

Q: What is the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program (DP)?

A: The Diploma Program is a global standard curriculum designed by the International Baccalaureate Organization for students in the final two years of secondary school. It leads to a qualification that is widely recognized by the world's leading universities. The program prepares students to learn more than a collection of facts; it aims to develop students who have excellent breadth and depth of knowledge – students who flourish physically, intellectually, emotionally and ethically. Students are encouraged to ask challenging questions, learn how to learn and develop the ability to communicate with and understand people from other countries and cultures.

Q: Does Tracy High have entry requirements for the Diploma program?

A: We have no formal entry requirements. IB is an open program to all students enrolled at Tracy High. The single most important requirement for us is a positive attitude. Students will need to have made acceptable progress through to the end of Grade 10, and have a high academic foundation otherwise they will struggle. Students at Tracy High in grade 9 and 10 follow a program of prerequisite classes that give an excellent foundation for the IB Diploma. The students then start IB classes in Grade 11.

Q: Is the IB only for the academic elite?

A: No, not at all. An IB Student needs to show motivation, a determination to do their best, a willingness to organize themselves so that they can complete the work and lead full and balanced lives at the same time. They need to be willing to work with others, and to participate in class. In our IB program students learn a lot from our teachers, but they learn most by interacting and cooperating with each other. Our experience shows that this is sufficient for success in the IB and to reach the required score for the Diploma (24 points out of 45) is very manageable.

Q: What kind of student is a good candidate for the IB?

A: The DP is a challenging course of study. Success throughout the program depends on a student's dedication to do his or her best, willingness to be organized in order to complete the work while leading a full, balanced life, and a strong commitment to learning in and beyond the classroom. That is more of an indicator of ability to earn the diploma than prior academic success.

Q: I heard the IB is a lot of extra work. What are the advantages of enrolling in the IB Program?

A: Students with IB Diplomas, who now attend universities, report that their involvement with IB has given them the tools needed to succeed at university and to make the most of their post-secondary education. In particular, students comment on their sense of preparedness, their self-confidence, their research skills, their ability to manage their time, and their willingness to be actively engaged in their own learning. Even more importantly, they have developed the skills with which to embrace the complexities of life. The IB Organization often employs a variety of phrases to describe these traits and abilities: "learning how to learn", "life-long learners", "critical and compassionate thinkers", and, "informed participants in local and world affairs".

Q: What is the difference between IB Diploma Candidate and Certificate Student?

A: IB Diploma students must complete six IB courses in the 11th and 12th grades, as well as complete the core requirements of the program. For the six courses, students must choose one class from each of Groups 1-5. For the 6th course students can choose to take a second Group 3 or 4 course. All Diploma students must complete the three core elements- Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS), The Extended Essay (EE) and Theory of Knowledge (TOK) requirements of the program.

Also available at Tracy High is the IB Certificate where students have the option of the more flexible IB Certificate program, which allows you to take IB classes in your strongest areas. In this program, the core elements are not required. Students who enroll in individual courses and test will receive an IB certificate noting the courses they took and the marks they earned.

Q: Does the IB Diploma increase your chance of getting into a US university?

A: We believe so. Every year our students come to us with their acceptances and we are excited for them as they have worked so hard to earn this achievement. But please contact the college or university you are interested in attending and find out their acceptance of IB students.

Q: Do IB teachers receive special training?

A: All IB Diploma Program (DP) teachers receive regular professional training in the subject they teach, as well as development in the IB's approaches to teaching and approaches to learning by certified IB workshop leaders. This is a requirement of IB World Schools implementing the DP.

Q: When are the IB assessments?

A: Once a student enters junior year, IB assessments will happen over the two-year period. Internal assessments begin in January of junior year and conclude in February of senior year. The IB exams take place in May after the conclusion of their coursework.

Q: What is an HL subject and SL subject?

A: HL indicates "higher level" and SL indicates "standard level".

HL indicates at least 240 hours of study and SL indicates at least 150 hours of study. Students decide at the end of junior year (and confirm at the beginning of senior year) the level for each exam. In general, HL exams are more rigorous than SL exams. The content is the same in most cases; however, the expectation of a student's ability to apply knowledge is on a higher level.

Q: How many IB exams are there, and when do students take them?

A: A student doing the full IB Diploma will take six IB exams comprising of:

- Group 1 : one literature course – IB English HL
- Group 2: one foreign language – IB Spanish HL or IB French HL
- Group 3: one social science – IB History of Americas HL, IB Psychology SL, IB Philosophy SL or IB Social and Cultural Anthropology SL
- Group 4: one experimental science – IB Biology HL, IB Chemistry SL, IB Physics SL or IB Environmental Systems & Societies SL
- Group 5: one math – IB Mathematics: Applications & Interpretations SL
- one elective of student's choice (Chosen from either group 3 or group 4)

Of the six exams, two or three are taken at the standard level (after a minimum of 150 teaching hours), and three or four taken at the higher level (after a minimum of 240 teaching hours).

IB students take their exams in May of their senior year. However, the IBO permits students to take one or two standard level examinations at the end of junior year, upon the recommendation of the school's IB Coordinator. Higher level exams can only be taken at the end of the senior year.

Q: What are the fees associated with the IB Program?

A: Currently the cost for each test is \$119.00. Students who qualify for the Free and Reduced Meal Program will qualify for a reduced fee of \$5 per exam.

Q: Do students have to attend Tracy High to be an IB student?

A: Yes. The IB permits only students enrolled and attending full time in an IB School may participate in the IB Diploma Program.

Q: Do IB classes earn weighted grades?

A: Yes. All IB classes and AP classes, receive a weighted grade (i.e. A = 5pts instead of 4pts for the GPA. In addition, all IB classes fall under at least one A-G category within the A-G requirements structure.

Q: How is the IB Graded?

A: Each of the IB subjects (from the 5 Groups) are graded from 1 (minimum) to 7 (maximum) and a student must reach a minimum of 24 points to be awarded the IB Diploma. Up to 3 extra points are available for the 'Core elements'. These are the Extended Essay, Theory of Knowledge and Creativity, Action and Service so that the maximum score for the IB Diploma is 45 points.

Q: Can a student participate in Ag/Sci, IB, PAM and AVID programs?

A: Due to the requirements of each program, a student may not be able to participate fully in multiple programs. Instead, students may choose to take a few IB classes with other programs of their choice. However, some enterprising students are able to participate in multiple programs.

Q: If I take an AP class will that qualify for the IB Diploma?

A: AP classes that are offered are challenging honors courses and students are encouraged to participate in these classes and take the appropriate test from College Board to potentially earn college credit; but AP courses are not affiliated with International Baccalaureate and do not factor into the IB Diploma. However, students that take AP classes and choose to test in these classes may participate in the IB Senior Awards at the end of the year, if they choose to do so.