

# CAS HANDBOOK

**Creativity, Activity, and Service**

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE  
DIPLOMA PROGRAMME



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“...if you believe in something, you must not just think or talk or write, but must act.”  
(Peterson 2003)

CAS is at the heart of the Diploma Programme. With its holistic approach, CAS is designed to strengthen and extend students' personal and interpersonal learning. CAS is organized around the three strands of creativity, activity and service defined as follows.

- Creativity—exploring and extending ideas leading to an original or interpretive product or performance
- Activity—physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle
- Service—collaborative and reciprocal engagement with the community in response to an authentic need

*-The Creative Action Service Guide (2015)*

As a shining beacon of our values, CAS enables students to demonstrate attributes of the IB learner profile in real and practical ways, to grow as unique individuals and to recognize their role in relation to others. Students develop skills, attitudes and dispositions through a variety of individual and group experiences that provide students with opportunities to explore their interests and express their passions, personalities and perspectives. CAS complements a challenging academic programme in a holistic way, providing opportunities for self-determination, collaboration, accomplishment and enjoyment.

## **Aims of CAS**

The CAS programme aims to develop students who:

- enjoy and find significance in a range of CAS experiences
- purposefully reflect upon their experiences
- identify goals, develop strategies and determine further actions for personal growth
- explore new possibilities, embrace new challenges and adapt to new roles
- actively participate in planned, sustained, and collaborative CAS projects
- understand they are members of local and global communities with responsibilities towards each other and the environment.

## Learning Outcomes

Student completion of CAS is based on the achievement of the seven CAS learning outcomes realized through the student's commitment to his or her CAS programme over a period of 18 months. These learning outcomes articulate what a CAS student is able to do at some point during his or her CAS programme. Through meaningful and purposeful CAS experiences, students develop the necessary skills, attributes and understandings to achieve the seven CAS learning outcomes.

Some learning outcomes may be achieved many times, while others may be achieved less frequently. Not all CAS experiences lead to a CAS learning outcome. Students provide the school with evidence in their CAS portfolio of having achieved each learning outcome at least once through their CAS programme. The CAS coordinator must reach agreement with the student as to what evidence is necessary to demonstrate achievement of each CAS learning outcome. Commonly, the evidence of achieving the seven CAS learning outcomes is found in students' reflections.

In CAS, there are seven learning outcomes.

1. Identify own strengths and develop areas for growth
  - Students are able to see themselves as individuals with various abilities and skills, of which some are more developed than others.
2. Demonstrate that challenges have been undertaken, developing new skills in the process
  - A new challenge may be an unfamiliar experience or an extension of an existing one. The newly acquired or developed skills may be shown through experiences that the student has not previously undertaken or through increased expertise in an established area.
3. Demonstrate how to initiate and plan a CAS experience
  - Students can articulate the stages from conceiving an idea to executing a plan for a CAS experience or series of CAS experiences. This may be accomplished in collaboration with other participants. Students may show their knowledge and awareness by building on a previous experience, or by launching a new idea or process.
4. Show commitment to and perseverance in CAS experiences
  - Students demonstrate regular involvement and active engagement in CAS.
5. Demonstrate the skills and recognize the benefits of working collaboratively
  - Students are able to identify, demonstrate and critically discuss the benefits and challenges of collaboration gained through CAS experiences.
6. Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance
  - Students are able to identify and demonstrate their understanding of global issues, make responsible decisions, and take appropriate action in response to the issue either locally, nationally or internationally.
7. Recognize and consider the ethics of choices and actions
  - Students show awareness of the consequences of choices and actions in planning and carrying out CAS experiences.

## Guidelines to CAS experiences

The CAS coordinator assists students in understanding what may or may not be a CAS experience. There are four guidelines that should be applied to any proposed CAS experience. A CAS experience must:

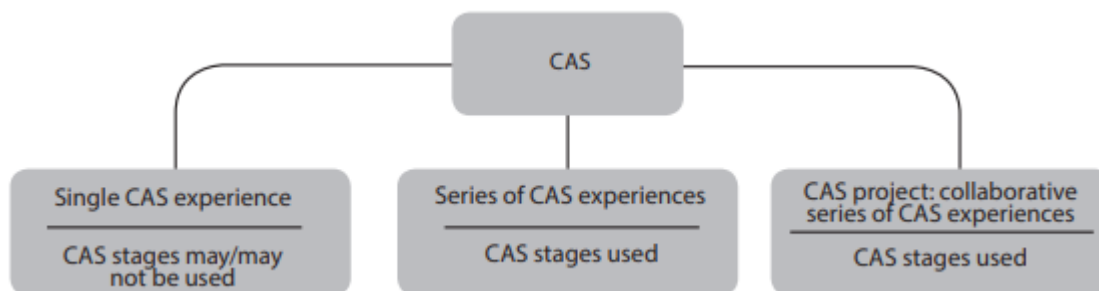
- fit within one or more of the CAS strands
- be based on a personal interest, skill, talent or opportunity for growth
- provide opportunities to develop the attributes of the IB learner profile
- not be used or included in the student's Diploma course requirements

To further assist students in deciding on a CAS experience, the following questions may be useful for students to consider.

- Will the experience be enjoyable?
- Does the experience allow for development of personal interests, skills and/or talents?
- What new possibilities or challenges could the experience provide?
- What might be the possible consequences of your CAS experience for you, others and the environment?
- Which CAS learning outcomes may be addressed? While it is not necessary for each CAS experience to address a CAS learning outcome, upon completion of the CAS programme, CAS students are required to present evidence demonstrating achievement of all CAS learning outcomes.

### The five CAS stages are as follows.

1. **Investigation:** Students identify their interests, skills and talents to be used in considering opportunities for CAS experiences, as well as areas for personal growth and development. Students investigate what they want to do and determine the purpose for their CAS experience. In the case of service, students identify a need they want to address.
2. **Preparation:** Students clarify roles and responsibilities, develop a plan of actions to be taken, identify specified resources and timelines, and acquire any skills as needed to engage in the CAS experience.
3. **Action:** Students implement their idea or plan. This often requires decision-making and problemsolving. Students may work individually, with partners, or in groups.
4. **Reflection:** Students describe what happened, express feelings, generate ideas, and raise questions. Reflection can occur at any time during CAS to further understanding, to assist with revising plans, to learn from the experience, and to make explicit connections between their growth, accomplishments, and the learning outcomes for personal awareness. Reflection may lead to new action.
5. **Demonstration:** Students make explicit what and how they learned and what they have accomplished, for example, by sharing their CAS experience through their CAS portfolio or with others in an informal or formal manner. Through demonstration and communication, students solidify their understanding and evoke response from others.



For **singular CAS experiences**, students may begin with investigation, preparation, or action. For **ongoing CAS experiences**, beginning with investigation is advised. In these ongoing experiences, the action stage may lead students back to investigation or preparation as they further develop, expand and implement new or related ideas. **All CAS projects** must follow the five CAS stages.

## The CAS Project

A CAS project is a **collaborative, well-considered series of sequential CAS experiences**, engaging students in one or more of the CAS strands of creativity, activity, and service. CAS students must be involved in at least one CAS project during their CAS programme.

The primary purpose of the CAS project is to ensure participation in sustained collaboration. Through this level of engagement students may discover the benefits of teamwork and of achievements realized through an exchange of ideas and abilities. A CAS project challenges students to show initiative, demonstrate perseverance, and develop skills such as those of cooperation, problem-solving and decision-making.

A CAS project involves collaboration between a group of students or with members of the wider community. Students work as part of a team, with all members being contributors. A CAS project offers students the opportunity to be responsible for, or to initiate, a part of or the entire CAS project. Working collaboratively also provides opportunities for individual students to enhance and integrate their personal interests, skills and talents into the planning and implementation of CAS projects.

All CAS projects should use the CAS stages as a framework for implementation to ensure that all requirements are met.

A CAS project can address any single strand of CAS, or combine two or all three strands. The following examples are provided to help generate further ideas without limiting the scope and direction of a CAS project.

- Creativity: A student group plans, designs and creates a mural.
- Activity: Students organize and participate in a sports team including training sessions and matches against other teams.
- Service: Students set up and conduct tutoring for people in need.
- Creativity and activity: Students choreograph a routine for their marching band.
- Service and activity: Students plan and participate in the planting and maintenance of a garden with members of the local community.
- Service and creativity: Students identify that children at a local school need backpacks and subsequently design and make the backpacks out of recycled materials.
- Creativity, activity, and service: Students rehearse and perform a dance production for a community retirement home.

All CAS projects are designed with a defined purpose and goals. Individual students identify one or more learning outcomes to further guide their role and responsibilities in the CAS project. Students will likely identify more outcomes, or modify expected outcomes during the CAS project and/or at its completion.

A **minimum of one month** is recommended for a CAS project, from planning to completion. CAS projects of longer duration can provide even greater scope and opportunities for all participants and should be encouraged. Students should aim to undertake their CAS project locally and, if possible, engage in more than one CAS project over the duration of their CAS programme.

As expected throughout CAS, students reflect on their CAS project experience. Due to the collaborative nature of the CAS project, having occasions to reflect with others can prove most informative and assist students in gaining insights into the process of their endeavour as well as personal growth.

## **Responsibilities of a CAS Student**

Key to a student's CAS programme is personal engagement, choice and enjoyment of CAS experiences. Throughout the Diploma Programme students undertake a variety of CAS experiences, ideally on a weekly basis, for a minimum of 18 months. They must also undertake at least one CAS project with a minimum duration of one month. Students reflect on CAS experiences at significant moments throughout CAS and maintain a CAS portfolio. Using evidence from their CAS portfolio, students will demonstrate achievement of the seven CAS learning outcomes to the CAS coordinator's satisfaction. CAS students are expected to:

- approach CAS with a proactive attitude
- develop a clear understanding of CAS expectations and the purpose of CAS
- explore personal values, attitudes and attributes with reference to the IB learner profile and the IB mission statement
- determine personal goals
- discuss plans for CAS experiences with the CAS coordinator and/or CAS adviser
- understand and apply the CAS stages where appropriate
- take part in a variety of experiences, some of which are self-initiated, and at least one CAS project
- become more aware of personal interests, skills and talents and observe how these evolve throughout the CAS programme
- maintain a CAS portfolio and keep records of CAS experiences including evidence of achievement of the seven CAS learning outcomes
- understand the reflection process and identify suitable opportunities to reflect on CAS experiences
- demonstrate accomplishments within their CAS programme
- communicate with the CAS coordinator/adviser and/or CAS supervisor in formal and informal meetings
- ensure a suitable balance between creativity, activity and service in their CAS programme behave appropriately and ethically in their choices and behaviours.

## Completion Requirements

Successful completion of CAS is a requirement for the award of the IB Diploma. While not formally assessed, students reflect on their CAS experiences and provide evidence in their CAS portfolios of achieving the seven learning outcomes.

- The CAS programme formally begins at the start of the Diploma Programme and continues regularly, ideally on a weekly basis, for at least **18 months** with a reasonable balance between creativity, activity, and service.
- All CAS students are expected to maintain and complete a **CAS portfolio** as evidence of their engagement with CAS. The CAS portfolio is a collection of evidence that showcases CAS experiences and for student reflections; it is not formally assessed.
- Completion of CAS is based on student achievement of the seven **CAS learning outcomes**. Through their CAS portfolio, students provide the school with evidence demonstrating achievement of each learning outcome.
- Students engage in **CAS experiences** involving one or more of the three CAS strands. A CAS experience can be a single event or may be an extended series of events.
- Further, students undertake a **CAS project of at least one month's duration** that challenges students to show initiative, demonstrate perseverance, and develop skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, and decision-making. The CAS project can address any single strand of CAS, or combine two or all three strands.
- Students use the **CAS stages (investigation, preparation, action, reflection and demonstration)** as a framework for CAS experiences and the CAS project.
- There are **three formal documented interviews** students must have with their CAS coordinator/adviser. The first interview is at the beginning of the CAS programme, the second at the end of the first year, and the third interview is at the end of the CAS programme.
- CAS emphasizes **reflection** which is central to building a deep and rich experience in CAS. Reflection informs students' learning and growth by allowing students to explore ideas, skills, strengths, limitations and areas for further development and consider how they may use prior learning in new contexts.

## The Portfolio

All CAS students are expected to maintain and complete a CAS portfolio as evidence of their engagement with CAS and achievement of the seven CAS learning outcomes. The CAS portfolio can also reveal how students have developed the attributes of the IB learner profile. All DP students will join a Canvas course to access required forms and submit their portfolio. Due dates will be available on the Canvas calendar.

The CAS portfolio is used by students to plan their CAS programme, reflect on their CAS experiences and gather evidence of involvement in CAS; it is not formally assessed. The CAS coordinator/adviser must ensure the students keep their CAS portfolio up-to-date and relevant as it is a summation of their CAS programme. It could also be a valuable addition to a student's resume for a prospective employer or educational institution.

During the three scheduled CAS interviews the CAS portfolio is discussed and appropriate encouragement and advice is given. Notes and recommendations from these consultations should be briefly documented and included in the student's CAS portfolio. If any concerns arise, especially on whether a student will successfully complete CAS, these should be noted in the CAS portfolio and appropriate action taken at the earliest opportunity.

The CAS coordinator/adviser checks the CAS portfolio regularly. The CAS portfolio is used to showcase the student's CAS programme and should be a source of pride for the student. While the IB does not require any particular format for the CAS portfolio, a three-part portfolio may appeal to students and CAS coordinators and could include the following sections: "Profile", "Experiences", and "Evidence". Each section would be intended to assist students to better understand their engagement with CAS, reflect on their experiences, and provide evidence of their experiences.

- **Profile:** In this section, students include their interests, skills and talents, plans and goals for their CAS programme. At the start of CAS, students map their interests against the three strands of CAS to identify possible CAS experiences. A consideration of how a student's personal value system aligns with the values expressed by the IB, with a particular focus on the IB learner profile, could also be included when developing a student profile. In addition, developing an awareness of themselves in relation to the CAS learning outcomes is a significant part of the profile. Through an understanding of the CAS aims and learning outcomes, students will be able to identify both short-term and long-term goals in their CAS programme.
- **Experiences:** This section chronicles the student's journey in CAS, incorporating a variety of reflections, learning moments, personal achievements, and how they have utilized the CAS stages. This section would demonstrate that the student has actively engaged in his or her individual CAS programme. All throughout CAS, students can add their reflections regarding their ongoing personal development and self-awareness. **It is strongly suggested that students highlight evidence of a learning outcome in any written reflection.**
- **Evidence:** In this section, students collect the evidence of their involvement and achievements in CAS. Evidence could include, but is not limited to, planning documents, letters, emails, certificates, acknowledgments of participation and achievements, photographs, videos, and so on. Students could correlate their involvement with the CAS learning outcomes and may extend their thoughts to future ambitions within and outside the CAS programme.



## Reflection

Reflection is central to building a deep and rich experience in CAS. Developing a culture of reflection helps students recognize and understand how to be reflective as well as deciding the best methods and appropriate timing. Student learning is enhanced by reflection on choices and actions. This enables students to grow in their ability to explore skills, strengths, limitations and areas for further development. Through reflection students examine ideas and consider how they might use prior learning in new contexts. Reflection leads to improved problem-solving, higher cognitive processes and greater depth of understanding in addition to exploring how CAS experiences may influence future possibilities.

Purposeful reflection is about quality rather than quantity. The appropriate occasion, amount and method is the student's decision. Students are not expected to reflect on every CAS experience; they should identify moments worthy of reflection. Reflection is most meaningful when recognized as a personal choice. If the emphasis is on quantity with a required number of reflections or with a requirement such as "students must complete a reflection for every CAS experience", reflection becomes an obligation, which is contrary to the purpose of reflection in CAS. The preferred emphasis is for the student to determine key moments during CAS experiences that inspire reflection.

The following approaches may be helpful.

- Students choose significant moments as the basis for reflection, for example when:
  - a moment of discovery is happening
  - a skill is mastered
  - a challenge is confronted
  - emotions are provoked
  - achievement deserves celebration.
- Students reflect during or at the end of a CAS experience or series of CAS experiences, to identify important moments, discuss a possible learning outcome, recognize personal growth and achievements, and plan for their next CAS experience.
- Students engage in group reflection with their peers to discover shared insights.
- Students reflect at the beginning, during, and at the end of a series of CAS experiences.

This enables students to deliberate on such elements as planning, opportunities, expectations, challenges, progress, and personal growth. Reflection offers students opportunities to understand the concept, process and value of CAS experiences. With experiences that add meaning and self-knowledge, students can adapt, adopt and integrate reflection into a lifelong practice.

The CAS coordinator will explain to all students at the beginning of their CAS programs the importance of regular self-evaluation.

All junior candidates are required to meet with the CAS coordinator two (2) times during the year. All seniors must meet once with the CAS coordinator first semester and then an exit interview.

The CAS Coordinator will maintain records of all CAS activities. Reflections will be written or recorded every nine weeks. These pieces will be kept in the CAS portfolio.

## Types of Reflection

Different kinds of reflection work for different people. Reflection can be:

- Public or private
- Individual or shared
- Objective or subjective.

Students generally write their reflections. But writing is by no means the only possible outcome of reflection. Students can present their activities orally to peers, parents or outsiders. They can make

scrapbooks, photo essays, videos/DVDs or weblogs. They can use journals or make up varied portfolios. Or they may sometimes simply reflect privately: some of the most important lessons may be very personal ones that students should be allowed to keep to themselves.

### **Developing a Reflection**

Reflection should not just include what you did. Experiential learners might consider, where appropriate, for themselves and others, and for each stage of an activity (before, during and after):

- How they felt
- What they perceived
- What they thought about the activity
- What the activity meant to them
- What the value of the activity was
- What they learned from the activity and how this learning (for example, a change of perspective) might apply more widely.

## CAS Reporting Timelines/Schedule

All DP students will join a Canvas course to access required forms and submit their portfolio. Due dates will be available on the Canvas calendar.

Year and phase	Expectations	Student requirements	Evidence
DP year 1 MP 1	CAS planning and completion of proposal	Students discuss proposal with CAS coordinator and parents	Proposal approved and signed by student, parents, and CAS coordinator
DP year 1 End of MP 1	CAS experiences begun	Students have engaged in CAS experiences.	Progress comment on term 1 academic report
DP year 1 End of Semester 1	Some CAS experiences completed	Some CAS experiences are finalized, including reflections, evidence and supervisor reports if available.	Completion of reflections and gathering of evidence
	CAS reporting	Student interviews with CAS coordinator/adviser to discuss progress. Coordinator/adviser and student complete CAS checklist.	Progress comment on semester 1 academic report
DP year 1 End of Semester 2	Project under way	Students show evidence of planning and progress on project.	Completion of reflections and gathering of evidence
	Further CAS experiences completed	Further CAS experiences are finalized, including reflections, evidence and supervisor reports if available.	Completion of reflections and gathering of evidence
	CAS reporting	Student interviews with CAS coordinator/adviser to discuss progress. Coordinator/adviser and student complete CAS checklist.	Progress comment on semester 2 academic report; letter home to parents if unsatisfactory
DP year 2 End of Semester 1	Project and most CAS experiences completed; progress	Project and most CAS experiences are finalized. Significant progress on	Progress comment on semester 1 term 1 academic report;

	evident on final CAS experiences	remaining CAS experiences is evident.	letter home to parents if unsatisfactory
	Final CAS experiences completed	CAS experiences are finalized, including reflections, evidence and supervisor reports if available.	Completion of reflections and gathering of evidence
	Final CAS reporting	CAS adviser reports on CAS completion.	Completion comment on semester 1 academic report; letter to parents if unsatisfactory
DP year 2 MP 3 Week 5	Official CAS sign-off	<p>CAS project and all CAS experiences are complete, including: all reflections, all evidence and supervisor reports where available.</p> <p>Note: CAS coordinator/adviser signs off CAS portfolio using the CAS checklist. The CAS coordinator compiles a list of students whose portfolios are unsatisfactory and follows up until complete.</p>	Completion of reflections and gathering of evidence; letter home to parents again if student CAS portfolio is unsatisfactory, with warning about IB Diploma now being “at risk”