IB Diploma Programme

Simplifying the diploma requirements and failing conditions

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Introduction

Owing to continual refinements in the regulations that apply to the Diploma Programme it is necessary to regularly update the *General regulations: Diploma Programme*. The current general regulations governing the Diploma Programme were published in March 2011, and a new set of general regulations will be published early 2014 that will be effective from the May 2015 session. One significant change will be a revision of article 13 that lists the requirements for achieving the IB diploma. Because the new regulations will not be available for several months to come, this document has been produced to bring to the attention of schools what changes are being implemented to the requirements and associated failing conditions.

The changes do not make the diploma harder to achieve; the changes are a simplification of the existing requirements.

Diploma Programme coordinators are encouraged to communicate the changes described in the document (and subsequently all changes in the next general regulations) to candidates and their legal guardians, and other stakeholders, such as teachers, who need to know this information.

What are diploma "requirements" and "failing conditions"?

In order to achieve the IB Diploma a candidate must fulfil certain requirements; at its most basic a candidate must achieve at least 24 points from their combined grades in six subjects, together with their grades for theory of knowledge and the extended essay, and also complete the Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) element. However, to ensure a diploma reflects sufficient breadth in achievement across subjects and the core there are particular requirements stated in articles of the *General regulations: Diploma Programme*. These are the "requirements" and are phrased positively. The "failing conditions" are an interpretation of these requirements intended to indicate why a candidate has failed to achieve the diploma. The "failing conditions" are listed in the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme* and are shown for a candidate's results on the IB information system (IBIS), if of course a (diploma or retake) candidate has not achieved the diploma.

Here is an example of one requirement for the diploma and its equivalent failing condition.

Requirement

Article 13.3g Overall, there are no more than three grades 3 or below.

Equivalent failing condition

Failing code 7 Grade 3 or below has been awarded four or more times.

Why change the requirements/failing conditions?

The requirements listed in the current *General regulations: Diploma Programme* (published March 2011) are complicated and could be seen as unfair to some candidates. The general regulations list twenty requirements and it is not always easy to determine which requirement(s) a candidate has not met if a candidate fails to achieve the diploma. In fact, more than one failing condition may apply, which is not always obvious to coordinators and candidates when they interpret results.

Some issues include:

- Candidates who register for four HL subjects must achieve at least 16 points in their HL subjects (unless they have a total of 28 points or more then it becomes 14 points). Achieving the diploma is therefore arguably more demanding for these candidates.

- The hurdle of 28 points creates confusion and possible unfairness. For example: it is a failing condition for a candidate with 24 to 27 points to have a grade E in either the extended essay or theory of knowledge. However, a candidate with 28 points or more who has a grade E in say the extended essay and an A for theory of knowledge may pass the diploma and be awarded an additional point.
- Codes 14, 15, 17, 18 and 19 very rarely cause candidates to fail their diploma.

The aim of changing the requirements and associated codes for the failing conditions is to achieve greater transparency and fairness while ensuring that we do not:

- significantly alter the diploma pass rate
- jeopardize a significant number of candidates who would potentially have achieved the diploma under the current requirements
- accidentally encourage or allow candidate behaviour that is undesirable, such as reducing the amount of effort put into the extended essay or theory of knowledge requirements.

The current failing conditions and codes

As mentioned above, when the results are issued for an examination session, for any diploma or retake candidate who does not achieve the diploma a failing condition is indicated on the IB information system (IBIS). The current failing conditions and codes are as follows:

These codes apply to all diploma (and retake) candidates.

1. Candidate's total points are fewer than 24.
2. An N has been given for one or more subjects, theory of knowledge or the extended essay.
3. A grade E has been awarded for both theory of knowledge and the extended essay.
4. There is a grade 1 awarded in any subject and level.
5. CAS requirements have not been completed.
6. Candidate is guilty of academic misconduct.
7. Grade 3 or below has been awarded four or more times.

These codes apply to diploma (and retake) candidates with 24 to 27 points inclusive.

8. There is one or more grade 2 awarded at higher level.
9. Grade 2 at standard level awarded two or more times.
10. Candidate has registered for three higher level subjects, and gained fewer than 12 points on these.
11. Candidate has registered for three standard level subjects, and gained fewer than 9 points on these.
12. Candidate has registered for four higher level subjects, and gained fewer than 16 points on these.
13. Candidate has registered for two standard level subjects, and gained fewer than 6 points on these.
20. Candidate has a grade E in either the extended essay or theory of knowledge.

These codes apply to diploma (and retake) candidates with 28 points or more.

14. Grade 2 at higher level awarded two or more times.
15. Grade 2 at standard level has been awarded three times.
16. Candidate has registered for three higher level subjects, and gained fewer than 11 points on these.

17. Candidate has registered for three standard level subjects, and gained fewer than 8 points on these.
18. Candidate has registered for four higher level subjects, and gained fewer than 14 points on these.
19. Candidate has registered for two standard level subjects, and gained fewer than 5 points on these.

From the May 2015 examination session

From the May 2015 session the following failing conditions and associated codes will replace those in current use.

1. CAS requirements have not been met.
2. Candidate's total points are fewer than 24.
3. An N has been given for theory of knowledge, extended essay or for a contributing subject.
4. A grade E has been awarded for one or both of theory of knowledge and the extended essay.
5. There is a grade 1 awarded in a subject/level.
6. Grade 2 has been awarded three or more times (HL or SL).
7. Grade 3 or below has been awarded four or more times (HL or SL).
8. Candidate has gained fewer than 12 points on HL subjects (for candidates who register for four HL subjects, the three highest grades count).
9. Candidate has gained fewer than 9 points on SL subjects (candidates who register for two SL subjects must gain at least 5 points at SL).

What has changed?

The following has been removed (which applies to all diploma and retake candidates):

6. Candidate is guilty of academic misconduct. (This is not required because of the new code 3.)

The following have been removed or changed (which apply to diploma and retake candidates with 24 to 27 points inclusive):

9. Grade 2 at SL awarded two or more times. (Removed, but covered by codes 6 and 9 above.)
12. Candidate has registered for four HL subjects, and gained fewer than 16 points on these. (Changed, but covered by code 8 above.)
13. Candidate has registered for two SL subjects, and gained fewer than 6 points on these. (Changed, see code 9 above, must gain at least 5 points at SL.)
20. Candidate has a grade E in either the extended essay or theory of knowledge. (Changed, see code 4 above. The 28 point hurdle has been removed.)

The following have been removed or changed (which apply to diploma and retake candidates with 28 points or more):

14. Grade 2 at HL awarded two or more times. (Removed)
15. Grade 2 at SL has been awarded three times. (Removed)
16. Candidate has registered for three HL subjects, and gained fewer than 11 points on these. (Changed, see code 8 above.)

17. Candidate has registered for three SL subjects, and gained fewer than 8 points on these. (Removed)
18. Candidate has registered for four HL subjects, and gained fewer than 14 points on these. (Removed)
19. Candidate has registered for two SL subjects, and gained fewer than 5 points on these. (Removed)

Changes to the theory of knowledge/extended essay matrix

In addition to simplifying the list of requirements and failing conditions, the theory of knowledge/extended essay matrix will change from May 2015.

There is currently 1 additional point if a candidate obtains an A and an E, regardless of the fact that the candidate may fail the diploma if they have 24 to 27 points. If the matrix remains the same and is combined with the simplified requirements/failing conditions, such candidates would still gain an additional point and not achieve the diploma if they had an A+E combination. However, this would apply to all candidates not just those with 24 to 27 points. Gaining an additional point and then not being eligible for the diploma is considered inappropriate.

The current matrix is:

		Theory of knowledge					
		Grade **A**	Grade **B**	Grade **C**	Grade **D**	Grade **E**	No grade **N**
Extended essay	Grade **A**	3	3	2	2	1 Failing condition*	Failing condition
	Grade **B**	3	2	1	1	0 Failing condition*	Failing condition
	Grade **C**	2	1	1	0	0 Failing condition*	Failing condition
	Grade **D**	2	1	0	0	0 Failing condition*	Failing condition
	Grade **E**	1 Failing condition*	0 Failing condition*	0 Failing condition*	0 Failing condition*	Failing condition*	Failing condition
	No grade **N**	Failing condition	Failing condition	Failing condition	Failing condition	Failing condition	Failing condition

** Since the May 2010 session 28 points overall are required to be eligible for the diploma if a student attains an "E" grade in either the extended essay or theory of knowledge. As previously, a grade "A" in one of the requirements earns an extra point even if the other is a grade "E". Attaining a grade "E" in both the extended essay and theory of knowledge continues to represent an automatic failure.*

The following new matrix will be adopted from the May 2015 session.

<table>
<tr><th>ToK/EE</th><th>A</th><th>B</th><th>C</th><th>D</th><th>E</th></tr>
<tr><td>A</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td rowspan="5">Failing condition</td></tr>
<tr><td>B</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td>C</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><td>D</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><td>E</td><td colspan="4">Failing condition</td></tr>
</table>

Changes from the current matrix

B + C combination now results in 2 additional points (previously 1 point)

A + E combination now results in zero points and a failing condition (previously 1 point)

What are the consequences?

Results data has been used from the November 2012, May 2012 and May 2013 session to simulate the consequences of changing the requirement codes. There was no significant difference to the pass rate for any of these sessions when using the new requirement codes.