. Modulus or absolute value.
- Finding absolute value of a number
- Solving simple equations with absolute value

7. Product expansion.
- Expanding brackets (two linear expressions)
- Difference of squares rule
- Perfect squares rule
- Simplifying expressions with brackets

8. Factorization.
- Difference of squares
- Perfect squares
- Factorizing trinomials by splitting the middle term
- Factorizing trinomials (shortcut method)

9. Quadratic equations and inequalities.
- Solving quadratic equations by factorization
- Solving quadratic equations by completing the square
- Solving quadratic equations using the quadratic formula
- Solving systems of equations, one linear and one quadratic
- Solving quadratic inequalities

10. Formula rearrangement.

11. Adding and subtracting algebraic fractions with the same or different denominators.

12. Congruence and similarity.
- Congruent triangles
- Similar triangles

13. Coordinate geometry.
- Distance between two points in a plane
- Midpoint formula
- Gradient of a straight line
- Equations of straight lines
- Rules for parallel and perpendicular lines
- Axes intercepts
- Algebraic methods of finding points of intersection of graphs

14. Pythagoras theorem.
- Application in solving 2D and 3D problems

15. Trigonometry.

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- ? Right angled trigonometry (sine, cosine, tangent)
- ? The sine rule
- ? The cosine rule
- ? Problem solving using trigonometry

16. Representing and interpreting statistical data.

- ? Organising categorical and discrete data
- ? Measures of centre and spread (mean, median, mode, range)
- ? Grouped discrete data (mean, median, mode, range, cumulative frequency)
- ? Cumulative frequency curve

- **What is the difference between SL and HL?**

The SL course follows the core syllabus which covers six topics: algebra, functions and equations, circular functions and trigonometry, vectors, statistics and probability, and calculus. Students are also taught effective use of GDC. The HL course follows the core syllabus covering all the topics above in extended version with addition of complex numbers. It also covers an optional topic, as prescribed by IBO.

- **How is it useful apart from enabling you to get an ID diploma?**

*"Mathematics HL is an ideal course for students expecting to include mathematics as a major component of their university studies, either as a subject in its own right or within courses such as physics, engineering or technology."* (Mathematics HL Guide, 2012: 5)

- **Where can I find more information?**

Please see the subject brief for this subject here:
HL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/5_mathhl.pdf

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# THEATRE

- **What is the nature of the subject?**

*"Theatre is a dynamic, collaborative and live art form. It is a practical subject that encourages discovery through experimentation, the taking of risks and the presentation of ideas to others. It results in the development of both theatre and life skills; the building of confidence, creativity and working collaboratively.*
*The IB Diploma Programme theatre course is a multifaceted theatre-making course of study. It gives students the opportunity to make theatre as creators, designers, directors and performers. It emphasizes the importance of working both individually and collaboratively as part of an ensemble. It offers the opportunity to engage actively in the creative process, transforming ideas into action as inquisitive and productive artists. Students experience the course from contrasting artistic perspectives. They learn to apply research and theory to inform and to contextualize their work. The theatre course encourages students to appreciate that through the processes of researching, creating, preparing, presenting and critically reflecting on theatre— as participants and audience members—they gain a richer understanding of themselves, their community and the world." (Theatre Guide, 2014: 6)*

- **What prior knowledge is needed?**

No prior knowledge is needed.

- **What is the difference between SL and HL?**

As with any IB subject, the subject is assessed through a combination of external and internal assessment. With regard to the former, SL and HL students undertake two tasks (the Director's notebook and the Research Presentation). HL students undertake a further task: the Solo theatre piece, which is 35% of the final grade. With regard to the internal assessment, students undertake a Collaborative project where they are required to create and present an original piece of theatre lasting 13-15 minutes long.

- **How is it useful apart from enabling you to get an ID diploma?**

According to AQA, aside from the practical drama skills one develops, students cultivate the following skills: collaborative, communication, design, practical, and life skills. AQA claims that career opportunities include: Arts/theatre administration; arts journalism; theatre management; broadcasting; drama therapy; scriptwriting; etc. For more, please see here: http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/drama/a-level/drama-2240/why-choose

- **Where can I find more information?**

Please see the subject brief for this subject here:
SL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/theatresl2016englishw.pdf
HL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/theatrehl2016englishw.pdf

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# VISUAL ARTS

## • What is the nature of the subject?

*"The IB Diploma Programme visual arts course encourages students to challenge their own creative and cultural expectations and boundaries. It is a thought-provoking course in which students develop analytical skills in problem-solving and divergent thinking, while working towards technical proficiency and confidence as art-makers. In addition to exploring and comparing visual arts from different perspectives and in different contexts, students are expected to engage in, experiment with and critically reflect upon a wide range of contemporary practices and media."* (Visual Arts Guide, 2015: 6)

## • What prior knowledge is needed?

In art HL or SL you need have a portfolio in order to take part in the IB Visual arts. Such portfolio consists of observation drawing; ranging from still life to the study of the human body. Portfolios also need to show some creative input, own composition and photography maybe even 3D art works. You need to have some understanding of media, how to differentiate between media and how to use it. In some case architectural drawings are a possibility rather than the outlined portfolio. IGSCE portfolio is also accepted.

## • What is the difference between SL and HL?

HL students produce a larger body of works and are expected to demonstrate how their works communicate with potential viewers. In both cases there is a comparative study (HL students submit 3-5 additional screens), a process portfolio (HL students submit 13-25 screens as opposed to 9-18 at SL and do so using three art-making forms as opposed to two), and and an IA culminating in an exhibition (HL students submit a curatorial rationale of 700 words as opposed to 400 and submit 8-11 artworks as opposed to 4-7 at SL).

## • How is it useful apart from enabling you to get an ID diploma?

"*There are many reasons to study art. Often the first to come to mind are: opportunities for self-exploration and self-expression, the chance to broaden horizons, build mental focus, physical dexterity, reduce stress, and increase personal enjoyment. However, growing research and statistical evidence also prove that the skills established through the study of art assist students in achieving success in their other courses and meeting the demands of the modern world of work … Development in the arts also helps to create well-rounded students with and understanding of varied cultures, strong analytical abilities, and a range of communication and interpersonal skills. Students in the Visual Arts learn to understand both 'the big picture' and the nuances within it. They learn to meet a variety of challenges by formulating creative solutions and revisions. These are the sorts of perceptions and abilities that employers and post-secondary institutions seek."* (York Region District School Board in Ontario website)

## • Where can I find more information?

Please see the subject brief for this subject here:
SL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/visualartssl2016englishw.pdf
HL: http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/visualartshl2016englishw.pdf

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# Part 4: Careers' Advice

BISC understands that the IB programme is usually a stepping-stone to further studies. Alternatively, the IB programme can be a means to enter the job market or enter into apprenticeships. Some students even choose to take a 'gap year' in order to gain new experiences or to build on life skills.

Whatever path students opt for it is important that they be given expert advice on what options are available. This section aims to describe what paths are available and what support is given to our students in order to allow them to make informed decisions.

**A. Pathways**

**1. Higher Education**

Most students decide to go into higher education following the IB diploma programme, which provides excellent preparation.

- **UK**

Around a quarter choose to apply to obtain a place in UK universities through the following UCAS portal: https://www.ucas.com/

Requirements to enter UK university courses are given on both the UCAS website and university websites. Depending on the subject, requirements usually range between 28 points and 38 points with the average being 33 points.

Here is a sample of universities with requirements to study *Economics*:

| | |
|---|---|
| Aberystwyth University: | 28 points |
| University of Cambridge: | 40-42 points |
| De Montford University: | 25 points |
| University of Dundee: | 30 points |
| Durham University: | 38 points |
| King's College London, University of London: | 35 points |
| Goldsmiths, University of London: | 33 points |
| Lancaster university: | 35 points |
| London School of Economics and Political Science: | 38 points |
| Loughborough university: | 35 points |
| Queen Mary University of London: | 35 points |
| University of Northampton: | 25 points |
| University of Oxford: | 39 points |
| University of Portsmouth: | 29 points |
| University of Sheffield: | 34 points |
| University of St Andrews: | 38 points |
| University of York: | 35 points |

- **Netherlands**

The Netherlands is becoming an increasingly popular choice for the following reasons:

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- Quality (13 universities have been ranked in the top 200 universities worldwide according to Times Higher Education: https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/best-universities-netherlands
- Project-based education (problem-solving; group work)
- Competitive fees (from 2,100 euro per year for mainstream programmes to 4,100 euro for liberal arts and sciences programmes)
- Lower entrance requirements (24 points for mainstream programmes with individual faculty requirements)
- Liberal Arts and Science programmes (programmes that provide many electives with a combination of humanities, social sciences, and sciences)

Following a trip to the Netherlands in August 2018, the IB coordinator had the possibility to visit six institutions of higher education (University of Groningen; University of Twente; University of Utrecht; Radboud university; Erasmus University; Amsterdam university) and speak with university admissions staff as well as student ambassadors. The aim was to better understand the admissions system in the Netherlands as well as get a favour of student life in terms of available facilities.

Students in the Netherlands are admitted into three-year bachelor programmes and customarily continue into one or two-year masters' programmes. For liberal arts and sciences programmes to be considered students ordinarily need to attain 30-32 points in the diploma programme. Depending on the university, Liberal Arts and Sciences programmes provide the following benefits:

- A core programme including learner skills
- Project-based learning
- A variety of electives
- Academic and pastoral tutors
- Dutch language courses
- Accommodation (at least in the first year)
- On site lecture facilities, library, catering services, and administration

For more on liberal arts and sciences programmes, see the following:

Amsterdam university: http://www.uva.nl/en/programmes/bachelors/amsterdam-university-college/amsterdam-university-college.html
Erasmus university Rotterdam: https://www.eur.nl/en/bachelor/liberal-arts-and-sciences
Groningen university: https://www.rug.nl/bachelors/liberal-arts-and-sciences/
Leiden university: https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/education/study-programmes/bachelor/liberal-arts--sciences-global-challenges
Maastricht university: https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/liberal-arts-and-sciences
Twente university (Enschede): https://www.utwente.nl/en/education/bachelor/programmes/university-college-twente/
Utrecht university: https://www.uu.nl/en/organisation/university-college-utrecht/about-ucu/liberal-arts-and-sciences

For more on studying in the Netherlands, see: https://www.studyinholland.nl/

**2. Apprenticeships**

Students can also apply for apprenticeships which gives them the possibility of studying while working - in other words, 'earn while you learn'.

For more on these in the UK, see: https://www.ucas.com/apprenticeships-in-the-uk

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### 3. Gap year

Some students opt to take a 'gap year'. Here are some reasons:
- They are unsure about what to study
- They wish to retake an IB subject in the November examination session
- They prefer to gain hands-on experience as an intern of as a volunteer
- They wish to develop certain skills

For advice on gap years, see: https://www.ucas.com/gap-year

### 4. Summer schools

A number of universities offer summer schools to give students a taster of what university life will be.

For more on this in the UK, see: https://www.ucas.com/events/exploring-university/learn-about-uni-taster-course
For more on this in the Netherlands, see: https://www.studyinholland.nl/study-options/summer-schools

## B. Support

### Pre-IB

All students are invited to meet the IB coordinator and discuss their subject choice prior to entering the IB diploma programme. This is to ensure that their subject choice is better informed as some university-level courses stipulate that certain subjects need to have been studied.

### IB1

All IB1 students are invited to meet the IB coordinator at the beginning of the year to discuss what pathways they are considering once they complete their studies with us. They are introduced to the personal statement, which will help them to consider what they need to develop in order to strengthen their university applications. For more on the personal statement, see: https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/when-apply/how-write-ucas-undergraduate-personal-statement. They are also given advice on making their summer holidays more productive. For instance, students are encouraged to take advantage of open days and/or summer schools.

For more, see: https://www.ucas.com/ucas/events/find/scheme/undergraduate/type/open-day?keywords=&sort_by=field_event_date_value

Some universities have 'virtual' open days: https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/events-and-open-days/virtual-tours

Universities in the Netherlands are holding open days in October and November 2018:

Amsterdam university: 10 November 2018
Erasmus university Rotterdam: 6 October 2018
Groningen university: 9 November 2018, 1 February 2019, 13 April 2019
Leiden university: 13 October 2018
Maastricht university: 13 October 2018

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Twente university (Enschede): 16-17 November 2018
Utrecht university: 16-17 November 2018

**IB2**

All IB2 students are invited to meet the IB coordinator and discuss their chosen pathways. They will need to ensure that they conduct further research, complete their applications and submit by the given deadlines (e.g. to study medicine or veterinary medicine in UK applications need to be submitted by 15th October of the previous year).

**Education fairs**

The British Council organises yearly education fairs in Krakow and Warsaw. These usually take place in December and BISC students are invited to attend. More information can be found here: https://www.britishcouncil.pl/en/study-uk/education-fairs-and-exhibitions

**University visits**

BISC arranges a number of university visits each year. In the past, we have organised visits by Oxford University, the University of British Columbia and the University of Groningen. We are keen to develop relations with universities so as to enable our students to make a more informed decision about their future.

**'Schoology'**

Our portal has a dedicated page titled 'university guidance' where students and parents can find more information on the admission process, distance learning courses, fees, employment prospects, etc.

For more, please see: https://bisc.schoology.com/course/1226663452/materials?f=101153599

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