



# INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF FLORENCE

CAS HANDBOOK



## **MISSION**

A laboratory for learning where we collaborate to add meaning to a shared future.

## **VISION**

We aspire to build communities of creative makers and doers.

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## WELCOME

Welcome to CAS an exciting Program at the core of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program! Your participation in **Creativity**, in **Activity**, and in **Service** encourages you to share your energy and special talents while developing awareness, concern and the ability to work cooperatively with others. You are encouraged to initiate your own projects individually or collectively with your fellow students. CAS is holistic and many activities and projects overlap between creativity, activity and service. The CAS programme will challenge you, help you acquire new skills and interests, develop a spirit of discovery and self-reliance, and foster awareness of self and of others. The IB aims for balance; you are asked not just to serve others but to nurture yourself as well—follow your passion for art and music, develop new skills in sports, and explore your personal boundaries.

CAS will inspire you to

- Actively discover your passion by exploring a range of new CAS experiences
- Set goals and strive for excellence
- Learn and work collaboratively
- Increase self-awareness through reflection
- Improve the world around you through local and international service projects
- Understand the links between CAS and your subjects

My role is to support, guide and mentor you in your CAS Program in order to ensure your success in obtaining the IB Diploma. Please do not hesitate to contact me, either during your regular CAS period, or at [i.szablinski@isfitaly.org](mailto:i.szablinski@isfitaly.org) should you have any questions about, or ideas for your CAS program.

Inka Szablinski  
CAS COORDINATOR

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

*Peterson (2003)*

## WHAT IS CAS?

CAS is divided into three strands: **C**reativity, **A**ctivity and **S**ervice

**CREATIVITY:** exploring and extending ideas leading to an original or interpretive product or performance. Creativity will come from your talents, interests, passions, emotional responses and imagination. Experiences can be carried out in visual and performing arts, digital design, writing, film, culinary arts and crafts. You should engage in creative endeavors that move you beyond the familiar, in order to broaden your scope from conventional to unconventional thinking.

*ISF opportunities: Yearbook, Music lessons, Costume/Prop making for school productions, Astro Pi, MUN, Knitting Club, Developing a website. Healing Art photography, Tuskan Times, TEDx Youth*

**ACTIVITY:** physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle carried out on a regular basis to provide a genuine challenge and benefit. An 80% attendance is required by school teams. Sporting activities in the local community can also be counted as CAS.

*ISF opportunities: Soccer, Volleyball, Basketball, Padel, Tennis, Athletics, Running, Canoeing, Gymnastics, Cycling, Hiking, Swimming, Dancing*

**SERVICE:** collaborative and reciprocal engagement with the community in response to an authentic need. The aim of the Service strand is for students to understand their capacity to make a meaningful contribution to their community and society. Through service, our students develop and apply personal and social skills in real-life situations involving decision-making, problem-solving, initiative, responsibility, and accountability for their actions. (source IB guide March 2015 for students graduating 2017 and after)

*ISF opportunities: Student Council, Yearbook, CAS Webpage, Tutoring, ECA Assistant, Student Ambassadors, Green Team, Student Mentoring.*

*Local community: MartaCappelli, Angeli del Bello, Comunità di Sant'Egidio, Scuola di Pace, Caritas, Labirinto dell'Amore, Misericordia.*



## FOUR TYPES OF SERVICE ACTION

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It is recommended that students engage with different types of service within their CAS program. These types of actions are as follows.

**DIRECT SERVICE:** Student interaction involves people, the environment or animals. For example, this can appear as one-on-one tutoring, developing a garden in partnership with refugees, or working in an animal shelter. (Opportunities for Direct Service are somewhat limited in Italy, but ISF has established links with certain organizations.)

**INDIRECT SERVICE:** Though students do not see the recipients of indirect service, they have verified their actions will benefit the community or environment. For example, this can appear as re-designing a non-profit organization's website, writing original picture books to teach a language, or nurturing tree seedlings for planting.

**ADVOCACY:** Students speak on behalf of a cause or concern to promote action on an issue of public interest. For example, this may appear as initiating an awareness campaign on hunger, performing a play on replacing bullying with respect, or creating a video on sustainable water solutions (Global Issues, MUN).

**RESEARCH:** Students collect information through varied sources, analyze data, and report on a topic of importance to influence policy or practice. For example, they may conduct environmental surveys to influence their school, contribute to a study of animal migration, compile effective means to reduce litter in public spaces, or conduct social research by interviewing people on topics such as homelessness, unemployment or isolation.

Your participation in **creativity**, in **activity**, and in **service** encourages you to share your energy and special talents while developing awareness, concern and the ability to work cooperatively with others. You are encouraged to initiate your own projects individually or collectively with your fellow students. CAS is holistic and many activities and projects overlap between **creativity**, **activity** and **service**.





# CAS IN THE CURRICULUM:

## HOW EACH SUBJECT GROUP OF THE DP CAN CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS CAS

Students can use their subject groups to create a CAS Experience. The examples below are suggestions only. Students should create their own authentic connections where possible.



### CAS AND TOK

- Both CAS and TOK are at the core of the IBDP. TOK explores knowledge from both personal and shared knowledge. Experiential learning through CAS becomes a source for personal knowledge for students and as they explore different cultures and communities through their CAS experiences, students build a base of shared knowledge. Students benefit from links to TOK, considering, for example, what they bring as perspectives and prior knowledge to CAS situations. They can explore the different ways of knowing as they embark upon their CAS journey. They must think critically about the ethical choices they make.
- On what criteria do you judge the effectiveness of your project?
- Is it ethical to raise money through cake sales to feed the hungry?

CAS students are encouraged to investigate and to reflect upon the choice, the implementation and impact of their projects and CAS experiences.

- Groups 1 and 2, Literature and Language classes, for example, students could teach English/Italian/French/Spanish to those in need, organize a poetry competition, or raise cultural awareness through an international evening.
- Group 3, History students could visit local retirement homes and record histories of the elderly people.
- Group 4, Science students can initiate environmental projects, assist in the school Green Team, or volunteer to work with one of the local organizations such as Angeli del Bello.
- Group 5, Mathematics students could help younger students, or serve as Treasurer on the Student Council
- Group 6, Art students could help as a classroom assistant during Art classes or at the after school Art Club, create a band or choir and perform at a function, promote the arts through performance, or organize an art exhibition as a fundraiser for a project.



## A CAS EXPERIENCE

A CAS Experience can be a single event or may be a series of events. It may not be included or used in the student's Diploma course requirements.



### HOW TO DETERMINE IF AN EXPERIENCE IS CAS

#### IT IS CAS IF THE EXPERIENCE:

- Addresses one or more strands
- Is based on interests or skills
- Gives an opportunity to develop the IB Learner Profile attributes
- Is enjoyable
- Allows reflection and growth
- Allows learning outcomes to be addressed

#### IT IS NOT CAS IF THE EXPERIENCE:

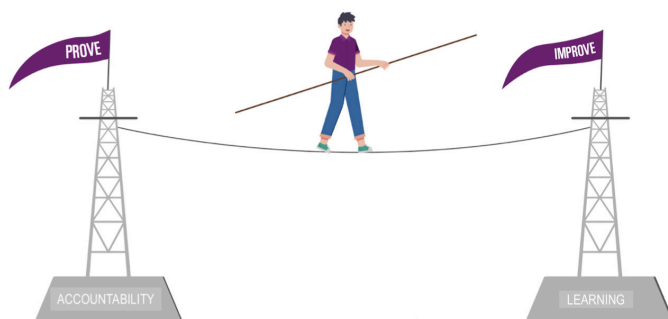
- Is part of the student academic programme
- Is mundane, repetitive
- Is part of a religious devotion or involves proselytizing
- Is passive, such as visits to museums or theatres
- Involves helping the family
- Is raising money with no particular aim
- Could cause friction between community groups

#### PROCEDURE FOR INITIATING A CAS EXPERIENCE

- Think carefully about how the Experience fits into your overall CAS programme
- Ask someone to be your CAS Supervisor
- Meet with your CAS Coordinator to confirm approval of the Experience
- Carry out the Experience
- Reflect continuously on the Experience and document your reflections. You should reflect on your Experiences before, during and after completing them
- **All Experiences should be reflected upon within one week of completing the Experience**
- Request a Supervisor Review

To meet the CAS requirement for your diploma, your Experiences must be properly documented, and you must provide evidence that you have achieved the seven key learning outcomes.

### THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF EVALUATION IS YOUR OWN SELF-EVALUATION



The school will offer you formative feedback on your progress and guidance on future Experiences. The final decision on completion is made by the school, and this is reported to the IB.

## THE CAS STAGES MODEL



- 1. Investigation** – Students identify their interests, skills and talents, as well as areas for growth and personal development. Students investigate what they want to do and determine the purpose for taking part in the CAS experience.
- 2. Preparation** – Students clarify roles and responsibilities, develop a plan of action to be taken, and acquire any skills needed to take part in the CAS experience.
- 3. Action** – Students implement their idea or plan.
- 4. Reflection** – Students describe what happened, express feelings, generate ideas, and raise questions. Reflection can occur at any time during CAS to further understanding, to learn from experience, and to make connections between their accomplishments and the learning outcomes. Reflection may lead to new action.
- 5. Demonstration** – Students make clear what they have learned and what they have accomplished, by sharing their CAS experience through their portfolio or with others in an informal or formal manner. This enables students to solidify their understanding and evoke response from others.

The student's CAS program will be a combination of single CAS experiences, e.g. *Corri la Vita*, *assisting at PA events*, a series of CAS experiences, (a minimum of 3 CAS experiences per trimester), and one or more CAS projects. The IB uses five stages to investigate, prepare, take action, reflect and demonstrate these experiences and projects. For single CAS experiences, CAS stages may or may not be used.

## CAS EXTENDED PROJECT

The CAS project should:

- use all of the CAS stages, i.e. investigation, preparation, action, reflection, and demonstration
- relate to one or more strands of C A S
- have a clear purpose and goals. What is our mission and what are our goals?
- organize roles and collaboration. Who is responsible for each part of the project?
- identify the learning outcomes that you aim to achieve
- regularly reflect on your progress and amend your plan accordingly
- document your progress and demonstrate your outcome
- show leadership but collaborate with others, i.e. fellow students, the ISF community, the local community
- identify resource needs, budget, location, supervisors etc.

Service projects that build purposeful relationships between students and community members are potentially the most rewarding for all concerned. However, the need must be authentic, the contribution must be relevant, and the benefit must be mutual. Ongoing CAS projects should be sustainable and passed down from year to year.

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 a 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.

**Creativity and activity:** Students choreograph a routine.

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

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.

All CAS projects are designed with a defined purpose and goals. Individual students identify one or more learning outcomes to further guide their role and responsibilities in the CAS project. Students will likely identify more outcomes, or modify expected outcomes during the CAS project and/or at its completion.

**A minimum of one month** is recommended for a CAS project, from planning to completion. CAS projects of longer duration can provide even greater scope and opportunities for all participants and should be encouraged. Students should aim to undertake their CAS project locally and, if possible, engage in more than one CAS project over the duration of their CAS program.

### **PROJECT PROPOSAL**

For a CAS project to go forward a project proposal is put forth to the CAS Coordinator for approval with identification of all CAS stages and all the above questions addressed. Organizing your CAS project through your project proposal is essential. Your plan will give you direction but you need to monitor your progress to ensure that the project follows the requirements of the CAS project. Good planning through the CAS stages of investigation and preparation will ensure that your CAS project is on the right track.

Once approved, the CAS project enters the Action phase and the project can be implemented. Projects involve a lot of perseverance. **Students can and should involve the school community: students, teachers, administration, parents as well as local businesses and local government but the project leaders are ultimately responsible for the success of their project.** Reflection occurs throughout this process. The Demonstration phase may occur at midpoint or at the end of a project.

Once you have finished your project, think about the sustainability of the project- could you make it generational, and are there any younger classes who could take it on? Assemblies could be held with the PreCAS classes in order to ensure continuity. Remember to celebrate your achievements and spread the word about your project to others.

### **Organizations that would value your contributions:**

- Fondazione Martacappelli ONLUS
- Angeli del Bello
- Sant 'Egidio
- CARITAS

### **THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT YOUR CHOICE OF A CHARITY ORGANIZATION:**

- Why is this charity significant for you?
- How did you choose this charity to support?
- What have you learned about its mission?
- Why does this charity exist and need money?
- For international projects, what are the social, economic and social conditions in the country in which it operates?
- What is the money donated used for?

### **ANY FUNDRAISING MUST BE APPROVED BY THE CAS COORDINATOR, AND REMEMBER, FUNDRAISING GOES BEYOND BAKE SALES!**

- Organize an International Food cook-off evening for the school community!
- Plan a Charity concert night- Battle of the bands- show off your talents for a good cause!
- Make and sell crafts at holiday fairs
- Bracelet and/or t-shirt sale to promote your CAS project
- "Jeans" day- any non-uniform day
- Flea market or bring and buy sale
- Car wash
- Sponsored run/walk
- Sponsored sporting events, i.e. golf, tennis

## CAS REFLECTION GUIDELINES

Reflections should be completed as soon as possible, both during and after the Experience. Reflections should be about the quality of the evidence and reflection that demonstrate your learning process. Use these guiding questions to help guide you:

- Summarize what you/your group did in this Experience/Project and how you interacted with others.
- Explain what you hoped to accomplish
- How successful were you/your group in achieving your goals? What difficulties did you encounter and how did you overcome them?
- What did you learn about yourself and others through this Experience/Project? What abilities, attitudes and values have you developed?
- How did this Experience/Project benefit others?
- How did your Experience reflect the IB Learner Profile?
- What might you do differently next time to improve your Experience?
- How can you apply what you have learned in other life situations?

Source: IB CAS guide 2015



Reflection is:	Reflection is not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• honest</li> <li>• personal</li> <li>• done in many different ways</li> <li>• sometimes difficult</li> <li>• sometimes easy</li> <li>• sometimes creative</li> <li>• building self-awareness</li> <li>• necessary for learning</li> <li>• what I did, combined with how I felt</li> <li>• surprising</li> <li>• helpful for planning</li> <li>• done alone or with others</li> <li>• about thoughts, feelings, and ideas</li> <li>• adding perspective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• forced</li> <li>• right or wrong</li> <li>• good or bad</li> <li>• marked or graded</li> <li>• difficult</li> <li>• copying what someone else said</li> <li>• predictable</li> <li>• to be judged by others</li> <li>• only a summary of what happened</li> <li>• done to please someone else</li> <li>• a waste of time</li> <li>• only written</li> <li>• only discussion</li> <li>• only led by teachers</li> </ul>

## LEARNING OUTCOMES AND IB LEARNER PROFILE FEATURES

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Successful completion of the CAS program requires that a student has achieved the following seven learning outcomes. Each student must provide evidence that he or she has been able to:

### 1. IDENTIFY OWN STRENGTHS AND DEVELOP AREAS FOR GROWTH

Thinking about your own strengths and qualities: How did an activity help your self-awareness about your existing utilities and skills? Which of your own existing skills and qualities could and should you improve and develop in the future?

### 2. DEMONSTRATE THAT CHALLENGES HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN, DEVELOPING NEW SKILLS IN THE PROCESS

How was an activity a new challenge to you? What was unfamiliar or difficult about it, to make it a challenge for you? Which new skill did you develop, or which existing skill did you significantly improve, as a consequence of a CAS Experience?

### 3. DEMONSTRATE HOW TO INITIATE AND PLAN CAS EXPERIENCE

Was an activity you are reflecting on planned and initiated by you right from the start, or did you initiate that activity or join an activity initiated by someone else?

### 4. SHOW COMMITMENT AND PERSEVERANCE IN CAS EXPERIENCES

Did you work alone or did you collaborate with others? Identify, demonstrate and critically discuss the benefits and challenges of collaboration gained through CAS Experiences.

### 5. DEMONSTRATE THE SKILLS AND RECOGNIZE THE BENEFITS OF WORKING COLLABORATIVELY

Attend activities on a regular basis and share responsibility for dealing with obstacles that may arise in the course of activities. Sporting activities require an 80% attendance rate for the activity to be counted as a CAS Experience.

### 6. DEMONSTRATE ENGAGEMENT WITH ISSUES OF GLOBAL SIGNIFICANCE

**“Think globally, act locally”** While it may be possible to join international projects, there are also many global issues at a local or national level as well (supporting the homeless, environmental issues).

### 7. RECOGNIZE AND CONSIDER THE ETHICS OF CHOICES AND ACTIONS

Ethical decisions arise in most CAS Experiences. Evidence of ethical issues can be shared in conversations with the CAS Coordinator, or recorded in reflections.

All seven outcomes must be present for a student to complete the CAS requirement. Some may be demonstrated many times, in a variety of activities, but successful completion of CAS requires that there is **some** evidence for every outcome.

# MANAGEBAC

## **CAS ManageBac accounts will be set up for all students at the beginning of the new school year.**

Students are required to record all of their CAS Experiences in ManageBac, as well as details of their CAS project, with their reflections. The CAS Coordinator will check students' progress in ManageBac.

## **MANAGEBAC: YOUR ONLINE PORTFOLIO**

Students will build their CAS Portfolio online through the software, ManageBac. At the **initial interview** in the first Trimester, you discuss your choice of CAS experiences, ideas of projects and what goals you have set in terms of learning outcomes. Your CAS Portfolio will demonstrate and showcase evidence of your achievements and show how you have met the 7 Learning Outcomes. It will be submitted as proof of completing CAS, and will be used in your 3 interviews, so it must be kept up to date.

## **THE THREE-PART PORTFOLIO: SUGGESTED METHOD OF ORGANIZATION**

### **MANAGEBAC GUIDELINES**

- Go to your personal CAS worksheet and add a CAS experience. It is important that you are detailed in your description of your CAS experience.
- Get in contact with your supervisor(s), inside or outside of school, and make sure that you have the correct contact information for that supervisor as you will need to send them an email for a supervisor review at the end of your activity.
- Choose which of the 7 learning outcomes you are going to address. These are the goals that you think that you can meet through this CAS Experience and in your goal setting and what you hope to learn. You may choose any number of these outcomes per CAS experience.
- The CAS Coordinator must approve these CAS experience proposals.
- Once approved, you may add reflections and evidence. You will be able to keep a proper record of your CAS experiences, and reflections in your personal CAS worksheet on ManageBac. Be creative and reflective in your journal; remember you can use different media to illustrate your CAS experiences. You can make observations about what you've experienced, what you've learned about yourself or the CAS experience, how you have attained or not attained your goals etc.
- Once the CAS experience is completed, complete your final reflection. Your supervisor will also review your CAS experiences and your reflections online and will add comments concerning your outcomes: whether or not goals were attained or not.



## CAS TIMETABLE

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### DP1

SEPTEMBER

- Introduction to CAS - presentation of Experiences
- Introduction to ECAs. First formal interview

OCTOBER

DECEMBER

- Formal interview continues
- CAS classes continue
- Introduction to various organizations.

MARCH

APRIL

MAY /JUNE

Second Formal Interview

### DP2

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER

CAS meeting with CAS Coordinator. Review requirements

NOVEMBER - FEBRUARY

MARCH

- 3rd Formal Interview
- CAS Fair

## WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS OF A COMPLETE CAS PROGRAMME?

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To successfully complete the programme, you need to meet the following **SEVEN REQUIREMENTS**:

- **REGULAR, HABITUAL PARTICIPATION**

The CAS programme is designed to create enjoyable, meaningful, regular Experiences for you. CAS Experiences should be challenging, set to develop new skills, and fun.

- **BALANCED PORTFOLIO**

Create a balance between the three strands of creativity, activity and service. Aim to work on Experiences for at least 1 trimester. Leave some time for spontaneous opportunities that might come up. All Experiences must be documented clearly on ManageBac.

- **AN 18-MONTH PROGRAMME**

Students must continue working on CAS for the entire 18 months.

- **THREE FORMAL INTERVIEWS WITH THE CAS COORDINATOR**

DP1 first interview in September: discuss the programme, and relation to the learning outcomes and importance of reflections. Discuss start of ManageBac portfolio. DP1 second interview in May/June: check programme goals have been achieved and review reflections. Discuss summer vacation activities and plans for DP2. Review ManageBac portfolio.

DP2 third interview in February/March: discuss CAS portfolio and review Experiences and Extended Project.

- **ONLINE PORTFOLIO AND REFLECTIONS**

The ManageBac portfolio is used as a base on which to store your CAS documentation, and through which you can communicate directly with your Coordinator and Supervisors. It is important to use video clips, digital photography together with other means of affective reflection.

- **CAS EXTENDED PROJECT**

Students must undertake a CAS Project of at least one month's duration that shows initiative, demonstrates perseverance, and develops skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, and decision-making. Prior to starting the Project, students must complete and submit the CAS Project Proposal and Risk Assessment forms for approval by the CAS Coordinator or Supervisor.



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