



Parents' Guide to the IBS IB Assessment Policy

The IB Diploma Programme features a unique balance between internal and external assessment which is an essential part of the evaluation of each student. At both Standard and Higher level, courses have three or four different components and a wide variety of testing techniques are used whenever possible. These range from multiple-choice questions to structured or open-ended problem-solving and may include data analysis, case study observations and text commentaries. Oral testing is an integral part of language study and Diploma students validate their Theory of Knowledge studies by speaking on a topic of their choice as well as writing an essay.

At the beginning of each course of study, teachers explain what coursework will be required and what percentage of the final mark each piece of work represents. Students are given an outline of the marking criteria for each component and we place strong emphasis on the fact that the skills which are evaluated in internal assessment are quite different from those that examinations normally assess. In some subjects, for example a student's first language, coursework may represent as much as 50% of the final mark.

Active participation in self-evaluation is encouraged through class discussion as an important part of the learning process and whenever a topic is covered in class, teachers make suggestions for related experiments, portfolios or essay titles to provide students with as wide a scope as possible in their choices of coursework. Tasks like these which are undertaken individually or as a group are an excellent occasion for students to reflect, discuss with others and take an active role in their own learning process.

Each subject teacher ensures that criteria are fully understood and that practice is given in each task so that the final result represents a student's highest potential. This focus on student/teacher co-operation with its emphasis on the development of a student's autonomy is a fundamental aspect of the IB philosophy of education. As a parent recently remarked, the teachers at IBS "encourage a hermeneutical approach while maintaining a maieutic position."

IBS uses the 1-7 marking range with the same grade descriptors as those applied in the IB Diploma. When several teachers are involved in teaching the same subject, we encourage cross-marking to ensure that the same standards are maintained and that assessment is consistent. The IB coordinator follows each student's progress closely in each subject throughout the course on ManageBac, discussing any problems as they arise and also giving congratulations on individual achievements. Parents of course are encouraged to also follow the progress of their children on ManageBac, and to raise any issues directly with the IB office. Feedback in the form of summative, formative and comments-only assignments allows for more nuanced reporting. Students appreciate the personal attention and it stimulates them to be more responsible and attentive to making regular progress.

Each student receives a report generated by ManageBac at the end of each term (six total throughout the course) with marks, written comments and criteria marks for behavior/attitude. An overall appraisal is given by the IB coordinator. Discussion at a personal level concerning any comments made is very important and students should consult their teachers for clarification and guidance in how to improve their work. Each report contains the points total, as well as an explanation of the IB failing conditions. While point totals are made according to IB criteria, we do however emphasize the fact that 'points acquired' early on in the course only relate to that particular stage of development and should not be considered as an accurate prediction of what the ultimate achievement will be. A typical progression for the six terms would look like this: 28, 30, 31, 32, 32, 34. In this example, the student's official IB results would have totaled 34 points.

These methods of assessment have enabled us to give realistic predictions for universities and have led both parents and students to be more aware of 'where they stand' at any point in the course, taking pride in their progress. The correlation between our predictions based on term totals and our students' final results has been very positive.



Parents' Guide to the IBS Learning Needs Policy

We believe that good assessment is fair assessment. Our school admission policy includes making sure that we can fully meet our students' educational needs whilst they are with us. We monitor the regular year to year progression, paying particular attention to the evaluation of a student's level at key stages in academic development. The school can generally meet the needs of students diagnosed with dyslexia or dyscalculia and in the past we have helped students with attention and motor problems.

Students with special needs that have already been identified in previous schools, or who have undergone specialist diagnosis which has been discussed during parent interviews are followed closely by the Learning Needs Coordinator, Jessica Hagar, who will, if given permission by parents, inform that student's teachers. All such information is considered as private and confidential and is communicated in order to promote understanding and fair assessment. Naturally, parents are first asked if they wish the special needs teacher to help in assessing the problem (which generally means referral to a higher organization) or whether a personal follow-up is desirable. We feel that informing teachers early on is essential to the development of a student's potential.

The IB Diploma taken by many of our senior pupils is a particularly rigorous, demanding course and we make it clear to our students when they are interviewed that they will be expected to follow and meet these requirements and that there are limits to what schools are allowed to do to assist candidates. During this enrolment interview, which should be attended by both students and parents, advice is given on the possible choices of subjects and the IB coordinator judges whether or not suitable arrangements can be made for the student.

We have to ensure that parents agree on what special needs information should be shared with teachers and eventually IBCA and most importantly we have to notify parents of the possible necessity for an 'update' or recent documentary evidence if existing records are too old. We have to decide on a request for 'special needs allowances' early on since this gives time for students to practice taking internal exams with extra time or with a computer. Such requests need to be made 18 months in advance.

The IB Coordinator is particularly supportive of such students since he has 'engaged' his responsibility in accepting them into the school's programme in the first place. In the past, our school has made requests for extra time (25%), amanuensis support, large print exams and use of a computer for word processing. All requests were granted and the end results were successful, ensuring there was no unfair advantage or disadvantage to the students concerned.

Our school is strongly committed to ensuring equal opportunities and fair evaluations for all the students we accept and we are ready to be as understanding and supportive as we can, not only in working towards academic achievements but also in accompanying young people through the 'growing-up' process which is an essential element of school life.



IB Admissions Policy at IBS

Admission to the IB Diploma Programme is determined by a careful analysis of each student's academic track-record, behavioural record, teacher recommendations, and either a phone or a face-to-face interview. While academic excellence is desirable, students with poorer academic records are not discouraged from applying to the IB programme. Rather, what our admissions team looks for is demonstrable progress—even slight progress—from one academic year to the next. We firmly believe that as long as students are putting forth their best effort, they deserve to be given the chance to access the full range of resources our programme provides. Moreover, priority is given to students who demonstrate particularly strong passion for the arts, sport, and/or voluntary work.

Furthermore, admission into the IB programme is contingent on each student enrolling in the full Diploma course. A change of status to Certificates is only possible in the second year, and must include the express permission of the student's parents, as well as a detailed plan for integrating post-secondary institutions. These changes are extremely rare, and students are never accepted to the programme in the first instance if they intend on changing their status to Certificate candidates. All potential candidates are provided with the IBS IB Course Brochure, and are given extensive counsel by either the IB Coordinator or the Assistant IB Coordinator or both prior to and following enrolment in the programme. Criteria for admission in the IB programme are explained at both of the yearly IB Presentation Meetings, and they are clearly stated on the IB pages of the school website.



Extended Essay Supervision Guide at IBS

All IB Teachers are required to accept the role of Extended Essay supervisor if asked by a student, and may supervise no more than five students. Each teacher's priority of supervision should be in his or her own subject(s), but may also supervise an essay in any of the other IB subjects. The timeline for the supervision of the Extended Essay is outlined in the Two-Year Calendar, is organized by the Extended Essay Coordinator, and typically follows this sequence:

Year1

Mid-October: Teachers join Extended Essay Introduction meeting, break into small groups, offer advice.

January: Teachers help students accomplish EE Task 1 (Brainstorming and Reflection), confirm EE Subject choices and supervision relationships.

May: Supervisors coach students through EE Task 2 (Reflection, adjustments, further tasks).

Year2

Mid-October: Completion of Reflection 2 on PPF, confirmation of research questions, preparation of first full draft.

November: Supervisors read first full drafts and meets with each student to discuss refinement.

December: Final EE Task 3 (final reflections, completion of PPF)

January: Supervisors ensure proper uploading of EE on eCoursework.