**IB DIPLOMA and ADVANCED PLACEMENT**

**EXAMINATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS**

For literally millions of students around the world, July and August are the months when they receive their examination results which will help determine the university they will enter, and the courses that they will study.

In international schools two of the most important of these examinations studied over Grades 11 and 12 are the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme and the US College Board, Advanced Placement course, each of these culminate in a set of externally set and graded examinations.

**INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA**

The IB was established in 1968 as a Foundation registered in Switzerland. The objective was to provide a curriculum for Grades 11 and 12 students who were not studying in their home countries yet need a matriculation qualification that would allow them to enter universities around the world.

Today the IB has established 4 sets of curriculum;

*The Primary Years Programme (PYP)*

*The Middle Years Programme (MYP)*

*The Diploma Programme (IBDP)*

*The IB Careers Related Certificate. (IBCC)*

Today over one million students are enrolled in these programmes, and over 3,600 schools in 145 countries are approved to offer one or more of the 4 programmes. A school can apply to be authorized to teach any one of the programmes, although many schools do offer the PYP, MYP and the IBDP. The IBCC is the most recent of the programmes and was taught for the first time in 2012.

In early July 2013 127,000 students from as far away as New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Japan and Chile received the results of the IB Diploma examinations which were sat in May. Many of the students studied one or more of the many subjects offered. One of the most impressive statistics of the IB Diploma is that 74 languages are offered and examined.

In most countries there is a national matriculation system and one of the key tasks of the IB has been to increase the global recognition of the IB for matriculation purposes. The IB Recognition team has now secured the approval of over 140 governments around the world.

Of the 127,000 IBDP candidates this year, over 50,000 of them completed the requirements for the IB Diploma which is one of the special and core components of the IB.

**About the IB Diploma**

**The programme is presented as six academic areas with a central core. It encourages the concurrent study of a broad range of academic areas. Diploma Programme students study two modern languages (or a modern language and a classical language), a humanities or social science subject, an experimental science, mathematics and either one of the creative arts or another science or social science subject.**

**In addition to these subjects, all Diploma Programme students complete three core requirements that are included to challenge and to broaden the educational experience:**

* **The extended essay (4,000 words) which requires independent research related to a Diploma Programme subject**
* **Theory of knowledge that encompasses 1) critically examining different ways of knowing – perception, emotion, language and reason and 2) examining the different kinds of knowledge – scientific, artistic, mathematical and historical**
* **Creativity, action, service (CAS) that requires students to engage in 1) arts activities and demonstrating creativity, 2) taking action by participating in sports (team and individual), local and international projects and expeditions and 3) participating in community and social service activities. Students are expected to be involved in CAS activities for the equivalent of at least three hours each week during the two years of the programme**

**THE COLLEGE BOARD ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAMINATIONS**

In 1900, the College Board was created in the United States to expand access to higher education. Formed by a handful of U. S. colleges, the purpose was to simplify the application process for students and college admission offices.

In 1955 the College Board acquired administration of the Advanced Placement Program, designed to encourage high school students to engage in college-level work.

More than a century after evaluating those first few test-takers, more than seven million students use College Board resources prepare for a successful transition to college each year. The largest of these are the Advanced Placement examination and SAT tests. The results of these examination and test help Colleges and Universities to select student for Admission

In the United States in particular, the publication of the Advanced Placement (AP) exams results are awaited by over 2.5 million Grades 9- 12 students who sat exams in one or more of the 36 subjects which are examined by the College Board. For these students the results will, for some, confirm the university places that they have been offered, and for many, they will gain college credit which exempts them from some college requirements. For Grades 9- 11 students it will give them actual AP grades which they can include in their college applications during Grade 12. In some subjects, especially Geography and one or other of the History courses many students in Grade 9 and 10 sit the exams in May each year.

Are AP and IB the same?

**-To an extent, yes**.

-The examinations are taken in May, and the majority of students who take them are in their final year of high school, although many students in Grades 9, 10 and 11 take AP examinations in some subjects.

-For both AP and IB the examinations are graded/marked by examiners outside of their school. For the IB the system of marking is becoming more and more digital with examination scripts being scanned and then sent electronically to over 9,000 examiners all over the world. For the AP the exams are graded at examination centers in the United States where the examiners meet and grade the hard copies.

-Strong grades in both IB and AP exams in some courses can give the students advanced credit for their university studies, this may mean that the student can forgo a Year 0ne course in a subject, and enroll immediately in a Year 2. This can a significant financial advantage as the students needs to enroll in fewer courses to achieve a degree. However, the possibility of advanced credit is determined by the individual universities.

**-To an extent, no**.

- Over 2.5 million students sat at least one AP examination in 2013, there wre just under 4,000, 000 exams taken, compared to the IB this is very large which ahd a total of just under 1,000,000 exam sat. 95% of AP candidates are in U.S. schools in the U.S, it is interesting that the largest group of IB students is today in the U.S. and this has been one of the most noticeable developments in the IBDP over the last 15 years prior to which Europe and ??????????

-The majority of IB Diploma student study over 2 years before taking the examinations, although it is possible to take some exams at the end of the first year. However, the AP exams can be sat by students in Grades 9-12, and in fact in some subjects the majority of candidates sitting the exams are in Grade 9 and 10.

-The IB has two levels in each of the courses. The Higher Level courses require more teaching time, and in general, covers a Core component and then some additional units of work, or they cover aspects of the Core in greater depth. Standard Level courses only cover the Core component of the subject. SL courses are supposed to have 150 hours tuition while HL students are supposed to have 240hours.

-The AP final grades are based solely upon the examination which has two parts- one a multiple choice section and the other an open response section. These sections are sat by the students in a single session with a small break in between. The IB exams normally consist of 3 papers for HL spread over two days and two papers for SL.

-The final IB grades are a combination of examinations as well as Internal Assessment (IA) - work done during the two years of study. This IA counts for 20-25% of the final grade- the IA grades is determined by the teacher in the school grading the working and then having that grading moderated by other teachers/examiners in other parts of the world.

**-** In terms of Grading, AP uses a 0-5 scale while IB uses a 0-7 scales. Last year 76% of AP exams were graded as 3+. For the IB Diploma the % of candidates who successfully meet the requirements is around is 80%.

- The AP is taught at many international schools outside of the US, but the numbers are modest compared to the number of US schools. The IB on the other hand has been successful at having not only private international schools adopt one or other of their Programmes, as was the norm in the first 20-25 years of its history but now whole public school districts, or State and Provincial school systems have not only recognized schools who want to offer IB courses but have adopted one or other of the Programmes as a basis for the state-wide system

**Costs;-**

- each IB candidate pays a registration fee of $120, irrespective of how many subjects they are studying, and then a fee of about USD108 for each subject studied by the student.

-schools approved to offer one or more the IB programmes have to pay an annual fee, for a school only offering the Diploma Program that can be approximately USD10,000pa..

-For AP the students only pays per subject sat, this is approximately USD117 per subject if they are outside of the US. There is no fee paid by the school to be a testing centre.

-IB schools must undergo an initial authorization process before be approved to offer one of the IB programme and have a 5-Year re-authorization review. For a school to teach and examine the AP examinations the approval process is less arduous.

**University Recognition**

What is best for University acceptances? This is a vexed question. The AP is a US based system and has been, along with SATs etc been one of the key tools for determining University acceptances. However, many Universities and countries outside of the US recognize the AP for matriculation purposes.

The IB Diploma is based on the assumption that IB graduates will go to wide ranges of countries for their tertiary studies, and given it is not based on one single national system, one of the biggest tasks of the IBO over the 40 years has been to achieve recognition for the IB by as many universities and countries globally, this is ongoing, and the numbers increase each year.

For US colleges and universities it is common for students to have unconditional offers of a place before the examinations results come out in July. This one reason why many AP exams are sat by students in Grade 9- 11 as it means when they come to do their college application ion Grade 12 they have some external examination successes to support their applications. In the UK, Australia and other countries it is more usual for students to have conditional offer, these offers will have a minimum level of grades that have to be achieved in the May examinations and hence the issuing of grades in July are of much greater importance.

Certainly for AP candidates studying overseas the main reason that they take the exams is to achieve entrance to a US College or University, although there may be many students who take the exams but who do not ultimately go to the US. For those who do a combination of SATs, APs, and a good US Accredited H.S. Diploma, and school transcript constitute the basis for their applications. Many will have done some IB courses as well, but unless they did an anticipated IB exam at the end of Grade 11, they will not have any IB results to support their applications.

In general, candidates for entry to US colleges and Universities will have unconditional offers ( these offers will be premised on the expectation that the student completes his/her HS Diploma requirements at a satisfactory level) prior to the AP and IB Examination in May of their final year of school. For British, European, Australian, New Zealand, Singapore and other the universities the students will have conditional offers which can only be confirmed after the IB results are issued in early July. For example these offers may be a minimum of 35 points for the Diploma, or a minimum of 6 in certain HL subjects depending on the University course applied for.