

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

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Global Research Department collaborates with universities and independent research organizations worldwide to produce rigorous studies examining the impact and outcomes of the IB's four programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the Diploma Programme (DP) and the Career-related Certificate (IBCC). Areas of inquiry for the IB Research Department include, but are not limited to: standards alignment, programme implementation, the learner profile and student performance. In addition, many researchers—completely independently of the IB—produce quality studies on the effects of IB programmes.

The findings below come from a sampling of both independent and IB-commissioned journal articles and research reports.

In the **UK**, **DP** students are more likely than A level students to enroll at a top 20 Higher Education Institution (HEI), achieve first class honours in most subject areas, report better tertiary continuation rates, go on to further study after leaving their HEI (and study for a higher degree), and be employed in graduate level jobs and in higher paid occupations. (Higher Education Statistics Agency 2011)

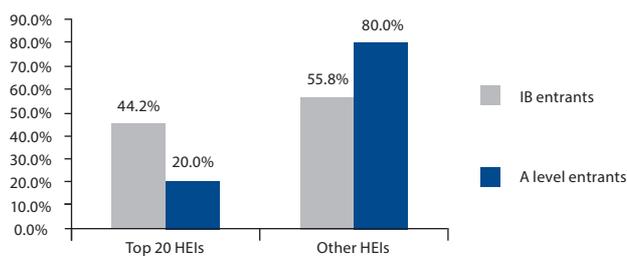


Figure 1: Full-time first degree entrants in the UK by type of qualification held and type of HEI, 2008/09. Sample includes 423,455 full-time entrants across 165 HEIs. Of these, 6,390 (1.5%) held IB qualifications and 67.5% held A levels or equivalent.

In Ofqual's (2012) report comparing the **UK's** A levels to 19 other curriculums/examinations, the **DP** material was highly regarded in a number of areas. **Higher level (HL) mathematics** exam questions were cited as being well written and constructed, and allowing excellent differentiation of students. The extended, unstructured nature of many questions, high technical level of content and the time demand of the papers were seen as key contributors to the level of rigor. Of all **English** qualifications examined, AQA A level and the DP stood out for maintaining a good balance between core and optional elements, encouraging independent thinking and research skills, the range of topics offered, and the combination of breadth and depth. The IB's requirements for intercultural awareness and close analysis of unseen texts were also commended. The DP **history** assessments were commended for allowing students to demonstrate higher-order skills developed through the course, while using language accessible to both lower- and higher-attaining students, providing an excellent opportunity for students to answer with varying levels of sophistication.

The Institute of Education at the University of London conducted a study of the **UK** university degree performance of DP students compared with A level students. The report compared **DP** students with A level students who have similar observed characteristics and follow the same subject at the same university. The report found that DP students with scores in the low 30s perform similarly to A level students; however, DP students having an average of 37 points or more are 5.4 percentage points more likely to achieve an upper second class degree or better. They recommend that higher-ranking universities can reduce the grade of DP required for entry, especially for DP students from state schools. (Green and Vignogles 2011)

In a policy analysis of the **Dutch** government's **DP** pilot project, Prickarts concludes that, despite some issues, the DP in public schools "creates more 'equitable' access opportunities for middle class children". (Prickarts 2010: 240)

An independent study was conducted to examine the relationships between students' prior attainment in the **DP** and results achieved in University of Cambridge, **UK**, examinations. In the sciences, "overall scores of 39 or more give a better-than-average likelihood of a II.1 or a First [the two highest possible class examination results], this likelihood increasing noticeably for scores above 42." (Parks 2011: 3)

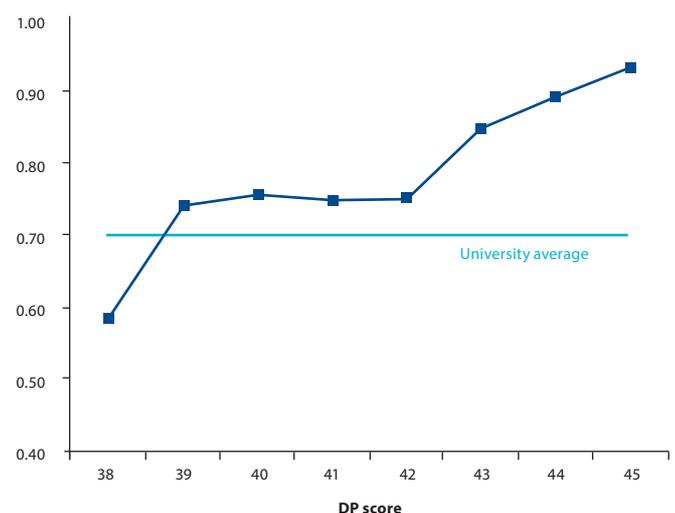


Figure 2: The observed likelihood of a DP student obtaining an upper second or first class degree in Cambridge University science courses as a function of their overall DP score. The horizontal light blue line indicates the university-wide average likelihood. N=568 admitted from 2005 to 2009.

A survey of 154 educators involved with the delivery of the **DP** in 11 private national schools in **Turkey** indicates that staff in these schools generally value the DP and recognize its value for their students. Results include: 69% *agree* or *strongly agree* that the DP fits with their school's aims, suggesting a match of need and provision; 75% *agree* or *strongly agree* that IB students receive an international education (Dual nationals and Turks agree most strongly); however, only 46% had had some form of IB training. Recommendations include: more effective inter-school communication and sharing; encouraging use of the online curriculum centre; better attendance and utilization of the annual national IB Day; and investigating the inconsistency of cultural understanding on certain critical topics. (Halıcıoğlu 2008)

For six years ACS International Schools have surveyed the attitudes of university admissions officers in the **UK**. The 2011 survey also included the US and **14 European nations** for a total of 112 university admissions officers. Results indicate that the majority of the sample from every region of the UK, the US and Europe generally value the IB **diploma** more than other qualifications and scored it more highly against a range of nine attributes from self-management to creativity. (ACSIS 2011)

Europe main exam system, predominantly school diploma  
1 = Do not value ... 5 = Value very highly

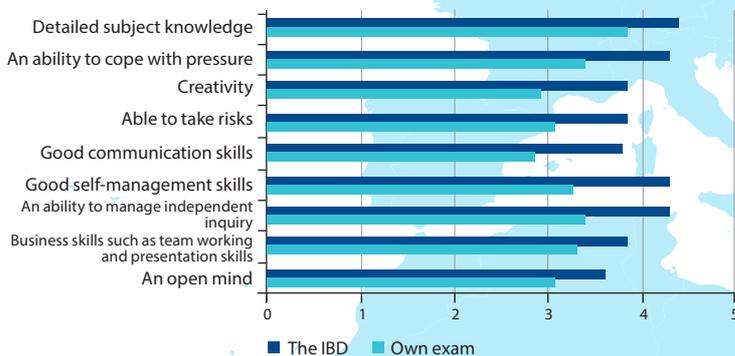


Figure 3: Comparison of 31 European university admissions officers' ratings on "How strong an element would you say each of the following is, comparing the main exam system in your country with the IB diploma?".

This information sheet aims to provide a brief sampling of findings produced through recent independent studies as well as research conducted or commissioned by the IB. It does not attempt to represent all research on the IB available in the field. As with all research, findings must be placed within the particular contexts in which the studies took place. Nonetheless, it can be gathered from this document that the majority of research on the impact of IB programmes in the region focuses heavily on the DP and is concentrated in a relatively small number of countries (most notably the UK). This highlights the need for further research of all the programmes in diverse contexts.

In the analysis of **PYP** and **MYP** student performance on the International Schools' Assessment (ISA), in the regions of **Europe** and the Americas, the IB cohort outperformed the non-IB cohort in all four ISA assessment domains with a relatively large margin (effect sizes ranging from 0.12 to 0.75), and IB student performance was equal to or better than that of non-IB students in all four ISA assessment domains at all grade levels with only one exception. In **Africa**, 75% of comparison groups showed IB students significantly outperformed non-IB students in all four assessed domains (effect sizes ranging from 0.16 to 0.60), and IB student performance was as good as or better than that of non-IB students in all instances. Among the top-performing IB schools in the global study, 62% were from Europe or Africa, despite only 43% of the sample being from those regions. (Tan and Bibby 2012)

A case study of an international school in **Europe** identified personal, professional and environmental factors that teachers indicated contribute to success in "embracing and adopting inquiry-based teaching in the **PYP**" (p 48). Important personal factors: valuing children's contribution to the inquiry process (providing clear structure/framework necessary), embracing the idea that "we are all learners", belief of self-efficacy, open-mindedness, flexibility and positive attitude. Professional factors: training and professional development (PD). Environmental factors: encouragement of reflection and discussion, time and flexibility for planning, PD opportunities, support of whole school community (including parents), facilitation of administrator/coordinator. (Veikoso Twigg 2010)

In a study of teachers' views of the **PYP** in **Turkey**, 14 pre-school teachers at 4 schools were asked in semi-structured interviews about the strengths and weaknesses of the programme and their views regarding implementation and improvement. Respondents stated that the biggest strengths of the programme are: children are educated as world citizens with international awareness; the programme is research and inquiry based and child-focused; measurement and assessment studies are used purposefully; teachers have flexibility in practice; and the programme allows individuals to use their creativity. (Güler and Yaltirik 2011)

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