

GRHS IB Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: 10/22/23

What is International Baccalaureate?

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a two year course of study in the junior and senior years of high school which prepares students for the demands of college. The program was founded in Geneva, Switzerland in 1924 to establish a common curriculum for students attending international schools around the world. The vision at the time and today is that "a shared academic experience emphasizing critical thinking and exposure to a variety of points of view would encourage intercultural understanding." The International Baccalaureate Organization is a foundation supported in part by UNESCO, the Twentieth Century Fund, and the Ford Foundation. The International Baccalaureate was established in over 4,000 schools in 159 countries. Twenty-one schools in Minnesota offer the IB Diploma program and eight schools offer the IB Career Related Programs.

What Courses are required in the IB program?

Students in Grand Rapids High School may choose classes from seven subject areas: English, World Language, Individuals and Societies (Social Studies), Experimental Sciences, Mathematics, Arts and Electives, and Theory of Knowledge

What courses are part of IB at Grand Rapids High School?

IB English (Literature as an HL course or Language & Literature as an SL course), Spanish, History, Geography, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Calculus, Film Studies, Business & Management, and Theory of Knowledge. These courses are clearly identified in the GRHS Curriculum Guide.

Is college credit given for IB classes?

Depending upon the type of exam taken and the score the student receives, a student may receive credit at most colleges and universities not only in the United States but also internationally. Most of our IB courses at GRHS are combined with our UMD CITS courses; this means students will be eligible to earn automatic UMD credit through the course and potential ADDITIONAL credit is possible through IB exams.

Are there courses to prepare for the IB curriculum for junior and senior years?

Yes, Advanced English 9 and 10 and Advanced Civics, Geography, and American History. Students must also be enrolled in Spanish and Geometry in 9th grade.

When do students take exams?

Exams are given in April and May of the senior year. Some students may be ready to test in Spanish, Biology, Geography, Film Studies, or Business Management in May of their junior year. Students are also required to complete essays, lab reports, portfolios, and oral exams as part of the course work. These varied assessments give students the opportunity to show their strengths in a variety of ways over a period of time. Assessments are often graded by teachers who teach the IB program in other countries.

How much does it cost to take an exam?

Exams are \$40, with a maximum payment of \$120. The cost is subsidized by School District 318 and the Minnesota Department of Education. The fee is quite reasonable considering what a student may save in costs for college credits. Exams are free for students on free or reduced lunch. In addition, Diploma Candidate exam fees are waived.

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What is an IB Diploma?

The heart of IB is the diploma program. Diploma students successfully complete exams in all six subject areas, enroll in Theory of Knowledge (a class which ties together all subject areas), write an extended essay, and complete a Creativity, Action, and Service component (CAS). Diploma students meet monthly with the IB and CAS coordinators and work with a faculty member on their Extended Essay (a college-level research paper in the subject of their choice).

What are the advantages of the Diploma?

Diploma candidates have distinguished themselves. The IB diploma opens doors to colleges and scholarship opportunities. Depending upon the college, students may accelerate to a higher level their freshman year. The diploma is also excellent preparation for college.

How should Middle School students prepare for the Diploma?

Students at Grand Rapids Middle School should be enrolled in Algebra 1 in eighth grade and register for Spanish in ninth grade. In addition, graduation requirements such as Physical Education, Health, and Money Matters should be taken in 9th or 10th grade.

How will a student know if a college accepts IB credits?

The Grand Rapids High School website under the Academics and IB tab has a link showing college credit policies across the world. In addition, IB Teachers all have a booklet of Minnesota schools' IB credit policies. A student may also check with the IB coordinator or a counselor and also log on to the IBO website at www.ibo.org.