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Diploma Programme

Guide to school authorization: Diploma Programme



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International Baccalaureate
Peterson House, Malthouse Avenue, Cardiff Gate
Cardiff, Wales GB CF23 8GL
United Kingdom
Phone: +44 29 2054 7777
Fax: +44 29 2054 7778
Website: <http://www.ibo.org>

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Phone: +44 29 2054 7746
Fax: +44 29 2054 7779
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Overview

Introduction

In order for a school to become IB World School, it must be authorized by the IB to implement any one of its programmes.

The authorization process has been designed to support schools in:

- making the decision to become an IB World School
- understanding the nature and requirements of the IB programme
- defining their readiness to implement the programme
- planning to sustain the programme in the long term.

The authorization process has a number of phases, each of which has distinctive objectives and related time frames.

The implementation of an IB programme may entail changes in the life of a school. These guidelines are intended to support schools during the process of authorization.

Overview of the authorization process

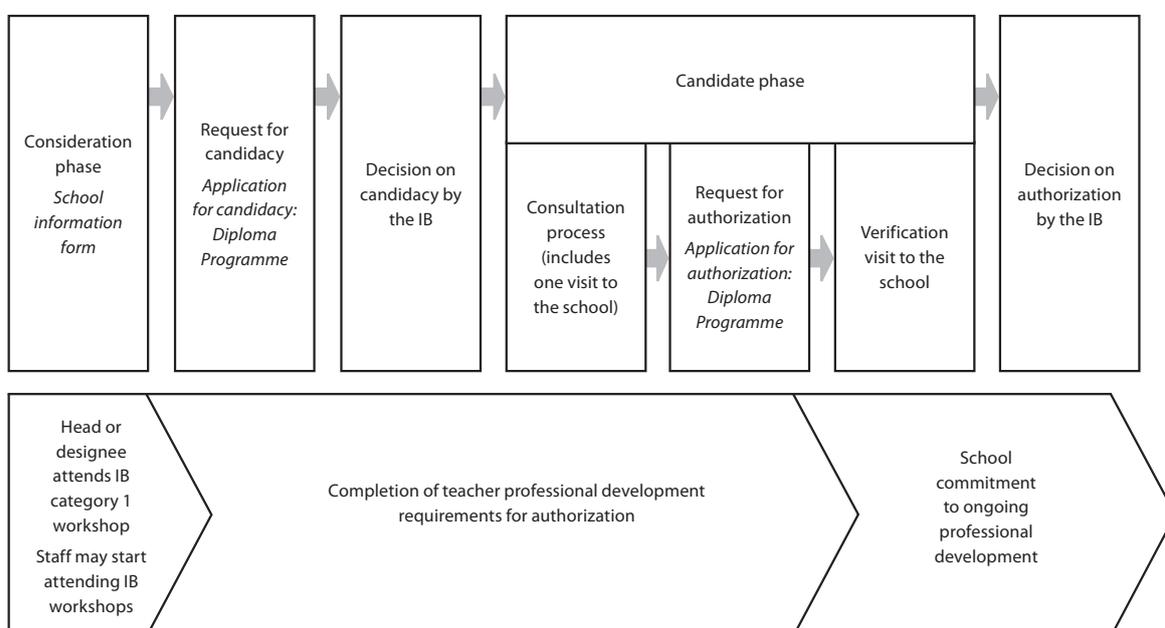


Figure 1: Stages of the authorization process

Consideration phase

Form the school completes: School information form

Schools have visited the IB website or have received information about the IB and want to know more. They complete the *School information form* in order to inform the IB of their interest and to request additional information.

What does the school do before applying for candidacy?

Before application, the school conducts a feasibility study in which it analyses the IB philosophy, programme structure and requirements, compares its findings with the situation of the school and defines what needs to be done in order to implement the programme. As a result the school will decide whether to apply to become an IB World School.

Normally, a school will take some or all of the following steps.

- a. Identification of who will carry out the feasibility study. It is helpful to include in the group school experts in different academic areas, members of the school leadership team and the person(s) responsible for finance.
- b. Analysis of the IB mission statement and the IB learner profile in order to see whether the school's own philosophy is similar to that of the IB. This is the most important decision that the school has to make because it is related to the purpose of the school and its unique contribution to education.
- c. Participation of the head of school or designee in an IB category 1 workshop to become familiar with the IB programme and the authorization process. Schools are encouraged to participate in IB professional development activities as early as possible to ensure that they make an informed decision regarding the future implementation of an IB programme.
- d. Analysis of the requirements related to the school entity.
- e. Analysis of the structure of the programme.
- f. Purchase and study of the Diploma Programme starter pack and additional documents.
- g. Analysis of the *Programme standards and practices* and specific programme requirements.
- h. Analysis of the commitment that the IB requires from IB World Schools to ensure that the programme will be sustainable in the long term.
- i. Analysis of the situation of the school with regard to IB expectations.
- j. If the school were to decide to implement the programme, definition of the human, material and financial resources that would be committed in order to align the school with IB expectations and to sustain the programme in the long term.
- k. Approximate time that the school will need to align with IB expectations.
- l. Analysis of the benefits that the implementation of the programme will bring to the school and its community.
- m. Final decision on whether to implement the programme.

If it decides to implement the programme, and therefore start the authorization process, during this period the school identifies the person who will become the coordinator of the programme, starts to gain support from its community, identifies resources and starts sending staff to IB-recognized professional development activities.

Request for candidacy

Form the school completes: Application for candidacy: Diploma Programme

The school will start the authorization process by completing the *Application for candidacy: Diploma Programme* and gathering the supporting documents. By submitting the application and the supporting documents the school formally applies for candidate status.

The *Application for candidacy: Diploma Programme* shows that the school has carried out a preliminary analysis of the programme and the consequences of its implementation, and that, as a result, an action plan has been developed reflecting the commitment of the school to make the necessary adjustments to become an IB World School.

Through the information provided in the form and supporting documents, the IB will ascertain that:

- the school is a legal entity, in existence and fit for the purposes of providing educational services, with appropriate accreditation by local authorities and/or independent recognized accreditation agencies, if applicable
- the school mission statement and philosophy align with those of the IB
- the head of the school or designee has participated in an IB workshop and is aware of the requirements to become an IB World School
- the school has contemplated the costs of the implementation of the programme and shows this through the presentation of a five-year budget and the written commitment of the authorities that will finance the project
- the school has support from the school community to undertake the project
- the school shows understanding of the implications of implementing the IB programme
- the school shows commitment to teacher professional development to ensure the development of the programme
- the school has designed an action plan to reflect its journey towards authorization.

If the school has shown that the above-mentioned conditions have been fulfilled, and has paid the corresponding IB fee, it will be recognized as a candidate school.

The IB has full discretion to refuse to recognize a school as a candidate school.

In all cases the school will receive a report that will provide information regarding the submitted form and documents and the decision that the IB has made.

Candidate phase

During this period the school will implement the actions necessary to address the IB requirements for authorization.

Special attention should be given to the implementation of the professional development plan as early as possible to ensure that teachers will be duly trained in IB-recognized professional development activities related to their subject areas or roles. The schedule needs to be carefully analysed so that the requirements for authorization are met in a timely manner. Since teachers need to formulate their course outlines to submit with the *Application for authorization: Diploma Programme*, they will be better prepared to carry out this task as a result of the workshops. It is expected that the requirements related to professional development are completed at the time of the verification visit.

The school will have the support of the IB through advice—by the relevant IB office and IB approved consultants—and through a mandatory consultation visit to the school. The timing of the visit will be established in consultation with the relevant IB office or IB consultant. As a result of the visit, a report will be sent to the school with recommendations on the future implementation of the programme.

All teachers will be given access to the IB online curriculum centre (OCC), a website where teachers can obtain IB publications and teaching materials and can participate in online forums on programme-related topics with their colleagues from schools around the world.

Request for authorization

Form the school completes: Application for authorization: Diploma Programme

The *Application for authorization: Diploma Programme* and supporting documents provide evidence of the school's progress in the authorization process and of its readiness to become an IB World School. The candidate school will submit specific documents showing understanding of the programme and its implementation.

Through the *Application for authorization: Diploma Programme* and supporting documents, the school will show that it has:

- understood the IB philosophy
- understood the programme requirements
- met the major objectives of its action plan to ensure successful implementation
- concluded that it meets the requirements to become an IB World School.

Verification visit

Upon acceptance of the *Application for authorization: Diploma Programme*, a visit to the school will be carried out to verify the school's claim that it has taken all the necessary actions and is prepared to become an IB World School.

The purpose of the visit is to ensure that the educational principles, standards and practices on which the IB programme is founded will be maintained and furthered. The visit is not aimed at appraising or assessing individual teachers or school administrators. A description of the visit can be found in the appendix to this document.

Following the visit, the relevant IB office will produce a report regarding the authorization process. This report will be based on the findings of the visit and the data from the application forms. It will normally include the following elements:

- **Commendations:** These relate to school practices that are beyond the requirements for authorization and will benefit the implementation of the programme.
- **Recommendations:** These provide guidance for the school on further developing the programme.
- **Matters to be addressed:** In certain cases there are areas within a school's practice that, if not addressed immediately, will jeopardize the integrity of the programme and thus the school's entitlement to be considered an IB World School.

Decision on authorization

The director general is responsible for deciding the outcome of all applications made by candidate schools. This decision is based on the documents submitted by the relevant IB office.

Authorization to teach an IB programme may be granted or denied by the director general.

The decision will have one of the following outcomes.

Authorization

If the director general considers that the application by the candidate school meets IB requirements and that there are no matters to be addressed, authorization to teach the relevant IB programme will be granted under condition of accordance with the *Rules for IB World Schools: Diploma Programme*. A letter of authorization from the director general will be sent from the head office of the IB to the school.

Commendations and recommendations are sent to the candidate school in conjunction with the letter advising the school of the authorization decision.

Continuation of candidacy

There are times when the IB considers that certain changes or improvements must be implemented by the candidate school before authorization. In such cases, the relevant IB office will write to the candidate school listing in detail those matters to be addressed. The letter will prescribe a deadline by which evidence must be submitted showing that these changes have been made or that an acceptable plan has been made for their accomplishment, if applicable.

The relevant IB office will then determine whether the candidate school may be recommended for authorization or whether additional work must be done prior to authorization. A return visit to the candidate school may also be scheduled, at the candidate school's expense. Under no circumstances may a school be authorized without the matters to be addressed being addressed by the candidate school to the satisfaction of the IB.

Refusal of authorization

The IB has full discretion to refuse to authorize a candidate school to teach an IB programme. If authorization is refused, the director general will give summary reasons for this decision. The decision is final: it is not subject to reconsideration or appeal.

A school may reapply for candidacy after a period of at least two years has elapsed since the date of the letter sent by the IB with the above-mentioned decision. The normal process and fees will apply.

Quality assurance framework

In order for the IB to gather information about the quality of its processes, once the school is sent the letter from the director general, it will be asked to complete a form related to the school's perception of the whole authorization process. The feedback from the schools is analysed in order to inform future changes.

Requirements to become an IB World School offering the Diploma Programme

Introduction

A school wishing to become an IB World School offering the Diploma Programme should consider the requirements described below to ensure that they can comply with all of them. They are classified as follows:

- requirements related to the school entity
- requirements related to the structure of the Diploma Programme
- requirements related to the implementation of the programme.

The school will be asked to show evidence of some of these requirements when submitting the *Application for candidacy: Diploma Programme*, others when submitting the *Application for authorization: Diploma Programme*, and others will be verified when the school is visited. They must all be evidenced if a school wants to become an IB World School authorized to offer the Diploma Programme.

Requirements related to the school entity

Requirements related to the school entity need to be in place for the IB to recognize it as a candidate school. They are stated in the IB document *Rules for candidate schools*.

Name and status of the school

In various forms, combinations and logos, the names “International Baccalaureate”, “IB” and “IB World School” are registered as trademarks worldwide by the IB Organization. Furthermore, the right to use the term “IB World School” and the related logo is provided under licence exclusively to IB World Schools that have been granted authorization by the director general to teach one or more of the IB programmes.

Consequently, no school whose name includes the words “International Baccalaureate”, “IB”, or “World School” in any form or language—or that has any trademarks or pending applications containing such words—shall be accepted by the IB Organization as a candidate school.

The school must be duly registered as a legal entity—either for profit or not for profit, privately or publicly funded—that is fit for the purposes of providing educational services and has the required accreditation by the local authorities and/or independent recognized accreditation agencies, if applicable.

New schools should normally have been in existence for at least three years before they can be authorized.

Multiple campus schools

If a school is divided between two or more campuses, each campus is normally deemed a separate candidate school and must individually fulfill all of the conditions of authorization stipulated in the *Guide to school authorization: Diploma Programme*.

In some cases the IB Organization recognizes that a single programme may, for logistical reasons, be taught in a school with two or more different campuses, perhaps a short distance apart. If such a multiple campus school is to be regarded as one unit for the purposes of recognition and fees, the school must provide evidence that the following criteria are all satisfied.

- a. All campuses are recognized as comprising a single school according to legal and local registrations.
- b. One person is responsible for the day-to-day educational leadership of the school across campuses and is formally recognized as such by the staff and, if applicable, also by the local authorities.
- c. The campuses are governed by the same rules and regulations—including organizational structure and, if applicable, school fee tariff.
- d. One IB programme coordinator will be responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the combined programme across the campuses.
- e. There can and will be horizontal and vertical articulation of the programme across the campuses.
- f. The staff across campuses can and will meet frequently for collaborative planning.

For the purposes of programme authorization, the IB Organization reserves the right to decide what constitutes a multiple campus school.

Requirements related to the structure of the Diploma Programme

General

Schools need to consider the requirements related to the structure of the programme to ensure that its implementation is possible. This information and other details are included in IB publications such as: *Rules for IB World Schools: Diploma Programme*, *General regulations: Diploma Programme*, *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*, *The Diploma Programme: From principles into practice*, subject guides and guides related to the core—theory of knowledge (TOK), creativity, action, service (CAS) and extended essay.

Continuum of IB programmes

The four programmes developed by the IB are free-standing; schools may opt to offer one, or any combination of the three programmes.

Appointment of a Diploma Programme coordinator

Schools must have a Diploma Programme coordinator, whose leadership role needs to be formally recognized in the school. This will be the person to whom the IB will send relevant information and communications related to the programme. The programme coordinator must show proficiency in one of the IB working languages (English, French or Spanish).

Subject choice and language(s) of instruction

Information about choice of subjects, combination of subjects and languages of instruction is included in the current *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*.

Mandatory teacher professional development

A school wishing to implement the Diploma Programme needs to make a commitment to ongoing teacher professional development. Specifically, schools must meet the following requirements.

- The head of school or designee must attend an IB category 1 workshop before submission of the *Application for candidacy: Diploma Programme*.
- All Diploma Programme subject teachers must attend IB category 1 workshops in their subject.
- TOK teacher(s) must attend IB category 1 TOK course workshops.
- CAS coordinators must attend IB category 1 CAS workshops.
- The Diploma Programme coordinator must attend IB category 1 Diploma Programme coordination workshops.

It is expected that the professional development has taken place before the verification visit.

The school's commitment to IB professional development would allow as many teachers and staff as possible to participate in IB activities.

Requirements related to the implementation of the programme

Requirements related to the implementation of the programme are laid down in the *Programme standards and practices*. Although the actual standards and practices are common to all IB programmes, some practices have been described in relation to the Diploma Programme in more detail to allow for a better understanding from the perspective of the programme.

The IB is aware that for each school the implementation of an IB programme is a journey and that the school will meet these standards and practices to varying degrees along the way. However, at the time of authorization certain expectations must be met, as identified in the two right-hand columns of the following tables.

- The IB has identified some practices and programme requirements that must be “in place”. Even though the Diploma Programme cannot be taught before the school is authorized by the IB to do so, there are practices and programme requirements that need to be in place because they are the basis of the preparation for the future implementation of the programme—IB professional development of teachers, course outlines, student schedule, and so on. The absence of these practices and requirements in a school may endanger the integrity of the programme.
- The IB has identified some practices and programme requirements for which the school must show that “planning is in progress”. Schools must show that planning of the identified practices is in progress at the time of authorization.

Other practices, which are not identified in any column, will be in a very early planning stage at the time of authorization. It is expected that the school makes commitment towards meeting all the standards, practices and programme requirements at the time of evaluation of the programme and will show evolution in time, which will be evidenced at every cycle of the programme evaluation.

Section A: Philosophy

Standard A

The school's educational beliefs and values reflect IB philosophy.

Practice		A school must show the following to become an IB World School offering the Diploma Programme	
		In place	Planning is in progress
1.	The school's published statements of mission and philosophy align with those of the IB.	✓	
2.	The governing body, administrative and pedagogical leadership and staff demonstrate understanding of IB philosophy.	✓	
3.	The school community demonstrates an understanding of, and commitment to, the programmes(s).	✓	
4.	The school develops and promotes international-mindedness and all attributes of the IB learner profile across the school community.		✓
5.	The school promotes responsible action within and beyond the school community.		✓
6.	The school promotes open communication based on understanding and respect.	✓	
7.	The school places importance on language learning, including mother tongue, host country language and other languages.		✓
8.	The school participates in the IB world community.		✓
9.	The school supports access for students to the IB programme(s) and philosophy.	✓	
	a. The school provides for the full Diploma Programme and requires some of its student body to attempt the full diploma and not only individual subject courses.	✓	
	b. The school promotes access to the diploma and subject courses for all students who can benefit from the educational experience they provide.	✓	
	c. The school has strategies in place to encourage students to attempt the full diploma.		✓

Section B: Organization

Standard B1: Leadership and structure

The school's leadership and administrative structures ensure the implementation of the IB programme(s).

Practice		A school must show the following to become an IB World School offering the Diploma Programme	
		In place	Planning is in progress
1.	The school has developed systems to keep the governing body informed about the ongoing implementation and development of the programme(s).		✓
2.	The school has developed a governance and leadership structure that supports the implementation of the programme(s).	✓	
3.	The head of school/school principal and programme coordinator demonstrate pedagogical leadership aligned with the philosophy of the programme(s).	✓	
4.	The school has appointed a programme coordinator with a job description, release time, support and resources to carry out the responsibilities of the position.	✓	
5.	The school develops and implements policies and procedures that support the programme(s).		✓
a.	The school has an admissions policy that clarifies conditions for admission to the school and the Diploma Programme.	✓	
b.	The school develops and implements a language policy that is consistent with IB expectations.		✓(1)
c.	The school develops and implements a special educational needs policy that is consistent with IB expectations and with the school's admissions policy.		✓(1)
d.	The school develops and implements an assessment policy that is consistent with IB expectations.		✓(1)
e.	The school has developed and implements an academic honesty policy that is consistent with IB expectations.	✓	
f.	The school complies with the IB regulations and procedures related to the conduct of all forms of assessment for the Diploma Programme.		✓

6.	The school has systems in place for the continuity and ongoing development of the programme(s).		✓
7.	The school carries out programme evaluation involving all stakeholders.		

1. At the time of authorization it is expected that the school has developed preliminary policies that will be applied and refined once the school is authorized.

Standard B2: Resources and support

The school's resources and support structures ensure the implementation of the IB programme(s).

Practice		A school must show the following to become an IB World School offering the Diploma Programme	
		In place	Planning is in progress
1.	The governing body allocates funding for the implementation and ongoing development of the programme(s).	✓	
a.	The allocation of funds includes adequate resources and supervision for the creativity, action, service (CAS) programme and the appointment of a CAS coordinator.	✓	
b.	The allocation of funds includes adequate resources to implement the theory of knowledge course over two years.	✓	
2.	The school provides qualified staff to implement the programme(s).	✓	
3.	The school ensures that teachers and administrators receive IB-recognized professional development.	✓	
a.	The school complies with the IB professional development requirement for the Diploma Programme at authorization and at evaluation.	✓	
4.	The school provides dedicated time for teachers' collaborative planning and reflection.	✓	

5.	The physical and virtual learning environments, facilities, resources and specialized equipment support the implementation of the programme(s).	✓	
a.	The laboratories and studios needed for group 4 and group 6 subjects provide safe and effective learning environments.	✓	
b.	There are appropriate information technology facilities to support the implementation of the programme.	✓	
c.	The school provides a secure location for the storage of examination papers and examination stationery with controlled access restricted to senior staff.	✓	
6.	The library/multi-media/resources play a central role in the implementation of the programme(s).	✓	
a.	The library/media centre has enough appropriate materials to support the implementation of the Diploma Programme.	✓	
7.	The school ensures access to information on global issues and diverse perspectives.		✓
8.	The school provides support for its students with learning and/or special educational needs and support for their teachers.		✓
9.	The school has systems in place to guide and counsel students through the programme(s).		✓
a.	The school provides guidance to students on post-secondary educational options.		✓
10.	The student schedule or timetable allows for the requirements of the programme(s) to be met.	✓	
a.	The schedule provides for the recommended hours for each standard and higher level subject.	✓	
b.	The schedule provides for the development of the theory of knowledge course over two years.	✓	
c.	The schedule respects concurrency of learning in the Diploma Programme.	✓	
11.	The school utilizes the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programme(s).		✓
12.	The school allocates resources to implement the Primary Years Programme exhibition, the Middle Years Programme personal project and the Diploma Programme extended essay for all students, depending on the programme(s) offered.	✓	

Section C: Curriculum

Standard C1: Collaborative planning

Collaborative planning and reflection supports the implementation of the IB programme(s).

Practice		A school must show the following to become an IB World School offering the Diploma Programme	
		In place	Planning is in progress
1.	Collaborative planning and reflection addresses the requirements of the programme(s).	✓	
a.	Collaborative planning and reflection includes the integration of theory of knowledge in each subject.	✓	
b.	Collaborative planning and reflection explores connections and relations between subjects and reinforces knowledge, understanding and skills shared by the different disciplines.		✓
2.	Collaborative planning and reflection takes place regularly and systematically.	✓	
3.	Collaborative planning and reflection addresses vertical and horizontal articulation.		✓
4.	Collaborative planning and reflection ensures that all teachers have an overview of students' learning experiences.		✓
5.	Collaborative planning and reflection is based on agreed expectations for student learning.		✓
6.	Collaborative planning and reflection incorporates differentiation for students' learning needs and styles.		✓
7.	Collaborative planning and reflection is informed by assessment of student work and learning.		✓
8.	Collaborative planning and reflection recognizes that all teachers are responsible for language development of students.		✓
9.	Collaborative planning and reflection addresses the IB learner profile attributes.	✓	

Note: "Collaborative planning and reflection" is used as a single concept as the two processes are interdependent.

Standard C2: Written curriculum

The school's written curriculum reflects IB philosophy.

Practice		A school must show the following to become an IB World School offering the Diploma Programme	
		In place	Planning is in progress
1.	The written curriculum is comprehensive and aligns with the requirements of the programme(s).	✓	
a.	The curriculum fulfills the aims and objectives of each subject group and the core.	✓	
b.	The curriculum facilitates concurrency of learning.	✓	
c.	The curriculum is balanced so that students are provided with a reasonable choice of subjects.	✓	
d.	The school develops its own courses of study for each subject on offer and for theory of knowledge.	✓	
2.	The written curriculum is available to the school community.		✓
3.	The written curriculum builds on students' previous learning experiences.		✓
4.	The written curriculum identifies the knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes to be developed over time.	✓	
5.	The written curriculum allows for meaningful student action in response to student's own needs and the needs of others.		✓
6.	The written curriculum incorporates relevant experiences for students.		✓
7.	The written curriculum promotes students' awareness of individual, local, national and world issues.	✓	
8.	The written curriculum provides opportunities for reflection on human commonality, diversity and multiple perspectives.	✓	
9.	The written curriculum is informed by current IB publications and is reviewed regularly to incorporate developments in the programme(s).	✓	
10.	The written curriculum integrates the policies developed by the school to support the programme(s).		✓
11.	The written curriculum fosters development of the IB learner profile attributes.	✓	

Standard C3: Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning reflects IB philosophy.

Practice		A school must show the following to become an IB World School offering the Diploma Programme	
		In place	Planning is in progress
1.	Teaching and learning aligns with the requirements of the programme(s).		✓
a.	Teaching and learning at the school addresses all of the aims and objectives of each subject.		✓
2.	Teaching and learning engages students as inquirers and thinkers.		✓
3.	Teaching and learning builds on what students know and can do.		✓
4.	Teaching and learning promotes the understanding and practice of academic honesty.		✓
5.	Teaching and learning supports students to become actively responsible for their own learning.		✓
6.	Teaching and learning addresses human commonality, diversity and multiple perspectives.		✓
7.	Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning in a language(s) other than mother tongue.		✓
8.	Teaching and learning demonstrates that all teachers are responsible for language development of students.		✓
9.	Teaching and learning uses a range and variety of strategies.		✓
10.	Teaching and learning differentiates instruction to meet students' learning needs and styles.		✓
11.	Teaching and learning incorporates a range of resources, including information technologies.		✓
12.	Teaching and learning develops student attitudes and skills that allow for meaningful student action in response to student's own needs and needs of others.		✓
13.	Teaching and learning engages students in reflecting on how, what, and why they are learning.		✓
14.	Teaching and learning fosters a stimulating learning environment based on understanding and respect.		✓

15.	Teaching and learning encourages students to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.		✓
16.	Teaching and learning develops the IB learner profile attributes.		✓

Note: "Teaching and learning" is used as a single concept as the two processes are interdependent.

Standard C4: Assessment

Assessment at the school reflects IB assessment philosophy.

Practice		A school must show the following to become an IB World School offering the Diploma Programme	
		In place	Planning is in progress
1.	Assessment at the school aligns with the requirements of the programme(s).	✓(2)	
a.	Assessment of student learning is based on the objectives and assessment criteria specific to each subject.	✓(2)	
2.	The school communicates its assessment philosophy, policy and procedures to the school community.		✓
3.	The school uses a range of strategies and tools to assess student learning.		✓
4.	The school provides students with feedback to inform and improve their learning.		✓
5.	The school has systems for recording student progress aligned with the assessment philosophy of the programme(s).		✓
6.	The school has systems for reporting student progress, aligned with the assessment philosophy of the programme(s).		✓
7.	The school analyses assessment data to inform teaching and learning.		
8.	The school provides opportunities for students to participate in, and reflect on, the assessment of their work.		✓
9.	The school has systems in place to ensure that all students can demonstrate a consolidation of their learning through the completion of the Primary Years Programme exhibition, the Middle Years Programme personal project and the Diploma Programme extended essay, depending on the programme(s) offered.	✓	

2. At the time of authorization this practice will be evidenced in the course outlines.

Appendix: The verification visit

Once a candidate school has successfully submitted the *Application for authorization: Diploma Programme* and its supporting documents, an IB visiting team will conduct a visit to the school.

Aims of the visit

The visit will verify the school's claim that it has taken all the necessary actions and is prepared to become an IB World School. For this purpose, the visiting team will:

- gather evidence showing that the school has met all the requirements for authorization
- identify practices that are beyond the requirements and those whose further development will contribute to the effective implementation of the programme.

The aim of the visit is not to appraise or assess individual teachers or school administrators.

Description of the visit

When and how long?

Following the acceptance of the completed *Application for authorization: Diploma Programme* and supporting documents by the relevant IB office, the IB will arrange with the school the school visit. Each visit normally lasts two days, but the IB may decide on a greater length depending on the size of the school.

Who is involved?

The IB visiting team

Composition

The IB visiting team normally comprises two to three experienced IB educators who have been duly trained according to global IB policies to become site visitors. The IB may decide on a higher number according to the size of the school. The team is selected by the appropriate IB office.

Staff from the school being visited cannot be members of the visiting team. Normally, members of the team may not visit schools where they have recently taught or with which they otherwise have, or have had, a close relationship. If it presents a potential conflict of interest, team members should not visit a school in close proximity to their own.

Responsibilities of the visiting team

Members of the visiting team are aware of the aims of the visit and should follow specific procedures for conducting the visit. They have read the documents related to the school they visit.

The school community

The visiting team will have meetings with different members of the school community (members of the governing body, leadership team, IB coordinator, IB teachers, students and parents), will visit the school facilities and will observe classes.

How is it organized?

School's responsibilities

- Defining an agenda with the IB.
- Funding the visit, according to IB procedures established for this purpose.
- Providing the IB with information about nearby hotels to book for site visitors or making hotel reservations, if applicable.
- Providing transportation for site visitors from and to the airport and from and to the school, if applicable.
- Making available, in the school, a room for the use of the team throughout the visit where all necessary documentation required by the team will be available. As meetings will normally take place in the allocated room, it is the school's responsibility to see that it is quiet and conducive to private conversations.
- Providing meals during the school day.
- Providing the assistance of an external translator if meetings need to be conducted in a language other than the IB working language identified by the school as its language of communication with the IB (English, French or Spanish).

IB's responsibilities

- Providing the school with dates for the visit, with enough time for the school to organize it.
- Appointing the members of the visiting team, whose names will be informed to the school in a timely manner.
- Approving the final agenda, after consultation with the school. This will normally be carried out by the leader of the visiting team.

The agenda for the visit

The visiting team leader decides which visiting team members and representatives of the school should attend which meetings.

The agenda will be drafted to ensure that the different stakeholders will be able to attend at specific times. Decisions about school staff attending meetings outside normal school hours are left to the school: the IB cannot insist that the staff attend.

Any visits to classes will be carried out with the consent of the teacher(s) concerned.

Agenda items

The agenda for the visit will normally include the following items:

- Formal interviews with the school administration, governors/board members (if applicable), the IB programme coordinator, the school pedagogical leadership team, teachers, librarians, groups of students, parents and others who will be involved in the programme. These interviews will be individual and in groups, as decided by the visiting team leader, and will adhere to the local legal framework.
- Informal dialogues with teachers, students, administrators and other staff members who will be involved in the programme.
- Observation of classes, if applicable.
- Tour of school facilities emphasizing the areas that will support the implementation of the programme (library, laboratories, and so on).

Details of the agenda are determined and confirmed before the visit. The precise agenda will depend on factors such as the size of the school and the information provided by the school prior to the visit. Sample agendas are available electronically.

The visiting team leader may revise the agenda slightly on site if the need arises and if the school is able to accommodate the request.

Exit interview

At the end of the visit, the visiting team will conduct an exit interview with members of the school administration. Based on the visit and school documentation submitted for the authorization process, the team will orally communicate the observations made during the visit. The team will take this opportunity to check their facts and to ensure that the subsequent report that they have to write and submit to the relevant IB office accurately depicts the findings.

At this time the visiting team will not provide the school with a response regarding its prospects for authorization, as the visit is but one part of a larger process, the outcome of which will be notified to the school by the IB.

The visiting team will continue discussions among themselves after the visit, and adjustments to their oral report may be made. The visiting team will then complete a written report to be submitted to the relevant IB office.