

CAS 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. Creativity, action, service guide 5 Introduction

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 at least two 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. 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 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 challenge—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 need to 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.

Successful completion of CAS is a requirement for the award of the IB diploma. CAS is not formally assessed but students need to document their activities and provide evidence that they have achieved eight key learning outcomes. A school's CAS programme is regularly monitored by the relevant regional office.

Reflection, recording and reporting

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?

The difficulty lies in the complexity of the possible answers.

Kinds of reflection

Different kinds of reflection work for different people. Reflection can be:

- Public or private
- Individual or shared
- Objective or subjective.

For example, in a CAS group project, the planning stages are largely public, so reflection on them can be largely public, shared and objective. The term "largely" is used because there may be individual views that arise independently, in terms of how satisfactory the process was for a particular student (who may enter and leave the activity with different personal experiences from others). Carrying out the project is likely to be both public and private, both individual and shared, and both objective and subjective.

Outcomes of a project or other activity are similar: there may be objective successes and limitations of the activity as a whole, but what it has meant for the team and for individuals within it may be more varied. Creativity, action, service guide Details.

For some students and some kinds of reflection (such as private, individual, subjective), writing is the best tool for reflection. However, for many, reflective writing does not come naturally. It can, to some extent, be "modeled" in oral discussion of more public, less sensitive matters, either as an end in itself or as a prelude to writing. But writing is by no means the only possible outcome of reflection. Students can present their activities

orally to peers, parents or outsiders. They can make scrapbooks, photo essays, videos/DVDs or weblogs. They can use journals or make up varied portfolios. Or they may sometimes simply reflect privately: some of the most important lessons may be very personal ones that students should be allowed to keep to themselves.

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. There are many different sources of advice on techniques for developing reflection, some more appropriate to CAS than others. Reed and Koliba (1995) and Berger Kaye (2004) have many useful ideas.

Recording and reporting

Students should document their CAS activities, noting in particular their reflections upon their experiences. As previously indicated, this documentation may take many forms, including weblogs, illustrated displays and videos, and written notes. Its extent should match the significance of the particular activity to the student. While it is important to encourage students to make an early start on their CAS log, there is no point in writing lengthy accounts about relatively routine experiences. Some of the most valuable recording and reporting happens when there is a real audience and purpose, for example, when students inform other students, parents or the wider community about what is planned or what has been achieved.

There should be consultations between each student and a CAS adviser 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*.

Creativity, action, service guide 11

Details

Where a school is required to submit sample student CAS records to the regional office, as part of the regular monitoring process, the records required will be:

- the progress form (see model form A in the “Appendices” for a possible model)
- the completion form (see model form B in the “Appendices” for a possible model)
- up to 10 sample pages from the student’s ongoing documentation. These sample pages, which may, for example, be photocopied journal pages or printouts from electronic logs, must include a list of the principal activities undertaken and evidence of both planning and reflection. For one or more activities, it must be possible for the reader to tell what happened, why it happened, how it happened, what its value was and what the student learned from it. Schools should retain other supporting material until 31 May (May session schools) or 30 November (November session schools) in case there are queries about the material supplied. As part of routine monitoring, or during five-year reviews, regional offices may request to see the complete documentation for individual students.

Range and diversity of activities

All students should be involved in CAS activities that they have initiated themselves. Other 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. Some schools have ongoing relationships with local organizations that offer challenging opportunities for service activities that may also incorporate elements of creativity and/or action. Other schools undertake major, concentrated, one-off activities that may involve considerable planning and fund-raising (for example, expeditions or building projects).

The Online Curriculum Centre (OCC) is a good place to look for examples of varied CAS activities, large and small. A brief visit to this extensive website can begin to give a sense of how individual schools tailor their CAS programmes according to the constraints and opportunities of their own situations. In line with the aim of CAS to broaden students' experience during their Diploma Programme years, work that is part of a student's study of a Diploma Programme subject, theory of knowledge or extended essay may not be counted towards CAS. This excludes, for example, routine practice performed by IB music or dance students. However, where 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 a state qualification or of another award scheme does not prevent them from being counted towards CAS. 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.

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, a 12 action, service guide Details

Other possible sources of organizing themes or concepts, which schools may wish to consult, include the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (www.un.org/millenniumgoals/) and various websites dealing with global issues (enter "global issues" in a search engine). As with any Internet sources, some of these websites are more reputable and/or credible than others. Many schools have also found inspiration in JF Rischarde's twenty global problems (see Rischarde 2002).

Creativity

Creative activities should have a definite goal or outcome. They should be planned and evaluated like all CAS activities. This can present something of a challenge where, for example, a student is a dedicated instrumental musician. It would be artificial to rule that something that is both a pleasure and a passion for the student could not be considered part of their CAS experience. How, though, can it help to fulfill CAS learning outcomes? It may be useful to refer back to the section "The nature of creativity, action, service", particularly to the second principle: **personal challenge**—tasks must extend the student and be achievable in scope.

Perhaps the instrumental musician can learn a particularly difficult piece, or a different style of playing, in order to perform for an audience. The context might be a fund-raising activity, or the student might give a talk to younger children about the instrument, with musical illustrations. Appropriate CAS activities are not merely "more of the same"—more practice, more concerts with the school band, and so on. This excludes, for example, routine practice performed by IB music or dance students (as noted earlier), but does **not** exclude music, dance or art activities that these students are involved with outside the Diploma Programme subject coursework.

Action

Similar considerations apply here. An outstanding athlete will not stop training and practicing in order to engage in some arbitrary, invented CAS physical activity. However, modern approaches to sports coaching emphasize the notion of the reflective practitioner, so it is possible for the athletics coach to incorporate relevant CAS principles and practice into training schedules for the benefit of the student. Setting goals, and planning and reflecting on their achievement, is vital. "Extending" the student may go further, for example, to asking them to pass on some of their skills and knowledge to others. If their chosen sport is entirely individual, perhaps they should try a team game, in order to experience the different pleasures and rewards on offer.

Some excellent "action" activities are not sporting or competitive but involve physical challenge by demanding endurance (such as long-distance trekking) or the conquest of personal fears (for example, rock climbing). It is important that schools carefully assess the risks involved in such activities. Alternatively, a student's "action" may be physical exertion as part of a service activity, perhaps in a project as outlined in the section "Projects, themes,

concepts". To avoid possible confusion, it is appropriate to note that the use of the term "action" in CAS is very different from that in the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP). In the PYP, action is a powerful concept that is part of the whole philosophy of learning (see *Making the PYP happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education*); in CAS, action relates specifically to physical activity.

Service

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 students' time. This rules out mundane, repetitive activities, as well as "service" without real responsibility. A learning benefit that enriches the student personally is in no way inconsistent with the requirement that service be unpaid and voluntary. Creativity, action, service guide 13 Details

The general principle, sketched out in the section "The nature of creativity, action, service", that the "rights, dignity and autonomy of all those involved [in service activities] are respected", means, among other things, that the identification of needs, towards which a service activity will be directed, has to involve prior communication and full consultation with the community or individual concerned. This approach, based on a collaborative exchange, maximizes both the potential benefits to the recipients and the learning opportunities for the students.

Ideally, such prior communication and consultation will be face-to-face and will involve the students themselves. Where this is not possible, schools need to work with appropriate partners or intermediaries, such as NGOs (non-governmental organizations), and make every effort to ensure both that the service provided is appropriate, and that the students are able to understand the human consequences of their work, for both individuals and communities.