

IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME (IBDP)



HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE (HSC)

A holistic, well-rounded, globally focused, rigorous curriculum.

Flexibility for graduates in terms of global university admissions.

Widely recognised by universities in Australia and internationally.

An interdisciplinary approach promotes critical thinking, independence, and student agency, with a global perspective built into subjects.

Students are not impacted by school-based internal assessment rankings. Other students' rankings at school or in the country do not influence the final grades awarded.

Designed from conception as a pre-university course.

Multiple studies indicated that DP students are more prepared for university (e.g. Lee et al. 2017)



Key Strengths

Allows for a more specialised approach to course selection.

For example you could do three arts subjects.

Familiar and established curriculum recognised nationally and can be converted to be recognised internationally.

A combination of school-based assessment, Major Work, Bodies of Work and performance/practical assessments and final exams.

6 Subjects across 2 years

One from each subject group, as well as engagement in the Core (Theory of Knowledge, Creativity, Activity, Service and Extended Essay).

Out of the 6 subjects, students select 3 to study more deeply at Higher Level and 3 at Standard Level to allow greater focus on the HL subjects.



Curriculum Structure

Must complete at least 12 units of preliminary courses and at least 10 units of HSC courses, including English.

Most courses are worth 2 units, so typically in Year 11 students study 6 subjects and continue with 5 or 6 of these in Year 12. A few students pick up more subjects with multiple extension subjects. Extension subjects are aimed at university preparation.

Students have flexibility and agency in every course.

For example, the texts they choose to use in English courses for each component of the assessment of the course. Internal Assessments allow students personal choice in topic and exploration. The Extended Essay is in an area of study selected by the student.



Student Agency

Students have agency in a range of courses.

For example, Major Works in English Extension 2, History Extension, Science Extension, Design and Technology, IT Multimedia, Music and Visual Arts. Performance pieces are created for Music and Drama.

Recognised by over 5000 Universities worldwide in over 100 countries, including Australia.



University Recognition

All Australian universities, and some international universities, accept the HSC.

Specific entry requirements and ATAR cut-offs vary by institution and course. Most international universities will accept ATAR and HSC but often this is as a result of a conversion software (e.g. HSC to GPA or HSC to O levels).

A wide range of subjects that support the breadth of knowledge and a holistic education.



Subject Range

A wide range of subjects are available.

Also allowing for specialisation in a particular area e.g. 3 science courses. The HSC allows for students with a disability or learning concerns to complete a life skills course. HSC offers a larger range of subjects than the DP.

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It is compulsory to take a subject in each group of the programme, including Maths and an additional language.

Group 6, the Arts, can be used to take subjects in some of the other groups.



Compulsory Subjects

English is the only compulsory subject.

Three subjects have to be studied at Higher Level.

This allows an in-depth exploration of the subject, with some elements of university level learning. The Extended Essay provides students with an opportunity to engage in deep level research.



Extension and Stretch

Students may opt to take Extension subjects.

For example History, which is a good opportunity to develop in areas of personal interest and provide an academic challenge.

All subjects count towards your DP score.

You cannot drop subjects after week 4 of term 1 in Year 11



What Counts?

Your best 10 units count.

You can drop some units after a conversation about your package.

Students are not ranked against their peers.

No percentile ranking or comparative scaling is applied across the cohort.



Ranking

Students are ranked in each subject against their peers.

Subjects are assessed through a combination of internal assessments and external assessments.

Most subjects have one internal assessment across the two years that contributes generally 20% towards the final DP grade for that subject. The Arts courses tend to vary, and Visual Arts for example, has no final examination, but instead is more portfolio-based.



Assessment

Final examination marks only contribute to 50% of a student's final mark.

Students earn marks for the other 50% throughout the year through school-set tasks such as examinations, as well as practical and performance results.

The DP is taught as a 2-year programme.



Length

The HSC is taught over 1 year.

In Year 11, Students must complete 100 hours in each subject in the Preliminary HSC course before they can enrol in HSC courses. Year 11 is seen as a Preliminary Course to prepare for HSC.

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Develops globally minded thinkers.

Examples and case studies are by design to cater for a global market and interest, to produce globally minded, active citizens. The curriculum is set to provoke and develop a wide range of perspectives.



Perspective

Courses include an Australian-centred perspective, although many courses cover global issues.

Students performance in subjects are graded on a 1-7 scale, with 7 being the highest.

The TOK course and Extended Essay are awarded A-E grades and then converted into a bonus point score out of 3 to add to the overall DP score out of 45.



Grading

Final HSC marks fall into one of six performance bands, with Band 6 representing the highest level of achievement.

The HSC mark for each course is calculated as a 50:50 combination of a student's school-based assessment mark and their external HSC examination mark. The school assessment mark reflects student performance in assignments and tasks throughout the year, while the exam mark is based on students' performance in the final, Board-set exam. Both marks contribute equally to the final HSC mark.

Students get an ATAR Conversion called an IBAS.

This is the DP score out of 45 plus additional information provided by the IB based on a student's precise position within each grade band across their six subjects awards students an IBAS (International Baccalaureate Admissions Score) which is used to obtain an ATAR-like rank, to allow IB Diploma students to be considered for tertiary places alongside their counterparts who have completed state curricula.



ATAR

Students are awarded an ATAR.

An ATAR is a ranking that can be used to gain entry to a university in Australia, and if going overseas, can be converted into a system of recognition at many Universities. The Student ATAR is based on the student's best 10 units completed for the HSC.

Leads to the award of the IB Diploma.



Qualification

Leads to the award of the NSW Higher School Certificate.

DP students are equally eligible for adjustment factors as their HSC peers.

Some universities offer recognition credit for learning completed in DP courses towards university courses.

Subjects that would be eligible for subject bonus points in the HSC, if the DP has a comparable subject and level, are also eligible for these subject bonus points. Adjustment points can also come from EAS (for disadvantaged students).

Scholarships and early entry are available to HSC and DP students. The school's recommendation scheme is also available to both HSC and DP students.



University Benefits

HSC students are equally eligible for adjustment factors as their DP peers.

Students usually have to achieve the equivalent of an HSC Band 5 or 6 to be eligible for subject adjustments. Adjustment points can also come from EAS (for disadvantaged students).

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As the DP is a pre-university course, it does not allow for vocational study as part of its package.



Vocational Study Options

HSC has options for vocational study.

HSC offers VET courses at Tara (e.g. VET Hospitality) and allows students to study a course externally for vocational reasons through TAFE and external providers.

Not just an academic programme.

The DP has the requirement for engagement with Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) built in, so it develops deep experiential learning and reflection.



Additional Requirements

There is no requirement to engage in service activities or other non-subject related components.

The Extended Essay

A personal research report, is a requirement for all DP students. It is excellent preparation for university.



University Style Research

Students can opt to include in their package Extension subjects that have a personal interest focus.

These subjects aim to prepare students for university studies in these courses.

Collaborative non-assessed requirement for all DP students.

All science students (e.g., Bio, Chem, Physics, SEHS) come together for a day to work on a real-world project through the lens of their own discipline.



Collaborative Science Project

Some depth study courses allow for some collaboration as part of the assessment task, and each individual is marked separately.

For more information on the IB Diploma Programme click below

<https://www.ibo.org/programmes/diploma-programme/>

For more information on the HSC Program click below

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/nesa/hsc/subject-selection/courses>

For more information on University admissions in Australia click below

<https://www.uac.edu.au/>