



International Baccalaureate
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

International Baccalaureate Career-related Certificate

IBCC overview

Introduction

The International Baccalaureate (IB) has developed a framework of international education that will incorporate the vision and educational principles of the IB into local programmes that address the needs of students engaged in career-related education. In this context the IB wishes to collaborate with a range of agencies, including schools, colleges, career-related providers, local or regional education authorities and national education ministries (providing organizations), to develop this qualification, known as the IB Career-related Certificate (IBCC). The IBCC is an academic qualification designed to support schools and colleges that offer career-related courses to their students.

Background information

The success of the curriculum models developed by the IB, addressing the academic needs of students in the 3–19 age range, is now well known. The IB programmes, and specifically the two-year pre-university Diploma Programme, grew out of international schools' efforts to establish a common curriculum and university entry credential for geographically mobile students. International educators were also motivated by an idealistic vision: they hoped that a shared academic experience emphasizing critical thinking and exposure to a variety of points of view would encourage intercultural understanding and acceptance of others by young people.

The IB has grown rapidly and now provides, through the medium of three working languages (English, French and Spanish), three related programmes that represent an educational continuum for students from 3 to 19 years of age: the Primary Years Programme (PYP for ages 3–11/12), the Middle Years Programme (MYP for ages 11/12–16) and the Diploma Programme (for students aged 16–19, designed as a two-year academic preparation for university).

Definition

Career-related qualifications use different terminology in different parts of the world. They can be described as vocational, professional or technical qualifications and there will be other definitions in different local or national systems. The term adopted in this context in IB documentation is “career-related education”.

Any career-related education programme offered in collaboration with the IB must allow the student, on successful completion of the course, to enter either employment or to progress to further study or higher education. In his paper *Constructing a Core Curriculum for Vocational Education in an IB Context* (2003), John Munro describes a career-related education as providing the “range of broad employment-related competencies which ... provide the basis for (1) effective participation in emerging forms of work and work organizations; (2) access to a range of education and training pathways, both initially and subsequent to commencing employment; (3) improved flexibility and mobility in employment; and (4) effective participation in adult life generally”.

Educational aims

Preparing for the human endeavour of work in a knowledge society

It is increasingly recognized that to prepare students to become effective participants in the rapidly changing 21st century society, schools must not only equip them with the necessary skills and the learning dispositions, but also the ability to manage and influence change.

The IBCC will help students to do the following:

- to develop a range of broad work-related competencies and deepen their understanding in general areas of knowledge
- to develop flexible strategies for knowledge acquisition and enhancement in varied contexts
- to prepare for effective participation in the changing world of work
- to foster attitudes and habits of mind that allow them to become true lifelong learners willing to consider new perspectives
- to get involved in learning that develops the capacity and will to make a positive difference.

Preparing for the future

It is important that the IBCC prepares students for flexibility and mobility in a range of employment opportunities as well as continuing lifelong learning. This means integrating broad, general learning areas as well as specific career-related content into a programme, developing a rigorous and challenging programme, and ensuring that participating schools work in close collaboration with higher education institutions and the working sector locally and internationally.

Providing a locally relevant education

As career-related education is subject to the pressures, priorities and requirements of diverse national and local economic contexts, it is important to achieve an appropriate balance between prescription of common programme elements, national or local requirements and school or student choice.

The IBCC is based on the following qualities.

- A balance of breadth and depth of learning.
- A coherent mix of required elements and school or student options.
- Flexibility of choice.
- Localization that recognises locally defined career-related programmes, locally defined language acquisition courses and locally defined pathways for students.
- Partnerships between schools and local universities, colleges and employers.
- A strong emphasis on learning that fosters intercultural understanding.
- The development of critical thinking, inquiry and research skills.
- An exploration of human endeavour through the school-based experience and work-based learning activities.
- Strong student involvement in self-assessment and reflection.
- A sustained experience of community involvement and service.
- Rigorous assessment through a blend of external as well as internal assessment procedures.
- Varied, dynamic pedagogy, supported by appropriate teacher professional development.

Aims of the IB career-related education framework

The development of this career-related education framework meets one of the goals of the IB's strategic plan, to develop a more diverse, inclusive IB community by enabling access to an IB education. Specifically within the context of this goal, the IBCC meets the strategic objective to provide additional ways of accessing an IB education through additional languages, pedagogical tools, expanded offerings and use of technology.

The IBCC will offer students engaged in career-related education the chance to partake in relevant elements of an IB education through a selection of Diploma Programme courses and a unique core. It is a chance to extend the benefits and value of an IB experience to a student cohort that has, so far, been unable to participate in the Diploma Programme.

This framework has four aims, each outlined below.

1. Providing a more inclusive provision for students aged 16–19

In its efforts to develop a coherent educational continuum for young people aged 3–19, the IB recognizes that there is currently a break in continuity between its two programme frameworks, the Primary Years Programme (for 3 to 11/12 year-olds) and the Middle Years Programme (for 11/12 to 16 year-olds), which are both inclusive, whole-school programmes, and the Diploma Programme, which is clearly academic in nature and design and, in some schools, selective. Working in collaboration with schools and local authorities to broaden access to the kinds of learning fostered in the Diploma Programme would potentially respond to the needs of many young people who would benefit from experiencing aspects of the Diploma Programme.

2. Responding to the IB's mission statement and extending the influence of international education

As an organization devoted to the development of international education worldwide, the IB adopted an ambitious mission statement in 2002:

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.

It is clear that these ambitious aims should inspire educational programmes for all students, not just those bound for academic university programmes. The strategic plan of the IB includes the development of new pathways to help more students to access an education that responds to these values. In its design and through its implementation in local contexts, the IBCC will foster the attributes of the IB learner profile, which defines learner outcomes for all IB programmes and IB qualifications.

3. Filling a gap in international education

While the Primary Years Programme and the Middle Years Programme meet the needs of the whole age group 3–16, the Diploma Programme is designed for the academically oriented students aged 16–19. However, even in developed countries, 30–70% of this age group opt for technical and vocational studies and are, therefore, beyond the current reach of international education. In a changing global economy, it is essential that students preparing directly for active employment develop a good understanding of world issues and contexts and an understanding of their responsibilities as global citizens.

Several areas of study and activity, such as business and administration, information technology and tourism, are often subject to relatively similar guidelines globally. Consequently, there are numerous internationally recognized diplomas at the polytechnic and university levels that have helped to standardize such studies. There is, however, no international qualification in such areas at the secondary level. While the IB will not develop such a range of courses itself, it wishes to explore ways of working in collaboration with agencies and schools in order to develop ways of internationalizing local career-related studies. Through its experience in developing programmes, assessment and teacher professional development internationally, the IB is well placed to create these contacts and connections to provide students with a truly international experience.

4. Reducing the “academic versus vocational” divide

Drawing on its experience and reputation in curriculum and assessment development through international collaboration, the IB can contribute positively to career-related education by challenging the perception (still prevalent in many parts of the world) that career-related education is of lesser status than academic studies. The IBCC has been designed to remove the distinction that exists in many educational systems around the world between knowledge skills and practical skills and, in so doing, maximize the effectiveness of young people as they continue their education, enter the workforce and take their place in society.

The IBCC strategic framework

Vision statement

The IB's vision of the IBCC is stated below.

By 2020, the IBCC will be acknowledged throughout the world as the leading international career-related qualification providing upper secondary school students with the academic, practical and social skills required by the 21st century learner.

Mission statement

The mission of the IBCC reflects the preamble of the IB learner profile, that being:

to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

Values statement

The values statement for the IBCC is the IB learner profile, which outlines the values we hope will be developed in IBCC students.

The nature of the IBCC

Components of the IBCC

The IBCC is a framework for which schools develop their own locally relevant programmes. The programme developed must include the following components.

IB Diploma Programme courses

Two Diploma Programme courses must be studied. The courses can come from any of the hexagon groups, 1 to 6, and can be studied at higher level or standard level or a combination of the two.

The Diploma Programme subjects (except for group 1 and group 2 languages) will be examined in English, French or Spanish.

Students will normally complete two Diploma Programme courses, but it is possible to study more than two courses.

The IBCC core

The **reflective project** is an extended piece of reflective work that can be submitted in a variety of formats. It emphasizes the ethical dilemma associated with a particular issue drawn from the student's career-related studies. The reflective project will be submitted at the end of the course and will be an opportunity for the student to draw together the various strands of the programme. It will be submitted in any of the IB working languages (English, French or Spanish).

The **approaches to learning** course emphasizes the development of transferable skills needed to operate successfully in society.

The **community and service** component encourages service learning and emphasizes the affective development of students and concentrates on the concepts of partnership and learning.

Language acquisition

Where one of the Diploma Programme subjects is not a group 2 language acquisition course, students must complete a course of study in language acquisition relevant to their background, needs and context. The format of the course is to be determined by the school but it must be studied concurrently with the other elements of the IBCC. Achievement levels are based on the common reference levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf). Students who choose a group 2 Diploma Programme language course automatically satisfy this requirement.

Career-related course of study

The IBCC has been designed to support and complement career-related courses of study. It is the school's responsibility to determine the appropriate career-related course(s), however, the nature of the career-related course(s) will be examined carefully by the IB during the authorization process.

Assessment of the IBCC

There will be a combination of direct IB assessment of student learning and of internal assessment performed by the schools themselves.

- The chosen Diploma Programme courses will be assessed in the usual way by the IB, combining external and internal assessment.

- Within the core, approaches to learning and community and service will be assessed and authenticated by the school. The reflective project will be internally assessed but externally moderated by the IB.
- Language competence will be assessed and authenticated by the school.
- The career-related course is assessed/validated by an external authority, **not** the IB.

Certification

If students successfully complete their course of study, they will receive the Career-related Certificate of the International Baccalaureate as well as a statement of results.

Authorization

The IBCC will follow the stages of authorization common to all IB programmes. The following steps apply to institutions wishing to become authorized IBCC schools.

- A consideration phase in which schools will study the relevant IBCC documents and decide whether to implement the IBCC. During this phase, which is carried out by the school on its own, the school will complete a School Information Form to express interest in the IBCC.
- Submission of application for candidacy to request candidate status. If and when the IB grants candidate status, schools will take all the measures necessary to meet the requirements for authorization. They will receive the support of an approved IB consultant and access to the online curriculum centre (OCC) for staff involved in the IBCC.
- Submission of application for authorization to formally request authorization.
- A verification visit to ascertain the preparedness of the school to offer the IBCC.
- IB decision on authorization.

Evaluation

The processes of IBCC evaluation will mirror those of other IB programmes, and will be based on the IBCC standards and practices.

Evaluation will be undertaken according to global processes designed by the IB and implemented by the global centres. As with programme evaluation in all IB programmes, IBCC evaluation will include a self-study on the part of the school community (and where applicable, its partner school), and a report issued by the IB with feedback on the evaluation process carried out by the school. The process will also include the monitoring of the approaches to learning course, the community and service programme and the language courses on offer.

Cooperation among participating schools and organizations

Schools and organizations participating in career-related education programmes in cooperation with the IB will be encouraged to exchange ideas and good practice in the development and delivery of their programmes and to promote student exchanges, either face to face or electronically, to enhance international understanding.

A forum has been established on the OCC, where teachers are able to post resources, ideas for school-specific courses and projects, and engage in discussions and cooperative work.

Conclusion

The IBCC clearly constitutes an opportunity for the IB to explore ways of developing new approaches to reach a large number of young people (and potentially a number of adults) which has not so far been developed by the organization. The approach of blending local and international elements is seen as the best solution to allow local economic, cultural and educational choices to be made according to the local context. At the same time, such a flexible framework will create a dynamic network of internationally minded schools sharing a vocabulary and educational aims for lifelong learning and responsible citizenship, collaborating to develop a truly international educational experience for their students.

The IB continues to review and develop its programmes to make them fit for purpose for 21st century learners. Human endeavour and particularly the world of work are changing realities that students must explore in order to develop a “range of broad employment-related competencies which ... provide the basis for (1) effective participation in emerging forms of work and work organizations; (2) access to a range of education and training pathways, both initially and subsequent to commencing employment; (3) improved flexibility and mobility in employment; and (4) effective participation in adult life generally” (Munro 2003). The classic distinction between academic preparation for university and more career-related study is likely to become increasingly blurred and irrelevant. The IBCC has been developed with the specific goal of combining academic skills with practical skills. Such a combination, set in an international context, provides students with a well-rounded educational experience and an opportunity to experience an IB education while preparing them effectively for life beyond secondary education.

References

Munro, J. 2003. *Constructing a Core Curriculum for Vocational Education in an IB Context*, Unpublished conference paper.

Council of Europe. 2001. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR)*, Cambridge, UK. Cambridge University Press.
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf