

CREATIVITY - ACTION - SERVICE

HANDBOOK

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Sebastian River High School

International Baccalaureate Programs

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www.srhsib.org

CAS is at the center of the Diploma Program. CAS stands for creativity, action and service.

Creativity: arts, and other experiences that involve creative thinking.

Action: physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle.

Service: an unpaid and voluntary activity that has a *learning benefit* for the student.

Students must complete and reflect upon at least 150 hours in total, with an equal distribution between creativity, action, and service. Most CAS activities should continue on a regular basis for as long as possible throughout the programme, and certainly for **at least 18 months**. It is the **experience** and the **reflection** upon the experience that counts, not merely the logging of hours.

All CAS activities must involve:

- Real, purposeful activities with significant outcomes
- Personal challenge – tasks must extend the student and be achievable in scope
- Thoughtful consideration, such as planning, reviewing progress, reporting
- Reflection on outcomes and personal learning

Four Questions to Consider When Selecting Any CAS Activity

1. How is this activity a personal challenge for you?
2. How will this activity extend you and is it reasonable?
3. What personal learning will this activity offer you?
4. Which learning outcomes will you achieve during this activity?

THE IB CAS PROJECT

Students should be involved in at least one project **involving teamwork** that **integrates two or more of creativity, action and service**, and is of **significant duration**. Larger scale activities of this sort may provide excellent opportunities for students to engage “with issues of global importance”.

From time to time, in line with its mission statement, the IB may identify broad themes that schools are invited to support (“Sharing our humanity” is the first of these). Such themes may provide a context that will enable students to generalize further in their reflections, following the maxim “Think globally, act locally”. Other possible sources of organizing themes or concepts, which schools may wish to consult, include the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals (www.un.org/millenniumgoals/) and various websites dealing with global issues (enter “global issues” in a search engine). As with any Internet sources, some of these websites are more reputable and/or credible than others.

IB Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. IB learners strive to be:

Inquirers	They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.
Knowledgeable	They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.
Thinkers	They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.
Communicators	They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.
Principled	They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.
Open-minded	They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.
Caring	They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.
Risk-takers	They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.
Balanced	They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.
Reflective	They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their

learning and personal development.

Learning Outcomes

As a result of their CAS experience as a whole, including their reflections, there should be evidence that students have:

1. **increased their awareness of their own strengths and areas for growth** - They 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.
2. **undertaken new challenges** - A new challenge may be an unfamiliar activity, or an extension to an existing one.
3. **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.
4. **worked 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.
5. **shown perseverance and commitment in their activities** - 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.
6. **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).
7. **considered the ethical implications of their actions** - 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.
8. **developed 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.

All eight outcomes must be present for a student to complete the CAS requirement. Some may be demonstrated many times, in a variety of activities, but completion requires only that there is **some** evidence for every outcome.

This focus on learning outcomes emphasizes that it is the quality of a CAS activity (its contribution to the student's development) that is of most importance. The guideline for the minimum amount of CAS activity is approximately the equivalent of half a day per school week (three to four hours per week), or approximately 150 hours in total, with a reasonable balance between creativity, action and service.

Responsibilities of the Student

The relevant section of the IB *Programme standards and practices* document states that students should have opportunities to choose their own CAS activities and to undertake activities in a local and international context as appropriate. This means that, as far as possible, students should "own" their personal CAS programmes. With guidance from their mentors/advisers, students should choose activities for themselves, initiating new ones where appropriate.

Students are **required** to:

- self review at the beginning of their CAS experience and set personal goals for what they hope to achieve through their CAS programme
- plan, do and reflect (plan activities, carry them out and reflect on what they have learned)
- undertake at least one interim review and a final review with their CAS adviser
- take part in a range of activities, including at least one project, some of which they have initiated themselves

- keep records of their activities and achievements, including a list of the principal activities undertaken
- show evidence of achievement of the eight CAS learning outcomes.

Creativity

Creativity must result in a product. In other words, you must create something. Creativity can also occur when you're designing or initiating your own community based action from its inception to the conclusion.

This can present something of a challenge where, for example, a student is a dedicated musician or artist. Something that is both a pleasure and a passion for the student can be considered part of the CAS experience.

Appropriate CAS activities are not merely “more of the same” – more practice, more concerts, more time spent on the same activity. Appropriate CAS activities may expand upon the existing skills and interests of the student. For example, the instrumental musician can learn a particularly difficult piece, or a different type of playing in order to perform for an audience. Do not include practice or work required by any IB course.

Creative activities should have a definite goal or outcome. This can present something of a challenge where, for example, a student is a dedicated instrumental musician. It would be artificial to rule that something that is both a pleasure and a passion for the student could not be considered part of their CAS experience. How, though, can it help to fulfill CAS learning outcomes? It may be useful to refer back to the section “The nature of creativity, action, service”, particularly to the second principle: personal challenge—tasks must extend the student and be achievable in scope.

Perhaps the instrumental musician can learn a particularly difficult piece, or a different style of playing, in order to perform for an audience. The context might be a fund-raising activity, or the student might give a talk to younger children about the instrument, with musical illustrations. Appropriate CAS activities are not merely “more of the same”—more practice, more concerts with the school band, and so on. This excludes, for example, routine practice performed by IB music or dance students (as noted earlier), but does not exclude music, dance or art activities that these students are involved with outside the Diploma Programme subject coursework.

Action

Action can be physical activity, including sports teams, building or painting a house, beach cleanup, planting trees, or marching band. It can also include creativity in “taking action,” such as undertaking a charity event, project, or chairing a committee.

An outstanding athlete will not stop training and practicing in order to engage in some arbitrary, invented CAS physical activity. Setting goals, planning, and reflecting on achievement is vital. The student should be “extending” skills and knowledge to others, possibly taking a leadership role. If the chosen sport is entirely individual, perhaps a team game could be attempted. Excellent “action” activities are not sporting or competitive, but involve physical challenge by demanding endurance (such as long-distance trekking) or the conquest of personal fears (for example, swimming lessons). Some excellent “action” activities are not sporting or competitive but involve physical challenge by demanding endurance (such as long-distance trekking) or the conquest of personal fears (for example, rock climbing). It is important that schools carefully assess the risks involved in such activities.

Alternatively, a student's "action" may be physical exertion as part of a service activity, perhaps in a project as outlined in the section "Projects, themes, concepts".

Service

Service must be performed for no payment, credit or in fulfillment of any obligation. It must be performed on your "own" time, that is not during school time. Service must be at a not-for-profit organization that benefits the entire community. You may not simply "volunteer" to work for a business, doctor's office, etc.

It is essential that service activities have learning benefits for the student. Otherwise, they are not experiential learning (hence not CAS) and have no particular claim on students' time. This rules out mundane, repetitive activities, as well as "service" without real responsibility. A learning benefit that enriches the student personally is in no way inconsistent with the requirement that service be unpaid and voluntary.

It is desirable that students, rather than teachers, initiate the service activity. This is in accordance with the greater expectations of autonomy and maturity in Diploma Programme students.

Guidelines for some specific CAS activities

Religious activity

In some parts of the world religious observance is illegal in the school curriculum; in others it is compulsory. It is recognized that this is a sensitive and difficult area. Nevertheless, the general rule is that religious devotion, and any activity that can be interpreted as proselytizing, does not count as CAS.

Some relevant guiding principles are that CAS activities should enlarge students' experience, encourage them towards greater understanding of people from different social or cultural backgrounds and include specific goals. By these criteria, work done by a religious group in the wider community, provided that the objectives are clearly secular, may qualify as CAS.

If a religious activity addresses learning outcomes (such as some summer mission trips), those outcomes are the focus. The parts of a mission trip that involve serving a community are CAS. The parts of a mission trip that involve proselytizing are not CAS. If the activity is singing religious songs, either during the service or to religious groups, this is not CAS even if a new skill is being learned.

Political activity

A CAS activity cannot be something that inherently causes division between people. Activities that support a specific political party or candidate do not count for CAS. An example of a political party or candidate specific activity would be volunteering in the Republican or Democratic campaign office.

Activities that are nonpartisan and non-candidate specific do count for CAS. An example of a nonpartisan/non-candidate specific activity would be volunteering at your local Elections Office to promote a voter registration drive.

Course requirements

Any class, activity or project which is already part of the student's academic requirement is not CAS (you can't do both: get grades and get CAS). For example, if your Drama course requires that you have a role in a class play and your participation will impact your grade it does not count for CAS.

School day events

CAS activities cannot take place during the school day. An example would be a band student playing at a pep rally. Although there may not be a grade impacted by their participation it takes place during the school day therefore it does not count for CAS.

What is not CAS?

If CAS becomes a points-scoring exercise, rather than an interesting variety of activities that the students finds intrinsically worthwhile and rewarding, and which is mutually beneficial to the student and to his or her community, then its purpose is lost. It is important that the spirit of CAS be considered at all times.

Generally, CAS is not taking place when the student is in a passive rather than an active role. There should be interaction. If the student is passive, nothing of real value, either for the student or for other people, results from what the student is doing, and no real reflection is possible. In such circumstances the student will be able to meet the learning outcomes of CAS only to a very limited extent.

Examples of activities which would not be appropriate for CAS are listed below.

- Any class, activity or project which is already part of the student's Diploma Programme.
- An activity for which a student is personally rewarded either financially or with some other benefit (unless this benefit is passed on in full to a worthy cause).
- Doing simple, tedious and repetitive work, like returning library books to the shelves.
- Working in senior or children's home when the student:
 - Has no idea of how the home operates
 - Is just making sandwiches
 - Has no contact at all with the senior citizens or children
 - Actually does no service for other people.
- A passive pursuit, such as a visit to a museum, the theatre, art exhibition, concert or sports event, unless it clearly inspires work in a related activity in which a student is already engaged.
- All forms of duty within the family.
- Religious devotion and any activity which can be interpreted as proselytizing.
- Work experience which only benefits the student.
- Fund-raising with no clearly defined end in sight.
- An activity where there is no leader, supervisor or responsible adult on site to evaluate and confirm student performance. (The parent of the student can not evaluate the student's performance)
- Activities which cause division amongst different groups in the community.

Creativity, Action, and Service Opportunities

It is the intent of IB to foster a lifelong commitment in CAS philosophy. It is the responsibility of the IB student to take the initiative and pursue activities which interest them. The CAS Coordinator can guide students, but can not make direct referrals to specific organizations. The following are suggestions to help students think about the multitude of opportunities in which they could be involved

Creativity

- Art gallery / museum volunteer
- Arts and crafts camp volunteer
- Band
- Chess Club
- Chorus
- Drama: Drama club, Theater productions, Tech crew
- Instrument lessons (learning or teaching)
- Inlet Magazine or Legacy Yearbook
- Web page design for an organization or group

Action

- Community Clean-up / Beautification
- Habitat for Humanity
- Little League Coaches, Referees and Umpires
- Martial Arts
- Participation on an organized sports team
- Race for the Cure
- Relay for Life
- Special Olympics
- Volunteer Lifeguard
- Walking, running, hiking, biking with an organization (Ex: Boy Scouts of America)
- Yoga Lessons

Service

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| • American Cancer Society | • Meals on Wheels |
| • American Diabetes Association | • National Multiple Sclerosis Society |
| • American Heart Association | • Peer Tutoring (set up through guidance) |
| • American Lung Association | • Public Library Volunteer |
| • American Red Cross | • SADD |
| • Big Brothers / Big Sisters | • Salvation Army |
| • Environmental Clean-up | • Soup Kitchens |
| • Girl / Boy Scouts | • Special Olympics |
| • Goodwill Industries | • Retirement and Elder Care |
| • Habitat for Humanity | • Ronald McDonald House |
| • Hospice | • Tutoring at Middle / Elementary Schools |
| • Non-profit Summer Camp Volunteer | • United Way |
| • Hospital Volunteer | |
| • Vero Beach Humane Society | |
| • Leukemia & Lymphoma Society | |
| • Local Library | |
| • Make-A-Wish Foundation | |
| • March of Dimes | |