



International[®] Baccalaureate

Developments in the hexagon core

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The hexagon core

- Creativity, action, service
- Extended essay
- Theory of knowledge

Creativity, action, service

- New guide due in schools in March 2008, for students graduating from 2010
- Reinforces existing best practice
- Some key differences from the current guide

CAS definitions

- **Creativity:** arts, and other experiences that involve creative thinking.
- **Action:** physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle, complementing academic work elsewhere in the Diploma Programme.
- **Service:** unpaid and voluntary, an exchange that has a learning benefit for the student. The rights, dignity and autonomy of all those involved are respected.

The nature of CAS

For student development to occur, CAS should involve

- real, purposeful activities, with significant outcomes
- personal challenge: tasks must extend the student and be achievable in scope
- thoughtful consideration: planning, reviewing progress, reporting
- reflection on outcomes and personal learning.

Key features of the new CAS guide (1)

- Clearly related to the IB learner profile
- Shorter than current guide: tighter focus, less repetition
- Aims to reduce form-filling and mechanical administration

Key features of the new CAS guide (2)

- Emphasis on CAS as experiential learning
- Importance of reflection as part of this process
- Need for a team approach
- Focus on learning outcomes

Experiential learning

“... the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.”

(Kolb, 1984)

- Experience is transformed through reflection
- Reflection needs to be encouraged and developed
- Students need a “CAS adviser” to guide them
- A team approach is essential, in all but the smallest schools

Learning outcomes (1)

- Increased their awareness of their own strengths and areas for growth
- Undertaken new challenges
- Planned and initiated activities
- Worked collaboratively with others

Learning outcomes (2)

- Shown perseverance and commitment in their activities
- Engaged with issues of global importance
- Considered the ethical implications of their actions
- Developed new skills

Extended essay

- New guide issued to schools in March 2007, for examinations from May 2009
- Common assessment criteria for all subjects, *interpreted* for each subject
- Concluding interview (*viva voce*) is recommended
- Three new subjects available: film, dance, human rights

Extended essay: new advice

- Responsibilities of the school: strong recommendation that schools train supervisors
- Importance of choosing a good research question: advice on this in both general and subject sections
- Advice in the new guide (but not assessment criteria) can be used now

EEs: developing a research question

Example, from environmental systems and societies

Topic: The ecological footprint of the school canteen

Research question: From the major inputs and outputs of the school canteen, what overall estimate of its environmental impact can be made in terms of an ecological footprint?

Approach: An analysis of records and practical measurements assessing the inputs and outputs of the canteen, and a synthesis of data into a holistic model indicating the environmental impact.

Theory of knowledge

- First examinations in May 2008 under new assessment scheme (guide issued March 2006)
- Three key features of new guide: knowledge issues, knower's perspective, changed arrangements for presentations

TOK: knowledge issues

- **Not** the same as “problems of knowledge”
- Students are expected to move beyond blanket scepticism, or mindless relativism
- For example, given that absolute certainty is impossible, how and why do we choose what to do, in any particular situation?

TOK: knower's perspective

- New assessment criterion for both essay and presentation
- High achievement levels require evidence of “independent thinking”
- Teachers who provide too much coaching or support related to current titles will do their students a disservice

TOK: presentations

- “Verification” of internal assessment: schools are notified well in advance
- Presentation must be based on a “substantive real-life situation” (see examples in guide)

New assessment arrangements

- Aim to train all examiners to use new TOK and EE assessment schemes
- Exemplar materials will be published as soon as possible, following the first grade awards of the new schemes
- Grade boundaries will be set during the first examination sessions of the new schemes. If you are predicting grades, assume that boundaries will be similar to the existing ones.