

FACT SHEET

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE¹ PROGRAM

The International Baccalaureate (IB)² program, administered by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), is an example of a comprehensive³ credit-based transition program. High school students take most of their courses within the program; and as a result, their entire junior and senior years are characterized by the rigorous academic expectations of the IB program.

The IB program allows students to take college-level classes, possibly earning college credit upon successful completion of exams during the 11th and 12th grade years. Courses taken before the 11th and 12th grade years are classified as Pre-IB classes. The IB program has six core academic subject areas: English, second languages, experimental sciences, arts, mathematics, and individuals and societies. In addition to taking classes and exams in the six academic subject areas, students must perform community service, write a 4,000 word essay, and take a Theory of Knowledge class.

After students take their IB courses during the junior and senior years, they can choose to take exams in either all or several of their subjects. The exams are developed, administered, and graded by the IBO and are graded on an internationally standard assessment scale of 1-7. If students take exams in all their subjects, receive satisfactory scores and complete the community service, essay and Theory of Knowledge components, students receive an IB diploma. If students do not choose to

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Location of Program: High School

Student Mix: High School Only

Instructor: High School

Course Content: Specially Designed Curriculum

How Credits are Earned: Through completion of IB exam in subject area

Degree of Intensity: High

pursue an IB diploma, they will receive certificates for each IB exam they do take and successfully pass. Colleges and universities set their own policies regarding credit for successful completion of IB exams.

The IBO is an international organization that oversees the various components of the IB program including: curriculum guidelines, exams, professional development, and standards for exam review. All IB classes are taught by high school teachers who are specially trained by the IBO and its regional offices. The curriculum is specially designed for all IB classes, and is constructed through a standard international revision and writing process.

The IB program provides high school students the opportunity to take a rigorous and articulated⁴ sequence of classes for which they may earn college credit upon successful completion of IB exams, but the program does not generally focus on preparing students for the social and behavioral demands of college life.

¹ This fact sheet on International Baccalaureate was prepared under contract for the U.S. Department of Education by DTI Associates, Inc. (DTI) and the Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University (CCRC). The purpose of this fact sheet, and others related to this project, is to give a broad overview and description of the types of programs that the Accelerating Student Success project is studying. For more information on the Accelerating Student Success study, please see the study's webpage on the U.S. Department of Education's website at: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/celo/cbtrans/index.html>.

² For more detailed information regarding the International Baccalaureate program, please visit the IBO's website at: www.ibo.org.

³ Comprehensive credit-based transition programs provide students with academic preparation, exposure to rigorous coursework through multiple college-level courses, and the ability to earn college credit.

⁴ Articulated courses generally entail students taking a series of classes in a specific academic/technical area over several semesters, while building their skills over time.