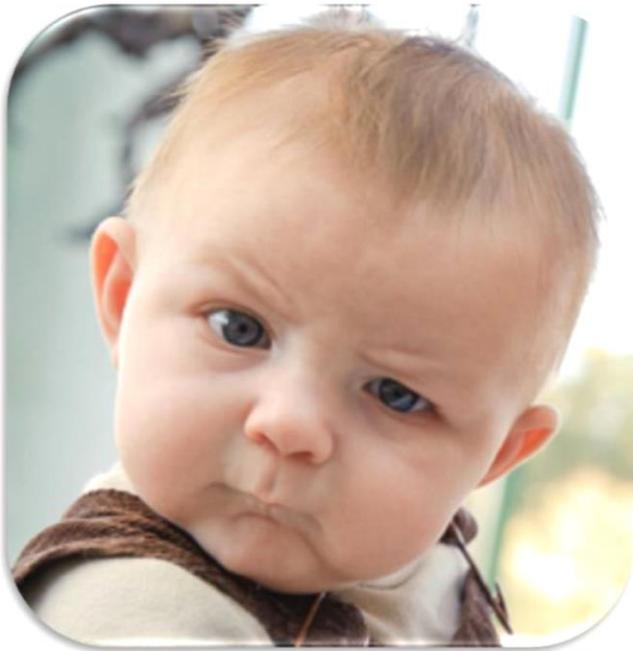




CAS at I.E. Weldon

You mean to tell me...



....you don't know what CAS is?

...only if you don't know what CAS is





CAS at I.E. Weldon



Welcome to CAS!

The Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) diploma requirement takes seriously the importance of life outside the world of scholarship. It recognizes that for life to be meaningful and fulfilling there needs to be a balance between academic pursuits and the necessity of interacting with the world around us that exists outside of school. CAS encourages students to experience personal growth and while on this journey, explore and share with the broader community. Open-mindedness, life-long learning, discovery, and self-reliance are the key concepts of CAS. Students are expected to complete their CAS activities and reporting requirements between September of Grade 11 and March of Grade 12. It is important to understand that CAS is not graded traditionally. Diploma students will be assessed as “Complete” or “Incomplete” with regards to their CAS requirement. As it is a requirement for achieving the Full IB Diploma, students receiving an “incomplete” will NOT be awarded the Full IB Diploma.

Learning outcomes of the CAS program:

The nature of CAS - For student development to occur, CAS activities need to 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.

All proposed CAS activities need to meet these four criteria. It is also essential that they do not replicate other parts of the student's Diploma Programme work.

The seven learning outcomes below are the backbone of the CAS experience. As a result of their CAS experience as a whole, including their reflections, there must be evidence that students have:

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. ***At least one project, involving collaboration and the integration of at least two of creativity, activity and service, is required.***

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.

NOTE: All seven 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. The completion decision for the school in relation to each student is, simply, “Have these outcomes been achieved?”

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. “Hour counting”, however, is not encouraged. (*Creativity, Activity, Service guide*)

What are the three elements of CAS?

CAS is a framework for experiential learning designed to involve students in **NEW** roles and to reflect on these roles and their effects. When exploring what activities might work for the CAS program, ask yourself if they address the criteria described in the *Learning Outcomes of the CAS Program* section above. Keep in mind that it is essential that activities do not replicate other parts of the student’s Diploma Programme work. Appropriate CAS activities are not merely “more of the same” *i.e.* more practice, more concerts with the school band, and so on.

Creativity – This is designed to cover a wide range of arts and other activities, preferably in groups, such as dance, theatre, design, photography, music, and visual arts. An important point to note is that it can include the creative aspect of designing and carrying out service projects. Creative activities should have a definite goal or outcome.

Activity – This aspect of CAS deals with the need for physical activity. It includes sports and fitness activities as but can be complete in a broader sense as well. In the case of athletics, setting goals, planning and reflection on achievement, is vital. “Extending” the student may be shown passing on skills and knowledge to others. If their chosen sport is entirely individual, perhaps they should try a team game, in order to experience the different pleasures and rewards this can offer. Some excellent 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 or learning to swim). Alternatively, a student’s activity may be physical exertion as part of a service activity such as involvement in walk-a-thons.

Service – This aspect of CAS generally covers traditional volunteer work. 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 beyond. Service activities should not only involve doing things for others, but also *with* others. It is essential that service activities have learning benefits for the student. Otherwise, they are not experiential learning (hence not CAS).

Range and diversity of activities

All students should be involved in CAS activities that they have initiated themselves. Other CAS activities may be initiated by the school. Activities should vary in length and in the amount of commitment required from the student, but none should be trivial. In line with the aim of CAS to broaden students’ experience during their Diploma Programme years, work that is part of a student’s study of a Diploma Programme subject, theory of knowledge or extended essay may not be counted towards CAS. This excludes, for example, routine practice performed by IB music or dance students. However, where students undertake activities that follow CAS guidelines (for example, by meeting CAS learning outcomes and including student initiative or choice), the fact that these activities also satisfy the requirements of a state qualification or of another award scheme does not prevent them from being counted towards CAS. The idea of CAS is to ensure that students have a balanced, fulfilling overall experience; it is not to overload students who are already participating in a very demanding academic schedule.

A couple of points to note:

Political activity

The IB has no view on whether or not it is appropriate for students to be involved in political activities as part of their educational experience. Views on this vary considerably in different cultural contexts, so it is a matter for decision at local or school level. However, where such activity is locally sanctioned, there is a question about whether or not it may qualify as CAS. It may be relevant to consider the following factors.

- Is the activity safe and secure, given the local circumstances?
- Is it an activity that will cause, or worsen, social divisions?
- Where are the learning opportunities for the students involved?

The general principle, sketched out in the section “The nature of creativity, activity, service”, that the “rights, dignity and autonomy of all those involved [in service activities] are respected”, means, among other things, that the identification of needs, towards which a service activity will be directed, has to involve prior communication and full consultation with the community or individual concerned. This approach, based on a collaborative exchange, maximizes both the potential benefits to the recipients and the learning opportunities for the students.

Ideally, such prior communication and consultation will be face-to-face and will involve the students themselves. Where this is not possible, schools need to work with appropriate partners or intermediaries, such as NGOs (non-governmental organizations), and make every effort to ensure both that the service provided is appropriate, and that the students are able to understand the human consequences of their work, for both individuals and communities. (*Taken from CAS Syllabus IBO 2008 7*)

Religious activity

Some of the same concerns apply here as with political activity. For example, 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. Another key issue is whether students are able to make choices and use their initiative. In contrast, service (even of a secular nature) that takes place entirely within a religious community can at best only partially meet the aims and learning outcomes of CAS, so there would need to be evidence from students' other activities that all the required outcomes had been met. CAS advisers who are faced with difficult questions in this area may find it helpful to ask students which of the CAS learning outcomes their proposed activity would meet, and how it might be possible to strengthen it in terms of CAS requirements. Activities may be very valuable to students as members of a religious community but nevertheless contribute little in terms of experiential learning. (*Taken from CAS Syllabus IBO 2008 8*)

Evaluation

The most important aspect of evaluation is self-evaluation by the student. The school will provide students with formative feedback on progress and offer guidance on future activities. The school also makes the final decision on completion, which is reported to the IB regional office. There is no other assessment of student performance in CAS. The IB regional office systematically monitors school CAS programmes and provides feedback to the school. (*Taken from CAS Syllabus IBO 2008 3*)