

Diploma Programme Assessment

Philosophy

The International Baccalaureate® (IB) assesses student work as direct evidence of achievement against the stated goals of the Diploma Programme courses.

The Diploma Programme goals provide students with:

- a broad and balanced, yet academically demanding, programme of study
- the development of critical-thinking and reflective skills
- the development of research skills
- the development of independent learning skills
- the development of intercultural understanding
- a globally recognized university entrance qualification.

Diploma Programme assessment procedures measure the extent to which students have mastered advanced academic skills in fulfilling these goals, for example:

- analysing and presenting information
- evaluating and constructing arguments
- solving problems creatively.

Basic skills are also assessed, including:

- retaining knowledge
- understanding key concepts
- applying standard methods.

In addition to academic skills, Diploma Programme assessment encourages an international outlook and intercultural skills where appropriate.

Assessment tasks are designed to support and encourage good classroom teaching and learning.

Student results are determined by performance against set standards, not by each student's position in the overall rank order.

Methods

A variety of different methods are used to measure student achievement against the objectives for each course.

External assessment

Examinations form the basis of the assessment for most courses because of their high levels of objectivity and reliability. They include:

- essays
- structured problems
- short-response questions
- data-response questions
- text-response questions
- case-study questions
- multiple-choice questions (limited use of these).

There are also a small number of other externally assessed pieces of work, for example, TOK essays, extended essays and world literature assignments. These are completed by students over an extended period under teacher supervision instead of examination conditions, and are then marked by external examiners.

Internal assessment

Teacher assessment is also used for most courses. This includes:

- oral work in languages
- fieldwork in geography
- laboratory work in the sciences
- investigations in mathematics
- artistic performances.

Assessments are checked by external examiners and normally contribute between 20% and 30% of the total mark.

Some of the arts courses, for example, music, and visual arts, have assessment of a major practical component, which can account for as much as 50% of the total mark.

Examiners

The IB uses about 5,000 examiners worldwide. They ensure that student work is assessed fairly and consistently.

- Many IB examiners are experienced Diploma Programme teachers.
- Examiners receive detailed instructions on how to mark the work sent to them.
- Examiners send a sample of their marking to a more senior examiner for checking.

Each subject has a group of senior examiners who prepare examination questions, set the standard for marking and determine the marks needed for the award of each subject grade.

There is a chief examiner for each subject, usually an academic from higher education, with international authority in their field.

Issue of results

- May session—results issued on 5 July

Following the issue of results, students' grades can immediately be distributed by the IB to universities and university admission bodies around the world.

Grading

Diploma Programme students follow six courses at higher level or standard level. The grades awarded for each course range from 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest). Students can also be awarded up to three additional points for their combined results on TOK and the extended essay. Therefore, the highest total that a Diploma Programme student can be awarded is 45 points.

The diploma is awarded to students who gain at least 24 points, subject to certain minimum levels of performance across the whole diploma and to satisfactory participation in CAS.