



Global Horizons

A report from **ACS International Schools**

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Global Horizons

The views of university admissions officers from the US, UK and Europe.

This is the sixth year of the ACS International Schools survey of university admissions officers. It compares the views and opinions from the US and UK of these university 'gatekeepers' on post 16 qualifications and university access, and for the first time this year also gathers the views from European university admissions officers.

It comes at a time which feels to many as a "watershed" moment.

In the US political and economic tensions are increasing as presidential election campaigning heats up; in England university tuition fees are about to rise to a new record level of £9,000 per annum, prompting many students to consider studying at university overseas. In the EU unprecedented economic pressures may peak within days of this report being published.

Young adults and their parents have a need at these times of change for information to help guide their choices and decisions. What are the best exams to study to help secure a university place? What do universities in different parts of the world look for in their students? Educationalists too may want to know more about what qualities university admissions officers across the world value, as they develop the education programmes in their own countries.

As an independent international school with three campuses in the UK and a recently opened fourth school in Doha, Qatar, ACS is not subject to the same changes in UK education policies which can affect others. This gives us an ideal place from which to conduct our research, and to ask questions about the value of different education systems and approaches on offer across the world.

The IB Diploma has shown itself through this independent enquiry to be more highly valued than the pre university education programmes in the US, UK and many European countries, a remarkable result.

Parents, students and educationalists rightly ask what it is that makes the IB so different and highly prized, and could it be the right choice for them?

This report answers these questions, and in doing so also throws some light on the differences between university expectations and possible experiences in the UK, US and Europe.

Fergus Rose

Head of Marketing and Admissions,

ACS International Schools

Summary

- 79 per cent of admissions officers in the UK and 85 per cent from the US have seen an increase in student applicant numbers this year.
- While 80 per cent of American admissions officers expect to see the same pattern of increases next year, only 24 per cent of British admissions officers expect to see the same trend next year.
- On average 6.8 per cent of applicants to US universities have the IB Diploma.
- The IB Diploma is increasingly popular as an exam qualification, and especially in America. 65 per cent of admissions officers from the US have seen an increase in the number of applicants with the IB Diploma in the past year. This compares to 52 per cent in Europe and 36 per cent in the UK.
- US admissions officers are concerned about grade inflation where 75 per cent feel it is creating students less prepared for university style learning.
- The IB is scored more highly than the local pre university exam programmes by the majority of our sample from every region of the UK, US and Europe against a range of nine attributes from self management to creativity.
- Only the British A level exam system is scored more highly than the IB against any factor, for detailed subject knowledge.
- Although the 4,000 word Extended Essay which all IB Diploma students must study is very similar in style to a university dissertation, only 18 per cent of UK admissions officers prefer to know the title or subject when reviewing an application from an IB Diploma candidate.
- The IB is designed to develop global citizenship and a positive attitude towards life-long learning. Outside of the qualities developed by specific exam systems, admissions officers from the US feel that China produces students with the most positive attitude towards learning.
- 74 per cent of admissions officers from Britain believe that the key to academic success at university is an ability to manage independent inquiry. Respondents from all regions agree this is key to university success although US and European admissions officers rank it less highly at 50 and 48 per cent respectively.
- 45 per cent of admissions officers from the US believe that possessing an open mind is key to university academic success, giving a much higher emphasis on this quality than their colleagues in the UK and Europe, scored at 23 and 29 per cent.

1. Do you have more students to select from this year compared to last year?

	UK	US
	%	%
Yes	79	85
No	15	15

Admissions officers in both the US and the UK feel they have more students to select from this year. In both regions more than three quarters of our sample feel they have more students to select from this year, compared to last year.

This question was asked in 2010 just of British university admissions officers and shows that for the UK the figure is down year on year. Last year 95 percent of admissions officers in British universities said they had a larger pool of students from which to select. From this exceptionally high figure, and given the changing economic position and tuition fee situation in the UK, we were likely to see a decrease from 2010's high figure, and this has been the case.

2. Do you expect this trend (i.e. more students to select from) to be the same next year?

	UK	US
	%	%
Yes	24	80
No	44	15
DK	30	5

Looking ahead to 2011, while a quarter, 24 per cent, of UK admissions officers feel they will have more students to select from next year, this is significantly different to the view of American admissions officers where 80 per cent are expecting to have more students to select from for their university.

British admissions officers are far more pessimistic than their American counterparts about their universities' prospects for the next year; 44 percent of British admissions officers are not expecting to have so many students to select from next year.

Tuition fee changes in the UK must be playing a part in the results as we can see clearly in the table above.

3. What percentage of all applicants to your university last year would you say had the IB Diploma? [US question only]

Percentage applicants with the IBD	US
	%
20 – 11 per cent	15
10 – 6 per cent	10
5 – 2 percent	35
1 percent or less	20
D/K	20
Total	100
Average	6.8

On average almost seven per cent of applicants to US universities from our sample have the IB Diploma.

The latest figures from the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) show that 751 schools offer the IB Diploma in the US, which would be around two per cent of all the private and state high schools in the country.

The relatively high proportion of intake to American universities with the IB Diploma, compared to the proportion of high schools offering the qualification, would suggest that either IBD students are especially likely to go on to higher education, or that the IBD qualified candidates are applying to study at university in the US from elsewhere in the world.

At this stage we are unable to identify exactly which country these IB Diploma students are applying from, but having identified the trend in the US for the first time this year, it is a subject we may investigate in future years.

There is related information from the UK about IB Diploma candidates applying to and completing university in the UK. This information demonstrated that IB Diploma students are more likely to complete their degree than students who have other qualifications, and also that they are more likely to achieve the highest degree result, a 1st class honours, usually considered equivalent to a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.8 or higher. This information, derived from the UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and the IBO, is reproduced in Appendix Two.

4. Have you noticed an increase in the number of applications from students offering the International Baccalaureate Diploma qualification this year?

	UK	US	Europe
	%	%	%
Yes	36	65	52
No	49	35	35
d/k	15	-	13
Total	100	100	100

In the three regions of the UK, US and Europe, the IB Diploma continues to grow in popularity, with the university admissions officers of each region reporting an increase in students who are presenting this qualification. Growth is most marked in the US, where 65 percent of admissions officers have noticed an increase in the number of IB Diploma students this year.

We asked respondents to describe how they valued the different component parts of the IB Diploma programme, as shown in the table below.

5. Thinking about the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme, to be awarded a Diploma, the student has to complete seven different elements or activities.

How highly do you value each of these different elements, in terms of developing the qualities that universities are looking for?

Mean score out of 5: 1 = do not value 5 = value very highly	UK	US	Europe	Total scores
	n.	n.	n.	n.
Studying three subjects at a higher level	4.5	4.5	4.8	13.8
Continuing to study maths, English and a science	4.1	4.6	4.3	13.0
Continuing to study a second language	3.4	3.9	4.5	11.8
The Theory of Knowledge or "TOK" essay	3.6	4.0	3.3	10.9
Studying three subjects at a standard level	3.7	3.4	3.8	10.9
Extended Essay of 4,000 words	3.9	3.4	3.5	10.8
Creativity, action, service participation	3.2	3.1	3.0	9.3

All seven elements of the IB Diploma are given an above average score. The breadth of study it requires, whether studying three subjects at higher level, continuing to study maths, English and science, and the requirement for a second language, are its most highly valued elements in each region.

One specific element of the IB Diploma is the Extended Essay, described below. We explored how it is used as part of the application process among our sample of British university admissions officers. The Extended Essay must be written independently by the student, and because it always involves reviewing and presenting a range of information, and often involves testing a hypothesis, is considered very similar to a university dissertation.

6. The 4,000 word extended essay has to be a written about a subject the student chooses themselves, approved by the school. When reviewing an application from a candidate with the IB Diploma, which if any of the following most closely represents your approach?

UK university only	UK
	%
Prefer to know the title or subject of the extended essay	18
Prefer to know the score awarded for the extended essay	13
Have no preference either way relating to the extended essay	61
We don't take account of the extended essay	5
Don't know	3
Total	100

Despite the similarity of the Extended Essay to the university dissertation concept, and the importance of the experience of writing it to the IB student, just 18 per cent of university admissions officers prefer to know the title or subject of the essay. Well over half of all admissions officers in the UK, 61 per cent, do not seem to have a policy or preference concerning the extended essay and a minority of five per cent take no account of it at all.

In the US, unlike the UK, admissions officers can draw on a range of externally available information to assess candidates in addition to the students' main academic qualification or performance. We asked our American sample about their use of the other assessment tools available to them.

7. Which, if any, of the following does your university require to evaluate student applications?

US university only	US
	%
SAT's	85
AP	35
Grade Point Average (GPA)	90
Our own entry exam	5

The vast majority of admissions officers from the US use both the GPA and SATs to assess their student applicants, and five per cent set their own entry exam.

In addition, we asked US admissions officers for their views on the concept of grade inflation. The results are shown below.

8. Educationalists and media commentators talk of grade inflation as more students achieve top exam scores. With which if any of the following statements about grade inflation do you agree?

	US
	%
Produces students less prepared for university style learning	75
Makes developments to the AP very useful	70
Grade inflation makes it harder for us to identify the very best candidates	65
Makes SATS even more essential	65
There is no such thing as grade inflation, its just students working harder	60
Is a sign that the GPA system has many flaws	60
Produces students with a narrower, less valuable education	35
Shows that students are gaining better, deeper subject knowledge	10
It is time to abandon A levels	10

Respondents were invited to indicate the statements with which they agreed, from a choice designed to reflect the different views which the subject of grade inflation provokes.

The prevailing response from the US is that grade inflation is not a positive force. Three quarters, 75 per cent agree that grade inflation is producing students less prepared for university style learning. Only ten per cent agree that grade inflation shows students are gaining a better, deeper subject knowledge.

However some 60 per cent also agreed with the statement that ‘there is no such thing as grade inflation, it is just students working harder’. We included this opposing statement to give admissions officers an opportunity to express their support for students’ work ethic if wanted. This is because while more students can be achieving higher grades, it does not need to mean that the content has been devalued or made easier, rather that the student is focusing on it more intently. Some might call this ‘learning to the exam’; however it is described, the effect does not seem to be considered positive from the university perspective.

Not surprisingly as more and more students are presenting with the highest grades, more than half of all admissions officer in the US, 65 per cent, confirm that grade inflation makes it harder for them to identify the best candidates.

A major part of our survey of university admissions officers involved exploring their views on their own main pre university examination system compared with the IB Diploma, as shown in the following tables.

We asked respondents from the US and European countries first to name their own main exam system, and for respondents in the UK we clarified that the question related to the UK A level system, rather than any other programme of studies. The answers to the question below are presented in the same order for each region of the UK, US and Europe, following the rank order of the British response for ease of comparison

9. As part of this research we are asking admissions officers in the UK, US and 20 EU countries for views on their countries' main exam systems. How strong an element would you say each of the following is, comparing your own exam system and the IB Diploma?

1 = very small element
5 = very strong element

UK universities	A levels	IB Diploma	Difference
Score out of 5			
	n.	n.	n.
An open mind	3.2	4.0	0.8
Business skills such as team working and presentation skills	3.0	3.8	0.8
An ability to manage independent inquiry	3.3	3.9	0.6
Good self management skills	3.4	3.9	0.5
Good communication skills	3.3	3.8	0.5
Able to take risks	2.7	3.1	0.4
Creativity	3.1	3.5	0.4
An ability to cope with pressure	4.0	4.0	0.0
Detailed subject knowledge	4.0	3.9	-0.1
Total difference			3.3

US universities	High School Diploma	IB Diploma	Difference
Score out of 5			
	n.	n.	n.
An open mind	3.1	3.6	0.5
Business skills such as team working and presentation skills	3.3	3.8	0.5
An ability to manage independent inquiry	3.4	4.3	0.9
Good self management skills	3.3	4.3	1.0
Good communication skills	2.8	3.7	0.9
Able to take risks	3.1	3.8	0.7
Creativity	2.9	3.8	0.9
An ability to cope with pressure	3.4	4.3	0.9
Detailed subject knowledge	3.8	4.4	0.6
Total difference			6.9

European universities	Own main exam	IB Diploma	Difference
Score out of 5			
	n.	n.	n.
An open mind	3.6	3.8	0.2
Business skills such as team working and presentation skills	3.4	4.0	0.6
An ability to manage independent inquiry	3.9	4.1	0.2
Good self management skills	3.4	4.0	0.6
Good communication skills	3.7	4.2	0.5
Able to take risks	3.1	3.5	0.4
Creativity	3.2	3.4	0.2
An ability to cope with pressure	3.5	4.0	0.5
Detailed subject knowledge	3.6	3.7	0.1
Net difference			3.3

Looking at each of the above tables, it is clear that the IB is considered to be a stronger exam system than the main alternative in every region of the US, UK and Europe.

Only the British A level exam system is scored more highly than the IB against any factor, for detailed subject knowledge.

Compared with respondents from the UK and Europe, US admissions officers views are more strongly felt, with the IB Diploma especially highly valued compared to the high school diploma or other local pre university educational approach.

In each region, qualities often referred to as 'soft skills' by employees including good self management skills or business skills such as team working and presentation skills are among the most highly rated qualities of the IB Diploma.

Each region however has an interesting and different set of top three differences between the IB and their own main alternative educational approach.

In the UK the top three differences and strengths of the IB compared to A levels are considered to be are 1) open mind 2) business skills and 3) an ability to manage independent inquiry.

US admissions officers have rated the IB Diploma more highly, or their own main exam system more poorly, across every exam factor compared to their colleagues from the UK and Europe. The four top differences according to US admissions officers are 1) good self management skills and equally 2) good communication skills 3) creativity 4) ability to cope with pressure.

In Europe the top differences and strengths of the IB are considered to be equally 1) business skills and 2) good self management skills and again equally 3) communication skills and 4) ability to cope with pressure.

We then asked our sample to identify which three of all these qualities they consider to be key to academic success at their university. The results, shown below, highlight some interesting differences by geographical region.

10. And which three of these qualities would you say is key to academic success at your university?

	UK	US	Europe
	%	%	%
An ability to manage independent inquiry	74	50	48
Detailed subject knowledge	54	45	42
Good self management skills	49	45	45
Good communication skills	36	50	35
An ability to cope with pressure	28	20	13
An open mind	23	45	29
Creativity	16	10	-
Business skills	15	10	16
Able to take risks	-	10	6

An ability to manage independent inquiry is the quality considered key to academic success across much of the world, based on these results from university admissions officers in the UK, US and Europe.

However British admissions officers place a significantly higher value on the ability to manage independent inquiry than their colleagues in the US and Europe, with 74 per cent from Britain saying this is key to academic success compared with 50 per cent from the US and 48 per cent from Europe.

American university admissions officers place a greater emphasis on communication skills in addition to an ability to manage independent inquiry, and by comparison with the UK and Europe also place a much greater value on having an open mind with 45 per cent from the US saying an open mind is key, compared with 23 per cent from the UK and 29 per cent from Europe.

Admissions officers from Europe give a notably different response compared with their colleagues from the UK and Europe for an ability to cope with pressure, where 13 per cent of respondents from Europe say this a key quality for academic success compared with 28 per cent from the UK and 20 per cent from the US.

11. In your experience which countries do you think provide students with the most positive attitude towards learning?

	US
	%
China	50
US	35
UK	35
Germany	20
India	15
Singapore	15
Malaysia	10
Australia	10
Canada	10
Not relevant/ no difference	10
DK	10

As part of exploring global horizons we asked our respondents from the US to identify, outside of exam programmes, their views on attitudes towards learning from different countries, with answers shown in the above table.

American university admissions officers feel that Chinese students have the most positive attitude towards learning of any nationality. This was an open question so respondents could offer any country which sprang to mind. American admissions officers feel that China provides students with a more positive attitude towards learning than the US does itself, with scores of 50 per cent and 35 per cent respectively.

Our final question invited respondents to address some commonly held views about studying in the US and Europe compared to the UK, as shown below.

12. And finally how accurate or inaccurate would you say the following views about studying in the US / Europe are, relating to your university?

1 = not accurate at all
5 = completely accurate

Score from 5	US	Europe
	n.	n.
It is more expensive to study here compared to the UK	2.5	1.7
We have a higher drop out rate in this country compared to the UK	3.0	2.9
A first degree can be completed here in the same time as an English first degree, in three years	1.8	4.6
There are no grants or scholarships available for overseas students at this university	1.2	2.0
The majority of our teaching is delivered through very large lectures with 200 or more students	1.1	2.0
IB students fit in very easily here	4.7	4.4

US admissions officers are neutral on the subject of costs and non completion rates compared to degree study in the UK, but refute the notion that there are no grants or scholarships available for overseas student. Admissions officers from the US most strongly refute the view that the majority of teaching in American universities is delivered through large lecture groups of 200 or more students.

There was almost complete agreement that a student who has the IB Diploma qualification will fit in very easily to university life in the US or Europe.

Methodology

The survey was carried out by an independent organisation on our behalf working to Market Research Society (MRS) standards. This guarantees the anonymity and confidentiality of respondents, and the quality of the interviewing and administrative processes. The fieldwork was conducted by telephone with follow-up email questionnaires between April 18th and May 27th 2011.

Respondents were invited to take part in a prize draw to win up to £250 for themselves or their chosen charity from all the completed surveys of their geographical zone, the UK, US or Europe.

The UK sample (61) was designed to ensure the sample was spread across the different university mission groups.

The profile of the UK sample is as follows:

	%	n
Russell Group	15	9
1994 Group	13	8
Million Plus	23	14
University Alliance	13	8
Guild HE	10	6
Unaffiliated devolved region	11	7
Unaffiliated 'other'	15	9
Total UK sample	100	61

In the above table by 'unaffiliated' we mean that the university is not a member of any mission group, and by 'devolved region of the UK' we mean Scotland and Wales.

The US sample (20) was drawn from the top 250 universities as defined by the US News and World News ranking, which includes private and state run institutions. The universities in the US sample are drawn from the following states:

Arizona
Florida
Illinois
Iowa
Missouri
New Jersey
New York
North Carolina
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
South Dakota
Tennessee
Washington DC

The sample of European universities (31) was selected from the publicly available lists of state and private universities in each country. The universities in the European sample are drawn from the following countries:

Austria
Belgium
Czech Republic
Denmark
Finland
France
Germany
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Netherlands
Portugal
Spain
Sweden

Further information

In the report we present the question asked in the survey in bold, with commentary and tables written in plain text.

Some questions were not asked in all regions being country specific, such as SATs in the US.

We show the questions and results here in as complete a form as possible. In some cases there is further information available for a question, but too much to present in this summary report.

If you would like to see more detailed information for any question or specific cross tabulations please contact the ACS press department by email on emmak@twelvepr.co.uk or phone on 01295 661 253.

APPENDIX ONE

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme

Background

The IB was created in 1968 at the International School in Geneva to provide a truly international education for students preparing for university. The mission statement of the IB is as follows:

“The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.”

The IB is a registered charity based in Geneva and works in four areas:

1. Development of curriculum
2. Assessment of students
3. Training and professional development of teachers
4. Authorization and evaluation of schools

Although the first schools to adopt the IB were private, today over half of all IB schools are state schools. In the UK, Tony Blair stated in 2005 that he wanted one state school in every local authority to offer the IB; the momentum of change has been building since that time and in the past year one school every three months switches to the IB.

The IB covers the continuum of school based education in three programmes:

- Primary Years Programme (PYP) for students aged 3 to 12
- Middle Years Programme (MYP) for students aged 11 to 16
- Diploma Programme for students aged 16 to 19

ACS International Schools is one of just four in the UK where all three IB programmes are taught. As an IB World School which has been offering the programme for over thirty years it has experience and skills to authorise and guide other schools in the IB; is the UK’s leading authority on the qualification, and has provided guidance on the qualification to government staff in both leading and opposition parties.

Qualification requirements: the IB Learner Profile

All students of the IB Diploma agree at the start of their course that they are working to develop a set of personal qualities, called the Learner Profile.

Having these stated qualities as an objective is one of the key differentiators of the programme for university educators and employers, because it nurtures a set of skills which are important to them. It is also a set of qualities which most parents would hope to instil in their children.

The IB Learner profile is as follows:

- Inquirers
- Knowledgeable
- Thinkers
- Communicators
- Principled
- Open-minded
- Caring
- Balanced
- Risk-takers
- Reflective

At ACS (and all schools where the IB is taught) these qualities are included in the development and assessment of student work, and teachers will also focus on one of these qualities each month in the curriculum.

The notion of open mindedness for example might include the role of open mindedness in innovation of new scientific discoveries, open mindedness of leaders in historical conflicts, or open mindedness as an agent for change – for instance in dealing with climate change – or in dealing with your own life and social relationships.

Each aspect of the learner profile will be embedded and explored within the curriculum to help the student understand and develop that quality in themselves.

Qualification requirements: the six key subjects

Students must take six subjects for the IB Diploma, of which three must be at 'higher' level (where they are studied in greater depth) and the others at 'standard level'.

The difference with the IB, compared to other education systems such as A levels, is that the student must also continue to study and develop both arts and science subjects until the age of eighteen. All IB Diploma students also have to study a foreign language.

The six subject areas within the IB Diploma are described below:

Group 1	Language A1 ¹	English (or mother tongue)
Group 2	Second language ²	Usually a modern foreign language - choice of 60 including Greek and Latin
Group 3	Individuals and societies	Including economics, geography, history & business management - choice of nine courses
Group 4	Experimental sciences	'Traditional' sciences - chemistry, biology, physics
Group 5	Mathematics & computer science	Maths, further maths and computer science
Group 6	The arts	Music, visual art, performance art and film

The IB recommends a minimum of 240 hours of instruction time for higher level courses and 150 hours for standard courses. To achieve an IB Diploma the student will have had 1260 teaching hours; in the UK this will be approximately 5% more teaching hours than required for 3 A levels and 1 AS level.

¹ From this year Group 1 will become 'Studies in Language and Literature'

² From this year Group 2 will become 'Language acquisition'

Qualification requirements: the three core elements

In addition to the six subject areas, an IB student must also complete three additional elements of work. Each is a significant body of work or commitment in its own right. They are as follows:

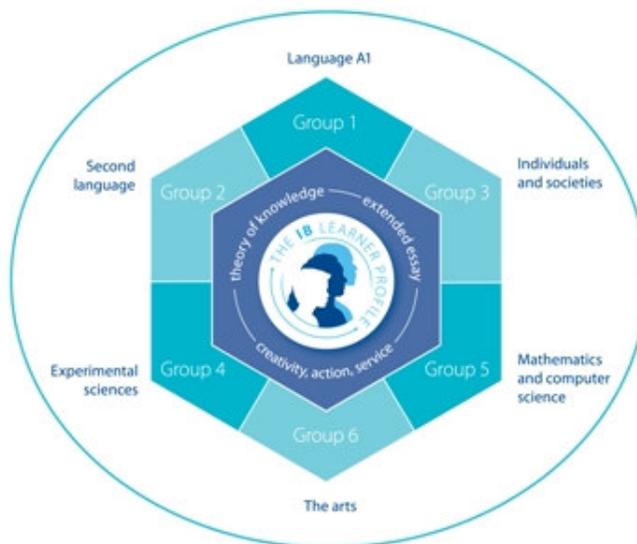
Extended essay	Independent research study up to 4,000 words	A topic of your own choice, linked to your subject of study or personal interest.
Theory of Knowledge	A course in critical thinking and a final 1,200 word essay	How knowledge is learned from different perspectives.
Creativity, Action, Service (CAS)	Any combination of physical (sport) or creative activities or community work; at least 3 hours/week	Participation which encourages personal growth through involvement.

The extended essay is one of the components of the IB which is considered a good preparation for university style learning.

It requires gathering and collating information from a variety of sources – independent research - and presenting it in a coherent and convincing way to illustrate your learning or position, and is very similar to the university dissertation. This approach requires similar skills to those needed to produce a market report or business plan in the workplace.

Each IB student will develop a portfolio of ‘core elements’ which is unique to him or her and reflects their own interests and passions. The CAS element for example can range from total dedication to sports, to a range of activities very similar to the British Duke of Edinburgh scheme, to overseas charitable work as a volunteer classroom assistant or care worker.

As the six subjects of study and the three core elements must *all* be completed, and must all relate to each other to develop the IB Learner Profile, they are usually presented or described within an IB hexagon as shown below:



Qualification requirements: the scoring system

The maximum possible score for an IB Diploma is 45 points. The points are awarded as follows:

Each of the six subjects of study:	Seven points, total 42 points
The three core elements:	Total 3 points
Complete IB hexagon:	Grand total 45 points

To be awarded a Diploma a student must have achieved at least 24 points (requiring four points in each of the six subjects) and must have completed each of the three core elements.

The international average score is 29 points and the pass rate is 78.6%; each year less than 0.5 % of students world-wide achieve the perfect score of 45.

If a student does not complete each of the three elements of the core, or if their total score is below 24 in the six subject areas they cannot be awarded a Diploma. In this case a Certificate will be awarded. This can often be the case where a student has joined the programme part way through a year, or has one exceptionally weak subject such as a second language or science.

With the IB Diploma's straightforward and absolute scoring system (not relative to the cohort) it is easy to compare results and identify outstanding candidates.

NEW STUDY SHOWS THAT INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE STUDENTS PERFORM BETTER THAN A LEVEL STUDENTS AT UK UNIVERSITIES

Report also reveals that IB leavers are more likely to be employed in graduate level jobs and earn a higher median salary than A level and equivalent leavers

Geneva, May 12, 2011 – According to a new study on the performance of International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme students in the UK post secondary system as compared to students with A Level or equivalent qualifications, conducted by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) on behalf of the International Baccalaureate, a higher percentage of IB students achieve a first class honours award compared to students holding A Levels or equivalent qualifications. IB Diploma Programme entrants are more likely to be enrolled at one of the UK's top 20 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) than entrants holding other qualifications. The report provides an overview of IB student characteristics and analysis of enrolment patterns at the top HEIs, chosen fields of study, achievement and non-continuation rates, as well as activities approximately six months after leaving HEIs. "These results reinforce yet again that the IB Diploma Programme gives students the knowledge, skills and attitudes that enables them to excel in university. The programme is well recognised by the world's leading universities and truly prepares students for the working world" said Adrian Kearney, Regional Director for Africa, Europe and the Middle East. Key findings include:

Achievement – Approximately a fifth (19%) of IB entrants with a full-time first degree achieved a first class honours award compared to 14.5% of first degree qualifiers who held A Level or equivalent qualifications. IB entrants are almost twice as likely to study Medicine and Dentistry (5.1%) as A Level entrants (2.9%). More than double the number of IB entrants attended the top HEIs compared with A Level entrants, when taken in proportion.

Continuation rates (measure of attrition/dropout) – Results show that across most subject areas IB entrants were less likely to leave their institution in the following year without gaining an award, than entrants holding other types of qualifications. 91.1% of IB entrants continued at the same institution compared to 89.5% for A level entrants.

Activities of IB leavers – Six months after leaving tertiary studies, IB students (36%) are almost twice as likely as their A Level and equivalent peers (18.8%) to pursue further study full time, and more likely to be employed in graduate level jobs and in higher paid occupations than A Level and equivalent leavers. A greater proportion of IB than A level leavers are employed within professional, scientific and technical activities.

Salaries of full-time employed IB leavers – The median annual salary of IB leavers in full-time paid employment was higher at £20,500, than that of A Level and equivalent leavers at £19,000.

The report sources data from the International Baccalaureate and data from the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the United Kingdom to identify characteristics and trends of IB students compared with students holding the more traditional A Levels, Scottish Higher and other level three qualifications. The majority of the data has been restricted to the academic year 2008/2009 with some comparisons with the academic year 2007/2008. Of the 423,455 full-time entrants to first degree courses across the 165 HEIs in UK, 1.5%, 56.7% and 10.8% were identified as holding IB qualifications, A Level qualifications and A Level equivalent qualifications respectively.

This study joins a growing body of evidence that the IB Diploma Programme prepares students for success at the university level and beyond, including three recently released studies on the US postsecondary performance of IB students. The complete study, and others, can be downloaded at:
<http://www.ibo.org/research/programmevalidation/index.cfm>

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About the International Baccalaureate

The International Baccalaureate is a not-for profit foundation, which offers three high quality and challenging educational programmes for a worldwide community of schools. For over 40 years, IB programmes have gained a reputation for their high academic standards, for preparing students for life in a globalised 21st century, and for helping to develop the citizens who will create a better, more peaceful world. The IB currently works with over 3,230 schools in 141 countries. www.ibo.org
For press information, contact: tim.nettleton@ibo.org

Information about ACS International Schools

ACS International Schools were founded in 1967 to serve international and local communities. The schools are non-sectarian and co-educational (day and boarding), enrolling approximately 2,550 students aged 2 to 18 years.

With three schools in the London area, each campus offers a fully international curriculum including the International Baccalaureate Diploma. All schools have state-of-the-art facilities with impressive grounds and an on-going programme of building investment. The strong academic programme and extensive arts, sports and cultural activities support the schools' student-centred philosophy.

www.acs-schools.com