

OUR DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

Our Diploma Programme is a challenging two-year course for 16–19-year-olds that is the gold standard of international education.

The aim of the Programme is to equip students with all the necessary skills and qualities to study at the world's top universities and fulfil all their personal and academic potential. It does this by providing an absorbing and holistic curriculum that's focused on expanding knowledge, developing critical thinking skills and helping creativity and individuality flourish.

Importantly, our Diploma Programme also helps students to develop a strong sense of their own identity and culture, and increases their ability to communicate with, and respect the views of, people from different backgrounds, countries and cultures. Key to achieving this outcome is that we only have around 120 Diploma students, which helps to create a close-knit community of people who support and appreciate each other.



COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Our Diploma Programme is formed of the following parts:

Subject groups

Students choose six subjects from the following six subject areas. They can choose two subjects from the same group, as long as their overall subject selections meet the requirements set out by the IB.

- Studies in Language and Literature
- Language Acquisition
- Individuals and Societies
- Experimental Sciences
- Mathematics
- The Arts

They must also select a course from Group 6 (The Arts) or a second course from one of the first five groups.

A student must study three of their courses at Higher Level and three of their courses at Standard Level. The difference between the two levels is that Higher Level courses typically involve 50% more work and students are expected to demonstrate a greater body of knowledge, understanding and skills.

An additional seventh subject can only be added to a student's programme if it can be accommodated within our published timetable.

Core elements

Theory of Knowledge explores the foundations of knowledge and introduces students to university-level critical thinking.

The extended essay is an essay of about 4,000 words. A student largely writes this during the second semester of Grade 11 through to the end of the September of Grade 12.

Creativity, activity, service (CAS) activities require a student to dedicate time to creative projects, physical activity or voluntary work.

OUR SCHOOL DAY

A Diploma student's day starts with registration at 8.40 and typically finishes at 15.30, although some classes do run until 16.30. Students have a 50 minute lunch break at 11.50.

We have a two-week timetable. Every day features 4 periods, lasting 80 minutes long, apart from Wednesdays where lessons are 65 minutes long. These periods are typically occupied with lessons, although a student may have some free periods during the week.

At the end of the school or during lunch time, students can attend extra-curricular activities, but may have a lesson depending on what courses a student is studying.

DISCOVERY WEEK

One of the first things our Grade 11 Diploma students do at the beginning of each school year is take part in Discovery Week. It is a four-day residential trip that helps students and staff to get to know each other and build up a strong sense of community.

Recent Discovery Weeks have involved paddle boarding in Jersey, orienteering in Dartmoor, and mountain biking in the Lake District.

Grade 12 students enjoy the campus to themselves, for a week of concentrated learning, both independent and teacher-led, with a particular focus on the core programme.

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

The purpose of Southbank's assessment in the Diploma Programme is to provide students, parents and teachers with the information they need to help identify each student's strengths and weaknesses. This then informs the next steps for their education and learning.

For Grade 11 students, our assessment is provided through:

- indicative grades – these are an indication of the progress made in the course up to this point
- conferences between parents, teachers and students
- academic reports setting out targets and strategies
- occasional incidental reports about progress, achievements or particular concerns.

For Grade 12 students, our assessment is provided through:

- a full report in December
- mock exam results and a full report in early February.

FINAL DIPLOMA RESULTS SCORE

Grade 12 students are awarded a final Diploma results score after receiving scores for their six subject courses and core elements. These scores are determined by written examinations and internal and external assessment tasks, depending on the course. The exams, coursework and tasks may be assessed externally or marked by Southbank teachers and then moderated by the International Baccalaureate.

The grades awarded for each course range from 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest). Students can also be awarded up to three additional points for their Theory of Knowledge work and extended essay. The Diploma is awarded to students who gain at least 24 points, subject to certain minimum levels of performance across the whole programme and satisfactory participation in the CAS requirement. The highest total that a DP student can be awarded is 45 points.