

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the educational advantages of earning the IB Diploma?

- Colleges and universities around the world recognize the IB Diploma not only for its high quality of education, but also because IB students have proven to be very successful in college.
- Possibility of entering college with advanced standing (college credits).
- Challenging and exciting classes focusing on writing, critical thinking, communication and ethics.
- Rigorous and comprehensive education based on a global perspective.
- High Standards of teaching required by the International Baccalaureate Organization.
- Students learn time management.
- Students are challenged to study and develop in a broad spectrum of areas, not just to become strong in one academic subject.

2. What type of student becomes an IB student?

The IB Program is designed for the academically able student who is eager to learn, and who can learn efficient time management skills to balance both academic and social activities.

3. Is the IB Program a four-year program?

The Diploma program is a program for 11th and 12th graders, and the Pre-Diploma program is a 9th and 10th grade program to prepare students for the Diploma program.

4. Is it true that IB students do not have a “life”, that all they do is study?

No, that is a myth. Typically IB diploma students are involved in several clubs and organizations, both school related and outside of school. Sometimes the homework load is heavy and sometimes not so heavy. Time management and consistent study habits are necessary for any rigorous curriculum. Learning these skills before going to college is a valuable asset.

5. Can a student take an IB course without enrolling in the IB program?

No, only students enrolled in the IB program can take IB courses.

6. Can a student transfer into the IB Diploma program and skip the Pre-Diploma program?

The Pre-Diploma curriculum is set up to offer students the prerequisite courses needed to enter the IB Diploma program. 11th grade students who wish to transfer are unlikely to have the required prerequisite courses, and therefore, it is improbable these students will qualify for the program. However, transfers from other IB programs will be accepted. Interested students are encouraged to transfer to Columbia High School for the 9th grade year.

7. Can IB students participate in extracurricular activities?

Yes, IB students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities. For example, in the 11th and 12th grades students can accrue Creativity, Action and Service (CAS) hours while playing football, track, basketball, volleyball, tennis, soccer, and swim team, CAS is one of the core requirements and students are encouraged to engage in social and civic activities. Students are engaged in new activities to broaden their thinking and experiences.

8. How much college credit will an IB Diploma student receive?

International Baccalaureate Organization does not make any claim regarding college credit for IB students. Individual colleges and universities determine the amount of credit based on exam scores on a subject-by-subject basis. On many college web sites, the “IB College Credit Guide” gives information regarding that college’s policy for IB credit. Some colleges offer 30 semester hours of credit and sophomore standing for the IB diploma.

9. What if a student finishes the program but falls short of the overall score requirement to earn the IB Diploma?

The student will still be eligible to receive a diploma from Columbia High School that meets all the requirements of Huntsville City Schools and the Alabama Department of Education. In IB courses where the student scored a 4 or better an IB certificate will be given.

10. What is the IB grading scale and how is it different from the AP grading scale?

With the exception of the IB Theory of Knowledge class, IB grades are given on a scale of 1-7 with 4 as the passing grade. The AP scale is 1-5, with 3 as a passing grade.

11. Please explain Standard Level and Higher Level.

The IB Standard Level (SL) courses must have 150 hours of instruction (at least one year) and Higher Level (HL) must have at least 240 hours of instruction (two years). To be eligible for the IB diploma a student must take three HL subjects.

12. What are External Assessments?

Examinations that are given on site and then mailed to trained graders around the world. These exams include for example: case-study questions, text-response questions, data-response questions, structured problems, and essays. There are other works supervised by teachers and completed by the students over an extended period of time which are also graded externally. For example, both the Theory of Knowledge and Extended Essay are in this category.

13. What are Internal Assessments?

The teacher assessment uses IB criteria. These assignments can include oral work in languages; laboratory work in the sciences; investigations in mathematics; and artistic performances. The Internal Assessment is part of the student’s total IB score, but percentage varies from course to course.

14. Are IB scores weighted?

Yes.

15. How many IB examinations must a student take to be eligible for the IB diploma and what scores are required?

Six examinations are required. In addition, each student must pass the Theory of Knowledge class, write an Extended Essay regarding original research, and complete 150 hours of Creativity, Action, and Service (CAS). In order to earn the IB Diploma a student must earn a **minimum of 24 out of 45 points** and meet all the additional criteria listed below.

- *A student must not be guilty of malpractice.*
- No course grade of 1 in any subject.
- No more than three grades of 3 or below.

The remaining criterion depends on the total number of points a student earns:

	24 to 27 Points	28 Points or more
Total HL Points	At Least 12	At Least 11
Grade of 2 at HL Allowed?	None	No more than 1
Total SL Points	At Least 9	At Least 8
Grade of 2 at SL Allowed?	No more than 1	No more than 2