

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

What is the Riverview International Baccalaureate Program?

The Riverview IB Program consists of four different pathways:

Preparatory IB Program (PIB), grades 9-10

IB Diploma Program, grades 11-12

IB Diploma Courses, taken in the diploma program, grades 11-12

IB Career Program, grades 11-12

(The following refers to the Diploma Program at Riverview)

*How is the IB Diploma Program different from other high school college prep programs?**

Taking place in the last two years of high school, the Diploma Program is a comprehensive and balanced curriculum & assessment system that is made up of a total of eight elements:

-----six subject areas,

-----a critical thinking course (Theory of Knowledge),

-----an independent research project (Extended Essay), and,

-----a documented commitment to service and extracurricular involvement (Creativity-Activity-Service, or CAS).

Through careful subject selection, students may tailor their course of studies to meet their needs and interests. Regardless of the subject selection, all students will explore the connections between these six major subject areas and will study each subject through an international perspective.

Assessment of student achievement happens in a variety of ways throughout the course of the two-year program. It includes assessment of student work both by outside examiners, as well as the students' own teachers. All assessment undergoes careful review or moderation to ensure that a common, international standard is

applied equally to the work of students around the world. Each subject area is also in a 7 year cycle of renewal, guaranteeing the most relevant high school curriculum anywhere in the world.

The first two years of high school, Riverview offers a preparatory-IB Program (PIB), whose purpose is to foster creative, exploratory thinking, as well as disciplined and structured approaches to learning. (After the PIB Program, students then enter the Diploma Program, take Diploma courses, or enter the Career Program.)

(Although only the last two years of high school (grades 11 & 12) make up the actual IB Diploma Program, schools often refer to the entire 3 or 4 year sequence -pre-IB plus IB years- as the “Diploma Program”.)

The IB Program sounds like a lot of extra work. What are the advantages of enrolling in the IB Program?

Students who completed the IB Diploma Program report that their involvement with IB has given them the tools needed to succeed at university and to make the most of their post-secondary education. In particular, students comment on their sense of preparedness, their self-confidence, their research skills, their ability to manage their time, and their willingness to be actively engaged in their own learning. Even more importantly, they have developed a sense of the world around them, their responsibility to it, and, the skills with which to embrace the complexities of life. The IBO often employs a variety of phrases to describe these traits and abilities: “learning how to learn”, “life-long learners”, “critical and compassionate thinkers”, and, “informed participants in local and world affairs”. Students who have goals of being successful adults need to think expansively, perform consistently, and, demonstrate the capability to work effectively with people of varied backgrounds and traditions. Riverview’s IB Program prepares students for these realities.

The contrasting statistics, regarding the dreadful percentage of students who complete university studies in six years (@40%) vs. the impressive percentage of IB grads who complete university (well over 90%), highlight the value of an IB education.

For these reasons, the IB Diploma Program is recognized as a superior education, preparing students to succeed at post-secondary institutions...and beyond.

What preparation do students need in order to succeed in the IB Diploma Program?

First of all the best preparation is a development for the love of learning – simple motivation to do one’s best. Specifically, one can prepare for the IB Diploma Program in a couple of ways: a) by succeeding in the pre-IB Program (grades 9 & 10), or, b) by demonstrating a high level of success in honors level classes (grades 9 and/or 10).

School attendance and social maturity are also two most critical factors.

How many IB exams are there, and when do students take them?

A student will take six IB exams, including one literature course, a 2nd language, one social science, one experimental science, one math, and one arts course. The arts course can be replaced by a second social science, a second experimental science, or a third language. Of the six exams, three are taken at the standard level (after a minimum of 150 teaching hours), and three taken at the higher level (after a minimum of 240 teaching hours). IB students are expected to take their examinations at the conclusion of the 2 year Diploma Program. However, the IBO permits students to take one or two standard level examinations at the end of junior year, upon the recommendation of the school’s IB Coordinator. Higher level exams can only be taken at the end of the senior year.

It is significant to know that the IB exams are not the only measure of successful course completion. Students are also evaluated by the formal work done during the school year; this is known as internal assessments. The final course grades in IB subjects are arrived at through the combination of the exams plus the internal assessments.

Can an IB exam be taken without having taken the course?

No. A significant part of the student’s final grade comes from work done in the classroom.

Does the IB Diploma satisfy the State of Florida graduation requirements?

Students who successfully complete the IB course of studies (curriculum) automatically receive a Riverview High School Diploma. In addition the State of Florida’s graduation requirements of American History, Gov’t./Economics, HOPE, as well as the Community Service requirements, are also waived.

Students who succeed in receiving the IB Diploma automatically receive Florida Bright Futures Scholarships. Even without receipt of the IB Diploma, students who successfully complete the IB course of studies (curriculum) automatically receive a Riverview High School Diploma. With minimum SAT or ACT scores, they also qualify for Florida Bright Futures Scholarships.

May I take IB examinations even if I am not attending an IB school?

No. The IBO permits only students enrolled in and attending IB-authorized schools to participate in an IB program and take IB examinations.

How does one earn the IB Diploma?

At the conclusion of Year 2 of IB (senior year), the exam scores and internal grades for each subject are compiled. Grades are awarded from 1 to 7 (highest). Out of the six subject areas, a student must average 4 points each, for a total of 24 points (as long as there are no failing conditions).

The yearly world average of successful diploma recipients hovers around 75%-79%. Riverview's rate is consistently between 75%-85%. The Riverview IB Program has been in existence since January, 1999.

How can my child enroll in the IB program?

Each school establishes its own student admissions policies. Please consult the admission requirements link at www.riverviewib.com for specific information. Riverview IB Admissions cycle is normally from Jan-April 1 each year, for following school year enrolment. (Students new to Sarasota County can apply up to the start of school.)

Can students with special needs participate in an IB program?

Certainly, the IBO has established policies for accommodating inclusion of all students.

Can students transfer from one Diploma Program school to another?

Yes, but while the Diploma Program itself is the same from school to school, the subject choices available to students will vary. Timelines and deadlines for a program's central elements – Extended Essay, Theory of Knowledge (TOK), CAS (Creativity-Activity-Service) – usually vary, as well.

Just what is the “Extended Essay”?

The Extended Essay is a 4,000 word piece of original research conducted by each IB Diploma candidate. It is completed between second semester of junior year and first semester of senior year. The student researches and writes on a topic of his/her choosing, and has an Extended Essay Coordinator, as well as an Extended Essay Advisor, to help with the essay.

What is “Theory of Knowledge”?

Theory of Knowledge, or TOK, is a seminar-type course that explores the linkages between subject areas (courses). It is part existential, philosophical, psychological and metaphysical. It, also, is taken between second semester junior year and first semester senior year. Students submit a presentation-tape and reflective paper, in order to successfully complete the course.

What is “CAS”?

CAS stands for Creativity-Activity-Service. In order to successfully complete the IB Diploma Program, each student must document creative-action-service involvement in experiences outside the classroom that are devoted to school, local, and, international communities. The commitment(s) should equal a total of 150 hours, but, more importantly show evidence of attaining seven outcomes:

This experiential learning must take place during the eighteen months between the beginning of junior year and second semester senior year.

Students in grades 9 and 10, Riverview pre-IB, are urged to also explore the notion of service. Not only will this affect personal growth but, if 100 hours of voluntary commitment are accumulated, it will also guarantee Florida Bright Futures should a student not continue onto the IB.

What does 'Baccalaureate' mean anyway?

In English, it is bachelors: the term typically used in European schools for an advanced, college prep, high school diploma.

Is it necessary to take the same Second Language for four years?

Not really. However, if one wants to be totally and thoroughly knowledgeable in the language and to take it Higher Level (HL), it is necessary. It may also be possible to take a Standard Level exam (SL) after junior year, or to take an additional Language as an Elective, or to switch 2nd Languages at the beginning of junior year.

My skills and interests are in the sciences. How does an IB Diploma Program address this?

It is very possible in the context of your four years of IB education to take between 6 and 8 science classes including advanced studies in Chemistry and Biology, as well as Advanced Placement Physics (as an elective senior year). The same pathway could be followed within the arts, history/politics, etc..

How do IB courses compare to Advanced Placement (AP) courses?

They differ from course to course, but typically, IB provides study in much greater depth, and in ability to apply that information in a variety of learning styles. IB is a program, fostering a sense of concurrency of learning; AP is individual courses.

How will I benefit from graduating from the IB Program?

For sure, you will be better prepared for university studies and will also have attained a higher level of critical thinking, which is valuable in everyday life. But we also strongly believe that, consistent with its mission, the IB develops knowledgeable, caring, reflective, inquiring, open-minded, balanced, thinking, principled, risk-taking, and communicating individuals.

How important is the IB Program to colleges when deciding whether or not to accept a student?

What is most important to colleges is the rigor of a student's courses. The IB curriculum represents the highest level of rigor of ANY high school program. It is the most challenging secondary school program that can be offered. Having said that, it is imperative to understand that rigor does not mean extremely hard...it means very challenging. The IB Diploma Program promotes rigor by mandating that students study 6 different subjects at a deep level and demonstrate that achievement in various modalities.

How many credit hours for college do IB students typically earn?

Credits granted by colleges can vary widely, from none to over 50 credits. Florida state universities generally award up to 30+ credits for the IB curriculum. A critical consumer may be more interested, however, in the amount of Honors Colleges, advanced majors, etc.. that IB graduates qualify for.

(Consult www.ibo.org and go to University Recognition)

What about weighted courses? And, won't my GPA suffer in the IB Program?

All IB courses are weighted courses. However, each university recalculates GPA's anyway. By and large, universities reward students for the rigor of their high school program, as well as the commitment to achievement displayed over four years. Again, the IB Program is the most rigorous program possible. Where personal growth and the development of individual skills are promoted as much as GPA's.

What kind of scholarships does IB give to students?

The IB organization gives no scholarships. Completion of the IB curriculum, however, makes students attractive to those who offer scholarships. Bear in mind, one must actively seek scholarship opportunities and apply for them.

Besides GPA, how does a student become 'attractive' to universities and scholarship sources?

In order to successfully meet the mission of the IB, all of us involved in the program strive to live and practice the IB learner profile:

These are human characteristics that when coupled with academic achievement make the IB student a wise investment, for sure.

What is the average amount of time one should expect to spend on homework each night in pre-IB and IB? How should we study?

From one to four hours per night: your study style is your own, but it is advisable to exercise good time management skills.

How do we decide which SL and HL courses to take?

Consider your strengths and weaknesses, confer with your teachers, IB upperclassmen, parents, and consider your college & career options – but most of all listen to the recommendation of the IB Coordinator. The goal of the program is attainment of the diploma; the coordinator keeps copious statistics on which HL and which SL exams are most approachable – and therefore what combination can lead to the diploma. Do not be overly concerned about HL vs. SL – this is really not fully decided until fall of senior year. Do your best in every subject area – the HL possibilities will emerge.

Do you have the same teacher both years of a higher level course?

Sometimes yes, sometimes no, depending upon the subject.

How are the students who do not earn the IB Diploma awarded?

Students are awarded certificates for the examinations successfully completed, as well as a Riverview High School Diploma.

How does one avoid burn-out? How do you know if you should continue in the program?

Focus on one thing at a time: remain positive: set realistic goals. Time management is also important. Once you are invested, plug along! Incentives become more and more evident the deeper one gets into the program. IB is a great community to belong to.

If, however, it is necessary to transfer out of the program, it has been demonstrated that the experience, in and of itself, is a marketable commodity. Students still can maintain advanced studies' course selections and high goals. If a student is not meeting with academic and/or personal success, in spite of interventions, then another pathway will be recommended.

Stress is not a negative commodity; it often means that we have accepted a challenge. Working through stress is the issue.

What does one accomplish in earning the IB Diploma?

Pride, a credential that proves beyond argument that you can navigate a challenging program: one that ranks among the very best in the world.

A global worldview that is priceless throughout one's life journey.

An approach to learning that celebrates knowledge and problem-solving and can communicate in diversified ways.

An appreciation of all peoples, traditions, and cultures, as well as an ability to work effectively with just about anyone.

Is IB a 'political movement'?

The joining of educators across countries and continents is not a political movement.

The belief that the best learner is a holistic learner is not a political belief.

The aim to understand all peoples and customs is not only a humanistic goal, but a wise and timely objective in this increasingly complex, ever-mobile world.

COMMON MYTHS ABOUT IB

IB Students have no life other than school:

Whereas academic achievement, and therefore studying, is a priority, IB students enjoy a very rich extracurricular high school experience. IB students have successfully participated in ALL interscholastic sports, consistently shown that they are school leaders on Student Council, Honor Societies, and the like, and enjoy belonging to a host of school clubs and community activities.

Surveys conducted year after year indicate that the typical pre-IB student at Riverview belonged to an average of 2 + extracurricular & community organizations; the average for IB students rises to 5+ clubs/activities.

Don't forget CAS sort of guarantees a very respectable level of non-academic ventures. Also, indications are that IB students enjoy a rather high percentage of leadership posts in the school and community-at-large.

IB students don't get to take Electives:

Pre-IB 9 & 10 students choose full-year electives each year. IB students in grade 11 choose a course of study that is both specific to their skills and interests and consistent with attaining the IB Diploma. Grade 11 & 12 IB also pursue their interests in their individualized courses of study, their Extended Essay Subject and their CAS experiences. In addition, a grade 12 student could have additional one/two electives, depending on how many IB exams are taken in junior year.

IB students also choose to take subjects as Standard Level or Higher Level, as well as choose a topic of interest or expertise in which to write their Extended Essay. All of this points to an impressive array of individualization, while still being in a 'program'. If one is suggesting that the IB Program is more focused than the traditional school program, that's correct!

IB students have to take classes beyond the normal school day:

Again, the IB Program is a highly-individualized program with a great deal of choice.

Also, the IB Program is frequently scheduled differently than the typical high school curriculum. There may be after school, evening, or even weekend seminars in TOK, Music Theory, a play/film/museum to attend or even tutorial help in certain subject areas.

Attendance is always by choice, the times of the seminars always decided by

consensus and for convenience, and, the atmosphere more relaxed than constrictive. The program caters to a love of learning, and students' keen interests in certain subject areas--and, yes, this happens at all times of day and night..

Students are not able to study their specialty, for instance Art:

Because IB is a program – there are requirements that must be met. Specifically, all diploma candidates must demonstrate a level of proficiency in each of the 6 subject areas. However, this does not preclude someone from specializing in a subject area.

Let's look at the example of Art:

A pre-IB student committed to Art would take an IB Visual Arts elective in grade 9 and grade 10 (2 courses at least; there may be additional art-related options).

The student would then pursue IB Visual Arts courses in grade 11 and grade 12 – probably at a Higher Level.

In addition, the student's Extended Essay could be in the field of Visual Arts. Also, many of the CAS initiatives could be 'art allocated' (museums; art galleries; art fundraisers; public relations for arts charities; etc..)

The student could also take an additional Arts elective in senior year

5+ courses in the Arts – all Honors Level (3 of them even more advanced); A 4,000 work piece of original research in the Arts (Extended Essay), with Arts' mentors; CAS internships and externships (grades 9 – 12) in the Arts field.

For sure, this would be an impressive high-school concentration in the Arts.

A similar 'curriculum profile' could be outlined for students specifically skilled or interested in Literature, Math, Social Science, Experimental Science, Language(s), etc..

There is too much homework in IB:

Recent student surveys have shown that pre-IB students spend an average of 1 to 2 ½ hours of homework per night and IB students spend an average of 2 to 3 ½ hours of homework per night. IB teachers try to coordinate assignments so that no one night is particularly overwhelming.

IB students should develop good time management skills in order to be successful in the program.

There is too much stress in the IB Program

The statement really speaks about ‘pressure’, and its source. Because of the nature of studying 6 advanced courses simultaneously, it is critical that students understand that straight “A’s” every quarter won’t be probable.

In fact, IB Coordinators everywhere talk of students & parents ‘flirting with a “C”’, simply meaning that success and achievement in the program dictate working ‘through it’ and not ‘conquering it’ with perfect GPA’s.

As soon as students & parents realize that grade evaluations in the IB Program are indicative of the highest, most rigorous standards in the world, and, that maintaining a healthy outlook and an exceptional work ethic are more important than getting all A’s, the stress will dissipate.

The ‘stress’ is treated programmatically by diversifying teaching/learning styles, so students experience can call on their strengths.

It’s truly a different way of looking at achievement, and this adjustment can be tricky for some.

IB students give up many of their long-time friendships:

If a student joins the IB Program and his/her friends do not then time in classes with them will not continue. But one of the great things about being in a large comprehensive high school is that there are many, many school activities that can be shared among friends.

In addition, an IB student is about to join a ‘community’, a ‘team’. As such, he/she will develop bonds of friendship with classmates, united in a program, which will grow tremendously strong. Students from varied backgrounds become ‘one’ in many wonderful academic and extracurricular pursuits.

IB is not all it’s made out to be:

IB has some very clear goals for excellence. The program also has some very definite outcomes that it wants to reach. Does it meet all its ideals? No. It still is an imperfect program – with inherent human and systemic weaknesses

However, Riverview’s program is one that is responsive to change and constantly introspective. In our 17 years of existence, goals have been met, ongoing feedback

solicited, and, program modifications adopted. We are proud of our results and what we stand for. Make no mistake about it: IB is the most impressive, results-oriented, humanistic, college preparatory program available.

Over the past few years in the United States, the number of International Baccalaureate Programs has grown at a rate of 12+% per year. Is it for everyone? No.