Anglo-Chinese School (Independent) was authorized as an IB World School in 2005 and is at present one of the few national schools in Singapore to offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE (IB)

The IB programme created in 1968, is a demanding two-year pre-university course of study that leads to examinations. The programme has earned a reputation for rigorous assessment, giving IB diploma holders access to the world’s leading universities. The International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) has shown over the course of 30 years that students are well prepared for university work.

The IB programme grew out of international schools’ efforts to establish a common curriculum and university entry credential for geographically mobile students. The international educators also hoped that students would benefit from a highly respected international curriculum and should share an academic experience that would emphasise critical thinking, intercultural understanding and exposure to a variety of points of view and acceptance of others by young people. Today, the programme has since grown to involve about 2335 authorised schools in 135 countries, evenly divided between private, mainly international, schools and state schools.

The IB diploma is a passport to higher education. Universities around the world welcome the unique characteristics of graduands of the IB Diploma Programme and recognize the way in which the programme helps to prepare students for university level education. IB students routinely gain admission to some of the best known universities in the world. Most of these institutions have established recognition policies for the IB diploma. The local universities in Singapore recognise the IB diploma as a university qualification.

CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

The IB Diploma Programme has proved to be a compelling pre-university course of study not only because it guarantees breadth of study, but it also provides opportunities for students to develop their independent research skills through an extended essay; to foster an understanding of the epistemological links across the different subject domains through its Theory of Knowledge course and to gain formal recognition of achievement in co-curricular activities through its Creativity, Action, Service requirement.

The IB Curriculum structure is represented by a hexagon model (see next page) with six academic subjects surrounding a core. Diploma students study six subjects from six subject groups, concurrently over two years, as well as the core elements of the programme (Theory of Knowledge, the extended essay and creativity, action, service). The six subject groups represent the major domains of learning across all subject disciplines of a curriculum.
At least three, and not more than four of the six subjects selected are taken at higher level (HL), the others at standard level (SL). HL courses represent 240 teaching hours, and require a greater depth of study across a broader range of content in the subject. SL courses require 150 hours and provide breadth of study across the whole Diploma Programme. Students are thus able to explore some subjects in depth and others more broadly, a deliberate compromise between the early specialization of some national systems and the breadth found in others. The science-oriented student is challenged to learn a foreign language and the natural linguist becomes familiar with laboratory procedures. Flexibility in choosing higher-level concentrations allows the students to pursue areas of personal interest and to meet special requirements for university entrance within a balanced overall programme. The subjects are continually reviewed and revised to meet contemporary needs.

The core of the model consists of the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course, the extended essay and creativity, action, service (CAS).

The Theory of Knowledge (TOK), a course unique to the IB programme, is an interdisciplinary course intended to stimulate critical reflection on knowledge and experience gained inside and outside the classroom. The course challenges students to question the bases of knowledge, to be aware of subjective and ideological biases and to develop the ability to analyse evidence. TOK is a key element in encouraging students to appreciate other cultural perspectives.

Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) is a fundamental part of the Diploma Programme experience. The CAS requirement emphasise the importance of life outside the world of scholarship, providing a refreshing counterbalance to the academic pursuits of the programme. The IB goal of educating the whole person and fostering a more compassionate and active citizenry comes alive in an immediate way when students reach beyond themselves and their books. The CAS requirement encourages students to share their energy and special talents with others: students may, for example, participate in theatre or musical productions, sports and community service activities. Students should, through these activities, develop greater awareness of themselves and concern for others, and the ability to work cooperatively with other people.
Extended Essay (EE) provides each student an opportunity to investigate a topic of special interest. The essay requirement acquaints diploma students with the kind of independent research and writing skills expected by universities. The IBO recommends that a student devote a total of about 40 hours of private study and writing time to the essay, which may be written in any of the subjects offered. The essay permits students to deepen their programme of study, for example by selecting a topic in one of their higher level (HL) courses. Students are appropriately supervised throughout the course of writing their EE by a faculty member in the school who is able provide academic guidance concerning the subject in which the EE is registered. In addition, the teacher-mentor provides general guidance on time management and the overall structure and presentation of the papers; and ensures that the essay is the student’s own work.

SUBJECTS OFFERED

ACS (Independent) offers the following subjects. However the subjects actually taught will depend upon the number of students selecting them. If the enrolment for a subject is too small, it is not viable for the school to offer the subject.

Each diploma student is required to take six subjects chosen across at least Groups 1 to 5 of the diploma hexagon.

GROUP ONE — Studies in Language & Literature
All students will study Literature (English or Chinese) or Language & Literature (English or Chinese). The range of texts studied is broad; students grow to appreciate a language’s complexity, wealth and subtleties in a variety of contexts. Confidence and competence in oral and written communication skills are fostered. One of the explicit aims of these subjects is to engender a lifelong interest in literature and a love for the elegance and richness of human expression.

GROUP TWO — Language acquisition
Chinese, English, Malay, Tamil, Hindi, Spanish, French

The two language options in this group; Language B or ab initio, accommodate second language learners with previous experience learning the language, and beginners respectively. The principal aim is to enable students to use the language in a range of contexts and for many purposes; the courses focus on written and spoken communication.

GROUP THREE — Individuals and Societies
Business and Management, Economics, Geography, History

GROUP FOUR — Experimental Sciences
Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Computer Science, Environmental Systems and Societies
Environmental Systems and Societies (ESS) is offered as a transdisciplinary standard level subject (TSL). A TSL subject meets the requirements of two groups through a single subject. The offering of ESS meets the requirements of Group 3 and Group 4.
GROUP FIVE — Mathematics

Three options (Mathematical Studies offered at Standard Level and Mathematics offered at Standard and Higher Levels) are available to cater for different abilities and levels of student interest. Each course aims to deepen a student’s understanding of mathematics as a discipline and to promote confidence and facility in the use of mathematical language.

GROUP SIX — The Arts

This includes visual arts and music, with emphasis placed on practical production by the student and exploration of a range of creative work in a global context.

Options: Instead of a group 6 subject, a candidate may select an additional subject from Groups 1 to 4.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING SYSTEM

An essential element of IB assessment is that standards are the same worldwide. The students’ performance is measured according to established standards and criteria that are consistent from place to place and year to year. The Diploma Programme’s grading system is criterion referenced: each student’s performance is measured against well defined levels of achievement consistent from one examination session to the next. Grades reflect attainment of knowledge and skills relative to set standards that are applied equally to all schools. Top grades are not, for example, awarded to a certain percentage of students.

Classroom teachers and IB examiners work in partnership to ensure that students have ample opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned. Responsibility for all academic judgements about the quality of students’ work rests with examiners worldwide led by chief examiners with international authority in their fields.

The IB diploma subjects are examined by a combination of continuous coursework (Internal Assessments) and written examinations at the end of the two-year programme. Internally assessed work usually accounts for a minimum 20% of the final grade in a subject. The modes of Internal Assessments are used to evaluate both the content and the process of academic achievement and include portfolios, essays, practical work, oral presentations and oral commentaries. The written examinations are taken in November in ACS (Independent).

Each examined subject is graded on a scale of 1 (minimum) to 7 (maximum). In order to be awarded the diploma, a student must meet defined standards and conditions, including a maximum total of 24 points (based on the notion that a grade 4 represents passing grade) and the satisfactory completion of the three diploma requirements; TOK, EE and CAS activities.

Excellent performance in all of the six subjects result in a total of 42 points (7 points for each subject). TOK and EE contribute to the overall score through a matrix system which awards up to 3 points based on the student’s combined performance. Thus the maximum diploma point score is 45 points.

Above write up extracted from IBO publications
https://www.ibo.org