

Fairview High School
International Baccalaureate

CAS Handbook



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Dear Student,

Congratulations on making one of the best decisions you will ever make . . . pursuing your International Baccalaureate Diploma. You are well aware by now that there are a few key components to assembling your diploma; fulfilling the Creativity, Action, & Service (CAS) component is one of them. This guide will provide you details you need to meet IB diploma requirements, but more importantly, it will help you engage in a meaningful, growing experience as a student and young adult.

The aims of the CAS requirement are to enable students to develop:

- an appreciation of the potential of the human mind and spirit
- knowledge, skills and understanding
- an awareness of humanitarian issues across the world
- a recognition that education imposes lifelong ethical responsibilities
- a willingness to inquire and an enjoyment of discovery
- confidence in their ability to initiate change, both individually and collaboratively
- autonomy and self-reliance
- an appreciation of their own and others' talents.

Most Fairview students are already engaged in a number of these types of activities. There are really only two aspects of the CAS component you must keep in mind. (1) The first is to **document the activities you engage in as part of your CAS requirement**. It is very important that you engage in a fairly robust effort in writing self-evaluation reports or reflective comments at the end of each series of regular activities or projects. Thoughts disentangle themselves passing through lips and pencil tips! A written record or diary of your experiences will help you clarify in your mind what was truly gained from the experience(s). (2) Secondly, you should strive to engage in new activities. The whole point of CAS is to broaden your horizons, to delve into activities and experiences you would have otherwise never tried. Stretch yourself!

Above all, have fun with this. Philosophical discussions in ToK, discovering a new truth about your favorite historical character, or successfully proving a hypothesis in physics are all exciting and fun endeavors; however, interacting with and making positive contributions to **people**, especially those within your own community, is the richest learning investment you can make.

Please read through the following information for instructions on how to proceed; visit or contact the IB office any time you have questions.

Upward and onward,

D. Bessett

What is CAS?

CAS is a framework for experiential learning, designed to involve students in new roles. The emphasis is on learning by doing real tasks that have real consequences and then reflecting on these experiences over time.

This process of doing and reflecting on the doing provides an excellent opportunity to extend what is learned in the classroom to a form of service, such as applying science (for example, biology or environmental systems) to the environment, or applying technology (for example, design technology) to the design of devices to help people who are disabled or to improve living conditions in a home or town or refugee camp.

The most meaningful CAS experience comes from spending time with others to build relationships and develop the self-worth of both server and served. In the design and construction of their CAS schedules, coordinators are strongly encouraged to emphasize these aspects as much as possible. Appropriate activities might include:

- physical assistance to the elderly
- a structured series of visits to a home for orphans
- helping with rehabilitation at the local hospital
- teaching basic literacy
- establishing and coaching a sports team for disadvantaged youngsters
- establishing and leading a musical ensemble for visually impaired people
- involvement in a theatrical production to which refugee children are invited
- teaching the use of computers
- environmental restoration and protection.

The activities should be undertaken gradually, be appropriately adapted to the circumstances, and take into account the students' aptitudes and preferences. The experience should never be a shock for students; this would be counter to the educational aims of CAS; rather it should reward and enrich all involved. When well carried out, CAS should build self-esteem, self-confidence, autonomy and self-reliance.

Creativity

This aspect of CAS is interpreted as imaginatively as possible to cover a wide range of arts and other activities outside the normal curriculum which include creative thinking in the design and carrying out of service projects. This could involve doing dance, theatre, music and art, for example. Students should be engaged in group activities, and especially in new roles, wherever possible. Nevertheless, individual commitment to learning an art form is allowed, where it respects the requirements for all CAS activities: that goals are set and the student reflects on progress.

Action

This aspect of CAS can include participation in expeditions, individual and team sports, and physical activities outside the normal curriculum; it also includes physical activity involved in carrying out creative and service projects. Action may involve participation in sport or other activities **requiring physical exertion**—such as expeditions and camping trips, or digging trenches to lay water pipes to bring fresh water to a village. Students should be encouraged towards group and team activities, and undertaking new roles, but an individual commitment is acceptable where the general requirements of CAS are met: goals are set and the student reflects on progress.

Both creativity and action can be enhanced by incorporating the service element. Students involved in the arts and in physical activities might consider coaching young children, seniors in residential homes, street children and so on.

Service

Service projects and activities are often the most transforming element of the diploma program for the individual student; they have the potential to nurture and mould the global citizen. Service involves interaction, such as the building of links with individuals or groups in the community. The community may be the school, the local district, or it may exist on national and international levels (such as undertaking projects of assistance in a developing country). Service activities should not only involve doing things for others but also doing things with others and developing a real commitment with them. The relationship should therefore show respect for the dignity and self-respect of others.

Guiding Questions

The following questions may help students determine whether or not an intended activity qualifies as CAS.

- Is the activity a **new** role for me?
- Is it a real task (not trivial) that I am going to undertake?
- Does it have real consequences for other people and for me?
- What do I hope to learn from getting involved?
- How can this activity benefit other people?
- What can I reflect on during this activity?

The IB CAS Guidebook has some excellent examples of projects and how they tie to the various components of CAS. Please refer to the official IBO CAS publication.

CAS Learning Outcomes

The IB Organization recently underwent a modification to their CAS program. While students are collecting hours in each of the three categories they are to simultaneously engage in a specific set of learning outcomes. There are eight of them, but please keep in mind that these outcomes are intertwined with the Creativity, Action, and Service components of the program and are not to be considered additional requirements.

So a key goal for completing the CAS program, is selecting activities that meet the category criteria as well as the learning outcomes criteria. The good news ... common sense volunteer activities almost always meet program requirements. This is not an overly difficult process.

Please see the learning outcomes below.

CAS Learning Outcomes

Increased awareness of strengths and areas for growth

Students are able to see themselves as individuals with various skills and abilities, some more developed than others, and understand that they can make choices about how they wish to move forward.

Undertaking new challenges

A new challenge may be an unfamiliar activity, or an extension to an existing one.

Planned and initiated activities

Planning and initiation will often be in collaboration with others. It can be shown in activities that are part of larger projects, for example, ongoing school activities in the local community, as well as in small student-led activities.

Working collaboratively with others

Collaboration can be shown in many different activities, such as team sports, playing music in a band, or helping in a kindergarten. At least one project, involving collaboration and the integration of at least two of creativity, action and service, is required.

Showing perseverance and commitment

At a minimum, this implies attending regularly and accepting a share of the responsibility for dealing with problems that arise in the course of activities.

Engaged with issues of global importance

Students may be involved in international projects but there are many global issues that can be acted upon locally or nationally (for example, environmental concerns, caring for the elderly).



Consideration of ethical implications

Ethical decisions arise in almost any CAS activity (for example, on the sports field, in musical composition, in relationships with others involved in service activities). Evidence of thinking about ethical issues can be shown in various ways, including journal entries and conversations with CAS advisers.

Developing new skills

As with new challenges, new skills may be shown in activities that the student has not previously undertaken, or in increased expertise in an established area.

Note: All eight outcomes must be present for a student to complete the CAS requirement. Some outcomes may be demonstrated many times, in a variety of activities, but completion requires only that there is some evidence for every outcome. (Data taken from IBO CAS Guide.)

Alright, I now have an idea what CAS is; how do I specifically proceed and how do I document my experiences?

1. **CAS notebook.** Start by printing this handbook and placing it in a three-ring binder. The three-ring binder will serve much like a regular class notebook . . . a repository for notes, important information, handouts, etc. You will need the handbook for reference over the next year and a half.
2. **Develop a plan.** Plan your activities and list them (along with contact numbers of the people you will be working with) on a sheet you place in your CAS notebook. Label this sheet, CAS Plan at the top of the page. Planning your activities means you have put some forethought into **why** you are doing them; it is answering this **why** question and **what you learned** from the activities that will make the reflective experience worth-while. It is also what IB requires you to record as part of your CAS requirement.

Your total CAS hours must be distributed between the three categories and eight learning outcomes. You need a minimum of **50 hours in each category**.

Creativity	Action	Service
50 hrs.	50 hrs.	50 hrs.

It is not enough to have 150 total hours if you only have 20 hours recorded for **creativity** and 45 hours of **service**, for example; in the end you must have at least 50 hours in **each** category. Most students will end up doing well over 150 total hours of CAS work. It is common for students to handily get hours in one or two of the categories and “struggle” a bit to get hours in the remaining category. This is why it is important to develop a plan. There is no specific format for this plan or outline other than it must be clear, can be easily understood by someone other than yourself, and that you include it in your notebook.

3. **Do the activities!** This seems simple enough, but do not get behind or put CAS off toward the end of your senior year. The idea behind CAS is that you are continuously working through it while at the same time engaging your studies. Part of your ToK grade will be comprised of showing evidence of your CAS progress.

4. **Record your experiences.** Keep an **electronic journal to record your experiences.** It is not absolutely necessary to use MS Word to do this, but Word is the preferred software (most find this program to be user friendly). Your journal is a running log, so you will be adding to it as you complete activities throughout the school year. Label your electronic journal with your name, current date, etc. (heading information). Later on, you will be putting all of your CAS activities into a web-based system called, CAS Manager (second semester Junior year).

What should go into your electronic journal?

(a) The first page of your journal should be a **CAS summary**, which is a running log of the activities you engage in and complete. The summary should include a short description of each activity (one or two sentences), inclusive dates, and the number of **total** hours you invested for **each** component of CAS. You may want to put this in a table format. This will most likely fit on a single page, but may certainly continue onto a second.

(b) For each activity listed in this summary, you must do a **self-evaluation**. This is the heart of CAS. Give some honest time reflecting about your experience(s) and please give some genuinely considered responses. What you write about is really up to you, but consider answering the following questions as part of your response(s) for each activity:

- Describe the activity and the number of hours in each category (Creativity, Action, Service) you devoted to it. What did you do at each stage? Include dates where relevant.
- What did you hope to accomplish by this activity? What did you actually accomplish?
- What difficulties did you encounter?
- Did you feel at any stage that you were failing to achieve what you wanted from this activity?
- What did you hope to learn from this activity, about yourself, about others, or about academic subjects? (For example: self-confidence, modesty, respect, awareness, responsibility, curiosity, honesty, objectivity, commitment, initiative, determination, new skills and the ability to meet challenges.)
- Did anyone help you during this activity? If so, describe the help given.
- How did this activity benefit other people or institutions?
- What would you change if you did this same activity again?
- What would you like to do next if you could continue with this activity?

It is important to note that these questions are **guiding** questions to help facilitate the writing process; do not feel obligated to answer them in sequential order. You should, however, try to answer each of them, to one measure or another, as part of your self evaluation. Devote no less than one page (single spaced) to each self-evaluation (roughly 300 words).

CAS Logbook for . . . Joe Cool

Summary						
#	Date(s)	Activity	Creativity (hours)	Action (hours)	Service (hours)	Total Hours
1	Fall/ Winter 2007	Fairview Tennis Team		50		50
2	Spring 2007	Tutoring at Southern Hills Middle School			11	11
3	April 14, 2007	Fashion for Compassion			3	3
4	All year	Violin lessons	50			50
5	Spring, 2007 (as of 24 April)	Colorado Junior crew		10		10
Overall totals			50	60	14	124

EXAMPLE

Some students may wish to record aspects of their CAS activities with photographs, video tapes and audio tapes. These can provide a useful reference when completing the formal evaluation reports.

(c) At the end of your CAS activities for the entire diploma program, students must assemble a **final self-evaluation**. This is where you write a critical reflection articulating the benefit and growth you had while engaging the entire CAS experience. Like your individual activity self-evaluations, your final evaluation should be no less than a page (single spaced).

Notes: While assembling your evaluations, keep in mind that CAS has **parity of esteem** with all the other requirements for the award of the IB diploma. For a candidate to meet the CAS requirement fully, his or her records, along with the self-evaluations and school evaluations, must clearly demonstrate quality, balanced content, and genuine commitment. On its own, proof of time spent on CAS is not sufficient.

Remember, your electronic journal is made up of a CAS summary, self-evaluations for each activity, and the final self-evaluation of the overall experience.

Almost done, but not quite

In addition to your electronic journal, there are two additional evaluations that must be done.

Evaluation by Supervising Adults

Each CAS activity you engaged in must have a supervisor or sponsor verify your participation and comment on your performance. This person might be a coach, activity director, or teacher/administrator. Supervising adults are encouraged to write letters to be placed in the student's diary, file or portfolio. Where there is an activity involving many students, a letter or certificate of achievement can be presented to those who have successfully met activity requirements.

To get this done, simply print the Supervisor / Sponsor Evaluation Form, and have the appropriate adult complete and sign it. **Signed copies should be submitted to the IB office.** Remember, one of these forms must be completed for each activity listed in your **CAS summary** (from your electronic journal). Project leaders may email letters to the IB office, but we must have actual signatures (some folks know how to do that).

Final Program CAS Evaluation

Simply put, this is a final assessment made by the Fairview IB office; there is nothing for you to do with this other than making sure you have all the above requirements in order! Schools are required to compile and keep full records of each candidate's CAS performance. These records will facilitate the writing of full evaluation comments for future transcripts, for transferring to another school, and for giving to the regional office upon request. The CAS coordinator (IB office) will make a final, individual evaluation of the performance of each student.



Creativity - Action - Service Supervisor / Sponsor Evaluation Form

Dear activity director/sponsor,

The student listed below is progressing toward the ambitious goal of earning his/her International Baccalaureate Diploma. To earn the diploma, students must engage in a series of activities that involve service to the community and experiential learning, each designed to involve students in both academic and physical pursuits.

Please take a moment to comment about this student's performance with your activity by completing the information below. If you have already assembled some sort of evaluation, letter, or completion certificate we can take that instead. Whatever the case, please ensure a signature is included with your document. Your time in giving a considered response is greatly appreciated!

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Activity name / description: _____

Approximate numbers of hours engaged in this activity: _____

To be completed by the activity/project leader

Punctuality and attendance:

Effort and commitment:

Further comments:

The activity/project was (circle the desired response): Satisfactorily completed | Not satisfactorily completed

Activity/project leader's name: _____

Activity/project leader's signature: _____ Date: _____

Please give this form to the CAS coordinator or IB office when it has been completed.

