

Frequently asked questions about the diploma programme.

What is the diploma programme in GWW?

The Diploma Programme (DP) is a curriculum framework designed by the International Baccalaureate (IB) for students in the last two years of high school. IB students graduating with the IB diploma are able to study at universities all around the world, often with advanced credit. Students report that their involvement with the IB has given them the tools needed to succeed at college. In particular, students comment on their sense of preparedness, self-confidence, research skills and their ability to manage their time. Even more important, they have developed a sense of the world around them and their responsibility to it. Diploma Programme students study six subjects (three at standard level and three at higher level) over two years and complete three additional requirements: the theory of knowledge (TOK), the extended essay (maximum 4000 words) and a completion of CAS experiences (creativity, activity and service tasks outside of the classroom). In addition to these requirements, students must earn a minimum of 24 points out of a possible 45 points on the final assessments which are externally marked and moderated by the IB, in order to receive an IB diploma.

Theory of knowledge (TOK)

TOK is an interdisciplinary course designed to help students question and understand how they know what they know. Students study how individuals from various disciplines view the world in order to develop their own ways of thinking. By stimulating analysis of knowledge across disciplines, TOK seeks to help students make sense of school and the world. It is introduced as a combined course with French in grade eleven and twelve.

Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS)

CAS is an experiential learning component of the DP. Students complete a wide variety of extracurricular, community service and athletic options to fulfill this requirement. It is a graduation requirement.

Extended essay

The extended essay introduces students to the demands and rewards of independent work. Emphasis is placed on doing personal research and communicating ideas effectively in order to write a 4,000-word essay in an area of personal interest.

IB in the York Region District School Board

Which schools in the York Region District School Board offer the IB Programme?

Alexander Mackenzie High School, Bayview Secondary School, Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School, Maple High School and Milliken Mills High School are authorized IB World Schools.

Who can apply to the IB Programme in York Region?

Grade 8 students who currently live in York Region are eligible to apply. Regrettably, Visa students (i.e. international fee-paying students) are not eligible for the IB Programme in York Region.

Does my child need to have French to be eligible to apply to the IB Programme?

We recommend that students are working at grade level in French at time of application.

How many spots do you offer?

YRDSB anticipates that we will be able to offer placements to over 500 students at the five sites. We will offer 116 spots at each site.

Is busing available?

Transportation is not provided for regional programs such as IB. Our schools are located on local transit lines.

Can I apply from Grade 9 or 10?

Students who are in grade 9 or 10 should contact the IB Coordinator at the school that serves their home address to learn about eligibility and available space.

Would you consider offering Higher Level IB math?

Although we revisit our course offerings regularly, we do not anticipate that we will be offering HL math in future. There are very few post-secondary programs that request HL math, and our students are still eligible to apply because they earn both the IB and Ontario Secondary School Diplomas.

Can my child also take non-IB courses while completing the IB Diploma Programme?

In grade 11 and 12 IB students have a full course load. There is no room in the student schedule to take extra, or non-IB courses.

What percentage of students attend international postsecondary schools?

A small percentage of our graduates do attend international postsecondary institutions. We do not release the names of schools to which students apply, or select to attend. We have a 100% graduation rate and all of our IB students have accepted or deferred offers of admission to postsecondary learning.

If we decided to participate in the IB Programme in Grade 9, are we required to finish the programme? Can my child change their mind?

We work very hard to support students so that they thrive while participating in YRDSB's preIB and IB Programmes and we hope that they will work through and complete their IB course of study but students are not

obliged to stay in a programme that is not the right fit for them. Be advised students may be required to return to their home school if they do not stay in the programme.

To which school can I apply?

You are assigned to a school based on your home address. To determine which school serves your home address, please visit the YRDSB School Locator. We strongly encourage you to do this before completing the online application.

We have purchased a home within York Region and will be moving into the region in a few months. We would like to apply to our area's IB school. Can my child apply ?

This is a question that needs to be considered on an individual basis as there are several variables taken into consideration (for example, your closing date). Prior to completing an application, you will need to make an appointment to speak with an administrator from your IB area school who will assess your situation.

My IB Area school is not conveniently located; a different school is a better or more convenient option for our family. Can we apply there?

No. Application eligibility is based on home address and, regrettably, we are not able to make exceptions.

I own property in a school's catchment area but do not live there; can we apply with that address?

No. Application eligibility is based on home address and, regrettably, we are not able to make exceptions.

We plan to buy/rent a property in a school's catchment area in the future. Can we apply to that school?

No. Application eligibility is based on current home address, and regrettably, we cannot make exceptions.

I want to know that my child is accepted into the IB Programme before I purchase a new home. Can I apply to a specific site with the future intention to purchase a home?

No. Application eligibility is based on home address at time of registration and, regrettably, we are not able to make exceptions.

Can I apply to the YRDSB IB Programme and to other IB Programmes?

You may apply to Programmes offered by other Boards or private schools; however, when applying to the YRDSB Program, you are only able to apply to your area IB School.

Are transfers between YRDSB sites available?

If you move into a new IB catchment area, transfers can only be considered if there is available space.

IB and Post-Secondary Pathways

How do colleges and universities view the Diploma Programme?

The DP is internationally recognized as representing one of the highest standards in university preparatory education. More than 1,000 colleges and universities in North America have recognition policies on how they weigh it in admissions, advanced standing, college credit and scholarships. A list of colleges and universities that grant credit, scholarships and/or advanced standing for DP diplomas and certificates is available at www.ibo.org.

What kind of student is a good candidate for the DP?

The DP is a rigorous course of study for motivated students. That said, prior academic success is less an indicator of ability to earn the diploma than a student's determination to do his or her best, willingness to be organized in order to complete the work while leading a full, balanced life, and a strong commitment to learning in and beyond the classroom.

Do DP students have time for anything beyond academics?

Absolutely. Most successful Diploma Programme students lead very full lives. They are often members of athletic teams and involved in a wide range of activities. Time management and organization are key skills the IB develops in students.

Do IB programmes consider “gifted” programmes?

Here at DR. G.W. Williams, we designate your Diploma Programme as selective enrollment, where grade eight students need to take an IB entrance task in order to enroll in pre-IB programme in grade nine.

Do DP teachers receive special training?

All DP teachers receive professional development in the IB's approaches to teaching and approaches to learning from certified IB workshop leaders. This is a requirement for IB World Schools implementing the DP.

Does implementing an IB programme mean my child's school will not teach local or national standards such as the Common Core?

The IB is committed to making sure that students in IB programmes meet and exceed local or national standards. Students enrolled in Dr. G.W. Williams will also receive lessons corresponding to OSSD curriculum on top of the IB curriculum. Students who successfully graduate while meeting the requirements from both programmes will receive an International Baccalaureate Diploma and an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

How does the IB DP differ from other university-preparatory programs such as Advanced Placement and Cambridge?

The IB DP is a two-year comprehensive curriculum with a culminating set of externally graded final exams. IB, Advanced Placement (AP) and other college-preparatory curriculums like Cambridge are all university preparatory,

academically rigorous programmes. There are important differences, however, in the content and exams. The DP is a cohesive and comprehensive programme, not a collection of individual courses as is the case with Advanced Placement. The most important distinguishing factor is the core of the Diploma Programme (CAS, TOK and extended essay). Students who take the IB Diploma Programme are still able to take AP exams.

How can I learn more about the IB and DP?

- Visit our [school website](#)
- Attend IB open house and events
- Speak with our school's DP coordinator: Hailey King (hailey.king@yrdsb.ca)
- Speak with your child's DP classroom teachers.

How to make your IB credentials stand out in the university application process.

As an International Baccalaureate (IB) student, you are distinctive and will bring a unique set of attributes to whatever university or college that you ultimately attend. The challenge is to how to bring those qualities, in addition to grades and standardized test scores, to the attention of admissions officers.

Five ways to emphasize your IB strengths:

1. **Highlight your advanced writing skills:** completing multiple essays comes easily to IB students given the emphasis the programme places on self-reflection and written expression. Especially the Extended Essay, TOK Essay, English HL Essay, and other opportunities. IB students can capitalize further on this by using the interdisciplinary model of learning to respond to admissions questions from multiple perspectives.
2. **Consider universities that accept individual portfolios:** some universities allow students to submit individual portfolios of work. The DP programme places emphasis on the development of a student's abilities over time. IB students will have amassed a significant body of work in their personal portfolios. Portfolio-based applications allow admission officers to understand how an IB student is reflective and critical in their work.
3. **Nail the interview:** DP students give multiple presentations over their two-year course work. The confidence and experience they develop in these public speaking opportunities will translate into a big advantage when interviewing for university admission, internships and work. Don't forget to mention your creativity, activity, service (CAS) project in addition to your academic credentials.

4. **Recommendation letters that pack a punch:** The recommendation letter remains a pivotal component of the application package. When soliciting recommendation letters that stand out, consider providing your teachers with an easy-to-reference profile of your high school history beyond academics. Include your extended essay topic, your CAS project, foreign language abilities, participation in any international programmes of study, extra-curricular activities and course workload.
5. **Show your global perspective:** IB students have a strong sense of their cultural identity, and respect the values and differences of other cultures. Trained to think globally and act locally, IB students are required to participate in civic engagement through a community service project that ties into some aspect of their coursework. For example, in Language B French, students are required to stay on top of global events and consider open mindedness in their Individual Oral assessment.