

## The IB Diploma at St. George's School in Switzerland

### What is the IB Diploma?

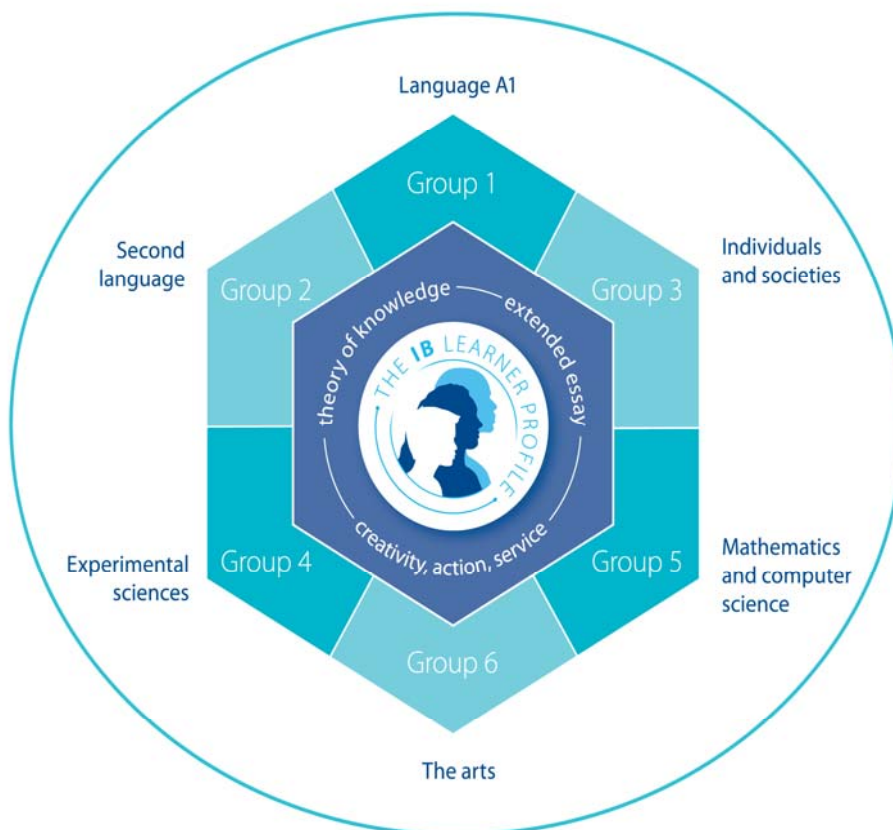
The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme is a demanding two-year curriculum aimed at students aged 16 to 19. It leads to final examinations and a qualification that is welcomed by leading universities around the world.

### What is unique about the IB Diploma ?

The aim of the Diploma is for students to prove where their strengths lie academically and personally. The Programme prepares students for university and encourages them to:

- ask challenging questions
- learn how to learn
- develop a strong sense of their own identity and culture
- develop the ability to communicate with and understand people from other countries and cultures

The IB hexagon, below, is used by the IB to illustrate the structure of the programme.



### IB Diploma students are encouraged to be:

<b>Inquirers</b>	<b>Knowledgeable</b>	<b>Thinkers</b>
<b>Communicators</b>	<b>Principled</b>	<b>Open-minded</b>
<b>Caring</b>	<b>Risk-takers</b>	<b>Balanced</b>
		<b>Reflective</b>

## The Core

- Theory of Knowledge (ToK)
- Creativity, Action, Service (CAS)
- Extended Essay

All students must follow programmes in ToK and CAS and complete tasks related to these. In addition students select a topic to complete an individual piece of research for their Extended Essay. No student can complete their Diploma without achieving a certain level in these areas.

**Extended Essay** The extended essay has a prescribed limit of 4,000 words. It offers the opportunity to investigate a topic of individual interest, and acquaints students with the independent research and writing skills expected at university.

**ToK** The interdisciplinary TOK course is designed to provide coherence by exploring the nature of knowledge across disciplines, encouraging an appreciation of other cultural perspectives.

**CAS** Participation in the school's CAS programme encourages students to be involved in artistic pursuits, sports and community service work, thus fostering students' awareness and appreciation of life outside the academic arena.

## Academic Programmes

St. George's language of instruction is English. The IB Diploma programme is therefore taught in English.

The curriculum contains six subject groups, as shown on the diagram above.

Students study **3 subjects at Higher Level** (5 periods per week) and **3 at Standard Level** (3 periods per week). By arranging work in this fashion, students are able to explore some subjects in depth and some more broadly over the two-year period.

### **Groups 1 & 2: Languages**

Students must study at least two languages

*Group 1 is Language A1.*

Language A1 is a literature course. Students normally take this subject in their best language, both spoken and written (not necessarily their 'mother tongue'). In most cases, the A1 language corresponds to the student's previous language of instruction.

*Group 2 is Second Language.*

Every student needs to choose a second language in addition to Language A1.

The main emphasis of these modern language courses is on language acquisition and usage.

## IBDP at St George's School in Switzerland

Three different levels are offered in Group 2 second language courses:

ab initio	learning courses for beginners with no previous experience of the language. Ab initio is offered at Standard Level only.
language B	a foreign language course for students with some previous experience. It is not primarily a literature course, although literature is studied as a means of understanding complex use of the language. The emphasis is on communicative skills in speech and writing, and understanding the culture of the language.
language A2	a course for bilingual students or those with a high level of competence in the language. There is more emphasis on literature and native language skills than in the Language B course.

### **Group 3: Individuals and Society**

St George's offers three subjects in this group, sometimes referred to as the Humanities, all taught at either Higher or Standard Level. These are:

- Economics
- Geography
- History
- Information Technology in a Global Society

Students learn to analyse concepts and theories and use quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, presentation and analysis.

Students complete Internal Assessment tasks in these subjects, usually research or fieldwork based, before completing their final exams in Year 13.

### **Group 4: Experimental sciences**

St George's offers three subjects in this group as well. Again all are taught at either Higher or Standard Level. These are:

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics

Students become familiar with the body of knowledge, methods and techniques that characterise science and technology.

Students follow an intense programme of practical work as well as completing a project common to all students.

### **Group 5: Mathematics**

All IBDP students follow a course in Mathematics. At St George's we currently offer Maths to Higher and Standard Level as well as Maths Studies at Standard Level.

Maths at HL is a very intense and stretching course intended for those wishing to follow degree courses that will require its use. Maths SL is similarly acceptable for certain courses and institutions. Maths Studies is a demanding course but is more accessible to the majority of students. All these courses allow students to develop logical and creative thinking and use abstraction and generalisation to reach conclusions.

### **Group 6: Art (or elective subject)**

Students can either follow courses in Visual Arts or Music at St George's (numbers permitting). These courses are focused on the student's ability to create art, whatever its form. Students learn how to express themselves artistically and therefore produce or perform works of art.

Alternatively students may follow a second subject chosen from Groups 2 – 4, depending on the school's current timetable.

### **What do students need to get their IB Diploma? How are they assessed?**

The IB Diploma is NOT automatically granted through an accumulation of credits, but rather through formal assessment. This assessment is based primarily on external examinations taken in all subjects in May of Year 13. However, all courses include at least 20% internal assessment.

Each subject is graded on a scale of 1 (minimum) to 7 (maximum). In order to earn the Diploma, the student must meet defined standards and conditions including a minimum total of 24 points and the satisfactory completion of the three core diploma requirements outlined above, ToK (Theory of Knowledge), CAS (Creativity, Action, Service) and the Extended Essay.

The minimum score of 24 is based on the notion that a grade 4 represents a passing level in each of the six subjects. Excellent performance in the six subject areas results in a grade 7 for each, or a total of 42 points.

ToK (Theory of Knowledge) and the Extended Essay combine to contribute a possible 3 additional points to the overall score, giving a maximum diploma score of 45 points.