

Mount Pleasant High School
International Baccalaureate

CAS

Handbook



WHAT IS CAS?

CAS is organized around the three strands of **creativity, activity** and **service** defined as follows:

Creativity:

This strand of CAS is interpreted as imaginatively as possible to cover a wide range of arts and other activities outside the normal curriculum that includes creative thinking in the design and carrying out of service projects or structured, personal improvement.

This could involve doing dance, theater, music, art, or supervised tutoring, for example. You should be engaged in group activities, and especially in new roles, wherever possible. Nevertheless, individual commitment to learning an art form is allowed, where it respects the requirements for all CAS activities: *that you set goals, reflect on your progress, and in some way benefit others through this activity.*

Activity:

This strand of CAS is interpreted as physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle.

This aspect of CAS can include participation in expeditions, individual and team sports, and physical activities outside the normal curriculum; it also includes physical activity involved in carrying out creative and service projects. Activity may involve participation in sport or other activities requiring physical exertion – such as hiking expeditions, camping trips, yoga, and martial arts. Try to get involved in group and team activities and in undertaking new roles, but an individual commitment is acceptable where the general requirements of CAS are met: *you set goals, you reflect on your progress, and you benefit others.*

Creativity and activity can be enhanced by incorporating the service component. If you are involved in arts and in physical activities, you might consider coaching young children, seniors in residential homes, homeless children, etc.

Service:

This strand of CAS is interpreted as collaborative and reciprocal engagement with the community in response to an authentic need. Service projects and activities are often the most transforming element of the Diploma Program. They have the potential to nurture and mold the global citizen. Service involves interaction, such as the building of links with individuals or groups in the community. The community may be the school, the local community, or it may exist on national and international levels (such as undertaking projects of assistance in a developing country). Service activities should not only involve doing things for others but also doing things *with* others and developing a real commitment with them. *The relationship should honor the dignity and self-respect of others.*

CAS Experiences

“...if you believe in something, you must not just think or talk or write, but must act.”

(Peterson 2003)

The CAS programme aims to develop students who:

- enjoy and find significance in a range of CAS experiences
- purposefully reflect upon their experiences
- identify goals, develop strategies and determine further actions for personal growth
- explore new possibilities, embrace new challenges and adapt to new roles
- actively participate in planned, sustained, and collaborative CAS projects
- understand they are members of local and global communities with responsibilities towards each other and the environment.

CREATIVITY = Personal Enrichment

- Participation in Band / Chorus / Orchestra / Theatre performances*
- Private lessons in music,* art,* dance, theatre,* photography,* etc.
(competitions, performances, shows, parades, recitals, and lessons associated with above)
- Special classes taken outside of school that benefit others as well as yourself (Examples: a sign language course, computer camp, etc.)
- Planning events and projects for school, community or other organizations to which you belong
- Participation in the newspaper, literary publication, yearbook*

*These experiences may not be part of any class for which you will receive a certificate or diploma, or receive credit/grade.

*These activities count for the extra-curricular aspects of these activities (**not** for what you complete in class)

ACTIVITY = Healthy Lifestyle

- Sports teams; intramurals
- Recreational teams that are coached by an adult
- Club activities which involve physically active participation
- Scouting activities
- Taking an aerobics/pilates/yoga class; supervised ‘working out’ at a health club (personal trainer)
- Dance classes and recitals

SERVICE = Reaching out to Others Locally and Globally

- Volunteering at a hospital, nursing home, public library, museum, animal shelter, etc.
- Participating in a summer or weekend community work project
- Working with Habitat for Humanity or other similar projects
- Participation in other service club projects
- Church or youth group service projects of an outreach nature (that do not proselytize)
- Representing MPHS athletic and academic competitions

- *All Supervised by an advisor (who is not a family member)*
- *You must also include one in-depth experience designated as a CAS Project.*

Some things do NOT count toward CAS ...

When in doubt about whether a given activity qualifies as a CAS activity, it is always a good idea to check with the CAS Coordinator. The International Baccalaureate does not recognize activities such as the following:

- ❑ Unsupervised tutoring or helping a friend with his/her homework
- ❑ Activities in which you proselytize your religious beliefs to others or do work affiliated with a political party
- ❑ Volunteer work with a business or other “for-profit” organization
- ❑ Self-taught skills, projects, or activities without a supervising adult instructor
- ❑ Special classes that focus on self-benefit, like SAT preparation or Driver’s Education

Sample CAS Experiences

The letters C, A and S correspond to “creativity,” “activity” and “service.” Depending on the details of the experience, not all categories will apply.

- Physical assistance to the elderly (S)
- Helping with rehabilitation at the local hospital (S)
- Teaching basic literacy (C,S)
- Establishing and coaching a sports team for disadvantaged youngsters (C,A,S)
- Teaching the use of computers (C,S)
- Environmental restoration and protection (A,S)
- Teaching children who have a disability to swim (A,S)
- Coaching a softball team (A,S)
- Teaching guitar to children (C,S)
- Writing for the school newspaper (C,S)
- Inter-generational learning and friendship (C,S)
- Clearing a beach of litter (A,S)
- Organizing a walk-a-thon to raise money for guide dogs (C,A,S)
- Organizing student participation in and raising funds for the Model United Nations (C,S)
- Creating and maintaining a service-oriented website (C,S)
- Assisting victims of a natural disaster (C,A,S)
- Learning to paint (C)
- Gymnastics (classes, team practice, competition) (A)
- Joining a running club (A)

Guiding Questions for CAS Activities

- Is the activity a new role for me?
- Is it a real task that I am going to undertake?
- Does it have real consequences for other people and for me?
- What do I hope to learn from getting involved?
- How can this activity benefit other people?
- What can I reflect on during this activity?

Your CAS activities should involve:

- Deep involvement (rather than a passive role)
- Real value (for the student and other people)
- Real reflection (you can find meaning in what you accomplished)

Evaluation of CAS

CAS Completion

The focus is the experience and reflection upon it. The recommended participation hours support depth in an experience; this depth enhances and supports a successful documentation and interview assessment:

Your CAS experiences submitted online through ManageBac when an activity is completed. Students should develop a method to organize their experiences. When you have completed the activity, then submit online. *Balanced participation in all strands is required to demonstrate adequate progress end of junior year. Each student's goal should be to complete at least half the activities by end of junior year.*

CAS Evidence

A **minimum of six to ten pieces** of evidence in varying formats must be submitted. This evidence, submitted through CAS ManageBac, may be journal entries, photos, uploaded documents, videos, blogs, and websites. Please read carefully and use the "Tips for Posting Evidence in ManageBac,"

CAS Activities

- Guidelines require that candidates engage in at least two different experiences per category C/A/S. For example, for the activity strand, a student may use soccer one year and Marching Band another year. **That is 6 total experiences- 1 of them must be your project**
- You need to upload 1 or 2 pieces of evidence for each experience
- A student must assume a leadership role in at least one activity.
- A student must engage in at least one collaborative activity.
- A student must provide evidence that the seven learning outcomes were addressed. This evidence is demonstrated in ManageBac
- **One activity must be designated as a CAS Project.**

Evaluation of CAS

CAS Project

A CAS project is a collaborative, well-considered series of sequential CAS experiences, engaging students in one or more of the CAS strands of creativity, activity, and service. CAS students must be involved in at least one CAS project during their CAS programme.

A CAS project involves collaboration between a group of students or with members of the wider community. Students work as part of a team, with all members being contributors.

A CAS project offers students the opportunity to be responsible for, or to initiate, a part of the entire CAS project. Working collaboratively also provides opportunities for individual students to enhance and integrate their personal interests, skills, and talents into the planning and implementation of CAS projects.

A CAS project can address any single strand of CAS, or combine two or all three strands. The following examples are provided to help generate further ideas without limiting the scope and direction of the CAS project.

Creativity: a student group plans, designs, and creates a mural.

Activity: students organize and participate in a sports team including training sessions and matches against other teams

Service: students set up and conduct tutoring for people in need

Service and activity: students plan and participate in the planting and maintenance of a garden with members of the local community

Creativity and activity: students choreograph a routine for their marching band.

Service and creativity: students identify that children at a local school need backpacks and subsequently design and make the backpacks out of recycled materials.

Creativity, activity, and service: students rehearse and perform a dance production for a community retirement home.

A minimum of **one month** is recommended for a CAS project, from planning to completion. CAS projects of longer duration can provide greater scope and opportunities for all participants and should be encouraged. As expected throughout CAS, students must reflect on their project experience.

CAS Learner Outcomes

Student completion of CAS is based on the achievement of the seven CAS learning outcomes documented through the student's commitment to his or her CAS program over a period of 18 months. The following learning outcomes articulate what a CAS student is able to do at some point during his or her CAS program.

Some learning outcomes may be achieved many times, while others may be achieved less frequently. Students provide documented evidence in their CAS portfolio of having achieved each learning outcome at least once. The CAS coordinator collaborates during mandatory advisement meetings with the student as to what evidence is necessary to demonstrate achievement of each CAS learning outcome.

There are seven learning outcomes:

- **LO 1 Identify own strengths and develop areas for growth**

Descriptor: Students are able to see themselves as individuals with various abilities and skills, of which some are more developed than others.

- **LO 2 Demonstrate that challenges have been undertaken, developing new skills in the process**

Descriptor: A new challenge may be an unfamiliar experience or an extension of an existing one. The newly acquired or developed skills may be shown through experiences that the student has not previously undertaken or through increased expertise in an established area.

- **LO 3 Demonstrate how to initiate and plan a CAS experience**

Descriptor: Students can articulate the stages from conceiving an idea to executing a plan for a CAS experience or series of CAS experiences. This may be accomplished in collaboration with other participants; however, each participant must specify a definitive role. Students may show their knowledge and awareness by building on a previous experience, or by launching a new idea or process.

- **LO 4 Show commitment to and perseverance in CAS experiences**

Descriptor: Students demonstrate regular involvement and active engagement in CAS.

- **LO 5 Demonstrate the skills and recognize the benefits of working collaboratively**

Descriptor: Students are able to identify, demonstrate and critically discuss the benefits and challenges of collaboration gained through CAS experiences.

- **LO 6 Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance**

Descriptor: Students are able to identify and demonstrate their understanding of global issues, make responsible decisions, and take appropriate action in response to the issue either locally, nationally or internationally.

- **LO 7 Recognize and consider the ethics of choices and actions**

Descriptor: Students show awareness of the consequences of choices and actions in planning and carrying out CAS experiences.

Proposal Planning Guide

Instructions: *Please read the CAS Handbook thoroughly and think about guidelines and expectations. Complete the information below to plan your CAS proposal.*

THE CAS PROPOSAL DOCUMENT

(The planning guide is for personal use. You are not required to submit this guide.)

Be as specific as you can at this time in planning your CAS Proposal:

Creativity activities (at least two different ones)-

1.

2.

Activity activities (at least two different ones)-

1.

2.

Service activities (at least two different ones). At least one activity should reach *beyond the school community.*-

1.

2.

What activity are you designating as your CAS Project?

Which activity(s) will engage your leadership role?

Which activity(s) will be collaborative?

Which activity(s) will challenge you to develop new skills?

Which activity(s) will engage ethical issues? Global significance?

Ethical~

Global~

Do your activities address recommended participation

Will your activities provide you with an opportunity for significant reflection that is necessary to succeed in the CAS Closing Interview

How will you provide reflective evidence for each experience?

FAQ

GENERAL:

Q: What is CAS?

C-A-S is shorthand for the IB requirement that all Diploma Candidates propose, participate, and document extracurricular activities in -- Creativity, Activity and Service

Q: How much time do I have to participate in and document these activities?

IB Diploma Candidates may begin participating in August 15th of the junior year. All activities to fulfill the requirement must be documented by the first week of March of the senior year. This deadline accommodates any needed revisions prior to the deadline in which all attendant documentation must be submitted to the IBO.

Q: When should I submit documentation?

Ideally, you will submit documentation as soon as you complete an activity. That way, your CAS online records are always up-to-date & there is less chance of losing or forgetting something. However, the following deadlines will be observed:

Q: How are C-A-S activities verified? And can the student or his/her parent or other family member or a friend sign off as the “sponsor” of these activities on the CAS Completion Form?

C-A-S hours must be verified by an adult sponsor (for example, a coach, a club sponsor, a teacher, or a program supervisor) who completes and signs the online.” *Parents or other family members may not act as sponsors. (For unusual circumstances – e.g. when a parent is the team coach or program supervisor – please seek the advice and approval of the IB Coordinators before undertaking the activity.)*

Q: Can I “finish” my C-A-S in grade 11?

No – You must be participating in some aspect of your CAS throughout the 18 months you are involved in the IB diploma program. However, some activities naturally take place in a short, compacted amount of time (e.g. week spent on a Habitat for Humanity project) while others span several months (a sport season, class or CAS Project).

Q: If I have a question about certain activities qualifying for C-A-S, what is the best way to get answers?

Please send your C-A-S questions by e-mail to the CAS Coordinator who will provide you with a prompt written response.

QUESTIONS ABOUT SERVICE:

Q: Can I dedicate all service by simply “volunteering” at school?

No. Learning outcomes specifically encourage service beyond the school community. Please refer to the “CAS Service Opportunities” handout in this notebook for activity suggestions, or discuss with the CAS Coordinator.

Q: Can I volunteer for any “non-profit” organization or simply by doing something on my own?

Just because an organization is “non-profit” does not mean that volunteer work done for the organization automatically qualifies as service. Service also involves interaction – not simply doing things for others, but doing things with others – that benefits those in need and that builds linkages with individuals or groups in the local, national or international community. Volunteer work performed without a sponsor or without community involvement will not qualify as Community Service under CAS guidelines.

Q: Can I count as service activities at my church?

IB distinguishes between service that benefits members of one’s own faith community (church, synagogue or mosque) and service that benefits the larger community. For example, church-sponsored activities that benefit individuals or groups outside one’s church to extend to the community can qualify for service, but volunteer activities that primarily serve or benefit church members only are not eligible to be credited as C-A-S activities

QUESTION ABOUT ACTIVITY:

Q: Do I have to be on one of the school athletic teams?

No. There are several ways to participate in ACTIVITY activities. Besides school athletics, students can also participate in organized activities like rec teams or ones that involve physical fitness, including weight training or aerobics, hiking or bicycling, rowing or bowling. Students may also engage in organized service activities requiring physical labor, such as building Habitat homes, cleaning streams, etc., to diversify activity participation.

QUESTIONS ABOUT CREATIVITY:

Q: Can time I spend planning and organizing school club or class activities (for example, a club field trip or a class fundraising event) count as Creativity participation?

Yes, they represent a leadership role, such as a club or class officer or captain of an academic/sports team.

Q: If I'm involved in one or more of the Theatre Department's plays, or if I'm a member of the Marching Band, the Concert/Symphonic/Jazz Bands or the Orchestra, am I allowed to use that participation for Creativity?

Yes, students involved in school drama productions (either on stage or as a member of the tech team), in bands, in orchestra or in choir can use that participation beyond class time toward Creativity. In addition, students participating as members of the newspaper, literary, and yearbook staffs, can apply those activities for creativity.

Q: I don't have time during the school year to participate in school-sponsored music, theatre, other performing arts, or other creative organizations. What other type activities can I use for Creativity?

Individually designed creativity projects or activities (computer science/software design, architectural design or dance class) can count for creativity. Summer enrichment program class hours can also be used. Structured tutoring is another possibility.

Q: Can serving as a student aide during a class period qualify for CAS hours?

No. Activities for CAS must be beyond class time, such as before or after school, or during your lunch.

TIPS FOR POSTING EVIDENCE ON ManageBac:

-All evidence submitted should be clearly attributed to you by name or image.

-Evidence should be clearly recognizable and easily accessed.

-Each piece of evidence should support the indicated learning outcomes.

JOURNALS: (authentic narration)

- Entries should be in real time, or reflect real time activities. The dates of entries are recorded on the website. Entries should be timely to be reflective.
- The number of entries should be three. One entry should represent the beginning, the next the mid-point, and finally the end of the activity. In each of the entries, the indicated CAS learner outcomes should be discussed, specifically referring to the language of the outcome. For example, "I experienced a new challenge when...."

PHOTOS: (individual and/or group images)

- If the activity is with a team or group, then the photo should include you interacting with that team or group. A posed team or group photo that represents the activity is also acceptable. *You should be clearly recognizable in the photo.*
- If the activity represents individual participation, the photo should present you engaged in a real time activity. Avoid individual posed photos NOT in real time, for example posing at home in a team logo tee shirt or studying at home for an enrichment course. You should be clearly recognizable and engaged in the real time activity.
- Two type photos are acceptable evidence: individual and team/club/group.
- Captioning is available. However, the caption cannot explain the learning outcomes indicated; the outcomes should be obvious from the image.

FILES: (name indicated)

- All uploaded files should be easy to access, download, and WORK.
- If you scan a document as evidence (like a certificate of completion), it must be legible and clearly provide *evidence of your participation using appropriate attribution (your name, dates, official organization).*

WEBSITES: (name and/or image indicated)

- Websites can be used to verify the purpose or goals of the organization in which you are involved.
- A website alone, however, does not provide clear evidence of your participation unless *there is a photo of you or attributed credit to you that is easily identifiable and accessible.*

YOUTUBE and VIDEOS: (images)

- *YouTube* can provide evidence and documentation for individual or group performances. *You must be clearly visible in action in this video.*
- Any video used as documentation must present you in a real time event representing the activity. *You must be clearly visible in any video.*

BLOGS: (images/authentic narration)

- Blogging is an easy way to complete real time journaling, reflecting, and photo captioning in a timely manner.

If an activity is re-documented, use a different format for additional evidence.

CAS Reflection Tips

- Each activity or project that you choose to fulfill the CAS requirement must engage you in deep, reflective ideas.
- This deep reflection is demonstrated at the CAS Closing Interview
- All question responses should be thoroughly elaborated upon using details and examples. Each response must earn at least a satisfactory rating
- Preparation should be obvious; avoid reading responses and referring often to notes.
- These are the eight potential questions you should examine for each activity. If you discover that your CAS Project or other activities do not strongly engage these reflective questions, then it is not a worthy CAS endeavor:

Reflections must include responses to questions such as:

- How successful was I in achieving my goals? What difficulties did I encounter and how did I overcome them?
- What did I learn about myself and others through this activity/project? What abilities, attitudes and values have I developed?
- Did anyone help me to think about my learning during this activity/project? If so, who helped and how did they help?
- How did this activity/project benefit others?
- Did I maintain full attendance? How many sessions have I missed? Was I punctual? How would I summarize my effort and commitment?
- What might I do differently next time to improve?
- How can I apply what I have learned in other life situations?
- What have I learned about development issues that are evident in our local community? How do I feel about this? What are my views on these issues? What have I done to address these issues?

Reflect before, during, and at the end of each experience. **Reflections are a huge part of CAS and you will learn how to do it and how to improve.**

Examples of good reflections

(from the International School of Panama)

Volunteer at the Minneapolis Children's Hospital – Service

"... The children were very open in accepting me. They were always the ones who made this brief interaction between two strangers seem comfortable. Through the compassion I constantly saw in these very sick children I was exposed to an amazing outlook on life. One of the false assumptions I made about working at Children's was that as a result of my work I would feel good about myself for giving my time to these children. In fact, I did feel good about myself but it was not because of what I had given. Instead it was the children who gave to me. From them I learned how positive and selfless people can be..."

Volunteer at Walker Methodist Centre – Service

"I have seen first-hand the harshness of the aging process. People who were once vibrant, bustling human beings are now confined and subdued by their deteriorating health. Jane has Parkinson's disease and is inhibited by her soft speech and inability to use her hands. I know from the time we have spent together that she has so much to say and many interests, but is slowed and sometimes stopped by her illness. Anne's only disease is effects of time and how it has affected her memory and hearing. Although she always recognizes me, Anne does not remember my name or hear much of what people say to her. As time went by, I began to realize that they had wonderful lives. Both have successful and large families, with interesting experiences throughout their lives. Now they are slowed down, but maybe because it's time for them to rest. I have learned a lot from them, about many things, but mostly about how to live with what you are given... I hope when I am their age and in their situation like theirs that I can have their attitude – life is what it is and the best thing to do is accept it and be happy."

Writing poetry –Creative

"For the past two years I have kept a journal of poetry and stream of consciousness pieces that I have written. It now contains about 30 works. I write in it rather sporadically, either as ideas come to me that I feel would make good poems, or I feel the need to vent my emotion on paper. I have shown this journal to certain teachers and friends, and I have submitted several of them to *Mosaic*. For me this journal is a way to stay sane, sort of catharsis for my soul. By writing poetry about situations that I am in I can think through my options and how best to deal with them. Similarly, it helps me to understand better what I am feeling. And if someone else can benefit from my writing through *Mosaic*, all the better. After all, art is not only beneficial for the artist, but also for the observer of that art."

Service Activity

"As one of my service activities I wanted to help an elderly person as I realized that their problems are sometimes neglected or forgotten. That is why I turned to an environmental nurse so that she could find a person in need of help and willing to be helped. I stayed in contact with the nurse and after a while she gave me the name and address of an old lady whom she described as lonely and having problems with walking. I was happy that I found the opportunity to offer my help to a person in need.

On one day the nurse and I visited the elderly lady in her flat. Beforehand, the nurse informed me that the lady used to work physically and retired early (at the age of 45 due to health problems). I got acquainted with her and from that day on I started visiting her regularly once a week.

I went for walks with the lady and every week we went shopping to the nearest supermarket. However, the most important task turned out to be far more difficult than I had expected. I made the greatest effort to make the woman cheerful, to create a friendly warm atmosphere, but I noticed how reserved and depressed she was. She mentioned the fact that she had been lonely for a long time and it stuck in my memory. It made me realize how loneliness affects human psyche. At the beginning I found it very difficult to make her smile, because she was only saying how miserable her life was and complained about the problems that she faced. I tried to show my understanding and convince her that life is worth living regardless of the difficulties one faces, but it seemed to me that it did not speak to her. Sometimes I wondered if my visits and help were bringing her anything good.

Surprisingly, as time was passing by and we came to know each other better, I noticed a change in her and a change in the character of our interaction. I was very happy when on one day she confessed to me how grateful she was for my help. The activity gave me fulfillment and made me conceive how serious is the problem of loneliness in life and I realized the importance of attention that needs to be paid to lonely people."

Examples of poor reflections

“Today I got to the nursing home at 2:00. Talked to some ladies. Passed out popcorn at the movie. Went home at 4:00. When you volunteer at the nursing home, the residents really make you feel appreciated. It makes it all worthwhile.”

Whether it was for a long period or short, this student reflecting on their social service missed the point. This student was surrounded by human drama. On every side were loneliness, love, struggle, joy, death, dignity, injustice, need and concern. There were more than a dozen health-related, trades-related, professional-related careers to observe and experiment with. There were people with wisdom to draw upon and pains to ease. From their observations and reflections, these students experienced nothing.

A necessary part of turning what you experience into what you know is reflection – time to sit down and consider:

- What you saw and didn't see
- Who needed you and why you were there?
- What did you learn and what did you teach?

Reflection involves observation, asking questions, putting facts, ideas and experiences together to come up with new meaning. Reflection on experience can give you the following abilities:

-Taking charge: Being able to learn from experience gives us the power to influence the meaning and impact of things that we do or that happen to us.

-Increasing your problem solving ability: Being able to analyze problems, generate alternatives, and anticipate consequences are critical skills.

-Power to assess your personal impact: Ongoing reflection helps reveal and even determine what personal changes are occurring in self-image, new skills, and ideas about a career. It can give you the self-confidence to take on a bigger project or to use more of your skills.

It will be through your reflections that you will learn from what you are doing, and we will know whether:

- your attitudes and values were able to transcend race, class, religion, age, gender, and politics
- you grew in areas of knowledge and technical abilities, and developed a spirit of discovery and self-reliance
- you made links with the local community and developed longer-term goals
- your academic disciplines were complemented by your real life experience

CAS Service Opportunities

SPCA Animal Shelter

Blood Bank of Delmarva

Salvation Army

Big Brothers/Big Sisters

Read Aloud DE

Meals on Wheels

Special Olympics

Delaware Association for
the Blind

American Heart Association

Habitat for Humanity

Museums of DE

American Red Cross

Bike to the Bay

Women/Children Shelters
Volunteer

Volunteer Coaching

Beach clean-up

YMCA

Nursing Homes

Make a Wish

UNICEF