

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why the narrow subject choices?

The proposed IB Diploma subjects offered by Scotch are a starting point and informed by current subject choices: these tend to be the most popular subjects with boys and satisfy the requirements of the most popular university degrees undertaken by Scotch boys. Subject choices are restricted by student numbers and timetable restrictions. The new *Courses of Study* has increased potential pathways and placed an additional burden on the timetable. For example, where there was one TEE English course, there are now two: Stage 2 and Stage 3 units. This also applies to other subjects.

2. How will the Diploma be presented to boys currently in Years 8 and 9?

In Term 3, the Diploma Coordinator will address boys in Years 8 and 9 and inform them about the DP requirements as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the course. We aim to produce a mini-handbook which will provide an overview that teenage boys can comprehend. Additionally, it is our intention to assist in an understanding of the Theory of Knowledge component by doing an activity with them.

3. Is criterion marking clear and equivalent to the OBE? Will there be on-going tasks?

The criteria in the DP are explicit and transparent. Teachers and coordinators across Australia have commented that it is easily understood and targeted in assignments. Students go into examinations with a very clear understanding of what is required to achieve a Grade 7. There will be on-going tasks over the two years and teachers will be engaged in moderation activities with IB teachers in other schools to ensure their understanding of standards.

4. Will non-IB students be disadvantaged?

Teachers will teach both the West Australian Courses of Study and the Diploma. As a result, we believe that non-Diploma students will benefit as academic rigour and pedagogy improves and teachers are trained to meet international standards. St Paul's in Sydney, conducted some independent research which demonstrated that their HSC results (the equivalent of our TEE) improved significantly after the implementation of the DP.

5. Can SL subjects score the maximum grade? What percentage of a student's mark is completed internal?

All subjects regardless of whether they are taken at an HL or SL are scored out of a maximum grade 7. All subjects have parity and there is no scaling as there is in the WA TEE courses. A minimum of 20% of a student's mark will come from internal assessments with examination weighted as high as 80%.

6. Can students change DP subjects partway through the course? Can they move across to the WACE Courses of Study?

As with the TEE, students are able to change subject choices but they would need to do so earlier rather than later. There is an advantage as the DP is a two year course and the only examination which is of any

importance is the final one at the end of Year 12. The examinations in Year 11 would be practice exams which provide the student with an understanding of their competence. If they wished to change to the West Australian system they would need to do it by the end of Term 1 because there is a more significant emphasis on internal assessment and examinations which occur at the end of each semester.

7. Is it aimed solely for prospective university students?

No. The IB Diploma is about instilling a love for learning and creating life-long learners. It is designed to educate the complete individual: the mind and the heart. We believe that any competent student with a good work ethic will be successful in the DP and profit from their experience with the *Extended Essay* and the *Theory of Knowledge* component which improves critical thinking.

8. What scores are required in the MYP to earn a respectable score in Language B subjects?

Language B: Students will need to score a MYP Grade 4 or 5 to cope with a SL language and a 6 or 7 to cope with an HL course.

9. Will Scotch employ experienced IB Diploma teachers?

More than 90% of Scotch teachers required for the DP subjects have completed the IB workshops and we are confident in the quality of our personnel. When one sits in a workshop with 20 other teachers from around the world, one soon grows to understand their level of competence. We know that our staff members are more than able to compete on the international stage. Some of our staff are being employed by the IBO as examiners (Mr Tibbit is an examiner for Economics SL) and this will continue to grow. Additionally, as staff retire or leave, we find that a number of teachers with IB experience are applying for positions at Scotch.

10. If my son is below average and his work ethic isn't exemplary, would he benefit from the Diploma?

Is he attaining below average results because of ability or because he isn't motivated? Most Scotch boys like to be challenged and poor results are often a result of disinterest. A boy like this probably needs to be challenged and stimulated. I believe that the Diploma will excite and encourage him to strive for excellence. A pleasing aspect of the DP is the fact that students do not compete against each other as they do in the TEE; they compete against the criteria and will often collaborate to achieve success. Every boy can score a perfect score and this encourages collegiality rather than self-centredness.

11. How will they value CAS – no points?

All students will attend one CAS lecture per ten day cycle and will be informed about the underlying philosophies informing the programme. Scotch boys will have opportunities to design and participate in tasks that excite them. Community Service is a part of everyday life for Scotch students who are involved in several projects already because it is something that they value. I doubt that the CAS component will be burdensome as it is well entrenched in the Scotch culture and students' work practices. Additionally, I believe that CAS will be beneficial to students and complement their future aspirations. For example, a Scotch

boy who wishes to enrol in Medicine at UWA will have to score well in an interview which is likely to be 40% of his entrance requirement. A Scotch boy who has participated in Community Service in a related field will be more empowered in the interview. The IBO esteems the CAS component which lies at the heart of the programme and, therefore, a student who scores a perfect Grade 7 in all six subjects and a perfect score in the Extended Essay and ToK essay but doesn't complete his CAS hours, will not be awarded the Diploma.

12. Will Diploma students have to participate in sport?

Yes. All DP students will participate in all school activities. The DP will simply be another course that students embrace: they will be no different to students who are currently enrolled in TEE courses or Instep.

13. a) Have all WA and national universities recognised the Diploma?

All national universities have recognised the DP and UWA has the greatest number of DP graduates in Australia. DP graduates have gained access to all university courses and, indeed, are preferred by universities (ACER Report).

b) Why is there no English as a subject?

The World Literature course is like the TEE Literature course with one difference: students' texts are not confined to writers from the UK, USA or Australia. They will read the translations of texts produced by writers from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, etc. All DP courses are reviewed every seven years and at different times. The Language A course is being reviewed in 2009 and the new course in 2011 will contain a media component which will provide a course of study similar to our current TEE English course as well as the World Literature course.

c) If someone wished to study Biology, Chemistry and Physics, can they?

Not without permission from the IBO. A student may apply to the IBO for permission to take a third science but they would need to present a case to the IBO. For example, they may wish to study Medicine at Edinburgh University which requires three sciences. However, students will not be allowed to abandon Language B.

d) Will a student be able to add any additional TEE subjects?

Unlikely. Why would they take on an additional burden? They either acquire their TER from the Diploma or the TEE system; both are demanding courses. Students must earn the Diploma for university recognition.

e) Are students who have completed the PYP and MYP advantaged?

Scotch College students have a distinct advantage because of the PYP and MYP courses which segue neatly into the DP. The same principles apply and tasks like the Personal Project prepare boys for the Extended Essay.

14. How do I compare the TEE with Diploma when I know very little about the TEE?

We will produce a booklet that explains the West Australian TEE system and show DP comparisons. This will be made available to all parents.

15. Will parents be guided by the School about their son's eligibility for the Diploma?

If the DP is to be implemented, then individual subject teachers will be asked to comment on a student's suitability for the DP. This information

will be shared with the student and recommendations will be made by the Careers Councillor, Diploma Coordinator and/or Director of Teaching and Learning. If it appears that the student is unsuited to the programme but wishes to continue, then Scotch would support that student's choice to participate in the DP.

16. Will more subjects be introduced over time? Are Diploma students eligible for academic awards?

We will be guided by student numbers. If there is significant interest in a particular subject, then Scotch will try to offer it. As with all students participating in academic studies, DP students will be eligible for academic awards.

17. a) Is the Diploma as politically correct and "fluffy" as the PYP?

The Diploma has a reputation for academic rigour and balance and privileged by elite universities such as Harvard, Oxford, Cambridge, Princeton, MIT, etc. The Australian universities also esteem it because it is well defined, provides breadth and depth in its courses.

b) Will we set our own curriculum and too much emphasis be placed on Diploma students?

Scotch is in a position to offer parents the DP as well as the West Australian Courses of Study which are recognised by TISC and Australian universities. The Diploma will never be established as an elite course for the academic students; it will be an alternative which offers choice.

18. Can students take Music and Computer Science?

If there are sufficient numbers we will consider the implementation of these subjects. However, our current numbers in upper school have discouraged us from offering them. Additionally, Computer Science is a very demanding subject that requires a high degree of expertise and academic ability: together with Maths HL and Chemistry HL, it is one of the more demanding courses.

20. How will the teaching of languages change at Scotch to retain numbers?

The status of languages will be lifted by the requirement of a second language in the Diploma Programme and the possible influx of bilingual students.

21. If you are doing Diploma in Year 11, can you switch to TEE in Year 12?

Yes and be eligible for a TER but Secondary Graduation may be problematic as students must complete 10 subjects with a C grade average or better over two years (Years 11 and 12).

22. Does the re-structuring of the timetable affect boys because of their age?

Unlikely. It's only an adjustment of one term and the current Year 5 group are an older cohort. The re-structuring of the terms provides Scotch boys with more time in Years 11 and 12 to address the requirements of the DP. They will have 8 terms rather than 7. This is common practice in Sydney schools and teachers have praised its benefits.

23. What would be available to a boy who wants to study a subject not offered (e.g. music) but is prepared to meet all other requirements?

Although we would like to offer more subjects, we are restricted by timetables, staffing and student numbers. If a boy chooses to dismiss the Diploma because of one subject then we would respect that choice.

24. Will courses be combined in the same class (ie. TEE and Diploma)?

It is unlikely that IB and non-IB students will be placed in the same classes as there are different requirements. Experienced Diploma teachers from around the world indicated that this was especially problematic and not ideal. We would prefer to meet the needs of boys in both courses without compromise.

25. What counselling will be available to students who are interested in international universities?

Our Careers Councillor, Mr Peter Frusher, will meet with individual boys who are considering overseas universities and inform them about requirements.

26. Is it true that eastern states take three years to deliver the Diploma?

No Australian schools operate the course over three years. When we conducted our pre-Authorisation meeting with Mr Forbes-Harper, the Manager of the Diploma Programme, he made it clear that the IBO would not tolerate such a practice.

27. How many years of Language B is required to prepare students for success?

A minimum of three years is desirable for SL and HL but the student's ability is also a contributing factor.

28. a) How does the Diploma accommodate bright students with learning difficulties?

Students have access to all facilities offered in the TEE. Students with particular difficulties can apply for special examination arrangements such as extra time in examinations. They may also apply for access to a personal computer if there are problems with handwriting in examinations.

b) Will the Diploma affect the diversity of subjects offered for TEE? Instep?

The Diploma will not affect the choices offered in the West Australian Courses of Study. Student numbers will often be the primary factor which deters the College from offering a particular subject. Instep is a valuable programme and highly esteemed by Scotch College. The quality of the programme will not be compromised.

29. What kind of boy does the Diploma not suit?

A boy who is not prepared to make an effort will struggle with the demands of the course.

How does the course fit the re-structuring of the school year?

IB students together with TEE students will commence their Year 11 studies in October of 2009. This means that they will have about 8 terms over the two year course: this is more time than they experience currently.

What does 'pedagogy' mean?

Pedagogy refers to the art of teaching.

Are there different results for each year that a student has studied i.e. the boy who started French in Year 3 and the boy who started in Year 11?

No. There are different exams for SL and HL subjects. A boy will choose these based on their level of competence regardless of when they began their language studies.

Do universities shut the door on students who don't obtain the Diploma?

The few students who fail to earn the Diploma (97% success rate in Australia) are still attractive to universities and often admitted to certain courses.

How many students are required to start the Diploma?

We are hoping to commence with at least 28 students but this is not a fixed number.

30. Is there a chance of sharing courses with other schools? PLC?

Scotch and PLC are hoping to collaborate in the near future.

31. How is a student's results calculated?

The student's final result is a combination of his internal and external assessments. His internal assessments have a minimum weighting of 20% (varies slightly between subjects). This may be in the form of oral presentations, assignments, portfolios of work, etc. The student sits **one** external examination which will be weighted between 50% and 80%. But there is no norm referencing or scaling. In the TEE, the school submits a mark which equates to 50% of the student's score. They sit an external examination which is weighted at 50%. However, the TEE is norm referenced and scaled. This means that your son's work is ranked – not every student can earn a perfect score – Bell Curve. In the Diploma, every student can earn a perfect score if he satisfies the criteria. Additionally, TEE subjects are then scaled because Calculus is deemed to be more demanding than Geography. In the Diploma, Geography is equal to Calculus therefore boys who are strong in a particular field of study are not disadvantaged because all subjects are esteemed and valued in the Diploma.

32. Do students need some prior second language experience?

Students will require experience in Years 8-10 to cope with Language B at a Standard Level. However, those without prior experience can take up an ab initio language and earn a Grade 7 which is on par with all other subjects.

33. When will the current Year 9 boys have to decide whether or not they wish to study the Diploma?

Scotch needs to know how many Year 9 boys are prepared to embrace the DP so that we might proceed with our preparations. Ideally, we would like to know by the end of August 2008.

34. Will Language B HL be taught in that language?

In Language B HL, the teachers endeavour to deliver as much of the course work in the second language being studied. This immersion is vital to language acquisition. However, teachers are also at liberty to converse in English to clarify points.

Will there be practice exams prior to the final examination at the end of Year 12?

There will be practice exams prior to the final exams. Our students would sit the November examinations, therefore we are able to purchase the May paper (Northern Hemisphere) to use for our Mock examinations.