



International  
Baccalaureate®

*IB Diploma Programme:  
A guide for universities and colleges*



## What is the IB?

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a recognized leader in the field of international education. IB programmes encourage students to be reflective, active and lifelong learners and critical thinkers. IB students are forever curious, fully engaged citizens, who both embrace their own culture and are open and responsive to other cultures and views.

Founded in 1968, the IB currently works with over 2,000 schools in 124 countries\* to develop and offer three challenging programmes to over 500,000 students aged 3 to 19 years.

We value our hard-earned reputation for quality, high standards and pedagogical leadership. We promote intercultural understanding and respect, not as an alternative to a sense of cultural and national identity, but as an essential part of life in the 21st century. At its heart, the IB is motivated by a mission to create a better world through education.

All of this is captured in our mission statement.

*The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.*

*To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.*

*These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.*



## What are IB programmes?

We offer a high quality education through our three continuously evolving and widely respected programmes, for students aged 3 to 19, working in close cooperation with IB World Schools that may offer these programmes individually or as a continuum.

The **IB Primary Years Programme**, for students aged 3 to 12, focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside.

The **IB Middle Years Programme**, for students aged 11 to 16, provides a framework of academic challenge that encourages students to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and the real world, and to become critical and reflective thinkers.

The **IB Diploma Programme**, for students aged 16 to 19, is an academically challenging and balanced programme of education with final examinations that prepares students for success at university and in life beyond.

Each programme includes a curriculum and pedagogy, student assessment appropriate to the age range, professional development for teachers and a process of school authorization and evaluation.

## What is the IB Diploma Programme?

The IB Diploma Programme is a demanding two-year curriculum, taught in English, French and/or Spanish, leading to final examinations and a qualification that is welcomed by leading universities and colleges around the world, primarily aimed at students aged 16 to 19.

- The two-year curriculum is rigorous and intellectually coherent, encouraging critical thinking through the study of a wide range of subjects in the traditional academic disciplines while encouraging an international perspective.
- Beyond completing courses and examinations in six subject areas in preparation for higher education and beyond, IB Diploma Programme students are also required to engage in **creativity, action, service**, individual research through the **extended essay** and an inquiry into the **theory of knowledge**.

\* data from December 2006

"International Baccalaureate" and "IB World School" are registered trademarks of the International Baccalaureate Organization.

“McGill has enthusiastically recruited IB students for over two decades. Even today, when reviewing an application from an IB diploma candidate, whether from the local CEGEP (collège d’enseignement général et professionnel) or the other side of the globe, our admissions officers can be assured of the candidate’s strong and broad-based academic preparation. We have seen that IB students embrace the rigorous academic challenges of university life and perform well in their McGill programmes. As a member of the College and University Recognition Taskforce, I can attest to the respected position of the IB diploma at prestigious universities throughout North America.”

**Kim Bartlett**

*Director of admissions, McGill University, Canada*

<http://www.ibo.org/universities/>

“Increasing numbers of university students now continue their education to include postgraduate research qualifications. Unique skills are required for tertiary research studies and for those who continue into research careers. The International Baccalaureate emphasizes inquiry-based learning, independent learning and lifelong learning. These are exactly the types of skills that are needed to undertake postgraduate research studies effectively and also to develop and establish successful long-term research careers.”

**Professor Lyn Griffiths**

*Head, School of Medical Science, and director, Genomics Research Centre, Griffith University Gold Coast campus, Australia*

## How do schools implement IB programmes?

Any school wishing to offer an IB programme must be authorized to do so. IB World Schools are scattered across continents and are both national and international, large and small. Over 50% of IB programmes are in state-funded schools. The requirements for implementation are the same for all schools, even though the process is administered slightly differently in each IB region. The process of becoming an IB World School is designed to ensure schools are well prepared to implement an IB programme successfully. There are two key stages in the process, which include a feasibility study and identification of resources and an authorization visit from an IB visiting team.

Furthermore, a self-study process is required every five years in all IB World Schools, supported by the IB with reports and school visits where appropriate. This is a reflective exercise that involves the entire school community and aims to:

- improve practice
- identify strengths and weaknesses
- determine areas for future focus.

The self-study process reinforces the support and commitment for the programme from all stakeholders in the community.

### Professional development

In 2006 the IB trained over 30,000 teachers and administrators at workshops and events around the world. These events bring together teachers and workshop leaders from many countries and cultures, encouraging IB educators to constantly reflect upon and improve their practice. Certain workshops are mandatory for schools seeking authorization to offer an IB programme.

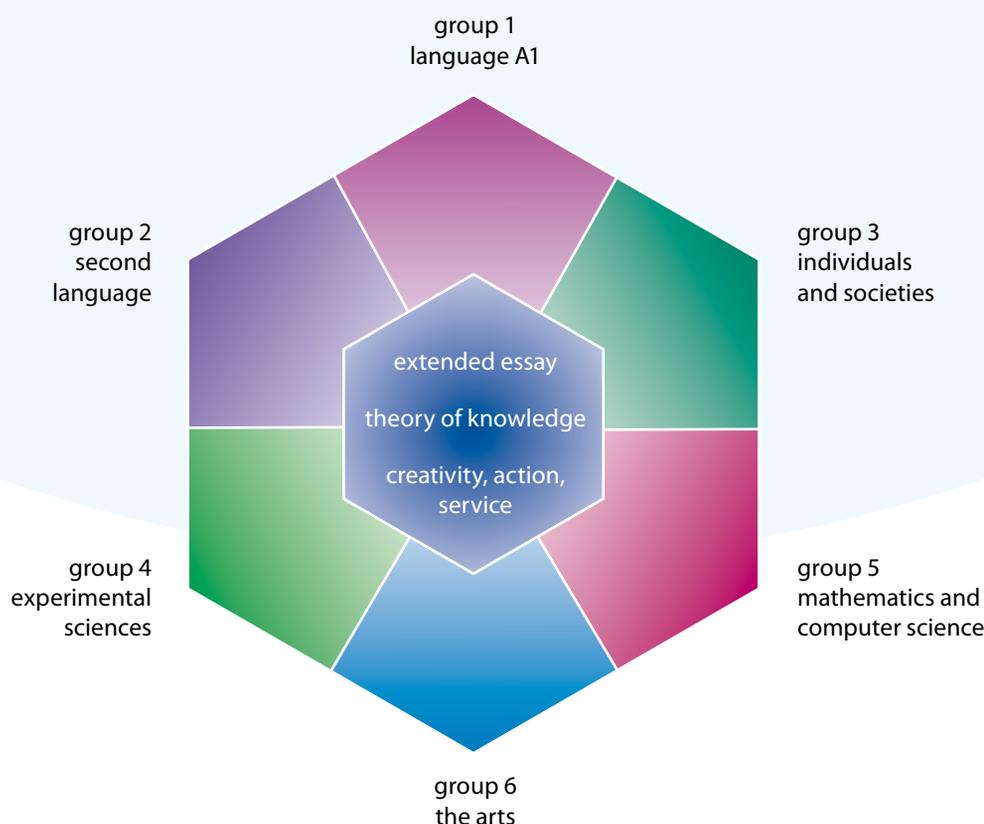
The online curriculum centre (OCC) provides an online community for all IB teachers around the world. It is organized by curriculum area, with additional sections relating to:

- librarians
- special educational needs
- academic honesty
- research.

The OCC also contains:

- news and information
- IB curriculum and assessment publications
- a teacher resource exchange
- discussion forums.

## What are the requirements for the IB diploma?



Full Diploma Programme students follow six subjects at higher level or standard level. Students must choose one subject from each of groups 1 to 5, thus ensuring breadth of experience in languages, social studies, the experimental sciences and mathematics. The sixth subject may be an arts subject chosen from group 6, or the student may choose another subject from groups 1 to 5. At least three and not more than four subjects are taken at higher level, the others at standard level. Higher level courses represent a recommended 240 teaching hours and give students the opportunity to study these subjects in great depth, while standard level courses cover 150 teaching hours.

The marks awarded for each subject range from 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest). Students can also be awarded up to three additional points for their combined results on theory of knowledge and the extended essay. The full diploma is awarded to students who gain at least 24 points, subject to certain minimum levels of performance across the whole Diploma Programme and to satisfactory participation in creativity, action, service. The highest total that a Diploma Programme student can be awarded is 45 points.

### Certificate students

Approximately 80% of full Diploma Programme students are awarded the diploma. A student who does not satisfy the requirements of the full Diploma Programme, or who has elected to take fewer than six subjects, is awarded a certificate for the examinations completed. Students who complete more than six subjects receive an extra certificate for the additional subject(s).

### Bilingual diploma

Many students study in a language other than their mother tongue. Upon fulfilling certain criteria and conditions, students taking examinations in more than one language may be awarded a bilingual diploma.

For information about individual subject descriptions, please go to *A guide to the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme for universities and colleges* at <http://www.ibo.org/diploma/recognition/guide/>.

“ Over the years we at the University of Mumbai have been delighted to admit students of the IB Diploma Programme. The candidates stand out as mature, well-grounded students who have a very broad outlook on education. In the class they are very interactive and well-informed. While they are quite opinionated on issues it is interesting to see how open they are to the opinions of others. Their application orientation helps other students in the college to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The IB philosophy definitely rubs off on our undergraduate education!”

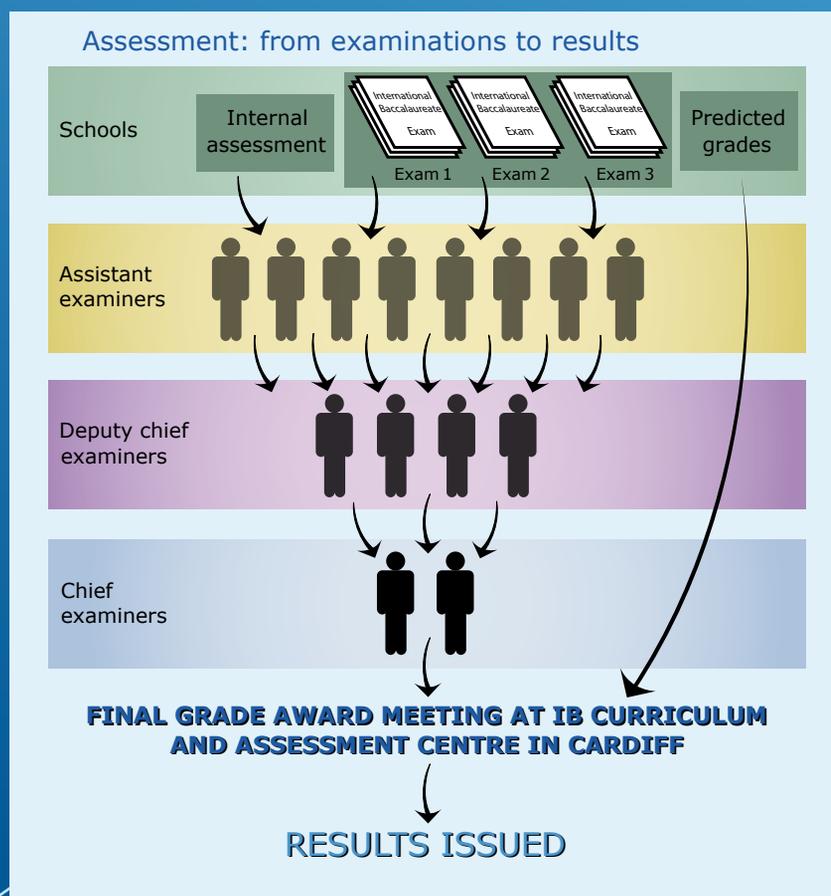
**Dr Indu Shahani**

*Principal, HR College, University of Mumbai*

## How are students assessed?

An essential principle of IB assessment is that standards are the same world-wide.

IB examiners represent many cultural and academic traditions, yet the organization measures student performance according to established standards and criteria that are consistent from place to place and year to year. Over the two-year teaching period, a variety of assessment methods are used to acknowledge both the content and the process of academic achievement and to take into account different learning styles. Final examinations in each subject take place in either May (northern hemisphere) or November (southern hemisphere). Students' work is assessed by international teams of examiners, who are themselves trained and monitored by the IB.



## External assessment

Examinations form the basis of the assessment for most courses because of their high levels of objectivity and reliability. There are also a small number of other externally assessed pieces of work, for example, theory of knowledge essays, extended essays and world literature assignments. These are completed by students over an extended period under teacher supervision, and are then marked by external examiners.

- There is a series of written examinations at the end of the course, which may consist of two or three separately written examination papers.
- Conventional external examination techniques are chosen from a variety of options including short responses, structured questions, text responses, data-based questions, essays and multiple-choice questions.
- Taken together, this approach is considered to deliver higher levels of reliability in assessing students.

## Internal assessment

Internal assessment is an important component of the IB assessment process. This recognizes the professional role of the teacher and gives students a chance to show what they can do over time, not just in the pressured context of a final examination without access to outside resources.

- Internal assessment usually accounts for 20–30% of the final grade in a subject.
- Marks awarded for internal assessment are externally moderated by IB examiners to ensure international parity.
- Internal assessment typically includes teacher evaluation of work done in class, homework assignments, special projects, notebooks and laboratory procedures.

## Predicted grades

The predicted grade is the teacher's prediction of the grade the student is expected to achieve in the subject, based on all the evidence of a student's work and the teacher's knowledge of IB standards. Predicted grades are also required for theory of knowledge and the extended essay, and may be used as additional information about students who are subject to special consideration.

For information about how to interpret IB grades and transcripts, please go to *A guide to the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme for universities and colleges* at <http://www.ibo.org/diploma/recognition/guide/>.



## *Why consider the IB diploma in recruitment?*

In an environment of increasing competitiveness among institutions of higher education, and taking account of the growing mobility of students, university admissions tutors and academic staff around the world recognize the benefits of recruiting IB graduates for their universities and colleges. The benefits include:

- the admission of students from a rigorous academic background, who know how to think and to learn
- the absence of any concerns about grade inflation
- the knowledge that state and national standards are being met and exceeded through effective teaching and learning; IB standards and grading practices are the same around the world, which means the criteria for achieving each grade are the same for all IB World Schools
- the rich diversity of experience and perspective that IB Diploma Programme students bring to their university or college.

Admissions officers around the world use some of the following assumptions about IB diploma graduates to assist them in the admissions process.



### *Academic strength of curriculum*

Admissions officers can be assured of students' strong preparation of coursework in a cohesive and broad-based curriculum that encompasses the basic academic areas: mother-tongue language and literature, second language, social sciences/humanities, experimental sciences and mathematics.

### *Academic strength of schools*

All IB World Schools must offer, support and maintain a minimum of seven or eight strong academic departments.

### *Academic strength of students*

The IB Diploma Programme requires students to maintain a high level of focus and performance.

### *External validation*

The IB Diploma Programme validates both achievement and academic integrity in students' performance through its examination requirements.

### *Research and writing skills*

The extended essay requirement—an independent, self-directed piece of research, culminating in a 4,000-word paper—provides practical preparation for the kinds of undergraduate research required for further and higher education. It is also the opportunity for students to engage in an in-depth study of a topic of interest within a chosen subject.

### *Acceptance of educational challenges*

Participation in the IB Diploma Programme demonstrates that students accept, rather than avoid, rigorous academic challenges.

### *Critical-thinking skills*

The required theory of knowledge course ensures that students become critical thinkers who understand the interdisciplinary nature of learning.

### *Interview skills*

IB students have strong preparation in oral presentation skills. Several IB courses include mandatory oral assessments, and the theory of knowledge course requires students to shape their opinions into logical discourse.

### *Extra-curricular involvement*

The creativity, action, service element requires students to invest a minimum of 150 hours during the final two years in non-classroom activities.

### *Maturity and responsibility*

The IB Diploma Programme assists students in developing time-management, goal-setting and other organizational skills.

“ [Academic] colleagues feel that the IB Diploma Programme gives a breadth of personal, professional and academic preparation, encourages an international outlook and instills the value of independent learning. ”

**Leslie Currie**

*Recruitment and admissions office, University of Bath, UK*

<http://www.ibo.org/universities/>

“ One of the advantages of an IB curriculum is its structure and quality. It’s a coordinated programme, well established, well known and well respected. We know the quality of IB courses, and we think the IB curriculum is terrific.”

**Christoph Guttentag**

*Director of admissions, Duke University, USA*

## What research exists to differentiate IB students?

Research conducted around the world demonstrates that IB students generally enjoy higher than average acceptance rates from universities and colleges, as they are considered better prepared for further and higher education than many of their peers.

### *Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), UK*

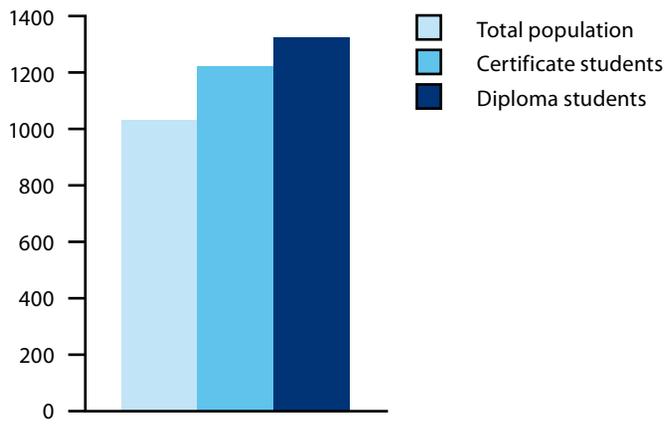
Since July 2006, the IB diploma has been included in the UCAS Tariff, a points system used to report achievement for entry into higher education in a numerical format, which allows higher education institutions to compare the different types of accredited qualifications available in the United Kingdom (UK).

The UCAS Tariff awards 768 points to the top diploma score of 45, which is broadly equivalent to 7 A-levels, and demonstrates the breadth and depth of the IB Diploma Programme. The most common score of 30 attracts 419 UCAS Tariff points. This is inclusive of the extended essay, theory of knowledge and creativity, action, service. It is also recognized that the Diploma Programme higher level courses are equivalent in scale and demand to a single A-level.

### *North American student surveys*

In 2003 a survey was carried out across IB World Schools in the United States (US), which tracked the SAT and ACT (pre-university test) results of 6,392 students in 131 schools in 29 states.

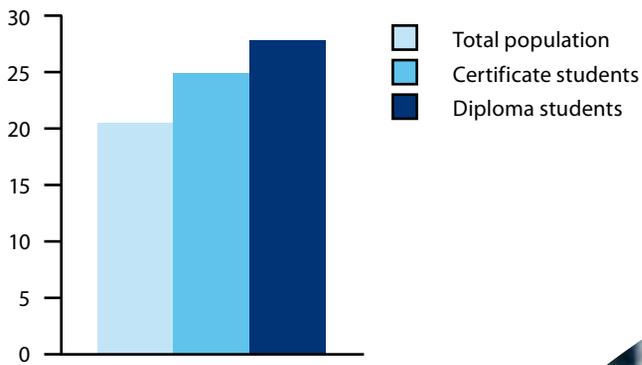
IB Diploma Programme students’ average score of 1,274 was significantly higher than the average score of the total population. In addition, the acceptance rate in US universities for IB students was generally higher than the average acceptance rate, and even more so for students of the full Diploma Programme.



Students' average SAT scores

	All applicants 2003	IB applicants 2003	IB diploma applicants 2003
Harvard University	11%	12.5% (312)	13.1% (290)
Yale University	13%	14.3% (252)	15.1% (232)
Stanford University	13%	16.8% (279)	17.6% (245)
University of California	24%	45.4% (421)	50.6% (318)

Acceptance rates for IB students



Students' average ACT scores



“ IB is well known to us as excellent preparation. Success in an IB programme correlates well with success at Harvard. We are pleased to see the credentials of the IB Diploma Programme on the transcript.”

**Marlyn McGrath Lewis**

*Assistant dean of admissions, Harvard University, USA*

#### *Monash University, Melbourne, Australia*

The results of a study at Monash University, published in *From School to Monash 2001–2003: The First Year*, showed that “female IB students performed best of all groups (gender/private/state/overseas) with a 90.32% pass rate”. Male IB students achieved a pass rate slightly above all male Victorian students (81.59%) and IB students overall achieved better results than all Victorian Certificate of Education students.

#### *Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)*

In March 2007 the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) completed a survey on “Perceptions of the IB Diploma in Australasian Tertiary Institutions”. Over 150 senior university representatives in 47 universities rated the IB diploma on its success in developing students’ capabilities in the following six areas: deep learning, breadth of learning, critical thinking, communication, research and self-management.

In comparison with other state and national pre-university qualifications, the IB diploma received the highest mean ratings in each of these areas, except depth where only UK A-levels received a higher mean rating.

#### *Perceptions of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme*

In October 2003 the IB published this report, written by Colin Jenkins, former principal of the United World College of the Atlantic in Wales, UK, and former deputy director general of the IB. He had contacted 120 higher education institutions in the UK, and found that 57% felt that the IB Diploma Programme conferred an advantage on applicants to university courses, when compared with the national pre-university examination system of A-levels.

Dr James Brown, director of admissions at the University of Glasgow, UK, also offered the results of research conducted by the university to track the progress of Diploma Programme graduates throughout their degree course. The percentage of Diploma Programme entrants graduating with an upper second class degree or better since 1995 was compared with the university’s graduating class as a whole.

Year of entry	% IB graduates achieving upper second class degree or better	Overall % achieving upper second class degree or better
1995	60	47
1996	100	53
1997	70	48
1998	80	50

## How is the IB diploma recognized?

University recognition has always been a primary concern for Diploma Programme students, parents and school staff, as well as for the organization. Annually, the vast majority of students who complete the Diploma Programme move on to further and higher education.

The discipline and work ethic required to complete the Diploma Programme call for considerable commitment from students. Diploma Programme students who have performed well in examinations and have earned the IB diploma expect universities and colleges to recognize this achievement.

Many universities and colleges have developed their own recognition policies. The individual policies vary greatly, but they all have one thing in common. Through their policies, these institutions make it apparent that they understand and appreciate the Diploma Programme student and the Diploma Programme itself, and acknowledge that targeting IB graduates simplifies the recruiting task. This recognition comes in many forms but the most common are:

- **recruitment**—actively recruiting Diploma Programme students
- **admission**—stating that the IB diploma is fully recognized and taken into account in the admissions process; addressing Diploma Programme students specifically in documentation and publications
- **placement**—acknowledging the rigour of the programme overall and establishing prerequisites for IB courses that are fair and equitable in comparison with those for state, provincial and other examination courses; understanding and acknowledging the English language proficiency of international Diploma Programme students
- **credit**—providing detailed information on the subject courses for which credit is possible based on Diploma Programme examination results; specifically understanding and recognizing theory of knowledge, the extended essay and the content of standard level as well as higher level courses
- **scholarships**—providing scholarships or scholarship opportunities specifically for Diploma Programme students.

For information on universities' recognition policies, please go to *A guide to the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme for universities and colleges* at <http://www.ibo.org/diploma/recognition/guide/>.

“ I believe that IB Diploma Programme graduates contribute to our academic life with the qualities and strengths they have gained through an education that promotes good intellectual habits, with their willingness to work at university and with their enthusiasm for the vocation they have chosen. ”

**Roberto Aras, admissions director**

*Pontificia Universidad Católica de Argentina*

<http://www.ibo.org/universities/>

## How do I find out more?

IB Diploma Programme graduates are welcomed at universities and colleges around the world. The IB recognizes the need for clear, current and concise information about the Diploma Programme. We have therefore prepared an online document *A guide to the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme for universities and colleges*, at <http://www.ibo.org/diploma/recognition/guide/>.

There is also a *Guide to the IB Diploma Programme for universities and colleges for the North America and Caribbean region* available at <http://www.ibo.org/ibna/recognition/index.cfm>. These guides have been written for university and college admissions staff and faculty so that they may learn about the programme and know what to expect from an IB World School and an IB Diploma Programme graduate.

We also provide a password-protected online site for university and college officials and admissions officers, where the following information can be found.

- Course syllabus for each subject (including assessment information)
- Recent examination questions
- Markschemes
- Student results (transcripts)

You can find these resources, designed specifically for university and college admissions staff, at <http://www.ibo.org/universities>.

Please use the guide, the secure site and support from your regional IB office to create and update your own publicly listed policy regarding university recognition.

## Regional contacts

### *IB Africa/Europe/Middle East*

Route des Morillons 15  
Grand-Saconnex, Genève  
CH-1218  
SWITZERLAND

Phone: +41 22 791 7740  
Fax: +41 22 791 0277  
Email: [ibaem@ibo.org](mailto:ibaem@ibo.org)

### *IB Asia-Pacific*

70 Shenton Way  
#04-03 Marina House  
Singapore  
SG-079118  
REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

Phone: +65 6776 0249  
Fax: +65 6776 4369  
Email: [ibap@ibo.org](mailto:ibap@ibo.org)

### *IB Latin America*

San Vladimiro 3056 - 2do.piso  
San Isidro - B1642GMB  
Provincia de Buenos Aires  
ARGENTINA

Phone: + 54 11 4766 3900  
Fax: +54 11 4766 3900  
Email: [ibla@ibo.org](mailto:ibla@ibo.org)

### *IB North America and the Caribbean*

IB Vancouver office  
Recognition services  
1661 West 2nd Avenue, Suite 202  
Vancouver, BC - V6J 1H3  
CANADA

Toll free: +1 866 826 4262  
Phone: +1 604 733 8980  
Fax: +1 604 733 8970  
Email: [vancouver@ibo.org](mailto:vancouver@ibo.org)  
<http://www.ibo.org/ibna/recognition/>

<http://www.ibo.org/universities/>

