

"As a student-centered, family-focused community, we will guide learners on their journeys towards fulfilling their individual potential, embracing their own independence and internationalism in a safe, supportive and challenging environment".



The International Baccalaureate
DIPLOMA PROGRAMME
HANDBOOK
2023 - 2024

"Belong. Be happy. Be excellent."



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Welcome to the Renaissance IB Diploma Programme

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is widely regarded as the best pre-university course that is offered anywhere in the world. An IB qualification is recognised by many institutions in different countries, and no other programme prepares students better for tertiary education and the world of work.

The purpose of this booklet is to make the reader aware of the different components of the IB and the various choices confronting students as they decide which courses to select. Renaissance International School Saigon is proud to offer a wide selection of subject choices, which enables any prospective student to select a programme which will allow them to progress to the next stage of their education or career.

Of course, success also requires dedication and commitment from the student. With 6 subjects, an Extended Essay (EE), Theory of Knowledge (TOK) and CAS (Creativity, Activity and Service), the IB Diploma Programme is highly demanding. This is exactly why universities around the world hold IB Diploma graduates in such high regard.



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Why Choose Renaissance for Your IB Diploma?

- An outstanding range of subject offerings
- Matriculation into high quality universities around the world
- Meaningful service work through the CAS programme
- Excellent student to teacher ratio
- A dedicated University and College Counsellor
- A fundamental focus on student welfare and well-being

University and Beyond

Universities in over 110 countries recognise the IB Diploma. It allows entrance to the most competitive universities in the world. The University Admission Authorities recognise the academic rigour of the IB and value the “extra” parts of the Diploma, such as TOK, CAS and the Extended Essay.

Universities prefer IB students because the IB curriculum develops a balanced variety of skills. IB graduates, with the range of subjects they have studied, have a greater choice of undergraduate programmes. Employers, too, are increasingly looking for flexibility and adaptability, which is something all IB students are able to offer.

The school, through its University and College Counsellor, will fully support all university applications and guide every student on an individual basis.

The school will send a transcript of results for the last four years (if the student studies less than four years at Renaissance, the transcript will be for the years at our school) to universities and colleges of student’s choice. This can be done through the Common App for the US, UCAS for the UK or targeted universities in other countries. For Year 13 the transcript includes predicted grades. Transcripts and predicted grades are confidential and will not be shared with students and parents, to meet International standards.

Creativity, Activity and Service

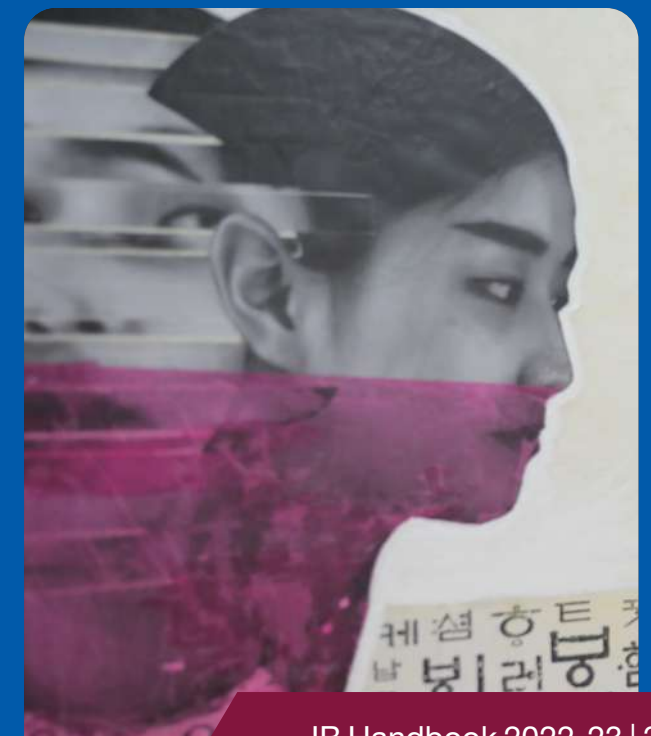
Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) is a core component of the IB. The philosophy of the IB is to develop all areas of a student’s potential, to educate the whole person and to encourage each individual student to develop their diverse talents. The CAS programme acknowledges the world outside academic studies and recognises the need for students to become involved in sports, theatre productions, artistic pursuits, community service work and other spheres outside the academic. CAS provides opportunities for students to take part in and organise non-academic activities, often outside school. It also develops awareness, concern, and the ability to cooperate with others.

The CAS programme is overseen by the CAS Coordinator. Students allocate time to plan and organise activities. Over the two years of the IB programme, students must devote time to CAS activities. Students must divide their activities equally between the three elements: Creativity, Activity and Service.

Creativity – These types of pursuits may include music, art, drama and dance. Students whose timetable does not include art, for example, may find opportunities to develop their creative skills through this part of their CAS programme.

Activity – These pursuits aim to keep students fit and physically healthy. Taking up a new sport or physical activity, coaching or organising a team are possible ideas. Going on an adventure - or an activity-based residential may also qualify here.

Service – As the name implies, these activities are about giving something back to the community. Service may take different forms: for example participating in environmental clean-up campaigns or helping disadvantaged members of the community such as the disabled or the elderly. Students can gain a great deal from giving their time to help others.



Theory of Knowledge

The Theory of Knowledge or TOK course is designed to develop students’ critical thinking and enhance their powers of reasoning and argument. These skills allow students to carry out more effective research, to be more demanding and rigorous in their studies as well as to be intellectually more independent and assertive. In short, TOK aims to help our students become active thinkers rather than passive learners and to develop into discerning adult thinkers.

TOK is a course that examines the origins and validity of various forms of knowledge. It is important to make clear that the course does not seek to challenge students’ beliefs; instead, it asks students to justify or validate their knowledge. By understanding why we believe certain things to be true we begin to understand how we make judgments. It is hard to fully explain precisely what TOK is all about in a few sentences. We feel it is significant that students frequently cite TOK as the thing they enjoy the most in the IB Diploma Programme.

The goals of the course are to gain an understanding of what it means to know something, for example as a scientist, an artist or a historian, and thereby to understand how different forms of knowledge relate to one another. Students from different cultural backgrounds are encouraged to compare and contrast their diverse attitudes and perceptions.

Discussion is a vital aspect of this course, which requires involvement and commitment from students.

All students are assessed in the same way; there are no Higher Level or Standard Level differences. Internal assessment consists of a live or virtual exhibition of three objects based on one IA prompt. The prompt will be chosen from a list that will be provided by the IB.

External assessment consists of an Essay from the prescribed IB essay list. This is assessed externally by an IB examiner.



The Extended Essay

All Diploma candidates undertake independent research on a topic of special interest and write an Extended Essay of approximately 4,000 words. This is excellent preparation for the kind of thesis they will be required to write at university and enables them to become acquainted with research and academic writing skills. They may choose to write an Extended Essay based on any of their six subjects.

Students who are taking the full Diploma will be appointed a supervisor by the IB Coordinator or the Extended Essay Coordinator. The supervisor will assist in the structuring of the student essay and will advise the pupil what to do for research and how to collect data. During the summer vacation students will complete this research or data collection, and the final essay will be submitted before the end of the First Term of IB Year Two.

Tok/EE	Excellent A	Good B	Satisfactory C	Mediocre D	Elementary E
Excellent A	3	3	2	2	Failing Condition
Good B	3	2	2	1	
Satisfactory C	2	2	1	0	
Mediocre D	2	1	0	0	
Elementary E	Failing Condition				



There are 3 points available out of the 45 points maximum for the Extended Essay, TOK Essay and TOK Presentation. The CAS Diary has no grade as such, although no Diploma will be issued without this.

The remaining 42 points come from a maximum of 7 points for each of the 6 subjects studied from the IB Subject Groups.

IB Subjects Offered at Renaissance

OPTION 1	OPTION 2
English A Language and Literature SL/ HL	Korean A Language and Literature SL/HL
English B HL	Vietnamese A Language and Literature SL/HL
	Chinese A Literature SL/HL
	Chinese (Mandarin) B SL/HL
	French B SL/HL/Ab initio
OPTION 3	OPTION 4
Business Management SL/HL	Physics SL/HL
Psychology SL/HL	Biology SL/HL
	Sport, Exercise and Health Science SL/HL
OPTION 5	OPTION 6
Maths: Analysis and Approaches SL/HL	Visual Arts SL/HL
Maths: Applications and Interpretations SL	Chemistry SL/HL
	Economics SL/HL
	Music SL/HL
	Theatre studies SL/HL

Subject and Level Selection

Choosing the correct subject to support your long-term goals is vitally important. Our teachers will be available to advise on the best combination for each student. After the 1st term of the programme changes can only be made at the school’s recommendation and under extenuating circumstances.

In the unlikely event of a course not being available, you will be informed during the first week of the academic year. Please understand that should this happen, any decision is taken in the best interests of the student.

Competence in English

Competence in the English language is a pre-requisite for IB. As English is the medium of instruction for most subjects, a sound level of English language proficiency is expected of an IB student.

*Key:
SL : Standard Level
HL : High Level

*Note:
Vietnamese Students are recommended to choose Vietnamese A in Group 2
English B is only offered at HL



Language A

Language and Literature

This course aims to improve and develop reading, writing, speaking, analysing and critical thinking skills.

Language and Literature is offered in English, Vietnamese, and Korean. The course also prepares students for the challenge and rigour of the Extended Essay, Theory of Knowledge, and university applications. The course analyses Literature and the Media; it is offered in SL and HL form.

Students may choose between Higher Level and Standard Level. The Higher Level course requires the study of 6 literary texts, and Standard Level 4.

Language and Literature comprises four parts—two relating to the study of language and two to the study of literature.

Part 1 (Language in a Cultural Context) requires the study of short texts from a variety of sources, genres and media (cartoons, blogs, opinion columns, newspaper articles etc).

Part 2 (Language and Mass Communication) also requires the study of a variety of texts chosen from different sources, genres and media (political speeches, propaganda, advertisements etc).

Part 3 (Literature—Texts and Contexts) requires the study of 2 (SL) or 3 (HL) literary works.

Part 4: (Literature—Critical Study) requires the study of 2 (SL) or 3 (HL) literary works.

The overarching aims of the course are to:

- Develop in students the ability to engage in close, detailed analysis of individual texts and make relevant connections.
- Develop the students' powers of expression, both in oral and written communication.
- Develop in students an understanding of how language, culture and context determine the ways in which meaning is constructed in texts. Students are encouraged to think critically about the different interactivities between text, audience and purpose.

Students considering a Self-Taught language option should make arrangements with the IB Coordinator.



Language B

The primary focus of language B is communicative competence in both the spoken and written forms.

Language B students will develop their reading, writing and oral skills in lessons which focus on issues related to culture as well as to the core IB concepts of international mindedness and TOK's ways of knowing. Students will examine a wide variety of topics that are immediately relevant to their experience. The core topics studied will relate to:

- ✓ Identities
- ✓ Experiences
- ✓ Human ingenuity
- ✓ Social organisation
- ✓ Sharing the planet

Through the examination of these topics students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking. They will eventually become competent in using language for social and cultural interactivity.

A wide variety of texts will be used in lessons e.g. news stories, short stories, brochures, advertisements, poems, informal and formal letters, excerpts from plays, articles, speeches, editorials, debates, reviews and interviews. Students will analyse the conventions of these forms of writing and also be able to write in all of these forms themselves.

Ab Initio

The language ab initio course is a language acquisition course for students with little or no experience of the language. The course is organised into three themes:

- ✓ Individual and society
- ✓ Leisure and work
- ✓ Urban and rural environment

Each theme comprises a list of topics that provide students with opportunities to practice and explore the language and to develop intercultural understanding.

Through the development of receptive, productive and interactive skills, students develop the ability to respond and interact appropriately in a defined range of everyday situations.



Individuals and Societies

Business Management

Business and Management is the rigorous and critical study of the ways in which individuals and groups interact in a dynamic business environment. Business decision-making is critically examined to determine its effects on a business's internal and external environments. A core ideal of the course is the global nature of business and how the key to successful business management is responsible citizenship.

This course is designed to give an understanding of business principles, practices, and skills. Emphasis is also placed on understanding corporate social responsibility and day-to-day business functions of operations management, marketing, human resource management, and finance.

A key feature of the course is to examine how business and management theory is applied in real life case studies. As part of this, students will engage with business case studies and learn to examine how Business and Management theory has been applied in various businesses throughout the world.

Graduates of this course will have been given the opportunity to take on board the principles of business and management also to become critical, informed thinkers within a global marketplace. Students wanting to go to university to study Business Management - or related courses such as Hospitality Management, Marketing, Human Resources - or who have a desire to open their own business in the future would find this course very useful.



Psychology

The IB Psychology course is the systematic study of behaviour and mental processes. Since the course examines the interaction of biological, cognitive and sociocultural influences on human behaviour, it is well placed in group 3, Individuals and Societies. Students undertaking the course can expect to develop an understanding of how psychological knowledge is generated, developed and applied. This will allow them to have a greater understanding of themselves and appreciate the diversity of human behaviour.

The holistic approach reflected in the curriculum, which sees biological, cognitive and sociocultural analysis being taught in an integrated way ensures that students are able to develop an understanding of what all humans share, as well as the immense diversity of influences on human behaviour and mental processes. The ethical concerns raised by the methodology and application of psychological research are also key considerations of the IB Psychology course.

The IB Psychology course is designed to allow for in-depth analysis, evaluation and consolidation of learning. The overall aim of the course is to give students a deeper understanding of the nature and scope of psychology. Teachers are encouraged to find ways of delivering the course that are most relevant to their students' interests and to the school's resources. This course should be taught in an integrated way, as the different parts of the syllabus complement each other. This will allow students to make comparisons and evaluate different psychological theories and arguments.

Economics

Economics is an exciting, dynamic subject that allows students to develop an understanding of the complexities and interdependence of economic activities in a rapidly changing world. At the heart of economic theory is the problem of scarcity. While the world's population has unlimited needs and wants, there are limited resources to satisfy these needs and wants. As a result of this scarcity, choices have to be made. The economics course, at both SL and HL, uses economic theories to examine the ways in which these choices are made:

- at the level of producers and consumers in individual markets (microeconomics)
- at the level of the government and the national economy (macroeconomics)
- at an international level where countries are becoming increasingly interdependent through international trade and the movement of labour and capital (the global economy).

The choices made by economic agents (consumers, producers and governments) generate positive and negative outcomes and these outcomes affect the relative well-being of individuals and societies. As a social science, economics examines these choices through the use of models and theories. The Diploma Programme (DP) economics course allows students to explore these models and theories, and apply them using empirical data, through the examination of six real-world issues and nine key concepts.



The Experimental Sciences

Biology

The IB Biology course helps students to develop a broad understanding of the principles of Biology. There are 4 basic biological concepts that run through IB Biology: structure and function, universality versus diversity, equilibrium within systems and evolution. These concepts serve as themes that unify the various topics that students will study. These topics include cells, biochemistry, genetics, evolution, ecology, and human biology – as well as of statistical analysis of data.

Although the IB Biology course at standard level (SL) and higher level (HL) has been written as a series of discrete statements (for assessment purposes), these four basic biological concepts run throughout:

Structure and function

This relationship is probably one of the most important in a study of biology and operates at all levels of complexity. Students should appreciate that structures permit some functions while, at the same time, limiting others.

Universality versus diversity

At the factual level, it soon becomes obvious to students that some molecules (for example, enzymes, amino acids, nucleic acids and ATP) are ubiquitous, and so are processes and structures. At another level, students can grasp the idea of a living world in which universality means that a diverse range of organisms (including ourselves) are connected and interdependent.

Equilibrium within systems

Checks and balances exist both within living organisms and within ecosystems. The state of dynamic equilibrium is essential for the continuity of life.

Evolution

The concept of evolution draws together the other themes. It can be regarded as change leading to diversity within constraints, and this leads to adaptations of structure and function. These four concepts serve as themes that unify the various topics that make up the three sections of the course: the core, the additional higher level (AHL) material and the options.

Chemistry

Chemistry is the study of the properties and behaviour of matter. It is often called “the central science” because knowledge of chemistry is necessary to understand the other sciences. Chemistry is involved with everything in life, from the phenomena in the natural environment to the technology used in industry. Apart from being a subject worthy of study in its own right, chemistry is a prerequisite for many other courses in higher education, such as medicine, biological science and environmental science, and serves as useful preparation for employment.

Many **issues in daily life** are **related to chemistry**, such as pollution, global warming and nutrition. We will discuss the ethics involved in making decisions related to medical practice and the environment. Science is not just a collection of facts, but an ongoing process. We will examine chemistry in an historical context, examining how scientific theories progress, and the relationship of chemistry, and the other sciences, with other areas of knowledge through Theory of Knowledge (TOK).

This course will challenge students to develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills through laboratory investigations, writing, reading, group projects and class discussions.



Physics

The IB Physics course is designed to give students a good preparation for the demands of university calculus-based courses in Physics. If you have a strong interest in fields such as engineering, physics, mathematics, medicine or architecture, you should be taking this course.

The **mathematical background** needed by HL Physics students is algebra and trigonometry. In the course, we will further develop elementary analysis of errors in measurements and introduce the use of differential and integral calculus.

IB Physics has several facets:

- A standard range of subjects: Newtonian mechanics, thermal physics, wave behaviour, electricity and magnetism, and atomic and nuclear physics. The second year of the course is supplemented by study of two optional topics.
- An emphasis on the physics of environmental concerns, namely energy sources, the greenhouse effect and global warming.
- Knowledge of experimental methods of investigating nature complemented by experience in practical lab work.
- Using technology in a variety of ways: calculator - and computer-based lab experiments, analysis of data in spreadsheets and data bases, use of simulations of physical phenomena and graphing of data and its analysis.

Assessment

The final grade is calculated based upon internal assessment that takes into account the practical and laboratory work completed by students and the external assessment is taken in the form of examinations at the end of Year 13.

The Experimental Sciences

Sport, Exercise and Health Science

Course Description

The sports, exercise and health science (SEHS) course is part of the Diploma Programme which is a rigorous pre-university course of study designed for students in the 16 to 19 age range. It is a broad-based two-year course that aims to encourage students to be knowledgeable and inquiring, but also caring and compassionate. Students study a range of subjects from six different groups. The SEHS forms part of Group 4: Experimental Sciences and is offered only at standard level.

Course Content

The course incorporates the traditional disciplines of anatomy and physiology, biomechanics, psychology and nutrition, which are studied in context of sport, exercise and health. Students will cover a range of core and option topics and carry out practical (experimental) investigations in both laboratory and field settings.

This will provide an opportunity to acquire knowledge and understanding necessary to apply scientific principles and critically analyse human performance. Where relevant, the course will address issues of international dimension and ethics by considering sport, exercise and health relative to the individual and global contexts.



The six core compulsory topics are:

1. Anatomy
2. Exercise physiology
3. Energy systems
4. Movement analysis
5. Skill in sport
6. Measurement and evaluation of human performance

Students are also required to study two of the following four options:

1. Optimising physiological performance
2. Psychology of sport
3. Physical activity and health
4. Nutrition for sport, exercise and health

Assessment

The internally assessed aspect of the course aims to determine the extent to which the student can demonstrate the personal skills of cooperation, perseverance and responsibility appropriate for effective scientific investigation and problem solving. Students will also have to carry out scientific investigations with precision and safety. Internal assessment is an integral part of the course and is compulsory.

Future Opportunities

If you enjoy the subjects of science and sport and have aspirations of progressing to higher education to study a sports science related degree, this course should be ideal for you. It is important to understand that this course aims to equip you with the skills and knowledge to potentially be a sports scientist.



Mathematics

What are the DP mathematics courses?

They are Mathematics: analysis and approaches SL/HL and Mathematics: applications and interpretation SL.

Mathematics: analysis and approaches

Mathematics can be described as having two facets. One facet is driven by abstract concepts and generalisations that are linked to form new ideas, which may not have any immediate application in the real world. This approach to mathematics is built on axioms, and is presented in the form of conjectures and logical theoretical arguments to form theorems. We live in a world of innovation which is often dependent on this deep understanding of mathematics and analytical expertise.

Mathematics: analysis and approaches follow this approach. The course covers topics that are seen as necessary for further study of mathematics and includes the study of algebra, functions, trigonometry, statistics, and calculus, as well as topics on developing proofs, for example, direct proof at SL, and proof by contradiction and by induction at HL.

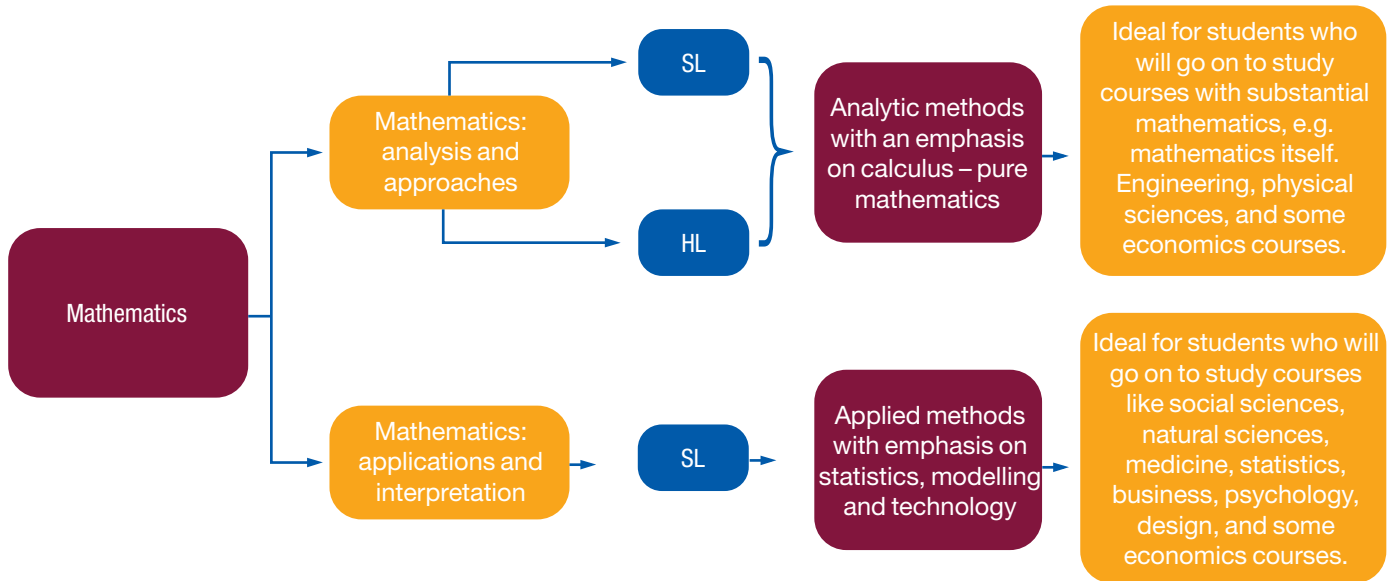


Mathematics: applications and interpretation

The other side of mathematics is based on describing the real world and solving practical problems. It is often carried out within the context of other disciplines. Mathematics is used as a language and a tool to help us explore the world around us and beyond. Trends are analysed, predictions are made, and relationships are explored. In a data- and technology-rich world, skills such as modelling and prediction are increasingly becoming more important.

Mathematics: applications and interpretation follows this approach, and includes topics that are traditionally part of pre-university mathematics courses, such as statistics and calculus. The course makes extensive use of technology to allow students to explore data, develop models and make predictions, often within the context of a practical problem.

Although these two different approaches to the discipline may seem distinct, there are often deep connections between the two.



The Arts

Visual Arts

Assessment: for the DP Visual Arts course is divided into three components: the exhibition, the comparative study, and the process portfolio. Each component is assessed separately and contributes to the final grade for the course.

Assessment Overview & Timeline:

External Assessment Comparative Study 20% June Year 1
Students analyse and compare different artworks by different artists. This independent critical and contextual investigation explores artworks, objects and artifacts from differing cultural contexts.

External Assessment - Process Portfolio 40% April Year 2
Students submit carefully selected materials which evidence their experimentation, exploration, manipulation and refinement of a variety of visual arts activities during the two-year course.

Internal Assessment – Exhibition 40% March Year 2
Students submit for assessment a selection of resolved artworks from their exhibition. The selected pieces should show evidence of their technical accomplishment during the visual arts course and an understanding of the use of materials, ideas and practices appropriate to visual communication.

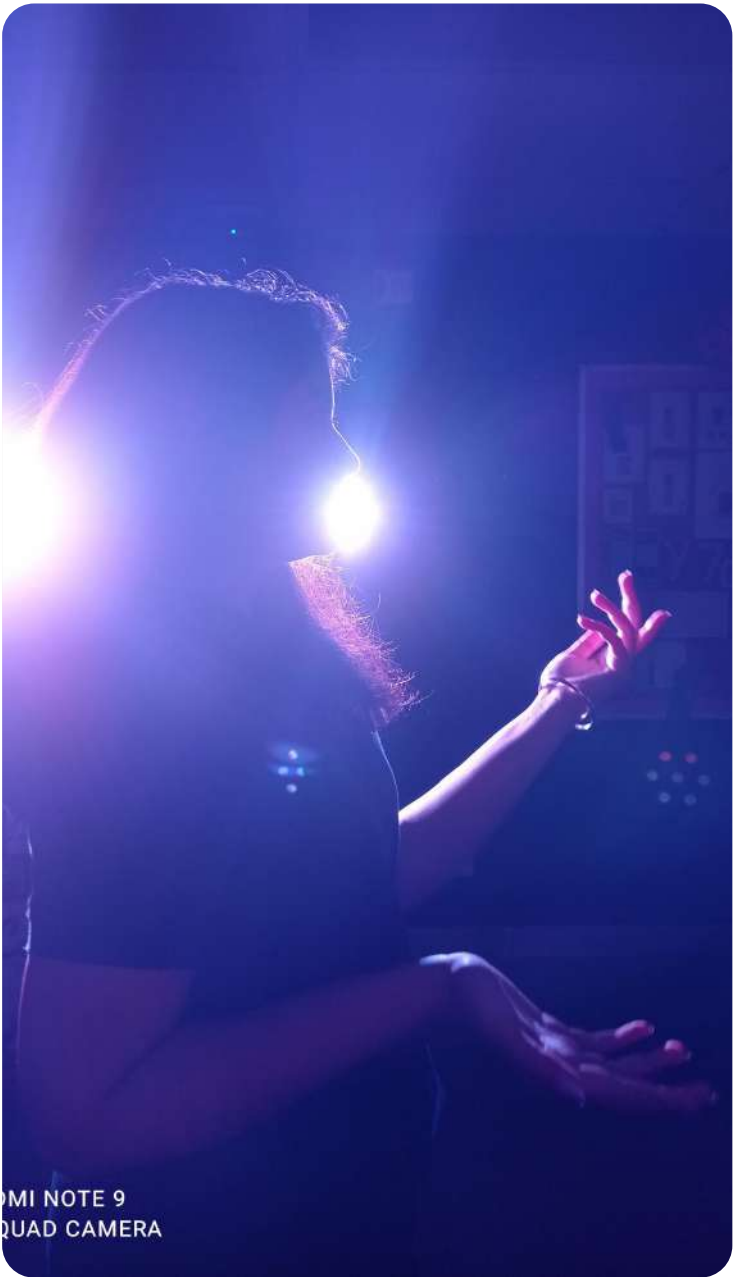


Theatre Studies

In IB Theatre the course is designed to give student good preparation for the demands of university performing arts course. If you have a strong interest in working within the creative industry, then you should be taking this exciting course.

Taking the perspective of Creators, designers, directors and performers this course allows student to:

- Create a solo theatre piece in the style of a theatre theorist. (HL)
- Design their own directors note book for a published play. (SL)
- Research and physically demonstrate their knowledge on a world theatre tradition. (SL)
- Collaborate, create and present an original devised piece of theatre for a target audience. (SL)



The Arts

Music

The course is grounded in the knowledge, skills and processes associated with the study of music and offers a strengthened approach to student creativity through practical, informed and purposeful explorations of diverse musical forms, practices and contexts. The course also ensures a holistic approach to learning, with the roles of performer, creator and researcher afforded equal importance in all course components. The aims of the music course are to enable students to: explore a range of musical contexts and make links to, and between, different musical practices, conventions and forms of expression acquire, develop and experiment with musical competencies through a range of musical practices, conventions and forms of expression, both individually and in collaboration with others evaluate and develop critical perspectives on their own music and the work of others.



Exploring music in context	EMC
External assessment	30% SL / 20% HL
Experimenting with music	EWM
Internal assessment	30% SL / 20% HL
Presenting music	PM
External assessment	40% SL / 30% HL
Higher level only	
The contemporary music maker	CMM
Internal assessment	N/A SL / 30% HL

Areas of inquiry

Music for sociocultural and political expression <ul style="list-style-type: none">Protest songsLiturgical MusicNational Anthems	AO11
Music for listening and performance <ul style="list-style-type: none">Chamber music Western ClassicalCool JazzExperimental Music	AO12
Music for dramatic impact, movement and entertainment <ul style="list-style-type: none">Film musicMusic for balletMusic Theatre	AO13
Music technology in the electronic and digital age <ul style="list-style-type: none">Electronic Dance MusicElektronische MusikTechnology in Popular Music	AO14



IB Subject Choices

Some programmes and universities will require you to have taken specific courses and earn a specific grade to be considered. Therefore it is important that you have an idea of what you might want to study in university in order to give yourself as many opportunities as possible once you apply to universities.

Here are some examples of strict course requirements:

- In Germany, students are expected to take at least one Maths or Science course at HL.
- In the UK, most universities will require you to take both HL Chemistry and HL Biology for studying Medicine and/or Dentistry.
- In order to study the Arts or Design, students are recommended to take HL Visual Arts.
- To study Business Management, most universities require Maths HL, although universities in the US are more lenient in this regard.

If you are not sure what you want to study at university, choosing facilitating subjects will keep your options open. These are the subjects which are most often required for entry to selective universities. They are:

Mathematics
English A Language and Literature
Physics
Biology
Chemistry
Languages



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