

# **Creativity, action, service: Additional guidance**

For students graduating in 2010 and thereafter





# Introduction

This publication is intended to clarify some of the frequently asked questions that schools may have about creativity, action, service (CAS). It should be read in conjunction with the *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) and the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*. By no means should it be regarded as a substitute for these publications.

The document is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on the curriculum of the current guide. The second section focuses on the implementation and organization of CAS.

Please note that, unless otherwise stated, the quotes in this publication are taken from the *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008). Each reference to the guide includes the page number (PDF version), followed by the title of the section (online version), where the quoted text appears.

## More information

The list of questions is not exhaustive and schools should refer to the *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) for all queries. In addition, they can consult the following sources for more information.

- CAS forum on the online curriculum centre (OCC)

It can be used to ask questions and share and discuss examples of CAS practice.

- CAS resources section on the OCC

It is a good place to look for examples of varied CAS activities, large and small. The resources can provide an insight into how individual schools tailor their CAS programmes.

- IB Answers (<https://ibanswers.ibo.org> or [ibid@ibo.org](mailto:ibid@ibo.org))

- Global Engage website (<http://globalengage.ibo.org>)

- *CAS illustrated*

Recently published, this book features real examples of successful CAS projects from IB World Schools in all three IB regions. It is available on the IB store (<http://store.ibo.org>).

- CAS workshops
- IB regional conferences
- Regional networks of IB schools

## Section I: Curriculum

### Where does CAS come from? Why is it part of the IB Diploma Programme?

A form of CAS has always been part of the IB Diploma Programme. It began in 1968 as a compulsory course “of theoretical and practical initiation into the Fine Arts”; however, in 1970 “dimensions of physical and social service activities were added” (Hill 2010: 80). In the 1970s, the course developed under the influence of Kurt Hahn. At the heart of his philosophy was the idea that students benefit and learn most from direct experience. He believed that next to cognitive growth, physical and social activities were needed to build character. The IB determined that in the Diploma Programme curriculum, all IB students—as part of developing the whole person—would undertake some sort of **creative, aesthetic** or **social service** activity: CASS.

In 1989, CASS became CAS (**creativity, action, service**) with all three areas being weighted equally. The word “social” was removed from the new acronym acknowledging that students in some schools were unable, for various reasons, to interact with the local community. In the early 1990s, satisfactory completion of CAS was made a condition of the award of the Diploma.

The 1996 and 2001 versions of the CAS guide recommended the inclusion of longer-term community projects, combining two or more areas of CAS. Adding to the professional nature of monitoring CAS, students’ CAS programmes were assessed on five performance criteria: personal achievement, skills, personal qualities, interpersonal qualities, and global awareness. Guiding questions to assist reflection were provided in these CAS guides. Students were required to write summative reflections on all their activities and a final essay that would encapsulate their CAS experience. These tasks supplied the evidence for CAS completion and often became part of the students’ *curricula vitae* as they graduated from secondary education.

The *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) stipulates the need for a minimum of three interviews during the programme and evidence that each learning outcome has been achieved: “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” (see page 6/“Learning outcomes” in the “Introduction” section). There is also the requirement for sustained collaborative activities involving two or more strands of CAS in one or more projects.

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. Possibly, more than any other component in the Diploma Programme, CAS contributes to the IB’s mission to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

### What are the criteria for a CAS activity?

The *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) provides four criteria for CAS activities:

- 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 and reporting
- reflection on outcomes and personal learning.

All proposed CAS activities must meet these four criteria and must also fit the general definitions of a minimum of one strand of CAS.

Further, CAS activities should:

- offer experiential learning—planning, doing and reflecting
- have a goal or outcome
- be planned and evaluated
- vary in length
- be initiated by the student where possible
- vary in the amount of commitment required from the student.

Students should identify the possible achievement of one or more CAS learning outcomes when planning an activity. The activity may result in no learning outcome being achieved, but learning outcomes should be considered during the planning process. Further, students should initially identify a goal so as to begin the activity with focus and purpose. While the student's goal may change as they become more aware of their role and opportunities, it is important they begin with a goal.

The decision to judge an activity as appropriate for CAS is made by the CAS coordinator, ideally in negotiated discussion with the student. If an activity is not initially considered suitable for CAS, it is often possible to turn it into an appropriate CAS activity. If students identify a new challenge, set personal goals and meet the other requirements, many activities can be turned into valid CAS activities.

The CAS coordinator and students should also understand the aims of CAS as these will help them determine if an activity fits CAS. For example, students should understand that CAS provides the opportunity for students to “understand their own strengths and limitations, identify goals and devise strategies for personal growth” and that they “enjoy and find significance in a range of activities involving intellectual, physical, creative and emotional experiences” (see page 5/“Aims” in the “Introduction” section).

## **How much planning is needed for an activity to be considered CAS?**

Planning is an essential step in all CAS activities. The amount of planning needed depends on the activity. The CAS students in consultation with the CAS coordinator/adviser should establish what is required.

It should be noted that spontaneous activities can equally be acceptable for CAS with little planning involved and may only require a brief reflection on completion. These should not be the sum total of the students' CAS experience; however, they may complement the CAS programme.

## **When should activities not be considered CAS?**

All activities should meet the criteria as stated in the *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008). Furthermore, a CAS activity should not:

- be unsafe
- cause, or worsen, social divisions
- be trivial, mundane or repetitive
- include proselytizing.

## Can an activity be religious in nature?

Activities that are religious in nature can be a source of concern for CAS coordinators and each case must be examined on an individual basis. The *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) states: "It is recognized that this is a sensitive and difficult area. Nevertheless, the general rule is that religious devotion, and any activity that can be interpreted as proselytizing, does not count as CAS" (see page 15/"Range and diversity of activities" in the "Details" section).

However, there are exceptions, notably when a religious organization provides a service irrespective of whether the people benefiting from their service are members of that religion or not. The *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) states: "Some relevant guiding principles are that CAS activities should enlarge students' experience, encourage them towards greater understanding of people from different social or cultural backgrounds and include specific goals. By these criteria, work done by a religious group in the wider community, provided that the objectives are clearly secular, may qualify as CAS" (see page 15/"Range and diversity of activities" in the "Details" section). There are numerous religious based groups that provide non-proselytizing help and support to members in the wider community.

Furthermore, if a student is able to show that they are meeting one or more learning outcomes and the activity is not proselytizing, then it can be a CAS activity. The CAS coordinator/adviser "may find it helpful to ask students which of the CAS learning outcomes their proposed activity would meet, and how it might be possible to strengthen it in terms of CAS requirements" (see page 15/"Range and diversity of activities" in the "Details" section ).

## Can an activity incorporate two or three strands of CAS?

Yes. For example, a student could engage in an activity that incorporated two strands of CAS. The student could set goals for action as well as for creativity, or service and action, or creativity and service. By achieving both sets of goals, the student could meet requirements for both strands.

Some activities could also integrate all three strands of CAS. For example, a student could choreograph a dance and perform this in a nursing home. The choreography could be seen to be creativity, the dancing as action and the performance, for an identified audience who may not normally be able to access such performances, as service. As long as the student has identified separate goals for all three strands, then this activity would incorporate all three strands of CAS.

## Can participation in Model United Nations (MUN) be considered CAS?

Yes. A student representing the interests of a United Nations member state in a debate could nominate this as creativity. Students involved in the organization of a conference could justify this activity as service. At all times the four main criteria of a CAS activity must be met.

## What does "initiated themselves" mean?

One of the requirements in the *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) is that "All students should be involved in CAS activities that they have initiated themselves. Other CAS activities may be initiated by the school" (see page 12/"Range and diversity of activities" in the "Details" section). This requires students to independently plan and begin an activity where possible. However, a student could also consider an existing CAS activity or project and plan a new approach or form of engagement that could then be seen as self-initiated.

## Do all CAS activities need to be collaborative?

No. The only instance where collaboration is formally required is the CAS project. This collaboration could be between students or student and others. However, the *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) does encourage students to fulfill the learning outcome "worked collaboratively with others" through a variety of CAS experiences rather than only through the CAS project: "Collaboration can be shown in many different activities, such as team sports, playing music in a band, or helping in a kindergarten" (see page 6/"Learning outcomes" in the "Introduction" section).

## **Does walking a pet count as a CAS activity?**

It is possible that walking a pet is a personal challenge, for example when a student is suffering or recovering from a physical disability. Or, the student is walking the pet of a disabled or elderly person. In these types of situations, it could be considered CAS. CAS students need to be aware that no activity “should be trivial” (see page 12/“Range and diversity of activities” in the “Details” section) and also need to consider the four main criteria of a CAS activity.

## **Do paid activities count towards CAS?**

The *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) specifically states that service activities must be unpaid and voluntary. While there is no rule that categorically prohibits students from getting paid for activities in the creativity or action strands of CAS, it could be argued this is not in the spirit of CAS. Schools, therefore, often ask their students to donate any income from CAS activities to charity or projects related to their personal CAS goals.

## **Can unpaid work experience count as CAS?**

Unpaid work experience can contribute towards a student’s CAS experience if “students undertake activities that follow CAS guidelines (for example, by meeting CAS learning outcomes and including student initiative or choice)” (see page 12/“Range and diversity of activities” in the “Details” section). The *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) notes that if a student’s “activities also satisfy the requirements of a state qualification or of another award scheme” (see page 12/“Range and diversity of activities” in the “Details” section) then it can still be counted towards CAS. This means that if a student is undertaking work experience in order to meet a formal requirement, and the work experience meets the CAS criteria, then it can be counted towards CAS. It is the CAS coordinator’s responsibility alongside the student’s to ensure that these conditions are met.

## **Does service at a for-profit organization count towards CAS?**

Schools may rule out service activities at a for-profit organization because the for-profit organization could employ someone to do the student’s work. Further, the work may not meet the criteria for service activities: “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” (see page 13/“Range and diversity of activities” in the “Details” section). It is up to the CAS coordinator to decide if the for-profit organization is appropriate for the student and the proposed CAS activities meet the CAS criteria.

## **Do students have to travel abroad to meet the CAS requirements?**

No. Although schools may engage in CAS projects abroad, the learning outcome “engaged with issues of global importance” does not mean students have to travel. The phrase “think globally, act locally” implies projects should also take place in the local community where possible.

Students benefit from serving in an international context when they are able to make clear links to parallel issues in their local communities. International service requires students having the background, understanding and knowledge of the circumstance for the travel and the service, or the experience may be misunderstood as recreational. Value increases as students recognize an articulated purpose and their actions are aligned with an authentic need.

An overseas trip may be advantageous but must not be the sum total of the CAS experience for a student, as CAS is required to run concurrently alongside the Diploma Programme for a minimum of 18 months.

## **Can schools use external organizations to provide CAS activities?**

For some schools, using external organizations is an option to help students engage in a well-balanced CAS programme.

The *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) states: "It is possible to identify a variety of reputable organizations, both locally and elsewhere, that can provide support for regular CAS activities and major projects. The school should maintain close contact with outside agencies through which students are completing part of their CAS requirement" (see page 16/ "Developing a CAS programme" in the "Details" section).

Furthermore, "schools need to work with appropriate partners or intermediaries, such as NGOs (non-governmental organizations)" and ensure that the activities provided are "appropriate, and that the students are able to understand the human consequences of their work, for both individuals and communities" (see page 14/"Range and diversity of activities" in the "Details" section). CAS coordinators need to confirm that commercial providers, when used, act in accordance with the ethos of the IB and CAS requirements.

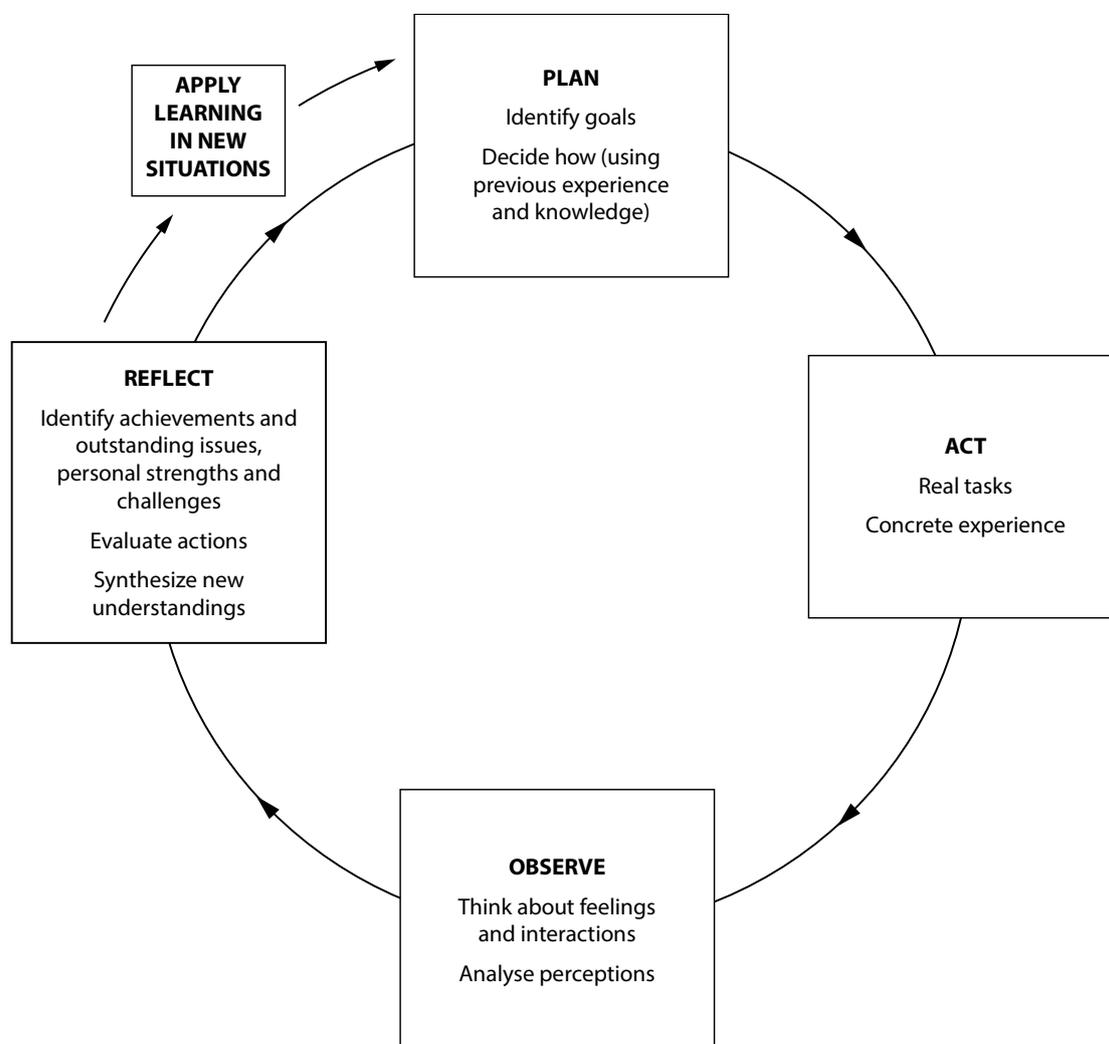
## **What needs to be considered when working with cross-cultural communities?**

Working with cross-cultural communities must be developed as acts of partnership that emphasize shared humanity. The purpose should be both to learn and to serve. As such, CAS activities are not designed to fix problems in other peoples' communities but rather to build an appreciation of cultural diversity through an attitude of service. For this reason, CAS activities that emphasize "deficiency" rather than "richness and diversity" are unlikely to build an ethos of partnership. Cultural sensitivity must be paramount to the conduct of CAS. It is, therefore, important that students have a contextual understanding for their service, which might include cultural, religious, economic and linguistic awareness.

Interactions with people within the community may further intercultural awareness and sustained relationships: "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" (see page 14/"Range and diversity of activities" in the "Details" section)

## What is the difference between service and service learning?

Service in CAS is defined as “an unpaid and voluntary exchange” (see page 3/“The nature of creativity, action, service” in the “Introduction” section). Furthermore, the *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) states that “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” (see page 13/“Range and diversity of activities” in the “Details” section). The following experiential model clearly outlines the learning benefits that could come from service activities.



Source: *Creativity, action, service guide*, Figure 1: The cycle of experiential learning

Service learning in the context of the *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) links service activities to Diploma Programme coursework. Diploma Programme teachers work with the CAS coordinator to “plan suitable service activities to exemplify and extend subject learning” (see page 14/“Range and diversity of activities” in the “Details” section). Therefore, service-learning activities should be an extension of IB Diploma Programme coursework and not counted towards any particular IB Diploma Programme course.

## How many projects should a student do?

The *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) states that “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” (see page 12/“Range and diversity of activities” in the “Details” section). There is no other requirement for the number of projects a student must be engaged in, and students should be allowed to decide what is appropriate. However, the guide does encourage “students to take on a variety of projects in a number of different contexts” (see page 16/“Developing a CAS

programme” in the “Details” section) where possible. This allows students to plan and engage in projects that integrate the different strands of CAS.

## **What is meant by a project of “significant duration”?**

The phrase “significant duration” is used by the IB to provide flexibility and autonomy for CAS coordinators and students to decide what projects to create and develop. The IB has not set any specific length of time for the duration of a project. The phrase implies that a project is not a one-day event and instead should be over a period of time allowing students to engage with a sustained activity.

The CAS coordinator in collaboration with the students should decide what a project of “significant duration” is. There is no minimum or maximum number of hours, days, weeks or months. A project is expected to involve students in a collaborative activity where students are able to “reflect on progress and adjust plans, in order to resolve problems that arise” and “show perseverance and commitment” (see page 21/“Glossary” in the “Appendices” section).

## **How can students develop reflection skills?**

Reflection skills need to be developed. Guiding questions, group meetings, motivating thoughts and readings, as well as thought-provoking films can all help to develop reflection skills. Establishing links between CAS and theory of knowledge (TOK) provides worthwhile opportunities to enhance the experiential learning cycle through reflection.

CAS students benefit from guidance in **how** to reflect. The CAS coordinator can then be a significant conduit for a profound and important lesson: **What is reflection and how do I do it?** In this situation, a CAS coordinator may elect to do the following.

- **Review the idea of reflection**

This can include clarifying what reflection is and is not, showing integral elements of reflection and having students describe, or reflect upon, the times they have previously valued reflection.

- **Model reflection**

Building on the concept that students learn through role models, a CAS coordinator can share ways he or she reflects. Rather than exposing personal content, the emphasis is on providing an actual image of what reflection can look like and varied ways reflection can occur.

- **Guide reflection**

Engaging CAS students in reflective experiences lets them respond to varied approaches, including one-on-one and peer-group discussions. Varying the reflective process allows all students to discover diverse ways for self-awareness and expression and provides for differentiation in learning styles.

- **Share student reflections**

With permission, student reflections from prior years may be shared. Or students who currently find reflection of value can guide their peers.

- **Provide prompts or suggestions to assist with reflection**

CAS coordinators, with students, can generate a series of questions, statements or proposed experiences that elicit thoughtful response and be appropriate to all components of the CAS programme.

## **How can students reflect on their CAS activities?**

Students are free to choose their own way of demonstrating evidence of reflection. This could take the form of pictures, memorabilia from events, a scrapbook, memory box, essay, narrative writing, poetry, blog, oral recordings, and video and so on.

Students must keep a CAS log or journal because “students are required to record their involvement in CAS activities, and their reflections upon them. A variety of forms are acceptable, including weblogs, written journals, annotated photo diaries and audio or video diaries” (see page 20/“Glossary” in the “Appendices” section).

## **How much reflection should a student do?**

Reflection is a key element of experiential learning. CAS students are expected to reflect on their CAS activities. However, good reflection is about quality rather than quantity. The appropriate amount and method of reflection is a matter for the student to reach agreement on with the CAS coordinator. Reflection should mirror the involvement of the student in the CAS activity and the nature and complexity of the pursuit. It is not expected or intended that students reflect deeply on every activity. It is the student who determines how much they reflect on any given activity and whether the activity has enough value to require reflecting upon identified learning outcomes.

When, through personal experience, CAS students understand the essential value of reflection to maximize learning and to establish depth of knowing about ones’ self and the world, then ensuring time for reflection becomes an understood and even desired part of their experience. Reflection is most meaningful at this stage of adolescent development when seen as a personal choice.

## **Reflection and the CAS learning outcomes**

The CAS learning outcomes are a key factor in gauging whether or not a student has successfully completed CAS for both the student and the CAS coordinator. As a result of their CAS experience, students need to “document their activities and provide evidence that they have achieved eight key learning outcomes” (see page 3/“The nature of creativity, action, service” in the “Introduction” section). Much of this evidence will be shown in their reflections. However, students need not reference the CAS learning outcomes in every reflection, particularly in the early stages of an activity that may focus on other aspects such as goals and reactions to a situation.

## **Understanding the learning outcome on ethical implications**

It is important to explain and explore the CAS learning outcomes with CAS students. For some students, the outcome “Considered the ethical implications of their actions” presents a challenge. This learning outcome encourages students to reflect on and understand the consequences of their actions to themselves, to others and to the wider community. “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)” (see page 4/“The nature of creativity, action, service” in the “Introduction” section). This should then lead students to explore the ethical implications associated with their actions in CAS activities.

It should be explained to students that “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” (see page 4/“The nature of creativity, action, service” in the “Introduction” section).

To explain this learning outcome for students, the CAS coordinator could create questions based on the learner profile highlighting ethical dimensions, link the students’ TOK studies with this outcome, encourage students to explore ethical issues on the internet, provide ethical scenarios for group discussion and so on.

## **How can links be developed between CAS and TOK?**

CAS and TOK are elements of the core of the Diploma Programme and are complementary to each other. CAS is primarily about undertaking activities beyond the classroom and then reflecting upon them to better understand how experiences develop the person. TOK is intended to develop more formal critical thinking skills, necessitating a more structured and analytical approach to

reflection and encourages students to reflect using additional philosophical and epistemological ideas.

It is important that there is good communication between the CAS coordinator and TOK teachers so that both are aware of each other's work. By working closely with the TOK teacher, the CAS coordinator will find a natural connection between TOK topics and experiential learning. This relationship should help students to utilize aspects of the TOK course in their CAS programme and vice versa.

Reflection forms the key link between these two central parts of the Diploma Programme. TOK aims to teach students how to reflect in a critical manner on issues relating to how and what they learn. In particular, the ways of knowing found in TOK can help students to reflect in a more meaningful manner. TOK also helps students to think carefully about their own value systems.

CAS aims to enable students to reflect on their experiences and impact on themselves and others. CAS provides the students with opportunities to become involved in real-life experiences that may offer worthwhile resources for their TOK course. CAS activities may be based on a knowledge claim or knowledge issue that students have explored within TOK discussions. Alternatively, a CAS activity and the subsequent reflections that a student makes could precipitate or form part of a TOK discussion, presentation or essay. This, in turn, can help to develop the reflections of students on CAS activities beyond the mere descriptive.

## **How can links be developed between CAS and the extended essay?**

A CAS project or activity that a student may undertake could provide the stimulus for an extended essay. It is possible that any subject area could be linked to the extended essay. Group 3 ("Individuals and societies") essays have, for example, been based on economics about the cost-benefit analysis of a social project by a school. Working in an aged care facility may well lead to an extended essay in history, incorporating some oral history as a source. A CAS service activity may lead to an investigation of the location of the homeless or the causes and effects of their movement from home. In biology and chemistry, work on an environmental issue may lead to an investigation of an ecosystem or the sources of air pollution. Service with a food kitchen might stimulate an interest in a world studies extended essay into food security.

## Section 2: Implementation and organization

### **When does CAS start?**

Formally, students begin CAS at the start of the academic year of the Diploma Programme. CAS is to provide an important counterbalance to the academic pressures of the rest of the Diploma Programme. The *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) states that “CAS activities should continue on a regular basis for as long as possible throughout the programme, and certainly for at least 18 months” (see page 3/“The nature of creativity, action, service” in the “Introduction” section). The student must participate in CAS for a minimum of 18 months from the start of the academic year for the Diploma Programme.

### **Can a student begin CAS during the break before the start of Diploma Programme Year 1?**

No. CAS cannot begin before the start of the academic year for the Diploma Programme. Some schools recommend their pre-Diploma Programme students use the break before the start of Diploma Programme Year 1 to prepare for elements of the Diploma. This period could, for example, be used to identify opportunities and interests in preparation for the start of CAS. However, no activities can be counted towards the students CAS programme before the start of the academic year for the Diploma Programme.

### **Can a student do CAS during the break in between Diploma Programme Year 1 and Year 2?**

CAS coordinators should decide whether or not to allow their students to engage in CAS activities in the break between Diploma Programme Year 1 and Year 2 while meeting the CAS requirements. This particular period often offers some valuable CAS opportunities for students. It is possible that students engage in CAS activities during the break and, thereby, add valuable reflections in regard to the achievement of one or more of the learning outcomes.

It should be noted that since CAS is not about “counting hours”, it is not permitted for students to complete their CAS over the break **instead of** during the two academic years of the Diploma Programme.

### **When does CAS end?**

CAS does not end when a student has achieved evidence of all eight learning outcomes. The *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) states that “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” (see page 3/“The nature of creativity, action, service” in the “Introduction” section). CAS coordinators should consider allowing students to finish the CAS programme before final assessments to allow them to concentrate on examination preparation.

By 1 June/1 December (May session/November session schools), the Diploma Programme coordinator has to indicate on the IB information system (IBIS) which Diploma/retake candidates have not completed the CAS requirement (if appropriate).

### **Do all CAS activities need to be supervised?**

No. The provision of a supervisor is at the discretion of the school. The CAS coordinator is responsible and accountable for the quality of the CAS programme: “The CAS coordinator must ensure that systems are in place to monitor student progress throughout the two years of the Diploma Programme” (see page 17/“Developing a CAS programme” in the “Details” section). The *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) further recommends that in order to monitor a student’s progress “arrangements are in place for activity supervisors, who may not be teachers or part of the school community, to report on any concerns they may have, including unexplained absences” (see page 17/“Developing a CAS programme” in the “Details” section).

Not every single CAS activity must be supervised if the CAS coordinator determines the activity to be safe, and the student is trusted to account truthfully on their attendance and participation. “The

principle that students should 'own' their personal CAS programmes implies that they should be trusted to fulfill the commitments that they have made, unless they show themselves unworthy of that trust" (see page 17/"Developing a CAS programme" in the "Details" section).

The activity supervisor's primary role is to ensure the safe and orderly conduct of the activity, to verify student attendance and participation, and perhaps in a limited way to comment on the student's engagement with the activity (though the emphasis should be on student reflection). In situations that require ensuring the safety of students or where "students have difficulties either in getting their activities under way or in working through tricky situations" (see page 17/"Developing a CAS programme" in the "Details" section), the use of a supervisor is recommended.

## **Do all CAS activities need to be signed off at completion by a supervisor?**

No, the IB does not require this. It is the CAS coordinator's decision on whether to require student's activities to be signed off by the supervisor.

## **Are there a minimum number of hours a student can count towards CAS?**

The *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) points to the learning outcomes as being of primary importance: "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" (see page 6/"Learning outcomes" in the "Introduction" section).

A good CAS programme will allow students to engage in the three strands of CAS over the 18 months and achieve a balance between all three. Further, the CAS activities should allow the students to meet all eight outcomes.

Counting the number of CAS hours defeats the purpose of CAS, which is to enhance students "personal and interpersonal development through experiential learning" and where CAS is "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" (see page 3/"The nature of creativity, action, service" in the "Introduction" section). However, the *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) provides the guideline of 150 hours to assist CAS coordinators in understanding the level of commitment required from students in CAS.

## **Can CAS take place during organized class time?**

There are many different ways in which a CAS programme can be delivered in a school, including but not limited to, the following.

- Schedule CAS time every week in order to provide students with the time for planning, reflecting, meeting with CAS coordinators/advisers, group discussions and so on.
- Schedule a regular weekly time for CAS activities to take place.
- All CAS related activities take place outside school hours.
- Use a combination of scheduled time and after school activities.

The IB has no requirement nor has made recommendations in regard to the implementation of CAS within a school's timetable. However, CAS coordinators have noted that regular scheduled time for planning, discussion and reflection does assist students in their CAS programme.

## **What are the strengths and weaknesses of online recording systems?**

Online recording systems offer worthwhile opportunities for students to keep their CAS records in a familiar environment as students are often comfortable with using computers. The CAS coordinator/adviser may find this an easier way to monitor the plans, activities and reflections of

students. By using an online recording system, students can upload pictures, videos, PowerPoint® presentations, recorded interviews and different forms of reflection.

Schools may develop their own CAS websites to address their needs and objectives. This could also be a CAS project carried out by students. However, possible public access to those sites requires a security policy to ensure the safe maintenance of CAS records.

One concern that may arise from “having everything done” by a system, is that it may diminish the CAS coordinator/adviser role of mentoring CAS. CAS is not about “accomplishing a requirement”; it is an opportunity for students to enhance their personal and interpersonal development. Educators have a crucial role in advising and encouraging students to get the most from their CAS programmes.

There are several online management tools available that have some common strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Organizes the administrative work for the student and provides a clear record of his or her activities and reflections.	Focus on quantity (hours), rather than quality of activity.
Provides a clear system of feedback to students.	CAS personnel could be tempted to disregard individual contact/discussions with students.
Often provides scaffolded forms of reflection that the student can use easily.	Can produce formulaic reflections that do not always indicate true student performance.
Uses a medium that is student-friendly (for example, a blog or wiki that students are familiar with).	Requires CAS personnel to be online regularly, which is not always possible.
Provides online support, transfer from one school to another and IB access for monitoring.	IB must be given permission to access records. Previous school permission required for transfer.

One problem with some software packages is the focus on hours. This encourages students to only engage in CAS as far as accomplishing a set number of hours. It is, therefore, important that the CAS coordinator clearly informs students that CAS activities must continue for at least 18 months of the Diploma Programme and encourage the students to meet the learning outcomes rather than any set number of hours.

## What is the role of the CAS coordinator?

Each school that is authorized to teach the Diploma Programme is required to nominate a CAS coordinator who is responsible for facilitating CAS in the school. The IB publication *The Diploma Programme: From principles into practice* (2009) states that “The CAS coordinator function includes developing opportunities for students to engage in authentic experiential learning and to reflect on their experiences in meaningful ways. This is time-consuming and requires close cooperation with many other school colleagues, who need to be involved in supporting CAS. The coordinator has a leadership function, if not a specific management responsibility, in ensuring that CAS is properly supported and valued in the school” (see page 18/“Developing a successful programme”).

The role of the CAS coordinator encompasses the following areas.

- Coordination
- Administration
- Mentoring/advising
- Supervision

The *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) provides a detailed overview of the responsibilities of the CAS coordinator.

## **Are schools required to have CAS advisers and CAS supervisors?**

There is no IB requirement to install a CAS team in a school. It is up to the school to decide if a division of responsibilities will better assist the management of its CAS programme. The roles of CAS adviser and CAS supervisor are usually done by the CAS coordinator when student numbers can be effectively and efficiently managed by one person.

In order to assist the effective and efficient management of CAS in schools with large cohorts of students, the *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) specifically articulates the roles of the CAS coordinator, the CAS adviser, and the CAS supervisor and how these roles contribute to the overall success of the CAS programme: “In larger schools a **team approach** under the direction of the CAS coordinator is **essential** if students are to be helped to make the most of their CAS experiences. The core team members are the coordinator and the **CAS advisers**, who provide personal advice and support to individual students” (see page 7/“Outline”).

Schools with large CAS cohorts find that the division of responsibilities between the CAS coordinator, CAS advisers and CAS supervisors ensure greater success of the CAS programme.

## **What is the difference between CAS advisers and CAS supervisors?**

The *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) specifically states what is required in terms of mentoring/advising and supervision. The CAS adviser provides assistance to the CAS coordinator by being responsible for one or more CAS students as a mentor. This role is primarily to help the students discuss their activities, assist with identifying goals, support students in reflective practice and help students make connections between what they do and the learning outcomes.

Where necessary, the CAS supervisor is present at a student’s activity or project, ensuring the safety of the student, monitoring their attendance and reporting any issues to the CAS coordinator or CAS adviser.

## **How does the CAS coordinator know when the student has fulfilled the eight learning outcomes of CAS?**

CAS learning outcomes are general in description, yet have specific purpose and intent. It is up to the school to initially help the students make connections between their activities and the learning outcomes, gradually encouraging students to independently understand and apply the learning outcomes to their activities. A CAS coordinator might consider creating a question list that could be used as guiding questions to make learning outcomes “visible”. The CAS coordinator reviews the students’ reflections, evidence and discussions to confirm the achievement of the eight learning outcomes using, for example, the *Model B form: CAS individual student completion form* (see page 23/“Appendices”).

To monitor students’ accomplishment of the learning outcomes, CAS coordinators/CAS advisers must hold meetings with the students at least twice in Year 1 and once in Year 2 (at the onset, the midpoint and the conclusion of the CAS experience). These interviews are opportunities to listen to students, exchange ideas, to encourage students to become involved in meaningful projects, to make suggestions, and to help them to reflect on their CAS experiences. They are also useful to schools in reflecting on and refining their CAS processes and support.

CAS interviews can be seen as semi-structured, in-depth interviews (often called a “conversation with a purpose”), where a list of open-ended questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation are developed. They should allow the student to share thoughts, feelings and concerns. They are an opportunity for a face-to-face in-depth dialogue.

## **What type of questions could be asked during CAS interviews?**

The following are example questions. CAS coordinators are encouraged to develop questions suitable to the needs, background and context of their students.

### **Getting to know the student**

- What are you doing already? Is this something new for you? What will you do to take it to another level?
- Are there activities already in existence in which you would like to take part? Why?
- What are you hoping to do after school?
- What activities/projects would you like to start?
- How long have you been doing this? How often?
- Why have you chosen this activity/these activities?
- Do you have any hobbies or talents that could link to a project?
- What activities have you done before?
- What are your interests?
- What are your dislikes?

### **Planning/goal setting**

- What activities would you like to do?
- What new skills would you like to develop?
- What new challenges would you like to engage in?
- How can you make this activity different to what you have done before in this area?
- What is the projected end?
- How will you go about this?
- What ideas do you have for CAS activities?
- Why do you think these activities are suitable for you?
- What do you want to achieve from your participation in this activity?

## **Learning outcomes**

- Do you prefer to work individually or in a team?
- Have you lived in other areas of the world? What impact (if any) has this experience had on you?
- How do you respond to events or news in other areas of the world? In what ways do these events affect you?
- What do you think your role could be in effecting change?
- In what ways have you positively affected the lives of others? What did you do?
- How do you think that the CAS programme will affect you as a person?
- What are your expectations?

## **Second interview**

- Review the project.
- How have your expectations changed?
- What do you need to change or adjust in order to achieve the goals of your project?
- Would it be better to continue or to start a new project?
- What have you enjoyed or benefited from most?
- How have your skills improved? Have you acquired new skills?
- What is your plan of action or further steps?
- What new areas do you intend to explore?
- To what extent does your project reflect a suitable balance within CAS?
- Can you make a link between the activities in which you have participated and any of the eight learning outcomes?

## **Last interview**

- What were your goals? Did you reach them?
- Did you have to make changes? What were they?
- Have you completed the learning outcomes?
- Where/what is the evidence?
- What difficulties did you face? How did you respond to those challenges?
- Was there a balance between your CAS activities?
- What did you learn from CAS as a whole experience? What was beneficial?
- How will you use what you have learned in the future?

- How did the reality of CAS compare to your expectations of CAS?
- Can you summarize your CAS experience in one or two words?
- How helpful was the support from the CAS coordinator? What suggestions might you make for future support?
- Celebration of what was achieved (help students recognize how far they have come).
- Is there anything that surprised you?
- To what extent have you fulfilled the learning outcomes? Which specific activities can be linked to any of the eight learning outcomes?

## **What is the difference between CAS for Diploma Programme students and students who take CAS as a stand-alone?**

From first teaching September 2012, (with first assessment in May 2014), senior students in a Diploma Programme school, regardless of the curriculum they are following, can be registered separately for TOK, extended essay and CAS. The decision to allow all students the opportunity to experience these core elements of the Diploma supports the IB's continued dedication to its "access agenda". There are no changes to the *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008), assessments or requirements for each core element.

Students who have successfully met the requirements for CAS will receive a transcript of completion from the IB.

## **What could be included in a school's CAS handbook?**

The IB recommends that CAS coordinators provide students with a CAS handbook. It can be a useful tool to inform students, parents and other members of the school community about CAS. It could also assist students in planning, organizing and reflecting on their CAS activities.

The CAS coordinator decides on the content of the CAS handbook. The handbook could include information about:

- CAS philosophy
- the experiential learning framework
- CAS learning outcomes
- CAS activity criteria
- CAS project proposal form
- reflection guidelines
- suggested schedule or deadlines for CAS records to be submitted
- a list of CAS activity/project opportunities offered by the school (ongoing activities/projects, school clubs, etc)
- risk assessment
- parents' agreement form on their children's involvement in CAS activities/projects outside the school
- possible links between CAS and other Diploma Programme courses, including TOK and extended essay.

## How do CAS coordinators inform the IB about their students' CAS status?

Until recently, schools submitted a paper form to the relevant IB regional office to notify which students had completed their CAS programme. The hard copy of this CAS programme completion form (*Form CAS/PCF*) has been withdrawn from the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme* and is replaced with an option on IBIS available under the "Candidate" tab. With the launch of this new option, information on the (non-)completion of CAS will not be accepted as hard copy, whether sent by post, fax or email attachment.

The change to an online system offers several advantages over a paper-based system. The deadline for informing the IB which candidates have not completed the CAS requirement has changed from 1 May/1 November to 1 June/1 December (that is, one month later). For a candidate who has not completed CAS, there is no longer a requirement to submit a report and the candidate's CAS record.

## What happens when a student does not meet the CAS requirements?

CAS coordinators are responsible for evaluating candidates' CAS activities and performance. If a CAS coordinator is not satisfied that the student has met the requirements, the CAS coordinator is expected to change the student's status for CAS completion on IBIS from "Yes" to "No". The IB Diploma will be withheld until CAS is completed. Candidates have one year to satisfy the requirements. When the student has satisfactorily completed his or her CAS, the CAS coordinator changes the "No" to "Yes". Provided all the other requirements are met, this will automatically generate the award of the Diploma.

## Do retake candidates have to continue CAS until they graduate?

No, students who have successfully completed CAS but have not satisfied all requirements to be awarded the Diploma do not need to continue with or restart their CAS programme.

## What forms must a CAS coordinator create for CAS?

The *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) includes two models that CAS coordinators should consider when creating their own CAS forms.

1. It is expected that monitoring progress will include meetings between CAS coordinators/CAS advisers and students, at least twice in Year 1 and once in Year 2 (at the onset, the midpoint and the conclusion of the CAS experience). These consultations should be briefly documented on a simple **CAS progress form** (see *Model form A* in the guide).
2. All eight learning outcomes established in the *Creativity, action, service guide* (2008) must be present for a student to complete the CAS requirements. The CAS coordinator/CAS adviser is required to record the completion decision for each student, noting the evidence for each learning outcome. While not compulsory, the guide provides a sample **CAS individual student completion form** as a guide (see *Model B form* in the guide).

CAS coordinators may also find it useful to include CAS in school reports for keeping track and informing both student and parents on the student's progress in CAS.

## How long are schools required to keep CAS records?

Schools are required to keep CAS records, which must be made available to the regional office on request, for a period of six months after the school's exam session. Some schools archive students' CAS records because students might ask for it later when they apply to post-secondary institutions. It is, however, a school decision to keep copies of these records longer than the stipulated six months after exams.

## **Do transfer candidates have to restart CAS?**

No. Diploma Programme candidates transferring from another IB school continue with their personal CAS programme. Together with the CAS coordinator, the student should identify to what extent his or her personal CAS programme needs to be adapted to the new (local) conditions.

If a student transfers from a non-Diploma Programme school in the beginning of Year 1, it might be difficult to meet the 18 months period. It is up to the school in collaboration with the student to set up an appropriate CAS programme that allows the student to meet the requirements.

## References

Hill, I. 2010. *The International Baccalaureate: Pioneering in Education (The International Schools Journal Compendium, vol 4)*. Woodbridge, UK: John Catt Educational.

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