

# IB Skara C.A.S.HANDBOOK

Creativity, Action & Service

The International Baccalaureate Diploma

For students graduating in 2014 and thereafter

## Innehåll

1. Introduction to CAS .....	3
2. Why CAS? .....	3
3. The three strands of CAS explained .....	3
4. What do I need to do to complete the CAS requirements?.....	4
5. What are the eight learning outcomes?.....	5
6. CAS Procedure explained in 10 easy steps.....	7
7. Reflections in CAS.....	7
8. Examples of good reflections .....	9
9. Ideas for CAS activities/projects.....	9
10. Good CAS and NO CAS.....	10
11. What's the difference between a CAS activity and a CAS project?.....	11
12. CAS Deadlines.....	11
13. Consequences for not complying with CAS requirements.....	11

## **1. Introduction to CAS**

CAS is an acronym for CREATIVITY, ACTION and SERVICE, and the program encourages you to discover more about yourself, what excites you, what upsets you, what your passions are and how you can develop those passions and turn them into action. Action to change the things you don't like and action to grow. Although commitment is a major element of the program, CAS is not about counting hours! What's truly important, and what you will see happen, is that it has the potential to open your mind, to help you learn, enjoy, contribute, create, take risks, and act responsibly and ethically. In CAS, the emphasis is on learning by doing real tasks that have real consequences and then reflecting on those experiences over time. The most meaningful CAS experience comes from spending time with others to build relationships and develop the self-worth of both server and served.

## **2. Why CAS?**

Of course, you need to complete the CAS requirement in order to graduate with an IB Diploma but if you only look at CAS in this way, you are limiting yourself. As privileged citizens of wealthy nations, it is our responsibility to share resources and lead by example. Of course, there are loads of other reasons for challenging yourself, like learning new skills and serving your community. One of the best reasons to volunteer is that you get the opportunity to engage in something that you're passionate about. Volunteering through different programs means devoting yourself to a cause that's close to your heart while spreading that passion to others. Another great reason to be involved in your community is that it can benefit a professional resume, and community service work is increasingly important to university and job applicants. Last but not least, CAS is at the core of the IB Diploma, because it provides a counter balance to the demands of your academic courses by allotting time for sports and creative endeavors in your life.

The focus is on developing you!

## **3. The three strands of CAS explained**

**CREATIVITY.** According to the IB guidelines, CREATIVITY refers to “arts, and other experiences that involve creative thinking.”

Start a newspaper, make a film, choreograph a dance, direct or act in a theatre piece, learn an instrument, study a new language, participate in a musical production, (or a choir, orchestra or band), design coaching sessions, or teach younger students.

*Remember that all your activities should have a very clear goal or outcome.* Your CAS activity should push your boundaries and not just be a continuation of something that you have always done. For example, if you have been playing the guitar for the past five years, you could turn this into a CAS activity by deciding to learn a very difficult piece or trying a new style of playing that you've never played before. You could take part in a

performance aimed at raising funds for a charity or give a presentation about guitar playing to younger students.

**ACTION** refers to “physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle, complementing academic work elsewhere in the Diploma Programme.”

Participate in sports, dance, personal training, distance running and swimming events, go on an expedition, do some extreme sports like skydiving, surfing, water and snow skiing and much, much more.

Again, you should set yourself a very clear, well-defined objective that you aim to achieve. If your sport has always been individual, you could try a team game. If you have gained certain skills, you could extend them into a CAS activity by coaching younger students and passing your knowledge on to others.

**SERVICE** refers “an unpaid and voluntary exchange that has a learning benefit for the student. The rights, dignity and autonomy of all those involved are respected.”

Serve your community by getting involved with an NGO<sup>1</sup>, local or global community organization, or a social entrepreneurship project. The focus here is on doing things with others, and not only for others. As always, keep a clear goal of what it is that you aim to achieve through your service activity/project.

#### **4. What do I need to do to complete the CAS requirements?**

There are eight learning outcomes in the CAS programme.

You can think of these as the assessment criteria by which your participation will be evaluated. You should achieve all of them periodically (not just once) over your two years in the Diploma Programme. With each activity or project you do, you should achieve at least three of them.

It is very possible that you will achieve more than three, and sometimes, depending on the activity, you may achieve all. Yes, you will achieve the same ones with different activities, and that's a good thing. Your goal is to contribute to a well- rounded, balanced CAS programme; this means including a variety of activities that cover the three areas (CREATIVITY, ACTION, and SERVICE).

The minimum amount of CAS activity required by the IB is 150 hours. Each activity should last for at least two months, which is about 10 hours. This means that you have to spend 2 to 3 hours each week on CAS since there are three strands. Remember though, that the program does not want you to focus on counting hours, so don't stress about having an exactly equal amount of time for creativity, action and service. If you are thinking about how best to achieve the learning outcomes when planning and carrying out your activities, you will have a balanced CAS programme.

The IB expects you to be involved in a CAS activity or project continually through the eighteen month period of the course. Obviously, there will be times when you are busy studying for your exams, and won't be able to devote quite as much time to CAS. This is why planning for CAS and managing your time wisely is so important.

How will you be assessed? The following evidence will be used to determine if you have met the eight learning outcomes:

-Your reflections

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<sup>1</sup> Non-Governmental organisation eg Amnesty, The red Cross

- The four interviews you will have with your CAS Coordinator or advisor throughout the program
- The written feedback from your supervisors

## 5. What are the eight learning outcomes?

All of your CAS activities must include at least three of the eight outcomes listed below. Please read the outcomes carefully and decide which ones apply to the project/activity you would like to start. Over the course of the two years of your IB Diploma, all eight outcomes must be present for you 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.

Always refer to the outcomes and give specific examples of how you are achieving your outcomes when you write your mid activity or final reflections.

### 1. Increase awareness of strengths and areas for growth

Your projects and activities should give you the chance to increase your awareness of your personal strengths and areas for growth. Think about what your strengths are. Are you a good communicator, organizer, learner or leader? Are you a positive person, a people lover, an idealist, an intellect? Do you love a good challenge? Think about what you're not so comfortable with. Perhaps you are someone who loves to take direction from others, stay in the background or work alone. Think of how your CAS activity is changing your perception of yourself and how others see you growing in your role.

### 2. Undertake new challenges

Your CAS activity should always be something which is a new challenge for you. This doesn't mean that you must do something you don't like or are not interested in. It means that you should think about what you are passionate about, what interests you, what you are already doing and take it to the next level. Are you already involved in music, sports or art? Do something different with your talent. How can you share it with others instead of just learning/playing for yourself? Have you always wanted to learn to do something or get a taste of what something is about? Do it! Don't worry about not being good enough or not having experienced it before. **Take a risk.**

### 3. Plan and initiate activities

What you choose to do for CAS should give you the opportunity to plan and initiate all or part of the activity or project. What role do you play in making your activity actually happen? What decisions will you make? How exactly are you going to make it happen? Is everything already decided and done for you or will you need to plan and execute that plan?

### 4. Work collaboratively with others

You should be working collaboratively. Be part of a team. Work with others! Responsiveness and capacity are increased by working as a group. Working with others also helps you gain access to additional resources that can help you in your endeavors. Increased capacity and expertise means that more can be achieved. Think about how your actions, attitudes and decisions will affect the whole group you are working with;

plan and act accordingly. A team effort means better decision making and better understanding of the bigger picture.

#### 5. Show commitment and perseverance

Always show commitment and always persevere. Never give up without exploring all possible avenues towards the success of a project or activity! Remember that other people will often be relying on you, and if you bail out, you are letting them down and potentially increasing other people's workload if you are part of a team. That's not what CAS is about. If your project supervisors determine that you are not honoring your commitment, you will not achieve this outcome and may even be asked to discontinue the activity.

#### 6. Engage with issues of global importance

Do something that has an international focus. This does not mean you have to jump on a plane and head to a developing nation. There are many local possibilities with global significance. **THINK GLOBALLY AND ACT LOCALLY!** What can you do here in Sweden that will have implications for people everywhere? What can you do for our environment? Here are some topics to get you thinking:

Human rights, immigration and refugees, animal rights and protection, food security, hunger and nutrition, global warming, public health disparities, the rights and status of women and children, economic growth and sustainability, over-population, emergency relief after natural disasters, the consequences of war, political and civil unrest, communication, broadcasting and social media, international business, sports, racial tensions and discrimination, education and the lack thereof, international tourism, cultural isolation and integration... this list is endless!

#### 7. Consider ethical implication

Do something that gives you the opportunity to think about the ethical implications of your actions. We all may intuitively "know" what the right thing to do is, but knowing how to do it, or being able to think through long-term consequences are challenging and often stop us from action. What does it mean to be morally autonomous? How are your actions perceived by others? What are the short and long term effects of your actions: on yourself, on the belief of an individual / a group / an entire community. Keep in mind social and economic status, health status, sustainability, freedom, safety, legal status, living standards and quality of life. What you do could be highly beneficial or have negative consequences. Consider these consequences of the activities you engage in.

#### 8. Develop new skills

Learn new skills. Choose an activity or project that gives you the opportunity to experience and learn new things. Get out of your comfort zone. Try something totally different and unexpected. Meet new people and learn from them. Think about how you can do the "same old thing" in a totally new and different way, thus creating a new experience with something you already know. Don't let fear of the unknown stop you from learning!

## 6. CAS Procedure explained in 10 easy steps

Here are the practical steps you need to take in order to start and finish a CAS activity/project.

1. Identify what you are passionate about and generate an idea for a CAS activity/project (see the section on ideas if you are not sure what to do).
2. Fill in a pre-CAS form in your portfolio. You find it at the bottom of each tab.
3. Talk to your CAS-adviser
4. Find a supervisor for your CAS activity.
5. Actively engage in the activity and remember to stay with it and be committed!
6. Make sure that each week fill in the hours in your portfolio.
7. Fill in a mid activity reflection if your activity/project lasts more than two months.
8. Write a final reflection two weeks after completing your CAS activity/project (see Section 7 for more information about what a reflection should look like).

## 7. Reflections in CAS

Reflection is what makes the project/activity a true learning experience, and this is why it is essential that you reflect on your activities. It is a critical part of the experiential learning cycle, which involves four stages: planning, acting, observing and reflecting.



There are two types of reflections: mid activity reflections and final reflections. If your activity lasts for more than two months, you need to include both a mid activity and a

final reflection. If your activity is shorter than two months, you only need to include the final reflection.

You should upload your mid activity reflection when you are approximately in the middle of your activity.

The final reflection should be written within two weeks of completing your CAS activity.

Both mid activity and final reflections must:

- explain whether you are on the right track to achieving your goal (mid activity) or have achieved your goal (final)
- show your growth and learning
- prove how you are meeting/have met the outcomes and give very specific examples
- be well-written in the form of an extended paragraph and be as error-free as possible

Where appropriate your reflections should include visual evidence in the form of photos, videos, lesson plans, sign-up forms, certificates of completion, etc.

### Mid-activity reflection

Here are the guiding questions for a mid activity reflection. **Use these as a guide in order to structure your paragraph, do not simply answer them in short sentences.**

Please refer to the Eight Learning Outcomes in order to help you focus your reflection.

- How close are you to reaching your goals? What is left to achieve?
- Look back at your CAS outcomes and comment on how you are meeting them. Give specific examples.
- Do any of your outcomes need to be amended in order to reach your goal?
- What difficulties are you facing?
- What have you and/or others gained from this activity?
- How valuable do you perceive this project to be for you and others?
- Do you need any support from your supervisor/CAS Coordinator in order to help you meet the challenges? If so, please comment.

### Final reflection

Here are the guiding questions for a final reflection. Use these as a guide in order to structure your paragraph, do not simply answer them in short sentences. Please refer to the Eight Learning Outcomes in order to help you focus your reflection.

- What were your goals for this CAS activity? Did you reach them?
- What did you have to change during this activity?
- Look back at your CAS outcomes . Which ones did you meet? Provide specific examples which clearly demonstrate how you have met these outcomes.
- What have you learned about yourself as a person as a result of this activity? Has it in any way changed yourself? Explain.
- If you could do this activity again, what would you do differently?
- How can you apply what has been learnt to new situations in the future?

### Format of your reflection

Your reflection can be a written statement but you are encouraged to branch out and make your reflection more creative, meaning that it can take any of the following forms:

- a documentary/movie
- a blog or a podcast
- a piece of art (a painting, a collage, graphic novel style art) that's scanned or photographed with a comment explaining it

- your photos with comments
- a piece of music or a poem
- your own creative expression

## 8. Examples of good reflections

## 9. Ideas for CAS activities/projects

Your activity choices should reflect your personal interests and should be fun. CAS should give you a learning opportunity that is a counter balance to the demands of your academic program.

Below are some ideas to get you started.

The following activities have been divided into the three strands of CAS although some activities may simultaneously contain two or even three of the CAS strands. Where appropriate the name of the teacher responsible for the activity has been added in brackets. You are encouraged to contact that teacher either personally or via email if you are interested in participating in a given activity. For more information on the other activities, please contact me directly. My email address is [maurac@bfischool.org](mailto:maurac@bfischool.org). My office hours are posted on the door to my office which is in room 3406. Please come at those times only or pop in if you see that my door is open.

### Creativity

- Performing or writing A One Act Play
- Math Club and competition
- Form an Art group
- Model United Nations

### Action

- Play a team sport – make sure you set yourself a challenging goal
- Coach a team of young students

### Service

- Charity group
- SFI/IM
- Reading the paper to an elderly



## 10. Good CAS and NO CAS

It isn't CAS if

- It's a repetitive and menial task such as taking out the garbage, serving coffee to the homeless, babysitting a child, or shelving books
- It's a part of religious, family or military duty
- It's a part of your IB curriculum or an IB summer course
- It's an internship that only benefits you
- It's harmful to others or the environment
- You receive payment for it

Good CAS / No CAS

Hopefully, the following scenarios will help you decide if your planned activity is considered as CAS.

- My friend and I decide to take a quilting class offered by a local shop... when we finish making our quilt, we plan to donate it to a homeless shelter. We might even teach others to quilt! GOOD CAS
- I was doing some community service in grade 10 last year. I think I'll just continue doing what I did for community service. NO CAS
- I will teach my neighbor to play the piano and only charge 5 euros an hour. NO CAS
- I plan to do the shopping, cleaning and ironing for my mom for a whole year! NO CAS
- I think I'll tell my dad's boss that I'll work for free for a month so I can get CAS credit. NO CAS
- There's an elderly woman who lives in my neighborhood, she seems kind of lonely. Perhaps I'll go around to visit every Monday after school...drink tea and talk with her. GOOD CAS
- I have done some cool sketches for my IB Art Portfolio. I'll just use those. NO CAS
- I know an old man who wants to learn how to use a computer so he can communicate with his grandchildren who live overseas. I plan to teach him. GOOD CAS
- I am going to work with the Kindergarten teacher and help her plan and choreograph the Kindergarten Halloween dance. GOOD CAS

- I take the bin out for my neighbor every week. NO CAS
- I want to get my driver's license. NO CAS
- I have noticed that nobody empties the recycling bins at school. That can be my job. NO CAS
- I plan to be involved in the running and managing of the recycling program at school. GOOD CAS

• I love beautiful gardens and want to learn more about specific plants and environments. I plan to spend time working at the botanical gardens giving English language tours. GOOD CAS

• My friends at school are helping shelve books in the library for community service hours. I want to do that as well. NO CAS

• I'm going to work in my dad's factory for free. NO CAS

If you are not sure if your idea for CAS will meet the criteria, please contact the CAS Coordinator or your CAS Advisor before filling out the pre-CAS document. This will save you time in the long run.

## 11. What's the difference between a CAS activity and a CAS project?

The IB requires you to complete at least one CAS project during the eighteen month period of the Diploma Program.

A project differs from an activity in that:

- It must be initiated, planned and organized by you
- It must at least one month long (this includes the planning stage, i.e. you might spend a month planning and organizing a one day event)

Examples of CAS projects:

- Start a school newspaper
- Write a play or a piece of music that will be performed publicly
- Organize a Food/Clothes Drive
- Organize an awareness campaign for an environmental/social issue
- Choreograph a dance
- Design a website for an environmental/social cause
- Write a novel or book of poetry
- Start an after-school club
- Design a series of lessons to teach someone something
- Organize and run an MUN club

## 12. CAS Deadlines

You find the CAS deadlines in the Test calendar. CAS must be finished in February the third year

## 13. Consequences for not complying with CAS requirements

Failure to complete the CAS program ultimately means that you will not receive your IB Diploma.

### 14. Failure to fill in the CAS portfolio

1. Exam warning and meeting with coordinator

2. Exam warning and meeting with principal with parents