



## **What is it? Who Should do it? Common Questions Answered**

Commonly asked questions regarding the IB Program at High Point Central from prospective students and parents are answered.

### **What makes the IB Programme at HPC unique?**

HPC is home to one of the oldest International Baccalaureate Programs in North Carolina. This year marks our 20<sup>th</sup> year of authorization as an IB World School (#875).

### **What are the advantages for enrolling in the IB Programme?**

Returning students report that they are fully prepared for college, esp. in their skills of organization, self-confidence, research, writing, and ability to manage time.

### **When does the IB Programme begin?**

9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students are accepted into the program as “Pre-IB” students, but the actual Diploma Programme (DP) is only junior and senior year. During the first two years, students are advised by and work with the IB Coordinator and IB guidance counselor to choose classes that will enable them to enter the DP and to have the proper classes for graduation from a North Carolina High School.

### **How do you earn the IB Diploma?**

To earn the IB Diploma, students must pass examinations in six subject areas: Language A (mother tongue), Language B (foreign language), Social Science, Science, Math, and Arts. In addition, all students participate in the CORE. The CORE or heart of the DP consists of three parts: Theory of Knowledge (TOK), Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS), and Extended Essay (EE). In each of these parts there is either a separate teacher or an advisor to help the students complete the tasks.

**Does a student have to be an Einstein to participate?**

Absolutely not! IB aims to provide a holistic education. They realize not every student is good at every subject. IB asks that students try each area, but provides pathways for students to excel even if not a “genius” in one area.

**Do IB teachers receive special training?**

All IB Diploma level teachers must have received training in their subject area training. Many also have additional training in special topics relating to the CORE. To make sure this happens, IB reviews the schools every five years in an in-depth evaluation. Schools that do not address the concerns immediately endanger losing their status.

**What does one accomplish in earning the IB Diploma?**

We stress that it is the journey that matters. All of the advantages listed above are gained by all IB students. Getting the Diploma adds additional pride; however, all IB students are eligible for college credit based on the scores awarded.

**Do I have to be in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade “Pre-IB” Program to be eligible for the DP?**

No. Students need to present a transcript showing completion of Honors 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> English, World History, Civics and Economics, level three of a foreign language, NC Math 3, Biology, and Physics and/or Chemistry. Environmental science is also required if the student wants to take IB Biology or Chemistry.

**What is Higher Level (HL) and Standard Level (SL)?**

This is part of the answer about who can do IB. Students must choose three to four HL courses and at least two SL classes. Typically, there are an additional 90 hours of teaching content in the HL classes so the HL classes chosen are in areas of particular strength.

**Why does Higher Level and Standard Level matter to scheduling?**

Each IB diploma candidate must take at least three HL exams and may take as many as four. All HL classes are mandated by IB to be taught over a two-year period with at least 270 instructional hours. At High Point Central, all students take English and History as HL classes. In planning a schedule, it is important to first consider what the third HL will be. At HPC, the HL options are Biology, Chemistry, foreign language, math (but completion of AP Calculus by the end of the sophomore year is a requirement), or Psychology.

**What is a block schedule?**

Most 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade classes are taught on the block schedule—that is the full year of the class is taught in one semester. Each class meets every day for ninety minutes. This means, for example, that all of NC Math III or all of French II is taught in one semester.

**What is a hybrid schedule?**

All 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade IB and AP courses are taught on an A day/B day schedule. This means students have these classes every other day for the whole year. Arts electives can usually be arranged. Many students will end up with a hybrid schedule—most A/B Day classes but a few block classes in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. In 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> there are more blocks with perhaps one or two A/B day classes. In planning, it is extremely important to list two or three alternate choices for electives.

**Are IB students isolated from others at HPC?**

No. The IB students by nature of the classes required do take many of their major subjects with students of like abilities. However, IB students are exposed to students outside of IB in their electives, sports, and extracurricular activities.

**How does my child complete level three of foreign language if none was taught in eighth grade?**

This is the benefit of the block schedule. Students can use the elective period to take an additional language class in either the ninth or tenth grade. Alternatively, North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS) classes are available on line and can provide a way to “catch up” or even take other classes of interest.

**Should Physics or Art be part of the program of studies?**

Planning for the IB program involves three considerations taken simultaneously. One is meeting NC High School graduation requirements; one involves courses required for the IB Diploma; and the third involves what colleges require for admittance. In the past few years, more and more colleges are requiring a physics class and/or a fine arts class. If unsure of a college, it is safe to err on taking physics and chemistry in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade and perhaps taking art as an elective in any grade or an online class.

**What are Quality Points?**

Each course is assigned a certain number of quality points depending on the relative difficulty of the class. In Guilford County, quality points are assigned on the following scale: A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0. An additional .5 quality point is given for each honors class and 1 additional point is given for each AP or IB course.

**Why do Quality Points matter?**

A student’s weighted grade point average is used to compute class rank.

**Does Class Rank matter?**

That is a matter of opinion because everyone might like to be #1. Some colleges and universities seem to use class rank as part of their admissions decision. ON the other hand,

many colleges are now using unweighted GPA so that all students are on a level field. Why? Students who are strong arts students or come from middle schools not offering advanced math are going to have to take the basic courses first. To give everyone an equal opportunity, many times the weighted GPA's are not used. In addition, some of the selective schools HPC students want to attend are looking at the total student record and even discounting numbers in favor of interviews.

### **Should a student avoid taking Art, Drama, Band, Newspaper, etc. that are only 4 point classes and take 5 point classes instead?**

This is part of the class rank answer above. Many colleges receive almost identical application from students; that is, top rank, perfect grades, high SAT scores. The defining difference is often the essays that give students the opportunity to shine as an individual. The artist or writer or musician that has participated in competitions or exhibits can show an added layer of interest and depth. That will be the student selected. That is also true for scholarship interviews. The student who has that added depth will shine in scholarship interviews.

### **What is the service component in the IB Program?**

GCS has a strong service learning initiative. Students are encouraged to log their hours over a four-year period to begin a life-long initiative to learn the advantages of serving others. In the IB Program, beginning the first day of the junior year, students must do a variety of Creativity, Activity, and Service activities over an eighteen-month period. They must propose projects, keep a record, and reflect on their activities. To help students, HPC provides a CAS Coordinator to help students select projects.

### **Can IB Students take AP Courses? Can AP students take IB courses?**

9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students are encouraged to take AP Human Geography as an elective if they come into 9<sup>th</sup> grade with NC Math I and level I of a foreign language completed. Alternatively, students can choose a CTE course. The purpose of the AP course is to initiate the students into the rigor of the IB Program.

We encourage AP students to take the AP class unless it is not offered. IB is a total Program while AP is a choice program where students take a class in an area of strength. Since IB classes are offered over a two-year period, it becomes tricky for an AP student to select two classes to take; however, it is permitted up to 3 classes. TOK is excluded from the offering because it involves grades in an EE and CAS.

### **Is IB better than AP?**

Both are excellent programs. Either AP or IB is likely to provide greater challenge than other courses offered at HPC. Both provide the opportunity to earn college credit, and both are highly regarded by colleges and universities. What is important to keep in mind is that IB is a total program while AP allows students to choose a class in an area of strength. In no way is AP to be considered a step down.

**Do IB students have a life?**

While academic achievement (studying) is a priority, IB students enjoy a very rich social and extracurricular experience in high school. IB students are in most sports, are school leaders, are active in clubs, and participate in community activities. That is not to say that at all times the IB students will tell you they are in love with the work.

The test comes after the exams. What IB students say is how much they have learned. Another test is when they come back to visit after the first semester of the freshman year. Invariably, they relate how prepared they feel, how well they can manage time, and how well they can write.