



An International Perspective

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA EXPLAINED

CAMERON MCKENZIE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA COORDINATOR

THE UNDERLYING VISION OF THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE ORGANISATION IS TO OFFER STUDENTS A BALANCED CURRICULUM THAT FOSTERS CRITICAL THINKING AND INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING.

In the mid 1960s a group of teachers from the International School of Geneva established the International Baccalaureate Organisation. The first examinations in the Diploma Programme were held in 1968 and from there the IB Organisation has spread to all parts of the globe and is now taught in 3968 schools.

The International Baccalaureate Organisation offers four programs: the Primary Years Programme, the Middle Years Programme, the Diploma Programme and the Career-related Programme. St Leonard's College students in years 1 to 4 undertake the Primary Years Programme (PYP), an enquiry-based model focusing on student exploration of broad themes. In years 11 and 12 students can choose to complete the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP) as an alternative to the VCE.

From the outset St Leonard's College has led the way with the IBDP, becoming the second school in Australia and the first in

Victoria to offer the Diploma Programme. Today 14 schools in Victoria offer the IBDP. The first IBDP examinations at St Leonard's College were held in 1982 and the original cohort of students numbered two. From these humble beginnings the IBDP has grown to the point where we now have approximately one third of our senior students choosing the course and our 2015 IBDP cohort is our largest ever.

The underlying vision of the International Baccalaureate Organisation is to offer students a balanced curriculum that fosters critical thinking and intercultural understanding. It aims to develop students who become responsible citizens within their own community and their own country.

CURRICULUM

The IBDP is a two-year course based on subjects within six designated groups - Studies in Language and Literature, Language Acquisition, Individuals and Societies, Sciences, Mathematics and The Arts - along with three central, compulsory components. St Leonard's College offers a large selection of subjects from each of the six groups as well as experienced support in the three core subjects.

Core Requirements

The Extended Essay

This is a 4000 word research-based project that allows a student to investigate a topic of their choice in great depth. With the assistance of a staff member to supervise progress, students develop their essay over a period of nine months. The research and writing skills they develop hold them in good stead for tertiary studies.

Theory of Knowledge

Theory of Knowledge (TOK) is central to the philosophy of the IB Programme. The course challenges students to reflect and evaluate the different ways of knowing, to question the basis of knowledge and to become aware of the ideological and subjective bias inherent in many arguments.

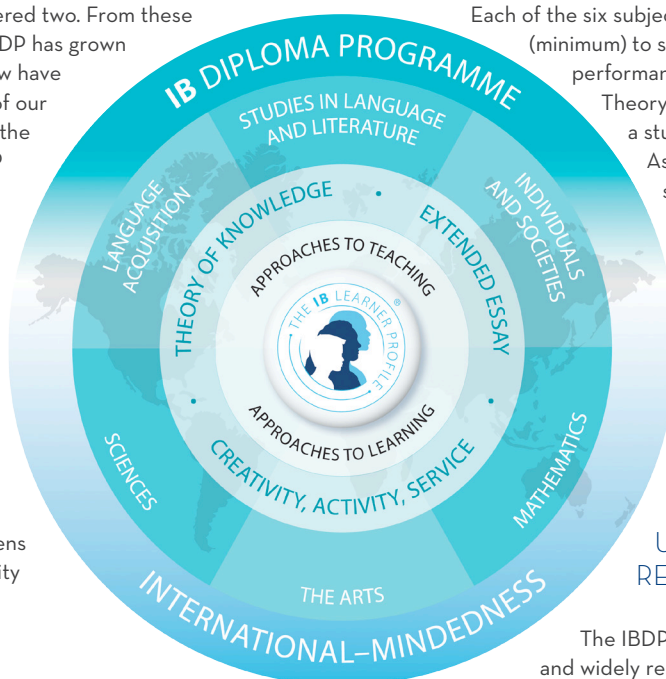
CAS - Creativity, Action and Service

Participation in CAS activities promotes the benefit of being involved in physical, creative and service pursuits in a local, national and international context. A commitment of approximately three hours per week towards these co-curricular activities over the two-year course is expected.

ASSESSMENT

Depending on the subject, assessment involves a combination of internal tasks and external examinations. In some subjects, the examination comprises a major portion of the final grade

(e.g. Mathematics and Science) while in others internal activities are more significant (Music, Theatre and Visual Art).



Each of the six subjects is awarded a grade from one (minimum) to seven (maximum). In addition, performance on the Extended Essay and Theory of Knowledge course can gain a student an additional three points. As such the maximum possible score for the IB Diploma is 45 points.

The Diploma is awarded to any candidate who achieves a score of 24, subject to a series of conditions including satisfactory completion of the Extended Essay, the Theory of Knowledge course and the CAS program.

UNIVERSITY RECOGNITION

The IBDP is the most highly regarded and widely respected tertiary entrance qualification by the world's leading universities.

In Australia a student's IB score is converted to a notional Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) to allow entry into local universities.

A range of IBDP scores and converted ATARs for the 2014 cohort are listed below:

IBDP Score	ATAR
45	99.95
40	98.15
35	92.80
30	83.00
25	69.65

In 2014 our IB cohort achieved a median notional ATAR of 92.8, which gave our students access to a wide range of tertiary courses both here and overseas. One student was accepted into the London School of Economics while others have applied to overseas universities including St Andrew's. College Dux, Alaric Sanders achieved a perfect score of 45 and has been accepted into the Chancellor's Scholar's Program at the University of Melbourne. Alaric has now commenced a Bachelor of Science on a full scholarship, receives an annual allowance and is guaranteed entry to any graduate degree of his choosing.

A vast majority of St Leonard's College students go on to tertiary studies and the IBDP offers an excellent preparation for the demands of life at university. The academic rigour of the Higher Level subjects, the depth of research in the Extended Essay, the reflective nature of the Theory of Knowledge course and the service component of the CAS program forge an independence that holds students in good stead for whatever they pursue in the future.