



Advanced Placement and The International Baccalaureate Diploma Program At Our Lady of Good Counsel

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the IB Diploma Program?

Established in the 1960's out of the United World College movement and aimed at fostering understanding among students in all corners of the world, the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IB) is a two-year college preparatory course of studies. The IB Diploma Program is an inquiry-based curriculum which requires students to take examinations in six different subject areas; complete an original piece of research; participate in and reflect upon their extra-curricular activities and service; and complete an interdisciplinary seminar entitled Theory of Knowledge.

Our Lady of Good Counsel High School has administered the IB Diploma Program since 1997. Flowing from the school's philosophy of "educating the whole person", the IB Diploma Program balances rigorous academic studies with a holistic approach towards living constructively in an ever-expanding world. Beyond the purely academic requirements, however, the IB compels students to reflect upon activities, athletics and service as vital components of a well-rounded education. True to our Catholic identity, IB students are challenged to learn in all fields of knowledge, but are also faced with the issue of applying their knowledge and talents to the needs of the world in which they live.

What is the philosophical difference between AP and IB?

Advanced Placement (AP) courses offer many opportunities for students to challenge themselves in rigorous college level classes. Successful

completion of an AP course and the national AP exam can lead to advanced standing or the awarding of college credit.

Success in IB courses and on the IB exams can also lead to advanced standing in college or the awarding of college credit. Additionally, the philosophical view of an IB class is focused on being internationally minded. Students are encouraged to learn the basic concepts of each subject area while applying them to an international arena. Students in the IB Diploma Program are expected to look outside of themselves and their immediate environment and learn in the context of the larger world around them.

What is the academic difference between AP and IB?

Our Lady of Good Counsel offers an extensive array of AP courses that students can choose to pursue. Students will often take courses that are more geared toward their strengths and interests. At the end of the course, students are strongly encouraged to take the national AP exam.

The IB Diploma Program is just that – a *program*. Students do not pick and choose to take rigorous classes in one area or another. Rather, they join into a program of upper-level classes spanning the six basic subject areas of English, Foreign Language, History, Science, Math, and Art. Successful completion of these courses leads to the awarding of the IB Diploma.

Another unique aspect of the IB Diploma Program, the Program Core, presents students with the opportunity to complete Theory of Knowledge, the Extended Essay, and CAS (creativity, activity, and service).

What are Theory of Knowledge, the Extended Essay, and CAS (Creativity, Activity, and Service)?

Theory of Knowledge (TOK)

This interdisciplinary seminar, which challenges students to think across traditional lines of thought, is taught over two years and provides students an opportunity to examine what, why, and how they are taught in all facets of their lives. It seeks to develop disciplined, inquisitive, and respectful thinkers who are continuously engaged in their own life-long learning.

The Extended Essay

A 4000-word piece of supervised, original research selected by the student in an area of particular interest is begun in TOK class during the Junior year, and completed independently during the Senior year.

Creativity, Action, and Service

CAS is an integrated requirement extending over two years that requires students to plan and reflect meaningfully on their activities, athletics, and service while encouraging students to be involved in pursuits beyond the classroom that can have a positive impact locally, nationally, and globally.

Is it better for students to take AP classes or apply to the IB Diploma Program?

Both routes of study will provide students with rigorous courses and the opportunity to achieve advanced standing or college credit. AP classes provide your child with greater course flexibility because he or she can pick and choose the courses they wish to pursue based on their strengths and weaknesses. The IB Diploma Program, since it requires students to complete rigorous courses across all subject areas as well as complete the Core requirements, ensures a solid foundation in all the academic areas as well as a thoughtful, meaningful commitment to learning outside of the classroom.

Many AP and IB courses overlap. IB Diploma Candidates take classes alongside students who have chosen not to pursue the IB Diploma, and nearly all IB Diploma Candidates take more than one AP exam over the course of their academic careers. Most students are often surprised – and benefitted – by the overlap of courses.

What does the application process entail?

Students do not need to apply formally to take AP courses – they express their interest in taking individual AP courses prior to course registration. The student's teacher will review the student's past performance in that subject area, and ensure the child can succeed in the course requested.

There is a formal application process for the IB Diploma Program because it does require a commitment from both parents and students regarding their choice of classes and the rigor of the program. Applications will be available from November through January.

How many students are accepted into the IB Diploma Program?

Our Lady Good Counsel does not set a cap on admission to the IB Diploma Program. After the applications are reviewed, qualified candidates are admitted into the program. This does not mean that every student applying will

gain admission into the program. Our first priority is to ensure that students are placed in classes that set them on the road to success.

When can students apply to the IB Diploma Program?

Applications are available to students from November through January of their sophomore year. All decisions are made prior to course registration in March. The IB Diploma Program course of studies begins Junior year.

Do students need to be in all honors classes to be IB Diploma Candidates or to take AP courses?

No, course placement and IB Diploma Program participation are dependent on past academic performance and teacher recommendations.

Further Questions?

Contact **Mr. Andrew Collins**, AP-IB Coordinator at Our Lady of Good Counsel.

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Where can I get more information?

The International Baccalaureate Organization: www.ibo.org

Advanced Placement Program: www.apcentral.collegeboard.com

