

STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

"I learnt time management skills and how to prioritise my workload, as well as other key competencies, which obviously help me at university, but will help me in the world of work too."

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Martina Ghinetti completed the IB Diploma Programme (DP) at Impington Village College. She is currently reading Law at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.

Why did you originally decide to pursue the IB Diploma Programme?

I am originally from Italy and, rather unconventionally, moved to the UK without my parents to pursue my sixth form studies. I stayed with a host family in Cambridge and attended Impington Village College, an IB World School.

I knew I would want to go to university abroad and to be able to travel using my degree, and didn't feel confident that Italian universities provided many opportunities for undergraduates in terms of professional development. For the same reason, upon moving to the UK, I decided to follow an IB education rather than A Levels because unlike IB, I had never heard of A Levels so I didn't think they would be internationally recognised.

As an IB student, how did you shape your Diploma Programme studies to your interests?

The breadth of subjects within the DP gave me opportunities to discover my academic passions, especially because I didn't have to focus and restrict my future opportunities at just 16. I studied seven subjects including Italian, English literature, science, maths, geography, economics and human rights. I think that having such a huge variety of subjects to study up to the age of 18 meant that I had experienced a wider range of courses when I applied to university.

I am now studying law at SOAS University of London. When I first joined Impington Village College I wanted to go on to study politics, but while I was studying the DP I realised that I wanted to make a real difference and help people (and so chose law). I think this development stemmed from the 10 attributes, including being principled, caring, open-minded, that IB programmes nurture in students through the IB Learner Profile.

Did the extended essay, TOK, or CAS prepare you for university? Are there skills you developed that you still use today?

My favourite element of the DP was the Creativity, Action and Service (CAS) project; a compulsory part of the programme. For my project, I created a Model UN Club for my sixth form. I found CAS extremely rewarding; helping others makes me happy and community service isn't something you would normally find as a compulsory element of your school years. I now volunteer as a GCSE Maths teacher with a local school.

The Extended Essay, another compulsory module of the DP, was incredibly hard work. However, with hindsight, it has prepared me for university in ways that I didn't realise at the time. I had to research, analyse, and write a 4,000 word essay on a topic of my choice – I decided to write about a topic which is personal to me; political corruption in Italy in 1994. The in-depth research I carried out has helped so much at university, especially studying law!

Even though IB programmes are intense, the DP in particular prepares you so well for higher education. The majority of the people on my degree course studied three A Levels and now struggle with the amount of work - especially the level of independent study - that is expected. As I had so many on-going projects throughout my IB studies I learnt time management skills and how to prioritise my workload, as well as other key competencies, which obviously help me at university, but will help me in the world of work too.

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