



## THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IN SWITZERLAND

# Applying to be an International Baccalaureate Diploma or Diploma Program Course student at TASIS and choosing courses.

### **The International Baccalaureate Program at TASIS**

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a comprehensive and rigorous two-year curriculum leading to examinations for students aged between 16 and 19. Based on the educational structure of no single country, it is a deliberate compromise between the specialization required in some national systems and the breadth preferred in others. The general objectives of the IB are to provide students with a balanced education, to facilitate geographic and cultural mobility, and to promote international understanding through a shared academic experience. It is highly valued as a preparation for university studies and is an important factor in admissions to selective universities around the world. More information on the latter can be found at "[Pathway to University and Employment](#)".

In 1996, TASIS began offering students the opportunity to take examinations in the IB program, leading to the full IB Diploma or individual Diploma Program (DP) Courses (previously called Certificates). A full Diploma student chooses six academic subjects, three of which must be at Higher Level and three at Standard Level. Students must also complete the core elements; a 4000 research paper (the Extended Essay or EE), a Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course, and participate in Creativity Activity Service (CAS) throughout the two years. Each of the six subjects is marked on a scale of 1 (minimum) to 7 (maximum) giving a total of 42 subject points. Three extra points can be obtained from a combination of the TOK essay/presentation and the EE. The maximum score for an IB Diploma is 45 points. In general, the award of the Diploma requires a minimum overall total of 24 points plus the satisfactory completion of the core requirements. More information is available at the [IB website](#).

### **Who should apply to be an IB student at TASIS?**

There are two groups of students, to some extent overlapping each other, who should pursue the IB Diploma. The first is those who specifically need it for entrance to the universities of their choice or whose chances of acceptance will be enhanced with good grades in the IB Diploma. The second is those who are both academically able and motivated and who want to undertake a challenging course of study. Students are expected to be in good academic standing (both academic and effort grades) before starting and during the IB program and they must be willing to work hard and organize their time effectively.

While students may attend TESIS for only the two years of the IB diploma program, it is highly recommended that students attend TESIS for at least one year before starting the program. This will allow them to take advantage of the IB planning and college counseling opportunities available in the 10th Grade that can be crucial in making a correct choice of IB program subjects.

## **The application process**

### **IB Diploma Program**

Returning TESIS students who are considering the IB program will be introduced to the program in their 9th and 10th Grade years by the IB Coordinator and will discuss an appropriate course of study leading up to, and including, the IB diploma. They will be asked to complete the [online application form](#) using the information contained in this document and will be interviewed by the IB Coordinator. Their current teachers will be asked to comment on their course choices and suitability for the program.

When new 11<sup>th</sup> graders make their application to attend TESIS they should also complete the [online application form](#) using the information contained in this document as a guide. Any questions about these course choices should be sent to the IB Coordinator (ib@tasis.ch). Non-native speakers of English will be asked to complete an English proficiency test as part of their general application to TESIS. Acceptance to study at TESIS does not guarantee entry into the IB program. For students new to TESIS, confirmation of their final placement in IB Diploma Program subjects will take place after testing in classes at the beginning of the two-year program at TESIS.

The general selection criteria for acceptance as a TESIS IB student are the following:

- satisfactory completion of the TESIS online IB application form.
- showing a good previous academic performance (minimum US GPA of 2.5 or equivalent) and an above average effort record (minimum effort average of 3.5 on the TESIS scale of 1-5 or equivalent)
- meeting an appropriate math standard for the chosen IB math course.  
Minimum Math requirement for each IB mathematics level: completion of the precursor TESIS math course or non-TESIS equivalent. Math testing for new students may be required.
- meeting an appropriate English standard for the chosen IB English course.  
Minimum English requirement for entry to the IB program: satisfactory completion of the TESIS English Grammar, Composition & Literature 1 course (previously called EAL 4) or a CEFR B2 standard on a recognised English test such as the CEPT (68+), TOEFL (79+), or IELTS (5.5+).
- receiving approval from the Academic Dean, the IB Coordinator and other members of the faculty where appropriate.
- agreement to abide by the IB General Regulations and an agreement to pay the IB registration and exam fees.

### **IB Diploma Courses**

In some cases a student's math, language, or science background prohibits participation in the full IB Diploma program, but these students may be able to either take one or more DP courses in the 11th and 12th Grades or to postpone entry to the IB program for one year. DP courses, like IB Higher Level classes, can count as the equivalent of Advanced Placement (AP) courses for many US universities and so earn college credit. DP course candidates must also complete the [online application form](#).

### **IB Anticipated exams**

If scheduling allows, sophomores may begin up to two IB SL courses before joining the full IB program as juniors. These courses are completed at the end of the junior year as anticipated IB exams. This allows

the students to concentrate on the remaining subjects in their senior year, to retake the exams if they have not performed as well as expected, and to be able to make university applications with actual, as well as predicted, IB grades.

## **IB Fees and Diploma Program General Regulations**

Parents should note that there are additional registration and examination fees levied by the IB. The registration fee is approximately CHF 250 for all candidates whereas each exam subject costs approximately an additional CHF 175. Consequently, a full IB diploma candidate must pay approximately CHF 1150. Parents must agree to the [Diploma Program: General Regulations](#). Submission of the TASIS IB application form will constitute agreement to abide by those regulations and to pay the IB fees.

## **Remaining in the IB Diploma Program**

Students must maintain good academic (GPA of at least a 2.5) and effort grades (at least a 3.5 average), complete all IB diploma requirements, and meet all TASIS IB deadlines for submission of work throughout the two-year program. Failure to do so will result in a review of a student's IB status and possible withdrawal from the program. An application to the program assumes agreement with these conditions.

## **The Award of an IB Diploma**

Students must meet the requirements detailed in Article 13 of the [General Regulations](#).

# **CHOOSING IB COURSES**

The following is intended to assist in the choice of courses for the IB Diploma or DP courses and should be used in completing the TASIS IB application form. All returning students (DP course as well as Diploma) should also consult with the IB Coordinator, their teachers, Department Heads, and the College Counselors. New students should follow the guidelines below and address questions to the IB Coordinator at [ib@tasis.ch](mailto:ib@tasis.ch).

## **How do university plans affect IB course choices?**

While many students do not have a clear idea of their future higher education plans before studying the IB at TASIS, some awareness of the country, institutions, and subjects for post-TASIS education will help determine the best choice of IB courses. It is best to make subject choices which meet the most likely university choices, but which also leave as many other higher education options open as possible. For those wishing to study a particular subject in a particular country, the choice of IB subjects must follow requirements established by that country or a particular institution in that country ([IB Recognition Statements by Country](#)). As each country, and even individual universities within a country, has different requirements, it is essential that these requirements are checked on the IB website, directly with the universities and with the IB Coordinator and TASIS College Counselors. Countries and individual universities can, and often do, change their IB entry requirements, and the following is only a brief guide to some countries popular with TASIS students.

## **United States and Canada**

It is a common myth that the IB is more suited to applications to Europe than North America. Nearly 70% of all IB students study the IB in the US and Canada and IB data suggests that IB students are twice as likely to be accepted to competitive US universities than non-IB students. These universities look first at the degree of difficulty of a student's academic program and the grades they have achieved. Entry to US universities is therefore enhanced for students who have taken the challenging Diploma or DP courses and who have done well during the two years of the program. In addition, advanced placement can be

obtained from many US universities for high IB scores. More and more US universities are allowing Diploma students direct entry into the second year. US universities do not usually expect students to have studied specific IB subjects. The IB Diploma is recognized throughout Canada as an admissions credential. Some of the most selective universities may require it for the admission of students who have been studying outside Canada.

### **United Kingdom**

For undergraduate degrees at British universities (see [UCAS](#)), the IB diploma is a recognized entry qualification. The choice of subjects and level may be crucial when seeking admissions. For example, students wishing to study medicine should take IB Biology and IB Chemistry at HL. Law students would be recommended to take IB History HL. Art courses will require a portfolio of artwork produced in IB Visual Arts. Some subjects are considered less suitable by some universities and need to be avoided. For each course at each university there will be a minimum number of points required on the IB Diploma and even specific subject scores. DP Course students may obtain entry to one-year pre-degree Foundation Programs.

**German** universities require that all IB courses are taken in the last two years of high school education i.e. no anticipated exams and that a student has completed 12 years of education. There are certain requirements regarding languages, mathematics, and science courses and certain subjects are not recognized. **Spain** and **France** recognize the IB Diploma and no longer require university entrance exams. **Swiss** state universities require a total of 32 points (without the extra points from the extended essay and TOK), and have specific subject requirements and exclusions. Competency in the language of instruction at the university is expected, and a language exam may be required. The two Swiss polytechnics require 38 points and certain subject combinations. Independent universities and hospitality schools in Switzerland have their own separate entry requirements. The IB Diploma is recognized by the **Italian** Ministry of Education for university entry if it meets certain subject combinations which are the equivalent of the Italian high school diplomas. TESIS students can, with the correct choice of subjects and levels, receive a diploma recognized by the Italian authorities in the sciences, languages or human sciences. Bocconi University recognizes the IB diploma and does not require specific IB subjects.

## **Use the following section to choose six academic subjects**

### **At least three must be at Higher Level and three must be at Standard Level**

IB Diploma applicants should work through the following pages choosing 3 HL and 3 SL subjects with one in each of the six groups. IB DP Course (Certificate) applicants should select as many individual subjects and levels as they wish to take. At the end, the subjects can then be transferred to the IB [online application form](#).

Descriptions of all of the IB subjects are available on the [IB Resources](#) page under the menu “Diploma Programme subject briefs”.

General requirements for IB Diploma students:

- All students must take at least two languages including English, 1 science, 1 mathematics, and 1 Group 3 subject.
- Students must choose a subject in each of the six groups, with 3 at Higher Level and 3 at Standard Level, and the core elements of TOK, CAS, and the extended essay.
- Subject choices must allow students to meet TESIS graduation requirements; please see the Course Offerings Book.

## Group 1 — A First Language: Language A

An **A Language** is the student's native language and there are three types of A language courses available at TASIS.

**Language A Literature** HL or SL. The program of study focuses on the reading and critical discussion, orally and in writing, of literary texts in the target language. Currently this is offered in English, Italian and Russian, but the latter two languages may not be offered after 2017 (see Language A Language and Literature below). Other languages may be taught when enrolment is sufficient.

**Language A Language and Literature** HL or SL. In this class the emphasis is on developing the student's command of both the language and literature in the target language and is suitable for highly proficient users of the language. Currently this is offered in English but Italian and Russian will be added in 2017-18.

**School-Supported Self-Taught Language A Literature** SL can be taken in most other languages. The support of the School is provided in a half-credit class led by an English teacher. All students are expected to arrange private tutorial assistance locally, via Skype, or at home during the vacations to master the self-taught aspects of the course in the target language. This tutoring is at the family's expense. Among self-taught languages that students have studied in recent years are Bulgarian, Chinese, Dutch, German, Japanese, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Serbian, Spanish, Turkish, and Ukrainian.

Given sufficient enrollment, a self-taught language class may be offered as a full-credit taught class. Please ask the IB Coordinator if this is likely to be the case with your native language.

Now choose **ONE** Group 1 subject on the following table:

<b>First Language (Group 1)</b>	<b>English A Literature</b> <b>English A Language &amp; Literature</b> <b>Italian A Language &amp; Literature</b> <b>Russian A Language &amp; Literature</b> <b>School-supported Self-taught Language A _____</b> <small>Note: SL only</small> <small>(NB An A self-taught language requires tutoring at extra cost)</small>	<b>HL or SL</b>
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## Group 2 — Language B HL or SL, Language ab initio or a second A language

All IB Diploma students must study a second language.

*Q. Which language should I choose if I have chosen my best language in Group 1?*

A. Choose your second-best language or a language you wish to start from the beginning in the IB program.

*Q. What is my choice if I am not studying English in Group 1 above?*

A. All TASIS students must take an English course each year to graduate. If your Group 1 language is Italian A, Russian A or a School-supported Self-taught language A, you must choose English A Literature or English A Language and Literature for Group 2 if you have a native command of the language. Otherwise you must choose English B HL.

*Q. Can I study a second A language in Group 2?*

A. Students who are bilingual may study more than one Language A course. One must be English A.

*Q. What languages can I study apart from a second A language?*

A. There are two options: a language B or an ab initio language. An ab initio language is for beginners who have not had more than one year of exposure to the language. It is offered only at SL. Language B is a foreign language for students with more than one year of previous experience of learning the language. To start a B language at Standard Level, students should know the basic grammar and be able to write and converse simply, but correctly, on topics of everyday life. They should have studied the language for at least two years prior to commencing the course. HL students should have studied the language previously

for at least three years. At TASIS, French, German, Italian, and Spanish are offered as ab initio and B languages.

In most university systems, the B Higher Level examination qualifies students for study at institutions where this language is the language of instruction. (For example, a student with a good command of French at B Higher Level should have the language skills needed to study in French at university.)

**Now choose ONE Group 2 subject and level on the following table:**

<b>Second Language (Group 2)</b>	<b>English B only HL</b> <b>French B SL/HL</b> <b>German B SL/HL</b> <b>Italian B SL/HL</b> <b>Spanish B SL/HL</b> <b>French ab initio SL</b> <b>German ab initio SL</b> <b>Italian ab initio SL</b> <b>Spanish ab initio SL</b>	<b>HL or SL</b>
	<b>Or an additional A language if it is not already selected in Group 1 above:</b> <b>English A Literature SL/HL</b> <b>English A Language and Literature SL/HL</b> <b>Italian A Language and Literature SL/HL</b> <b>Russian A Language and Literature SL/HL</b>	

### Group 3 — Individuals and Societies

*Q. What criteria should I use to select a Group 3 subject?*

A. Your interest in a particular social science, previous study of the subject, and university entrance requirements are all important factors as too are your career ambitions are an important consideration. For example, potential business management students hoping to attend European universities would be recommended to choose Business Management and/or Economics\*. Law students may be expected to have studied History at HL for these universities.

\*It is necessary to check that this combination is allowed by universities. The University of St Gallen does not recognize it.

**Now choose ONE Group 3 subject and level on the following table:**

<b>Individuals &amp; Societies (Group 3)</b>	<b>Art History SL (a 1-year course only offered at SL)</b> <b>Business Management SL/HL</b> <b>Economics SL/HL</b> <b>History SL/HL</b>	<b>HL or SL</b>
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### Group 4 — Experimental Sciences

*Q. What criteria should I use to select a Group 4 subject?*

A. Your interest in a particular science, previous study of the subject, mathematics and English levels, and university entrance requirements are all important factors. Your career ambitions are an important consideration, too. For example, potential civil engineering students hoping to attend European universities would be recommended to choose Physics at HL and Math at least at SL. For IB Biology, IB Chemistry and IB Physics it is expected that a student has already successfully completed a high school course in the subject.

Now choose ONE Group 4 subject and level on the following table:

Experimental Sciences (Group 4)	Biology SL/HL Chemistry SL/HL Environmental Systems & Societies SL Physics SL/HL	HL or SL
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### Group 5— Mathematics

*Q. How do I choose the correct mathematics level from among the three levels offered?*

A. The **Mathematics HL** course is intended for a handful of students who have excellent mathematics skills and a high degree of comfort with the subject. Typically they are students who will pursue economics, mathematics, physics, or engineering at university. It is the equivalent in difficulty to a Calculus 1 and then a Calculus 2 course. In order to successfully attempt this demanding course, students should have, at a minimum, completed the TESIS Pre-calculus course with an A grade.

**Mathematics SL** is also calculus-based, with the first year equivalent to Pre-Calculus and the second year equivalent to AP Calculus. Most universities accept this level as satisfactory preparation for advanced study in the medical, natural, and social sciences. Entry to this course requires the successful completion of Math 2 Extended at TESIS.

**Mathematical Studies SL** is not calculus-based. The syllabus emphasizes the application of concepts from algebra, geometry, and trigonometry to everyday life. The IBO anticipates that as many as 50% of all students will study Mathematical Studies and it is intended for those going on to study business, the arts or the humanities. Entry requires the successful completion of Math 2 Core at TESIS.

Now choose ONE Group 5 subject on the following table:

Mathematics (Group 5)	Mathematical Studies SL Mathematics SL Mathematics HL
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### Group 6 — The Fine Arts and Electives

Diploma candidates may fulfill the Group 6 requirement by taking a second course in any of Groups 1-4 (i.e., a third language, a second social science such as Art History, Business Management, Economics or History, or a second experimental science) or by taking Visual Arts (SL or HL) or Theater Arts (SL or HL).

A student who wishes to study fine art or drama at university would be best advised to take an art or theater course. Medical students or engineers need to take a second science, while a student interested in economics or business may wish to choose Business Management or Economics. A linguist may wish to choose a third language. In the Visual Arts students engage in studio work, maintain a research workbook, and build an extensive portfolio which may be essential for entry to certain university courses.

Now choose ONE of the following Group 6 subject on the following table:

Arts & Electives (Group 6)	Theatre Arts SL/HL Visual Arts SL/HL An additional Group 1 subject _____ An additional Group 2 subject _____ An additional Group 3 subject _____ An additional Group 4 subject _____	HL or SL
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## **Theory of Knowledge (TOK)**

All IB diploma students take this class which meets twice a week each year.

## **Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS)**

All IB diploma students must master seven learning outcomes in each of the three areas of CAS over the two-year program.

## **IB Seminar**

All IB diploma students attend a weekly class in which they are given instruction on all aspects of the IB program including CAS and are guided through the extended essay process.

**Unfortunately, not all course combinations may be possible due to scheduling constraints. Sufficient enrollment in any course is required for it to be offered in the first year of the program.**





# TASIS is an IB world school

## TASIS IB CONTACT INFORMATION

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All questions about admissions should be addressed to:

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*TASIS is accredited by the New England Association of Schools & Colleges and the European Council of International Schools*

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