

TASIS



WELCOME TO CAS!

Creativity
Action
Service

CAS Guide 2009-2010¹

IB Mission Statement:

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.

The nature of creativity, action, service (CAS)

¹ Much of the material contained in this guide is from the official IB CAS Guide 2009-2010. It is available on their website: www.ibo.org.

...if you believe in something, you must not just think or talk or write, but must act.

Peterson (2003)

Creativity, action, service (CAS) is at the heart of the Diploma Programme. It is one of the three essential elements in every student's Diploma Programme experience. It involves students in a range of activities alongside their academic studies throughout the Diploma Programme. The three strands of CAS, which are often interwoven with particular activities, are characterized as follows:

Creativity: The Arts and other experiences that involve creative thinking.

Action: Physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle, complementing academic work elsewhere in the Diploma Programme.

Service: An unpaid and voluntary exchange that has a learning benefit for the student. The rights, dignity and autonomy of all those involved are respected. It is essential that service activities have learning benefits for the student. Otherwise, they are not experiential learning (hence, not CAS) and have no particular claim on the student's time. This rules out mundane, repetitive activities, as well as "service" without real responsibility.

CAS enables students to enhance their personal and interpersonal development through experiential learning. At the same time, it provides an important counterbalance to the academic pressures of the rest of the Diploma Programme. A good CAS programme should be both challenging and enjoyable, a personal journey of self-discovery. Each individual student has a different starting point, and therefore different goals and needs, but for many their CAS activities include experiences that are profound and life-changing.

For student development to occur, CAS should involve:

- real, purposeful activities, with significant outcomes,
- personal challenges—tasks must extend the student and be achievable in scope,
- thoughtful consideration, such as planning, reviewing progress, reporting,
- reflection on outcomes and personal learning.

All proposed CAS activities must meet these **four criteria**. It is also essential that they do not replicate other parts of the student's Diploma Programme work.

Concurrency of learning is important in the Diploma Programme. **Therefore, CAS activities should continue on a regular basis for as long as possible throughout the programme, and certainly for at least 18 months.**

To fulfill CAS requirements students must meet the four criteria mentioned above and the eight Learning Outcomes. They can complete these requirements through a variety of projects over the course of 18 months, but it is important to be aware of these guidelines from the start in order to plan accordingly.

CAS Aims

Within the Diploma Programme, CAS provides the main opportunity to develop many of the attributes described in the IB learner profile. For this reason, the aims of CAS have been written in a form that highlights their connections with the IB learner profile (see the hexagon on page 2 of the IB CAS Guide 2009-2010).

The CAS programme aims to develop students who are:

- reflective thinkers—they understand their own strengths and limitations, identify goals and devise strategies for personal growth.
- willing to accept new challenges and new roles.
- aware of themselves as members of communities with responsibilities towards each other and the environment.
- active participants in sustained, collaborative projects.
- balanced—they enjoy and find significance in a range of activities involving intellectual, physical, creative and emotional experiences.

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are differentiated from assessment objectives because they are not rated on a scale. The completion decision for the school in relation to each student is, simply, “Have these outcomes been achieved?”

As a result of their CAS experience as a whole, including their reflections, there should be evidence that students have:

1. Increased their awareness of their own strengths and areas for growth

They are able to see themselves as individuals with various skills and abilities, some more developed than others, and understand that they can make choices about how they wish to move forward.

2. Undertaken new challenges

A new challenge may be an unfamiliar activity, or an extension to an existing one.

3. Planned and initiated activities

Planning and initiation will often be in collaboration with others. It can be shown in activities that are part of larger projects; for example, ongoing school activities in the local community, as well as in small student-led activities.

4. Worked collaboratively with others

Collaboration can be shown in many different activities, such as team sports, playing music in a band, or helping in a kindergarten. At least one project involving collaboration and the integration of creativity, action, and service is required.

5. Shown perseverance and commitment in their activities

At a minimum, this implies attending regularly and accepting a share of the responsibility for dealing with problems that arise in the course of activities.

6. Engaged with issues of global importance

Students may be involved in international projects, but there are many global issues that can be acted upon locally or nationally (for example, environmental concerns, caring for the elderly).

7. Considered the ethical implications of their actions

Ethical decisions arise in almost any CAS activity (for example, on the sports field, in musical composition, in relationships with others involved in service activities). Evidence of thinking about ethical issues can be shown in various ways, including journal entries and conversations with CAS advisers.

8. Developed new skills

As with new challenges, new skills may be shown in activities that the student has not previously undertaken, or in increased expertise in an established area.

All eight outcomes must be present for a student to complete the CAS requirement and to be awarded the IB diploma. Some may be demonstrated many times, in a variety of activities, but completion requires only that there is **some** evidence for every outcome.

This focus on learning outcomes emphasizes that it is the quality of a CAS activity (its contribution to the student's development) that is of most importance. The guideline for the minimum amount of CAS activity is approximately the equivalent of half a day per school week (three to four hours per week), or approximately 150 hours in total, with a reasonable balance between creativity, action and service. "Hour counting", however, is not encouraged.

CAS is not formally assessed but students need to document their activities and provide evidence that they have achieved the eight key learning outcomes. Students will be responsible for recording their CAS projects through LOG sheets and reflection. LOG sheets will remain a requirement despite the shift away from "hour counting". The purpose of the LOG sheets will not be to formally count hours, but to ensure CAS is an 18-month activity, and to hold students accountable. The LOG sheets will be used to check-in, and to ensure students do not procrastinate CAS until the last minute.

Reflection

Reflection can take many forms, but it is a required part of the CAS program. Reflection needs to be developed. It should not be assumed that it comes naturally. Just as the kind of reflection that a critic applies to a work of art or literature is something that develops with time and experience, so the kind of reflection appropriate in CAS is something that requires guidance and practice.

The fundamentals are simple. Of any activity, it is appropriate to ask the following questions:

- What did I plan to do?
- What did I do?
- What were the outcomes, for me, the team I was working with, and others?

Kinds of reflection

Reflection can be:

- public or private
- individual or shared
- objective or subjective

Reflection can take the form of a written journal, photo journal, scrapbook, oral discussions (recorded), videos/DVDs, portfolios, or other creative approaches.

Developing reflection

Moving on from the “What ...?” questions outlined earlier, experiential learners might consider, where appropriate, for themselves and others, and for each stage of an activity (before, during and after):

- how they felt
- what they perceived
- what they thought about the activity
- what the activity meant to them
- what the value of the activity was
- what they learned from the activity and how this learning (for example, a change of perspective) might apply more widely.

Interviews

There should be consultations between each student and the CAS coordinator as necessary, at least twice in Year 1 and once in Year 2, where the student’s progress is discussed and appropriate encouragement and advice is given. These consultations should be briefly documented on a simple CAS progress form. If any concerns arise, especially about whether a student will successfully complete the CAS requirement, these should be noted and appropriate action should be taken at the earliest opportunity.

The school will record the completion decision for each student, noting the evidence for each learning outcome. This decision is reported to the regional office, as specified in the *Handbook of Procedures for the Diploma Programme*.

The IB requires 3 interviews, but sometimes students will need 4 if they are falling behind.

Interview Schedule:

First Interview: Sophomore spring (April/May), Junior Fall (**all new Juniors mandatory**, returning sophomores optional upon need)

Interim Interview: Junior Spring (April/May, or Sept/Oct of Senior year if students need the summer and to check in on summer hours)

Exit Interview: Senior Spring (February-April)

Official TASIS deadline for all CAS materials: April 15th

Responsibilities of the student

The relevant section of the IB *Programme Standards and Practices* document states that students should have opportunities to choose their own CAS activities and to undertake activities in a local and international context as appropriate. This means that, as far as possible, students should “own” their personal CAS programmes. With guidance from their mentors/advisers, students should choose activities for themselves, initiating new ones where appropriate.

Students are required to:

- self-review at the beginning of their CAS experience and set personal goals for what they hope to achieve through their CAS programme,
- plan, do, and reflect (plan activities, carry them out, and reflect on what they have learned),
- undertake at least one interim review and a final review with their CAS advisor,
- take part in a range of activities, including at least one project, some of which they have initiated themselves,
- keep records of their activities and achievements, including a list of the principal activities undertaken,
- show evidence of achievement of the eight CAS learning outcomes.

Other Aspects of the CAS Program

International dimensions

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.

IB Learner Profile booklet (March 2006)

Creating “a better and more peaceful world” is a large aim. Working towards it should be seen as involving many small steps, which may be taken locally, nationally or internationally. It is important to see activities in a broader context, bearing in mind the maxim “Think globally, act locally”. Working with people from different social or cultural backgrounds in the vicinity of the school can do as much to increase mutual understanding as large international projects.

CAS and ethical education

There are many definitions of ethical education. The more interesting ones acknowledge that it involves more than simply “learning about ethics”. Meaningful ethical education—the development of ethical beings—happens only when people’s feelings and behavior changes, as well as their ideas.

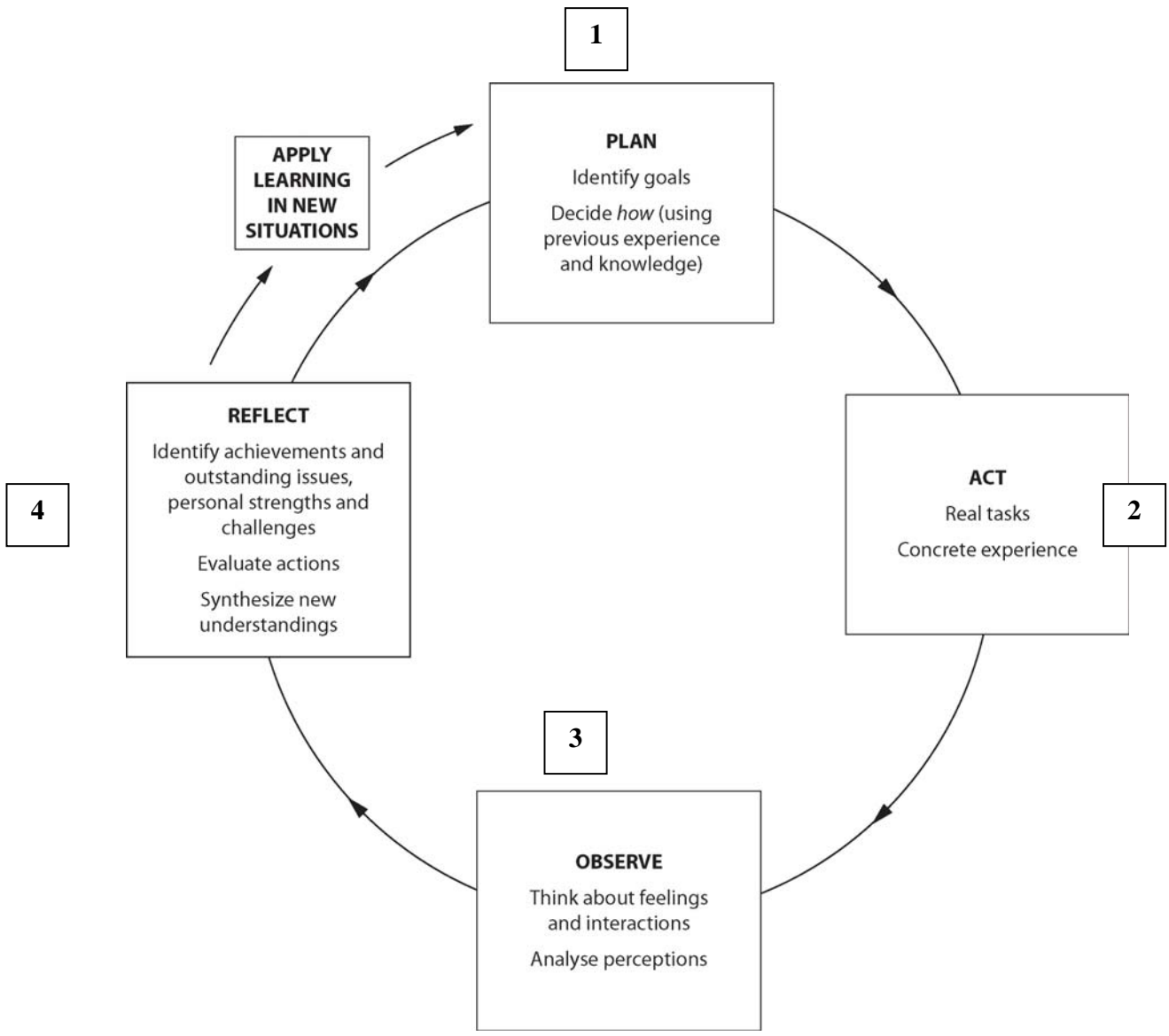
Because it involves real activities with significant outcomes, CAS provides a major opportunity for ethical education, understood as involving principles, attitudes and behavior. The emphasis in CAS is on helping students to develop their own identities, in accordance with the ethical principles embodied in the IB mission statement and the IB learner profile. Various ethical issues will arise naturally in the course of CAS activities, and may be experienced as challenges to a student’s ideas, instinctive responses or ways of behaving

(for example, towards other people). In the context of CAS, schools have a specific responsibility to support students' personal growth as they think, feel and act their way through ethical issues.

CAS and Experiential Learning

While different Diploma Program subjects offer varying amounts of opportunity for experiential learning, it is at the very heart of CAS.

As the figure below indicates, experiential learning involves much more than just the activity itself: planning, acting, observing and reflection are all crucial in making the experience as valuable as possible.



Some CAS Possibilities...

All students should be involved in CAS activities that they have initiated themselves. Some CAS activities may be initiated by the school. Activities should vary in length and in the amount of commitment required from the student, but none should be trivial.

TASIS has ongoing relationships with local and international organizations that offer challenging opportunities for service activities that may also incorporate elements of creativity and/or action. Other options are undertaking major, concentrated, one-time activities that may involve considerable planning and fundraising (for example, expeditions or building projects).

The idea of CAS is to ensure that students have a balanced, fulfilling overall experience; it is not to overload students who are already participating in a very demanding academic schedule. Students undertake activities that follow CAS guidelines (for example, by meeting CAS learning outcomes and including student initiative or choice), the fact that these activities also satisfy the requirements of TASIS (sports or art) or of another award scheme does not prevent them from being counted towards CAS.

Projects, themes, concepts

Students should be involved in at least one project involving teamwork that integrates two or more of creativity, action and service, and is of significant duration. Larger-scale activities of this sort may provide excellent opportunities for students to engage “with issues of global importance”. From time to time, in line with its mission statement, the IB may identify broad themes that schools are invited to support (“Sharing our humanity” is the first of these). Such themes may provide a context that will enable students to generalize further in their reflections, following the maxim “Think globally, act locally”.

Creativity

1. Ceramics
2. Painting and Drawing
3. Photography
4. Theatre
5. Model UN

Action

1. Soccer
2. Volleyball
3. Rugby
4. Basketball
5. Fitness
6. Hiking
7. Skiing
8. Tennis
9. Swimming
10. Lacrosse

Service

The TASIS Community

1. **Peer Mediators**—This is a program designed to train students in the art of mediation and negotiation. Students learn valuable conflict resolution techniques and then be given the opportunity practice and enhance these skills by facilitating mediations amongst their peers.
2. **Peer Educators**—Students participate in training with the counselor once a week to learn to facilitate discussion about important, personal and sometimes sensitive topics. Peer educators work in pairs to lead small-group discussions for younger students (6-8 students in a group). Topics include transition to life at TASIS, friendship and dating, stress, healthy living at TASIS, bullying and many others.
3. **Student Weekend Activities Team (SWAT)**—Students plan and organize creative, fun, and innovative weekend activities for the campus, and particularly the boarding students. Students develop skills in organization, planning and follow-through. They also use their creativity to build a sense of community and school spirit.
4. **Proctors**—Proctors are seen as campus leaders and role models. Proctors live in the dormitories and work as a liaison between dorm parents and dorm residents. They are active community members and work to foster a strong sense of community. Proctors also participate in either Peer Educators, Peer Mediators, or Student Activities to further develop their leadership skills.
5. **Peer Tutoring**—Top students in different areas of study work with the Academic Help Centers to tutor students who are struggling in certain subjects. The tutors further develop their knowledge of the subject by explaining concepts to other students. They also develop confidence through the formal recognition of their talents.
6. **“Reading Buddies”**—Students work with the elementary school students and read with them once a week. The elementary school students pick a book to read with their “buddy” and they practice their reading skills. This partnership is focused on mentoring and leadership skills for the older student and confidence-building and friendship for the younger students.
7. **BIGS**—High school students serve as mentors to middle school students. The BIGS help the younger students to adjust to life in Switzerland, at a boarding school, and at TASIS specifically. The program focuses on developing mentoring and leadership skills.
8. **Environmental Club**—Students run a campus-wide recycling program, host a week of environmental awareness and work on various projects throughout the year to make our campus more environmentally conscious.
9. **Student Council**—The Student Council consists of a Student Body President, Vice President, and three representatives from each High School class who work together to advance the quality of student life. As liaisons between the students and the administration, members are responsible for effectively and accurately representing the student body's interests. The Student Council promotes unity and cooperation in the School community by planning, conducting, and overseeing activities that foster school spirit.
10. **Sports Management**—Students work with the athletic director to help run sports tournaments and home games. Students develop planning and organizational skills in the process of hosting a tournament. Students learn the rules and regulations of a variety of different sports, and help to foster school spirit by supporting the TASIS teams.

The Local Community: Montagnola & Lugano

1. **Casa Elisabetta**—Casa Elisabetta is a domestic violence shelter and orphanage in downtown Lugano. TASIS students visit Casa Elisabetta and play with the children once a month. They also organize a Holiday gift giving campaign where advisory groups, teachers, and students can give a gift to a child at the home.
2. **Tea Time**—Students meet with elderly residents in Montagnola for tea once a week. Students go grocery shopping and deliver groceries to the elderly, and then join them for conversation and company. This helps students develop their Italian skills and learn about the local community.

Inter-School Community

1. **Model UN**—Students attend conferences around Europe to simulate the United Nations. Students discuss and debate global issues and work with students around the world to create possible solutions to our current crises.
2. **Amnesty International**—The TASIS chapter will begin in the spring of 2010 due to student initiative and leadership. The group will be student led and it will focus on issues of torture, unfair detention, and other human rights abuses. The group will work on letter writing, fundraising, and awareness projects.

International/Global Community

1. **Women's Institute for Secondary Education and Research (WISER)**—WISER is the first all girls' boarding school in Muhuru Bay, Kenya, a small, rural fishing village on Lake Victoria. The school is located in Nyanza, one of the poorest provinces in and the province with the highest HIV/AIDS and malaria rates of the entire country. TASIS students discuss issues of girls' education, female empowerment, poverty and HIV/AIDS awareness as well as how these issues are connected. Students learn about the community surrounding Muhuru Bay while working in a global partnership to provide opportunities for disadvantaged girls. Students raise funds to sponsor one girl's scholarship to WISER. A group of club members have the opportunity to travel to Muhuru Bay to visit WISER for Spring Academic Travel.
2. **HIV/AIDS Awareness**—HIV/AIDS Awareness is an adapted version of ACA. Instead of focusing just on Romania, students focus on the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a global problem. Students learn about AIDS, its global impact, the issues of stigmatization and discrimination, the social and environmental factors impacting AIDS, and about individuals who live and work with this disease.
3. **Habitat for Humanity**—This international nonprofit organization seeks to eliminate poverty and homelessness and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. TASIS students participate in a program based in Portugal, where they learn about the community and the issues of global poverty and homelessness. A group of club members are eligible to participate in the Spring Academic Travel trip to Portugal to build homes for local residents.
4. **Malaria Education**—Students will raise funds for mosquito nets in Kenya and Zambia and help cancer research in the local area of Ticino. CAMEO was a student initiated club and it will remain highly student run. Students will develop leadership skills and organizational skills through teamwork and planning events.
5. **Operation Smile**—Today, over, 130,000 children around the globe no longer suffer from facial deformities such as cleft lips and cleft palates. But, changing children's lives doesn't begin and end with surgeons and nurses alone. It's the compassion, energy and selfless service of students who make an impact on the world, one smile at a time. Operation Smile depends on students around the world, to contribute their energy and passion, even for a brief moment, to help make a child smile. More than 500

Operation Smile Student Clubs around the globe build awareness, raise funds and educate students about our core values of commitment, leadership and volunteerism.

6. **Phillip House**—There are no accurate figures on the number of street children in Romania, but it is estimated that only in the capital of Bucharest alone, there are between three and five thousand children living on the streets and over nine thousand in the entire Romania. As Romania's notorious institutions are being closed down, the numbers are on the increase. The Phillip House is located in Bucharest and is a safe place where children can go to do school work, get a meal, and receive medical attention. They also have dental, social, and psychological services that the children and their families can take advantage of. Recreational activities are also available. Students have gone here for the last 5 years and we hope to continue to make a difference.