ST. PAUL'S CO-EDUCATIONAL COLLEGE

2025 - 2026
Form Three
An Introduction to the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme

Dear Parents and Students,

SPCC offers the HKDSE and the IBDP curricula in parallel. This information booklet sets out to provide a general introduction to the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) and other issues relevant to its implementation at SPCC. Briefing sessions will be hosted at school for you to understand the application process for the F.4 Preparatory Year. We hope that by doing so, that we will be able to assist you and your child to make an informed choice in Form 3 on which curriculum to follow in F.4 and thereafter.

Inside this booklet you will find an overview of the IBDP curriculum structure, a brief course description of our Preparatory Year programme and answers to questions frequently asked about the programme.

Yours sincerely,

Belinda Ng.

Ms. Belinda Ng
IB Coordinator

Contents

Mission Statement of St. Paul's Co-educational College	5
Mission Statement of the International Baccalaureate (IB)	5
History of the IB	5
The Educational Programmes of the IB	6
The Rationale for SPCC to offer the IBDP	6
The IB Learner Profile and Approaches to Teaching and Learning	6-7
The IB Diploma Programme Model	8
Subject Areas of the IBDP	9
The Dual Curricula Structure at SPCC	10
An Overview of the IBDP Curriculum Structure at SPCC	11-12
General Mode of Assessment of the IBDP	13
The General Grade Descriptors	14
Award of the Diploma	15
General Information on the F.4 Preparatory Year	16
Subjects Offered in the F.4 Preparatory Year:	
English	17-18
中國語文	19-20
Mathematics	21-22
Biology	23
Chemistry	24
Physics	25-26
Economics	27
Geography	28-29
History	30-31
Environmental Studies	32-33

Psychology 34-35
Music 36-37
Visual Arts 38-39
Independent Learning and Thinking (ILT) 40
Experiential Learning (PYEL) 41
General Assessment Policy of the F.4 Preparatory Year 42
Admission Procedures for the F.4 Preparatory Year 43
Frequently Asked Questions 44-45

Mission Statement of St. Paul's Co-educational College

1. To uphold the founding Christian spirit of our schools: 'Faith, Hope and Love'.
2. To nurture academic excellence and lifelong learning.
3. To cultivate exemplary conduct, proper attitudes.
4. To develop an appreciation for the arts and competence in other activities.
5. To develop a global perspective, foster environment stewardship and serve humanity.
6. To advocate strong communication and interpersonal skills to promote harmony, mutual respect, appreciation and peace among humankind.
7. To adopt a shared and inclusive governance model.
8. To provide the best possible facilities and environment conducive to studies.
9. To maintain a professional and caring academic and administrative staff.

Mission Statement of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IB)

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.

History of the IB

Founded in 1968 in Geneva, Switzerland, the IB is a non-profit education foundation motivated by its mission to create a better world through education. It aims at promoting internationally recognized programmes of study which focus on the development of the whole student. Students are expected to develop the critical thinking skills, independent learning styles and knowledge of academic research that are expected for successful university level study. They are also expected to consider the nature of knowledge, engage in community service and value cultural diversity.

The IB is based in Geneva and administered by the International Baccalaureate Curriculum and Assessment Centre in Cardiff, United Kingdom.

The Educational Programmes of the IB

The IB offers four educational programmes for a worldwide community of schools:

- the Primary Years Programme (PYP) for students aged 3-12
- the Middle Years Programme (MYP) for students aged 11-16
- the Diploma Programme (DP) for students aged 16-19
- the IB Career-related Programme (CP) for students aged 16-19

Only schools authorized by the IB may offer the IB curriculum. At SPCC, only the Diploma Programme is offered.

The Rationale for SPCC to offer the IBDP

The parallels between the educational philosophy at SPCC and the IB in developing students into lifelong learners and responsible global citizens are what attracted the college to offer the HKDSE and the IBDP in tandem. The School Council strongly believes that the provision of two academically challenging programmes enables the school to better cater to its diverse student body, which encompasses a broad array of talents, interests and different learning styles.

The IB Learner Profile and Approaches to Teaching and Learning

This is the IB mission statement translated into a set of learning outcomes for the 21st century.

IB learners strive to be:

Inquirers	**Open-minded**
Knowledgeable	**Caring**
Thinkers	**Risk-takers**
Communicators	**Balanced**
Principled	**Reflective**

At the heart of the programme, there are also a set of Approaches to Teaching and Learning skills (ATLs) which are embedded into the teaching and learning outcomes of all subject areas and the core. The ATLs serve as a means to help students to think more deeply about their learning and to aid them in developing essential skills, attitudes and knowledge to be able to learn both independently and as part of a community. ATL skills are complimentary to the IB Learner Profile and focus on equipping students with a range of skills while honing their strengths so that they can take them forward in their studies and life after their diploma years.

The ATLs are categorised into five distinct strands:

Research **Thinking** **Communication** **Social** **Self-Management**

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.

As IB learners we strive to be:

INQUIRERS
We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

KNOWLEDGEABLE
We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

THINKERS
We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

COMMUNICATORS
We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

PRINCIPLED
We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

OPEN-MINDED
We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

CARING
We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

RISK-TAKERS
We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

BALANCED
We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

REFLECTIVE
We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

© International Baccalaureate Organization 2013
International Baccalaureate® | Baccalauréat International® | Bachillerato Internacional®

The IB Diploma Programme Model

© International Baccalaureate Organization 2024

Subject Areas of the IBDP

The subjects available for study are divided into six groups:

Group 1: Studies in Language and Literature (this is the group through which the IB's policy of mother-tongue entitlement is delivered)

Group 2: Language Acquisition (this is the group for students to learn a language as beginners or as students with prior knowledge of a language)

Group 3: Individuals and Societies, including History, Geography, Economics and Psychology

Group 4: Sciences, including Biology, Chemistry and Physics

Group 5: Mathematics

Group 6: Music, Visual Arts

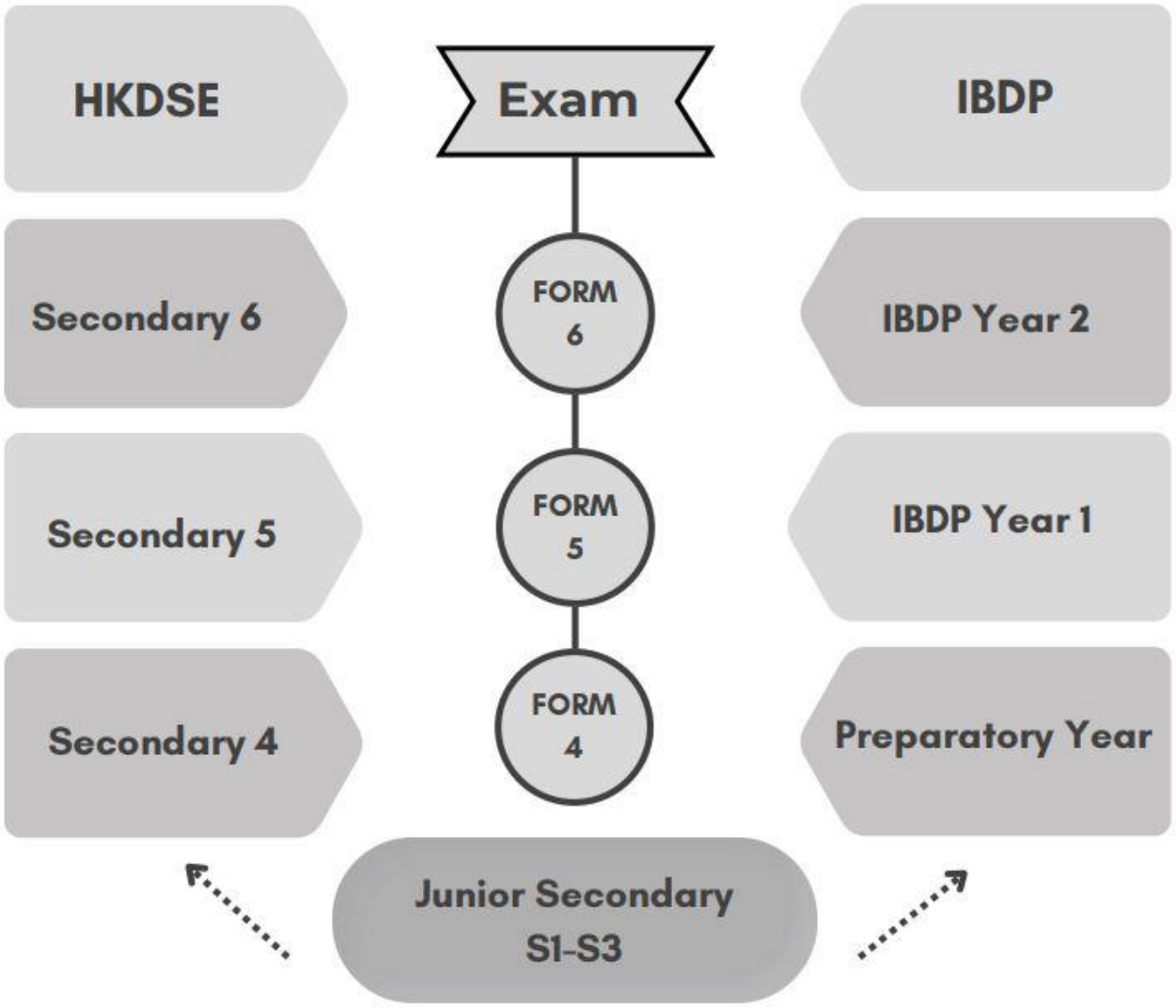
Students must study one subject from each of groups 1 to 5. Their sixth subject may come from Group 6, or from one of the other groups.

IB Diploma students normally study three of the above subjects at Higher Level and three at Standard Level.

They are also required to complete three Diploma core elements:

- a course in epistemology called Theory of Knowledge (internally & externally graded)
- a 4000-word academic Extended Essay (externally graded)
- a programme of Creativity, Activity and Service (not examined but tracked internally through reflective journals and regular meetings with the CAS Coordinator or CAS supervisors)

Dual Curricula at SPCC



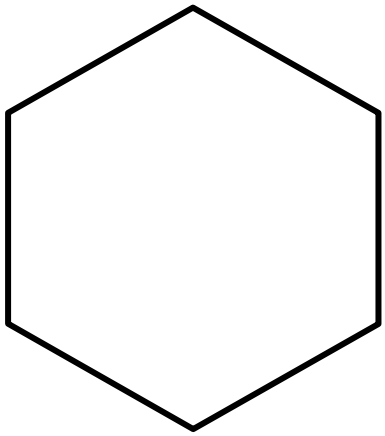
An Overview of the IBDP Curriculum Structure at SPCC

The IBDP programme is a two-year linear course followed in Form 5 and Form 6. Students must select one subject from each of the six groups illustrated in the Diploma Programme Model on pg.9. They also have to complete three components which are central to the IBDP – Extended Essay (EE), Theory of Knowledge (TOK) and Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS).

At present, SPCC offers the following subjects:

Group 1*
Studies in Language and Literature or Literature:
Chinese A Language and Literature, English A Literature,
English A Language and Literature

Group 2**
Language Acquisition:
Chinese B, English B,
Language ab initio courses



Group 3
Individuals and Societies:
Economics, Geography, History,
Environmental Systems & Societies***
Psychology

Group 4
Sciences:
Biology, Chemistry, Physics,
Environmental Systems & Societies

Group 5
Mathematics:
Maths: Analysis and Approaches,
Maths: Applications and Interpretation

Group 6****
The Arts:
Music, Visual Arts

*Group 1 – Subjects in this group refer to a student's native language or otherwise best language. IB students from SPCC Primary School or other local primary schools who have been following a regular Chinese Language programme prior to the IBDP must do Chinese A. If English is studied in this group as well, these students will be following a bilingual diploma and are not required to do Group 2.

**Group 2 – Only local students who have been following an adapted Chinese programme for non-Chinese speaking students (NCS) in primary school or junior secondary school will qualify to do Chinese B in this group.

– Students who do Chinese A in group 1 and English B in Group 2 will also be following a bilingual diploma as they will use English to complete subjects in Group 3 and Group 4.

– Language ab initio courses at SPCC refer to those on-line courses offered by the Pamoja Education.

***Environmental Systems and Societies – an inter-disciplinary subject that meets the requirements of both Group 3 and Group 4 subjects

**** Students may choose a subject from among those offered from Group 1 to Group 4 in lieu of Music or Visual Arts. Students who choose to do a third language (ab initio) will be enrolled with Pamoja Education which delivers online courses.

While the IBDP allows students to gain a broader view of the world, it also requires students to undertake in-depth study of some academic disciplines. They must therefore decide which three of their six subjects will be followed at Higher Level (HL) and which three at Standard Level (SL). HL subjects require a greater depth of study across a broader range of content.

Students may opt to study four subjects at HL and two at SL with approval from the school.

The Three Core Elements

1) TOK - Theory of Knowledge

The ToK course requires F5 students to submit an, internally assessed, 950 word file based on one of 35 prompts issued by the IB. In F6 the students submit a 1600-word essay, based on one of 6 knowledge questions issued by the IB, this essay is externally assessed.

Both tasks, and the course in general, demand that students reflect on the central ToK question, 'How do I know that a given assertion is true or a given judgement is well grounded?' In answering this question, and in completing the assessment tasks, students will be expected to make connections with, and provide examples from, their 6 IB Diploma subjects.

2) EE – Extended Essay

The EE is a 4,000-word research project which provides the opportunity for students to develop individual research skills. Students are required to choose a research topic and complete an in-depth investigation that will take them beyond the confines of the syllabus.

Each student is allocated a teacher as his or her Extended Essay Supervisor according to the choice of research topic. The supervisor provides advice and guidance, for example on how to formulate research question, access appropriate resources, gather and analyze data, and document sources.

3) CAS – Creativity, Activity and Service

The aim of these three strands of experiential learning in CAS is to enhance the personal and interpersonal development of the students. Such 'experiential education' provides an arena for students to develop many of the attributes described in the IB Learner Profile. Participation in CAS fosters in them a value system by which their spirit of open-mindedness, discovery and self- reliance is enhanced. It also helps in their development of new skills and the sharing of special talents.

CAS is an extension to subject work and students are required to engage in activities that display a reasonable balance between creativity, action and service. The focus is on the quality of the activities which are self-initiated by the students. Successful completion of CAS is a requirement for the award of the IB Diploma.

General Mode of Assessment of the IBDP

- the IBDP is graded out of 45 points
- assessment includes both the externally assessed final examination and internally assessed coursework (IA)
- coursework is assessed by the candidate's own subject teachers; samples are chosen by the IB for moderation by its own examiners
- up to 50% internal and up to 80% external assessable components across all academic subjects
- the examination papers take a variety of forms: short answer, structured response or essay type questions; there are also data analysis papers, text commentary papers and case study papers; multiple-choice questions are used in paper 1 in the Sciences
- the EE and TOK essays are produced under coursework conditions and are externally assessed
- externally assessed work is marked by examiners around the world
- criterion-referenced assessment with performance measured against well-defined levels of achievement applied equally to all schools
- grade award meetings are held at Cardiff by the senior examiners for each subject to determine final grade boundaries
- results are published on 6th July for May exam sessions for northern hemisphere schools

General Grade Descriptors

The subjects in the six groups, be they followed at SL or HL, are to be evaluated on a point scale of 1 (the lowest) to 7 (the highest).

Grade	Criteria
7 Excellent	A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them almost faultlessly in a wide variety of situations. Consistent evidence of analysis, synthesis and evaluation where appropriate. The student consistently demonstrates originality and insight and always produces work of high quality.
6 Very Good	A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them in a wide variety of situations. Consistent evidence of analysis, synthesis and evaluation where appropriate. The student generally demonstrates originality and insight.
5 Good	A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them in a variety of situations. The student generally shows evidence of analysis, synthesis and evaluation where appropriate, and occasionally demonstrates originality and insight.
4 Satisfactory	A good general understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them effectively in normal situations. There is occasional evidence of the skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation where appropriate.
3 Marginal	Limited achievement against most of the objectives, or clear difficulties in some of the areas. The student demonstrates a limited understanding of the required knowledge and skills and is only able to apply them fully in normal situations with support.
2 Poor	Very limited achievement against all the objectives. The student demonstrates a limited understanding of the required knowledge and skills and is unable to apply them fully in normal situations, even with support.
1 Very Poor	Minimal achievement in terms of the objectives. Work that has been completed is well below that required for satisfactory performance. Work may be superficial or irrelevant to the assignments. Assignments may not have been handed in.

Award of the Diploma

Performance in each subject as shown in the table above is graded on a scale of 1 to 7 points. A maximum of 3 points is awarded for the combined performance in the TOK and the EE. The maximum total point score is 45.

Group 1 Studies in Lang& Lit	**Group 2** Language Acquisition	**Group 3** Individuals and Societies	**Group 4** Sciences	**Group 5** Mathematics	**Group 6** The Arts	**Additional Points** TOK & EE	**Total**
7	7	7	7	7	7	3	45

The IB Diploma will be awarded to a candidate provided all the following requirements have been met.

a. CAS requirements have been met.

b. The candidate's total points are 24 or more.

c. There is no "N" awarded for theory of knowledge, the extended essay or for a contributing subject.

d. There is no grade E awarded for theory of knowledge and/or the extended essay.

e. There is no grade 1 awarded in a subject/level.

f. There are no more than two grade 2s awarded (HL or SL).

g. There are no more than three grade 3s or below awarded (HL or SL).

h. The candidate has gained 12 points or more on HL subjects (for candidates who register for four HL subjects, the three highest grades count).

i. The candidate has gained 9 points or more on SL subjects (candidates who register for two SL subjects must gain at least 5 points at SL).

j. The candidate has not received a penalty for academic misconduct from the Final Award Committee.

The Additional Points of TOK and EE

The following is the matrix for the award of additional points based on the combined performance in the Extended Essay and Theory of Knowledge requirements.

TOK / **EE**	A	B	C	D	E or N
A	3	3	2	2	Failing Condition
B	3	2	2	1	
C	2	2	1	0	
D	2	1	0	0	
E or N	Failing Condition				

General Information on the F.4 Preparatory Year

The F.4 Preparatory Year at SPCC aims to offer a school based curriculum that will equip students with the skills necessary for the IBDP while allowing them to develop their strengths and interests. It also aims at making clear the demands which a diploma student will face.

During this preparatory year students will follow a well-balanced and comprehensive programme which is designed to enhance their knowledge base and various skills: critical thinking, research, time management, oral and written communication, experimentation and independent learning. It is also designed to lay the foundation for the future discussion of the Theory of Knowledge in each subject.

In addition to *Independent Learning and Thinking,* all preparatory year students will have to do six subjects within the year. They will also need to work on a compulsory experiential learning component that aims to prepare them for the expectations and requirements of the Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) component in the IBDP. This compulsory experiential learning component will require students to display a commitment to community service, to personal physical development and to the enhancement of aesthetic and creative thinking skills.

The **six** subjects for the preparatory year are:

English
Chinese
Mathematics
one subject from elective 1
one subject from elective 2
one subject from elective 3

Elective 1	**Elective 2**	**Elective 3**
Economics	Biology	Music
or	or	or
Geography	Chemistry	Visual Arts
or	or	or
History	Physics	1 more subject from Elective **1**
or	or	or
ES*	ES*	1 more subject from Elective **2**
or		
Psychology		

1. **Any subjects which students are planning to take in F.5 and F.6 should be included in their F.4 programme.**
2. **Students who do both English and Chinese in Group 1 are not required to choose any language from Group 2. Should they want to do a third language, it can be studied as their Group 6 elective.**

Subjects Offered in the F.4 Preparatory Year

English

Course Description

Students will be equipped and prepared for the various syllabi offered in F5-6: English A Literature, English A Language and Literature, and English B. As a result, the English course focuses on encouraging the enjoyment and understanding of literary works, as well as the exploration of different non-literary text types. Students will learn to analyze literature by employing critical techniques and will learn to develop and reflect on their personal responses to works of literature through class discussions, oral presentations, and written commentaries. They will also engage in explorations of various global issues through the lens of non-literary texts such as media, advertisements, articles, and other text types.

Syllabus Outline

The teaching of oral and written approaches to literary analysis will be integrated throughout the course. Students will study literary texts of different genres, periods and cultures. These will include, but are not limited to:

- Novella: *Raise the Red Lantern* by Su Tong
- Play: *Antigone* by Sophocles
- Short prose texts and poems by various authors and poets such as Carol Ann Duffy, Maya Angelou, and Sylvia Plath
- Advertisements, comics, and other text types concerning various global issues

Students will also be taught the skills of unseen literary analysis and non-literary in preparation for the IBDP.

Course Presentation

Students will be taught in a variety of modes including close analysis of texts, student presentations, online collaborative work, group projects, film discussions, and more. They will be encouraged to participate actively in lessons, both in small and large groups. There will be opportunities for them to express themselves in formal, informal and creative contexts through oral assessments, in-class discussions, and dramatic interpretations of texts.

Assessment

Assessment will be both formative (during the course) and summative (at the end of the term or course, e.g. as an exam). Group presentations will be assessed in Term One, as will unseen guided analysis on an extract and a practical written piece. A comparative essay on two texts will be assessed in Term 2, as will an individual oral discussion. Formative assessment will also take the form of ongoing homework assignments and classwork activities.

Prerequisites

Students should have reached a level of English which enables them to read works of literature relatively confidently and to cope with the demands of English as a first rather than a second language. At the end of the Prep Year, students will be advised by their teachers on the appropriate English course they should pursue for their IBDP - English A Literature, English A Language and Literature or English B.

中國語文

課程描述（Course Description）

本科總體教學目標為「博古通今，曉諭中西」，預備班授課內容主要由文學及語言元素組成，希望學生能利用流暢通達之語文，分析文學作品、點評社會議題。

文學作品賞析方面，學生須博覽古今中外名家名篇，以提高鑑賞文本之能力；語言課題方面，學生須閱讀報章及網絡文章，注意社會時事熱話，以建立關注世界之觸覺。學生能將課堂所學內化為一己之語文能力，在文字寫作及口語表述上均能游刃有餘。

課程大綱（Syllabus Outline）

本科教學分文學及語言部分，旨在更妥善地銜接中五及中六課程，幫助學生提早適應國際文憑的學習模式，並提升其閱讀能力、寫作能力、溝通能力及聆聽能力。

文學部分，學生將涉獵不同文體的文本，包括若干篇古典、現代或當代文學作品。通過分析作品的內容、文體特色及寫作手法等，學生賞析能力將有所提升。上學期文學課程以詩歌及中短篇小說為主，下學期則側重於長篇翻譯小說及劇本。

語言部分，學生將接觸常見的六種非文學文類，包括各類新聞寫作及博客文章。通過了解相關文類的文體特徵及閱讀時事新聞，學生不但可初步掌握文本的寫作要求，更可多關顧社會，明白語言的奧妙之處。

教學材料:

- 《詩經》選讀
- 唐詩選讀
- 新詩選讀
- 現、當代短篇小說選讀
- 現、當代優秀散文選讀
- 優秀翻譯作品選讀

教學模式（Course Presentation）

本科教學模式多樣而豐富，並需學生掌握「自主學習」的能力。課堂活動除一般老師講評外，亦多利用電子教學資源，或要求學生預習某些課題，或於課堂內以小組討論的形式，鼓勵學生自行建構知識。

本科將以普通話作為主要教學語言，但為方便討論，令學生更容易表達己見，凡於口頭報告或小組討論時，學生皆可選擇以粵語進行相關活動。

評估方法（Assessment）

本科評核方式參照國際文憑大學預科課程中國語文及文學科，分為持續性評估及總結性評估兩部分。持續性評估將包括日常的寫作訓練、小組報告等，旨在鞏固學生平日所學。總結性評估則以文本分析與論文寫作為主要考核內容。

修讀條件（Prerequisites）

學生須具備流利之粵語及普通話溝通能力，並能以流暢文字進行寫作。

Mathematics

Course Description

The Mathematics course in the Form 4 Preparatory Year serves as a bridge between the junior form Mathematics and IBDP Mathematics. Besides learning new mathematical knowledge, students will use mathematics software and a graphic display calculator (GDC) to explore mathematics and solve problems. The idea of internationalism and approaches to learning will be embedded in the course where appropriate.

Syllabus Outline

Students will be exposed to topics such as numbers, sets, algebra, trigonometry and probability to pave their way for the learning of IBDP Mathematics. Presumed knowledge of IBDP courses will be taught where appropriate.

The following skills will be incorporated into the course throughout the year:

(a) use of a GDC, spreadsheets and dynamic geometry software
(b) comprehension of extended pieces of mathematical work
(c) simple mathematical investigation and modelling
(d) approaches to learning e.g. thinking skills, research skills, communication skills, social skills, self-management skills

Course Presentation

Lessons will be supplemented by various learning activities including reading mathematics works, using spreadsheets, dynamic geometry software and a GDC, making conjectures, doing mini-tasks such as investigation, modelling and enrichment materials. Students are expected to take an active role in learning and exploring mathematics. Students will be encouraged to read different mathematics works and learn the skills required for the learning of IBDP Mathematics. Students will also learn to confidently express themselves through using mathematical terminology. Opportunities will also be provided for students to collaborate in group presentations, sharing and group work.

To let students have a better understanding of the two new IBDP mathematics courses, a briefing session will be arranged in F.4 Prep Year. Examples and relevant problems will be introduced during lessons or in assessments.

Assessment

Assessment of learning will consist of unit tests, timetabled examinations and mini-explorations in the form of mathematical investigations, modelling and applications of mathematics. Students are to solve problems with and without the use of a GDC.

Relevant grade descriptors will be used in marking the exploration work.

Assessment for learning will consist of assignments, quizzes, observations and performance in class e.g. group discussions, presentations, individual work.

Assessment as learning will consist of self-assessment and peer assessment.

Prerequisites

Students should have attained a Form 3 standard in Mathematics in order to handle the mathematics content/skills during the preparatory year. Students are expected to engage in exploration and investigation of mathematics. They should take the initiative to browse online mathematics websites and read mathematics reference books and works. Besides subject knowledge and calculation skills, they should be willing to use technology such as spreadsheets, dynamic geometry software and a GDC to assist in learning and exploring mathematics and solving mathematics problems.

Biology

Course Description

The course is designed to prepare students for IBDP Biology while fostering a deep interest in the subject. Through the exploration of human physiology, genetics, ecology, classification, and evolution, students will acquire fundamental biological knowledge and essential scientific inquiry skills. Furthermore, this course will help students align their study techniques and learning approaches with the principles outlined in the IB Learner Profile.

Syllabus Outline

1. Biodiversity and classification
2. Food and nutrition
3. Respiration and gas exchange
4. Transport in organisms
5. Control and coordination
6. Defence against diseases
7. Reproduction
8. Inheritance
9. Variation and evolution
10. Ecology

Course Presentation

A student-centered approach will be adopted throughout the course. An enquiry-based approach, practical sessions and field studies will be employed to fulfill the course aims and objectives. Different teaching pedagogies, for example experiential learning, collaborative learning and mastery learning, and various e-learning tools will be used to attain the learning objectives.

Assessment

Formative assessment throughout the year will be based on assignments, group discussion and presentation, performance in practical work, reports on laboratory practical and field studies. Summative assessments including tests and examinations will also be included. Whenever appropriate, relevant grade descriptors will be used in marking.

Prerequisites

A genuine interest in Biology and a good understanding of basic biological principles learnt in F.3.

Chemistry

Course Description

The course will provide a platform for building essential scientific knowledge and skills. Being an experimental science, Chemistry helps students to develop skills for making scientific enquiries and conducting experiments safely. The course will also provide opportunities for students to discuss science-related issues using the language of Chemistry and apply their acquired knowledge and skills to real life situations.

Syllabus Outline

The syllabus will cover the following topics:

1. Bonding and structures
2. Acids and bases
3. Quantitative Chemistry
4. Energetics
5. Error analysis
6. Oxidation and reduction
7. Kinetics

Course Presentation

There will be a variety of approaches to the teaching of Chemistry. By its very nature, Chemistry lends itself to an experimental approach and this will be reflected throughout the course. In addition, students will be engaged in discussions, presentations and note-making to facilitate learning.

Assessment

Student learning will be formatively assessed with course work, tests, term examinations and performance in practical work. Relevant grade descriptors will be used in marking.

Prerequisites

Students should demonstrate a genuine love and passion of learning Chemistry and have a solid foundation on bonding, mole concepts and metal reactivity.

Physics

Course Description

The course will serve as a continuation of the science curriculum at junior secondary level and equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills for the IBDP Physics curriculum. Based on students' prior knowledge and their everyday experience, elementary Physics topics will be introduced to provide a coherent and comprehensive view of the world of Physics with the following instructional goals:

1. Knowledge of Physics – basic knowledge with understanding of the discipline of Physics, including phenomena, concepts, principles and theories.
2. Experimental skills – the ability to use basic equipment safely and efficiently, make sensible estimates, take accurate measurements and make scientifically supported arguments.
3. Problem solving – the application of knowledge and principles of Physics to solve problems by the use of qualitative and quantitative reasoning and by experimental investigation.
4. Connections – the understanding of connections of Physics to other disciplines and to societal issues.

Syllabus Outline

The syllabus will cover the following topics:

1 Lenses
2. Force and Motion
3. Nature and Properties of Waves
4. Electricity and Magnetism
5. Atomic Physics

Course Presentation

A variety of activities which involve different pedagogies will be deployed so that different learning targets can be attained effectively. These include questioning, demonstration, practical work, using IT and multimedia packages, whole-class and group discussion, reading and problem-solving. Students will be encouraged to take an active and independent role in learning.

Assessment

Student learning will be formatively assessed with assignments, lab reports, tests and scheduled examinations throughout the year. Relevant grade descriptors will be used in marking.

Prerequisites

A genuine interest in Physics and competence in elementary mathematical skills such as using expressions in decimal and scientific notation, using calculators to evaluate roots, powers, sine, cosine and tangent functions and their inverses and solving simple algebraic equations.

Economics

Course Description

The Economics course in the Form 4 Preparatory Year aims to prepare students for the study of IBDP Economics. The course will introduce economic concepts and theories that serve as important knowledge foundation. Students will gain an understanding of the dynamic nature of the subject with the use of current economic issues and topical phenomena.

Syllabus Outline

The syllabus will explore the following topics:

1. Basic Economic Concepts
2. Firms and Production
3. Market and Price
4. Market Structure
5. Measurement of Economic Performance

Course Presentation

A variety of teaching strategies will be used in delivering the course. Class discussions, case studies and presentations using current real-world issues will be included to develop students' critical thinking skills and essay-writing skills. Students will be encouraged to become inquirers and passionate learners by conducting independent research.

Teachers will encourage applied learning by using relevant local and international news so as to develop in students an awareness of local issues, an international perspective and a sense of community-mindedness in Economics.

Assessment

Student learning will be formatively assessed in class participation, oral presentations, independent research projects, essays and tests. Relevant grade descriptors are used in marking.

Prerequisites

Students with solid mathematical background will have an advantage in handling the quantitative analysis as required in the IBDP Economics curriculum.

Geography

Course Description

The Preparatory Year Geography course serves as a bridge between the junior form Geography curriculum and the IBDP Geography curriculum. Students are introduced to a variety of geographical concepts and knowledge. Topics are presented through case studies of different scales with equal emphasis on physical and human landscapes.

Syllabus Outline

The syllabus includes the following topics.

1. Population
2. Plate Tectonics
3. Special Landforms in Hong Kong
4. Transport Geography
5. Weather and Climate
6. International Interdependence and Cooperation
7. Sustainable Development Goals
8. Water scarcity

The following geographical skills are also incorporated throughout the syllabus.

1. Map Work – interpretation of a selection of maps
2. Statistical Techniques – analyses and presentation of spatial data
3. Fieldwork – collection of primary data for testing geographical hypotheses

Course Presentation

The teaching integrates a variety of methods that engage students in learning processes. Students are encouraged to participate in discussion and presentation actively in lessons. Fieldwork is included to allow students to apply their knowledge to study the environment practically. A variety of teaching aids such as maps, ground and aerial photographs, images, videos, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) will be used to deliver content. Students are encouraged to conduct library research and engage in group projects to enrich their geographical knowledge.

Assessment

Student learning will be formatively assessed in formal written essays, fieldwork reports, group projects, participation in class and timed examinations throughout the year. Relevant grade descriptors are used in marking.

Prerequisites

Students should have attained basic levels of map reading skills in English to enable them to read maps and make text references.

History

Course Description

The Preparatory Year History course is designed to prepare students to study IBDP History successfully. It will introduce the concepts and skills that are necessary for analysing history and making sound judgements. It will help students develop an understanding of and empathy for people living in other periods and contexts.

Syllabus Outline

The course will cover the essential developments in the 19th-century world in a global context through the investigation of various historical sources and historians' interpretations. Knowledge of the 19th-century world will serve as a solid foundation for students to study IBDP History, which looks at the 20th-century world.

The syllabus will be divided into 3 sections, and will explore the following topics:

1. Introduction to Modern European History
   - An overview of major events that shaped the modern western world from the 15th to 18th centuries
   - Change and continuity in 19th-century Europe: forces of change and continuity, new European diplomacy
   - Development and influence of liberalism and nationalism in 19th-century Europe – revolutions, independence and unification movements
   - Europe by the end of the 19th century

2. Introduction to Modern Asian History
   - Imperial rule and traditional China
   - Challenges to Qing China in the 19th century – internal rebellion and external threat (Taiping Rebellion, First and Second Anglo-Chinese Wars)
   - Traditions and changes of Tokugawa Japan in the 19th century
   - Challenges to the Tokugawa Shogunate in the 19th century

3. Historical Investigation

Note: The three sections will run in parallel. The time allocation will roughly be 4:4:1 for Sections 1, 2 and 3.

Course Presentation

A variety of teaching and learning activities will be arranged to engage students actively in the learning process. Students will be encouraged to use a range of primary and secondary sources, communicate historical knowledge, and make judgements. Teachers will also use a variety of teaching aids to maximise students' exposure to different historical sources. Students will be asked to conduct individual research as well as group investigation of historical issues.

Assessment

Student learning will be formatively assessed through written essays, analysis of historical sources, presentations, class discussions and tests. Students will also be required to conduct a historical investigation, which is a trimmed version of the one they have to do for IBDP History. It will be marked using the Internal Assessment level descriptors.

Summative assessment will take the format of essay writing in the end-of-term examinations. Relevant grade descriptors will be used in marking.

Prerequisites

Students should have acquired basic historical concepts and skills in analysing different sources and in communicating historical knowledge and judgements.

Environmental Studies

Course Description

Environmental systems and societies (ESS) offered in the IBDP is a transdisciplinary course. It can be counted as a group 3 or group 4 subject. Environmental Studies in our Preparatory Year will equip students with the knowledge, methodologies and skills required for the IBDP ESS course. Students will examine the environment and environmental issues from the socio-economic, political as well as scientific perspectives. A practical component is incorporated into the topics covered.

Syllabus Outline

The syllabus is mainly developed around two themes – "Understanding our Environment" and "People in the Environment" with the following topics:

1. Understanding our Environment

   Atmosphere & Hydrosphere:
   - Atmosphere as a system
   - Elements of weather and climate and water cycle
   - Major climatic zones

   Lithosphere:
   -Internal structure of the Earth
   -Ideas of plate tectonics
   -Formation of rocks and soil

   Biosphere:
   -Structure & functions of ecosystem
   -Features of common habitats
   -Basic skills for ecological study

2. People in the Environment
   - Farming as a system
   - Human response to climatic hazards - hurricanes

Course Presentation

Teaching methodologies will integrate a variety of strategies that aim to engage students in the learning process. Practical work including fieldwork and laboratory sessions will be included throughout the syllabus.

Assessment

Student learning will be continuously assessed in written assignments, laboratory sessions, fieldwork reports, group projects, participation in class and timetabled examinations throughout the year. Relevant grade descriptors will be used in marking.

Prerequisites

There is no prerequisite for this course.

Psychology

Course Description

The Preparatory Year course is designed to prepare students to study IBDP Psychology. It will introduce some of the foundational figures and the concepts in the discipline and help students develop an understanding of the vocabulary, skills, and methodologies needed to explore and express psychological concepts with confidence.

Syllabus Outline

The course will cover the early origins of psychology; some of the major approaches to the subject; and how to read and apply research studies and skills.

The syllabus will explore the following topics:

1. Introduction to Psychology
   Overview: What is psychology? History and significance
   Branches of Psychology: Clinical, cognitive, developmental, social, etc.
   Key Concepts: Understanding behaviour, mental processes, and the scientific method
2. Major Psychological Theories & Studies
   Psychoanalytic theory & psychology origins: Basics of Freud's ideas on the unconscious mind and Jungian theory. Subsequent therapy models
   Behaviourism: Key figures and major studies
   Cognitive Processes
   Social experiments
3. Research in Psychology
   Understanding research methods
   Qualitative vs. quantitative research
   Data collection: Basic techniques and tools for psychological research
4. Psychological Development
   Overview of Developmental Psychology: Stages of development
   Influences on Development: Nature vs. nurture debates
   Key theorists
5. Personality testing: models - strengths and weaknesses
   Introducing and assessing different types of testing
   Running and analysing tests and results

6. Criminal psychology
   Case studies
7. Review and Preparation for exams

Course Presentation

A variety of teaching and learning activities will be used to engage students actively in the learning process. Students will be encouraged to read widely and to critique the approaches and theories they encounter. Students will be asked to conduct individual research as well as group investigations and to present their findings in written and presentational forms.

Assessment

Student learning will be formatively assessed through essays, short-form answers, class discussions, and tests.

Summative assessment will take place in the end-of-term examinations. Students will write short-form responses and essays; apply their knowledge of data interpretation; and critique psychological studies.

Prerequisites

Students should have good levels of English reading and writing skills and be prepared to think in a cross-disciplinary manner.

N.B. The final details of the course structure and assessment may be subject to changes as the programme is currently under development.

Music

Course Description

The course is grounded in the knowledge, skills and processes associated with the study of music and offers a strengthened approach to student creativity through practical, informed and purposeful explorations of diverse musical forms, practices and contexts. The course also ensures a holistic approach to learning, with the roles of performer, creator and researcher afforded equal importance in all course components. In these roles, students inquire, create, perform, and reflect on the course's three musical processes: exploring in music, experimenting with music, and presenting in music.

Syllabus Outline

The course seeks to be inclusive of students with wide-ranging personal and cultural musical backgrounds. Students and teachers have the agency to personalise unique approaches to musical forms, genres and pieces. The exploration of diverse musical material is focused through the lenses of four Areas of Inquiry:

8. Music for sociocultural and political expression

   This area focuses on music that expresses and communicates social and cultural messages, conveys political ideas and/or helps preserve social and cultural traditions.

9. Music for listening and performance

   This area focuses on music that expresses and communicates intrinsic aesthetic values. Such music is sometimes referred to as "absolute music".

10. Music for dramatic impact, movement and entertainment

    This area focuses on music used for dramatic effect, music that supports choreographed movement or dance and/or music that is incidental or intended to purposefully serve as entertainment.

11. Music technology in the electronic and digital age

    This area focuses on music created, performed and/or produced using electronic or digital technologies. Such technologies are an important aspect of contemporary musical experiences, often transforming some of the ways that we understand and engage with music.

Engagement with these areas of inquiry takes place across three contexts -- personal, local and global. These contexts invite students to move beyond familiar musical material (personal context), to experience music from the culture or community around them (local context), as well as engaging with previously unfamiliar music (global context).

Assessment

Component 1: Exploring music in context

Students select samples of their work for a portfolio submission consisting of:

a. Written work demonstrating engagement with at least two Areas of Inquiry Inquiry other than those adopted for Experimenting with music

b. Exploring as a creator and as a performer

Component 2: Experimenting with music

Students submit a report with evidence of their musical processes in creating and performing focused through at least two Areas of Inquiry other than those adopted for Exploring music in context in a local and global context:

a. Experimenting as a researcher

b. Experimenting as a creator and as a performer

Component 3: Presenting music

Students submit a collection of works demonstrating engagement with diverse musical material from four Areas of Inquiry:

a. Presenting as a researcher

b. Presenting as a creator

c. Presenting as a performer

Prerequisites

This course is ideal for students who are interested in both the practical and theoretical aspects of music-making, respond to a creative approach to composition and performance, value collaboration and plan to study music in university or college.

Visual Arts

Course Description

Through the Preparatory Year Visual Arts course, students learn how to create, communicate and connect as artists. Students will be engaged in creative practices and processes working with a variety of art-making forms and creative strategies, and learn art-making as inquiry. In addition to exploring and comparing the visual arts from different perspectives and in different contexts, students are expected to engage in, experiment with and reflect upon a wide range of contemporary artistic practices and media.

The programme encourages an individual, independent, inquiring and integrated approach to Visual Arts. The DP Visual Arts course is assessment-based and there is no written exam.

Syllabus Outline

The Visual Arts course is a creative, practice-based course. Art-making as inquiry is at the centre of the syllabus and students learn through three core areas—create, connect and communicate. This model allows students to embrace the holistic nature of visual arts practice. These three areas overlap and provide opportunities for students to fulfill the aims of the course while keeping the syllabus content intentionally non-prescriptive.

Assessment

- Art-making Inquiries Portfolio

Students select and organise visual evidence of their personal investigations, discoveries and creations, supported by critical reflections, in a portfolio. Curated evidence of their art-making as inquiry will be recorded in a variety of art-making forms and creative strategies. The portfolio demonstrates how the student develops and refines their visual language through one or more lines of inquiry and must explicitly include the inquiry questions or generative statements they worked with.

- Connections Study (SL)/ Artist Project (HL)

The Connections Study presents curated visual and written evidence to demonstrate the connections between the student's chosen resolved artwork and their own context(s), and between the chosen artwork and at least two artworks by different artists. The connections must be informed by research, and the study must demonstrate understanding of the cultural significance of the two artworks by different artists.

The artist project demonstrates through curated evidence how the student work was informed by investigations of context, by connections with at least two artworks by different artists, and by dialogues. A short video curated by the student shows where and how the project artwork was realized to communicate with the audience in the chosen context.

- Resolved artworks

This task focused on the student's ability to create a coherent body of work selected from their wider production. Each student submits selected resolved artworks to demonstrate their best achievements in communicating their artistic intentions coherently.

Prerequisites

This course is ideal for students who are interested in both the practical and theoretical aspects of Visual arts, especially for students who plan to study art or design related subjects in university. Students should have strong commitment to the subject area as they are required to put in consistent work throughout the course.

Independent Learning and Thinking (ILT)

Course Description

Serving as a foundation to Theory of Knowledge, this course aims to expand students' critical and reflective thinking skills to facilitate independent inquiry and reflection. Students will also practise academic writing and hone their research and citation skills.

Syllabus Outline

This course will be allotted one lesson per cycle. The main focus of the instructional time will be on enhancing students' thinking skills through exploration of ATL skills, social issues and other relevant matters including Preparatory Year Experiential Learning engagements. The course will also develop students' understanding of academic honesty practices such as knowing how and when to cite sources for different purposes.

Course Presentation

In essence, the course aims to develop a skill set which will enable students to work independently. The concepts mentioned above will be explored through teacher-facilitated discussion, student-led discussion and independent work. Learning will also be consolidated through classwork to develop and apply these skills. Students will also be given the chance to engage in personal reflection and to express their thoughts on a regular basis.

Assessment

The course is non-examinable. Ongoing formative evaluation of students' performance and understanding will be done through presentations, online discussions, and in-class group interaction. A summative assessment task will be assigned at the end of each term.

Prerequisites

Students should be able to communicate and express their ideas comfortably in both spoken and written English.

Experiential Learning (PYEL)

Content Description

Preparatory Year Experiential Learning (PYEL) aims to prepare students for the challenges and expectations of the IBDP Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) core component. To achieve this, PYEL focuses on students achieving the following learning outcomes by the end of the year:

- Initiating their own experiences.
- Engaging in experiences where teamwork and cooperation are necessary.
- Engaging with and developing a greater understanding of sections of the community outside SPCC, especially those with different or greater needs than themselves.
- Developing an increased awareness of their strengths and areas for development.
- Taking part in new and challenging experiences.

In order to achieve this, students are expected to manage a PYEL portfolio, demonstrating a balanced engagement in the three strands (Creativity, Activity and Service), with at least three different PYEL experiences.

Students will have to participate in the Student Activities Week in November, allowing them to plan and initiate their experience in pairs or groups of not more than 4 students. The experience should engage students in a minimum of 35 hours of direct experience during the week. It has to be organized or run by an established organization in Hong Kong and the plan has to be formally approved by the Experiential Learning Coordinator.

Content Presentation

Students will attend a PYEL lesson at the start of the year that will detail the expectations of the programme.

Assessment

Students need to showcase their learning and achievements through a presentation, which will be used for an ILT assessment in the 1st term. In the 2nd term, students will need to initiate meetings with the Experiential Learning Coordinator, get feedback on their progress and prepare their CAS plan for the following 2 years.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this component except those required for access to the IBDP.

General Assessment Policy of the F.4 Preparatory Year

The assessment system adopted in the Preparatory Year is in line with that of the IBDP and its stated aims of:

1. encouraging good classroom practice and appropriate student learning;
2. arriving at subject grades that have a high level of reliability;
3. reflecting international-mindedness;
4. balancing development of the higher-order cognitive skills and the more fundamental cognitive skills;
5. ensuring that for each subject a suitable range of tasks are used to assess all objectives.

The grading system is criterion referenced. Each student's attainment of knowledge and skills will be measured against well defined levels of achievement. Hence, student performance is at all times evaluated against expected standards.

This evaluation, be it in the form of homework assignments, tests, oral presentations or exams, is then converted into a grade from 1-7 using either the percentage conversion tables of marks schemes or grade descriptors. In addition, all students are assessed on their academic honesty. Ethical conduct is expected at all times and students are expected to adhere strictly to the College's Academic Honesty Policy. Each of these policies has been designed to help students and teachers identify weaknesses and strengths and to improve learning and performance for a successful completion of the Preparatory Year.

Admission Procedures for the F.4 Preparatory Year

Interested internal applicants are required to:

Attend the F.3 IB Briefing on **5th December, 2025**.

⇩

Fill in the google form (sent via eClass email after the F.3 IB Briefng) to state your interest in attending an academic counselling session at the latest by **12th December, 2025**.

⇩

Complete an online assessment on critical thinking and English language skills.

⇩

Receive academic counseling from the IB Coordinator between **February to March, 2026**.

⇩

Complete the online Subject Selection Form in April, 2026 and return it to the school on or before the deadline of **30th April, 2026**.

⇩

Release of application result on **1st August, 2026**.

Please note that all applications will be considered by the school with regard to the applicant's general suitability to follow the IBDP programme, work habits and aptitude. A candidate's performance in internal examinations may also be considered.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How is the IBDP different from the DSE? Is one better than the other?

While neither programme is better than the other, they each have different emphases. The DSE is a three-year programme aiming to provide students with successful transitions to post-secondary education, university level education as well as the workplace while the IBDP is a two-year programme which prepares students primarily for university level education.

The DSE permits students to choose 3 or 4 electives freely on top of the core subjects of English, Chinese, Mathematics and Citizenship and Social Development. The IBDP on the other hand, requires students to take one course from each of the six IB subject groups plus the three core elements of TOK, CAS and EE. By requiring students to study both the humanities and the sciences, the IBDP by design requires them to have all-round intellectual development.

For students who intend to do the IBDP, their F.4 year will be a preparatory year. This is not an IB mandated programme but is one which is designed by SPCC to help acclimatise students to the IB educational philosophy which demands a high degree of independent work and good planning. It also aims at developing their study skills and knowledge in curricular content so that they are well prepared for the two-year programme that follows.

2. As a student, how should I decide whether to take the IBDP or the DSE?

This is a complex issue and one that should be discussed with your parents, teachers and Counsellor of Further Studies. You need to make an informed choice and to have a genuine understanding of yourself, both strengths and constraints. Reflect on your learning experiences in school and seriously consider your learning style, interest, aptitude and personality.

Some students would do better to choose the DSE curriculum if they are strongly inclined to do either the humanities or the sciences. For the IBDP, besides having to do both the humanities and sciences groups, there are the extra components of TOK, CAS, and the Extended Essay which involve an extra time and energy commitment in extensive reading and writing. Therefore it is important for you to be an independent and self-motivated learner. Proficiency in English and Chinese is also essential.

3. As a parent, how can I help my child prepare for the IBDP?

Students who plan to take the IBDP should begin their preparation early. Encourage your child to develop and practise good study habits and to understand the importance of time management skills which are required when studying this rigorous curriculum. Also encourage your child to research in greater detail the assessment components and the nature of each of the IB subjects that he/she intends to study. This will help students to develop a better picture of the performance expectations of the programme.

4. When and how to choose between Higher Level and Standard Level?

Students do not have to choose until the end of the F.4 Preparatory Year. Such choices should be made based on individual strengths and interests. Very often the HL subjects are those that students may want to pursue at tertiary level.

5. What is the class size for every subject?

All classes are capped at a maximum of 25 students.

6. What is the IB score that students need to obtain to get into a highly competitive university?

It varies from university to university and each university sets its own policy. You are advised to check with the Counsellor of Further Studies and visit university websites to check entrance requirements. A section of the IB website is dedicated to providing recognition policies and contact information for many universities worldwide. Go to www.ibo.org → University admission → Support students' transition to higher education → Guides for students applying to university.

7. Can one decide to do the IBDP when one is in F.4?

No. There will be a deadline at the end of F.3 for students to express their desire to enrol in the Preparatory Year. After this deadline, it is no longer possible to change to IB Candidate status. Once again, the emphasis is on making a carefully planned decision before entry into F.4. By doing your research and planning now, you will be able to choose a programme that meets your needs.

8. Where can I get more information?

You are most welcome to contact Ms. Belinda Ng, the IB Coordinator if you have further questions. You may also find it useful to explore the IB website to learn more about this international community at www.ibo.org. Other great resources within the school include subject teachers or even current IB students who can share their experience with the programme. There are also IB related reading materials available in the school library for you to get acquainted with this curriculum.