



Key findings from research on the impact of IB programmes in the Africa, Europe, Middle East (AEM) region

International Baccalaureate (IB) Research collaborates with universities and research institutions around the world to produce rigorous studies examining the impact and outcomes of the IB's programmes—the Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP), Diploma Programme (DP) and Career-related Programme (CP). This resource provides an overview of key findings from recent studies from the AEM region that were commissioned by IB Research or conducted by external research institutions.

A study across five countries (**including Russia, the United Kingdom (UK) and Kenya**) explored student, teacher and parent experiences with the **PYP exhibition**—the culminating project of the PYP. Study participants found the exhibition to be a pivotal experience that helped students to develop critical thinking skills, international-mindedness and learner profile attributes. Additionally, parents valued the exhibition for fostering “real world” skills, such as independent inquiry and reflectiveness (Medwell *et al* 2017).

In **Spain**, researchers investigated the **impact and implementation of the MYP** in eight private schools, including examining the **integration** of the MYP and the local curriculum. Implementing the MYP alongside the local curriculum offered students and schools a number of benefits, particularly introducing concept-based learning, the learner profile and a more comprehensive assessment system. School heads and coordinators also believed the MYP helped to develop students' critical thinking, communication and research skills, and fostered positive shifts in teaching and learning (Valle *et al* 2017).

A study by ACS International Schools surveyed the perceptions of **UK university admissions officers** of A level and DP students' **preparation for university studies**. Overall, the DP was considered the best educational qualification for providing students with the necessary skills to succeed at university. Admissions officers believed the DP was particularly helpful in “encouraging a global outlook” and “nurturing an open mind” (Figure 1) (ACS International Schools 2017).

To explore the **alignment of the DP and Sweden's upper secondary curriculum (Högskoleförberedande examen)**, researchers conducted a curriculum comparison of select subjects, and also examined the underpinning philosophies and approaches of both systems. The study found clear and substantial similarities between the DP and the Högskoleförberedande examen in terms of their philosophies

Figure 1: How well do you think each of these exam systems develop the following qualities in students at present?

Encouraging independent inquiry

A levels	49%
IB Diploma Programme	94%

Nurturing an open mind

A levels	24 %
IB Diploma Programme	93 %

Developing self-management skills

A levels	47 %
IB Diploma Programme	91 %

Encouraging a global outlook

A levels	7 %
IB Diploma Programme	97 %

Source: Figure based on University Admissions Officer Report 2017, ACS International Schools.

and recommended learning approaches. While some differences in subject content were noted, the DP covers a significant proportion of the Swedish content and also includes additional valuable content. The study indicates that IB World Schools in Sweden are well equipped to deliver the DP in a way that is compatible with the Swedish system (UK NARIC 2018).

Researchers in **Turkey** investigated the **university outcomes** of DP graduates and their non-IB peers at Turkish universities. Compared to non-IB students, DP graduates generally had higher subject grades (in all subject areas examined), overall grade point averages (GPA) and graduation rates. DP alumni



also reported feeling well-prepared for university studies, particularly with regard to English language skills and academic skills, such as writing and managing independent work (Ateşkan *et al* 2015).

A large-scale study that took place across two regions—Asia-Pacific and **Africa, Europe, Middle East**—explored the **impact of creativity, activity, service (CAS)** on DP students and schools. Coordinators, students, and alumni believed that CAS helps students to become better at “taking on new challenges”, “learning to persevere”, and “developing better interpersonal skills”. Students also generally believed that CAS would have a positive impact on them post-DP in terms of preparing them for future life or studies (Figure 2) (Hayden *et al* 2017).

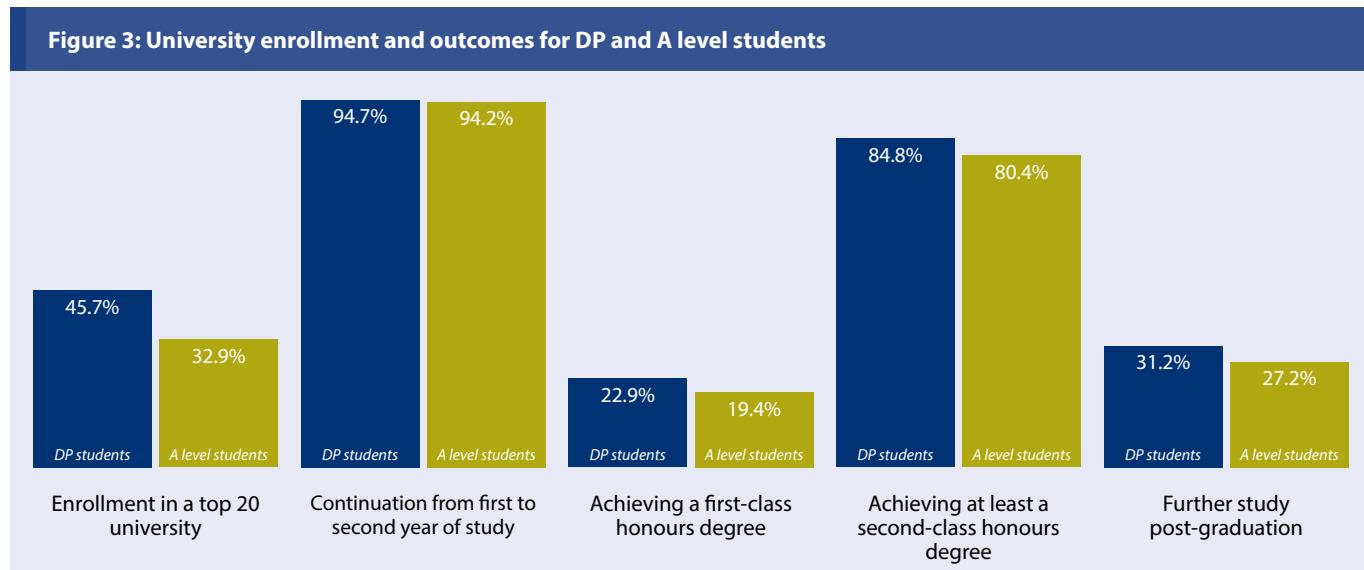
A study in five **Eastern and Central European countries** explored components of the DP that support **academic persistence**. Analysis indicated that the DP fosters students’ academic persistence to a higher degree than does the traditional education system. Fostering academic persistence has other benefits as well—in this study, IB students had higher academic achievement and were less likely to drop out of high school compared to similar non-IB students in Romania (Holman *et al* 2016).

Figure 2: “I believe CAS is helpful in ...” according to students

Preparing me for future life	Preparing me for university
Disagree 19.3%	Disagree 26.6%
Agree 80.7%	Agree 73.4%

To examine the higher education outcomes of students in the **UK**, researchers explored the **university enrollment and achievement** of statistically matched groups of DP and A level students¹. The study revealed that enrollment in the DP significantly increased a student’s likelihood of attending a top 20 university in the UK (by 57%). Additionally, compared to their A level peers, DP students were significantly more likely to receive a first- or second-class honours degree and to enroll in further education after completing university (HESA 2016).

Figure 3: University enrollment and outcomes for DP and A level students



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1. This study used propensity score matching to compare DP students with similar non-DP students. This statistical technique allows the researchers to better isolate and identify the impacts of the DP specifically, as the two groups are similar otherwise.