

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program?

It is a four-year course of study that results in a high school diploma that is recognized for its academic rigor throughout the world. Its course offerings are centered in the following areas: English, second language, social sciences, laboratory sciences, mathematics, and the fine arts. In order to earn an IB Diploma, students must successfully demonstrate mastery in each of these subjects as seniors through external and internal assessments. The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program is an internationally respected program that sets rigorous academic standards, world-wide. Ninth and tenth graders are enrolled in a two-year program to prepare them for graduation from the IB Diploma Program, offered their junior and senior years. The IB curricula includes the unique student challenges such as mandatory hours in Creativity, Action and Service (CAS), the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course, and an extensive capstone research project, the Extended Essay. Students will choose between an array of IB Standard and Higher Level Courses in each of the core curricular areas. Students earn an IB Diploma by completing at least six examinations in their junior and senior years covering each of the subject groups and achieving 24 IB Marks including the Extended Essay and the TOK assessment. The IB assessments, like Advanced Placement (AP), require a registration and testing fee paid by the student.

The Program's philosophy centers on providing its students with the skills needed to compete both intellectually and socially in any learning or work environment, anywhere in the world. UAIS learners will engage in active inquiry toward becoming knowledgeable thinkers, effective communicators, principled and open-minded students and members of our society and caring citizens of the world. As learners, UAIS students will be conscientious risk-takers seeking answers where others might accept conclusions, who look for balance in all aspects of physical, emotional and academic life and are reflective of the journey on which they have embarked in life and in education. UAIS students should demand the most rigorous of course requirements from their teachers and themselves. Students should expect to spend 2 – 3 hours on homework every night and should expect to hold themselves to the highest standards of academic excellence and personal integrity. Their teachers will expect no less. Studies show that students exiting this program are ready to excel in a post-secondary academic environment.

Is there college recognition?

Yes. According to the International Baccalaureate Key Indicators 2009, 2,765 universities, worldwide, have published IB recognition policies. Of those, 2,103 are located in North America. Almost all schools recognize IB Higher Level (HL) courses for college credit and some offer credit for Standard Level (SL) as well. Most HL IB courses will earn a student between 4 – 8 credits depending on their final marks. Most universities recognize a mark of 4 or higher (the IB scale is 7 points). Students at the Academy will also have access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses as well. Information can be found at www.ibo.org/recognition.

How does an 8th grade student apply to the IB program and is there specific enrollment criteria?

The Utica Academy for International Studies accepts applications from eighth graders in December - January each school year. Initially, 100 students will be accepted into the ninth grade; the same number of students will be enrolled for the subsequent three years until 400 students are enrolled in the four-year program.

The application process will include: taking and passing a series of admissions assessments (math, writing and Socratic discussion), having successfully completed Algebra I, and having maintained a

cumulative 3.0 grade point average as of the 1st semester of 8th grade. Should more students seek enrollment than there is space available, the district will conduct a lottery among those qualified applicants.

Can 9th and 10th grade students apply?

Yes. Students applying to be sophomores may do so if space is available. This application is on a student-by-student basis and requires an evaluation of the students current standing, academic rigor, minimum GPA, and ability to do additional work necessary to be prepared to begin the Academy the following year.

Student applying to be juniors must either a.) apply from an IB World School or must be seeking entrance after maintaining a minimum 3.0 GPA in a highly rigorous AP, IB or honors curriculum. Any such assessment will be made on a case-by-case basis. And, while the Diploma Program itself is the same from school to school, the subject choices available to students will vary. Timelines and deadlines for a program's central elements - Extended Essay, Theory of Knowledge (TOK), CAS (Creativity-Action-Service) - usually vary, also.

Students gaining entrance after their Freshman year who are not entering from another IB Diploma Program are exceedingly rare.

Where is the program located?

The Academy is housed with Heritage Junior High School at 37400 Dodge Park Road, Sterling Heights MI, 48312.

What type of schedule will I have at the UAIS?

The UAIS uses a 6 hour day organized in rotating block that has three instructional courses per day on rotating days. See below:

U.A.I.S. (International Baccalaureate Program) Daily Schedule uses block scheduling (alternating A and B days which are different classes)

1 st Block (A/B Day)	7:20 - 8:50
2 nd Block (A/B Day)	8:56 - 10:57
UAIS A Lunch	10:01 - 10:29
UAIS B Lunch	10:29 - 10:57
3 rd Block (A/B Day)	11:03 – 12:34
4 th Block (A/B Day)	12:40 – 2:11

Will transportation be provided?

Transportation is currently provided for students with district residency in two ways. For Stevenson HS students, transportation will be from door-to-school. Students will utilize Stevenson HS bus stops and transfer with those students being dropped off at Stevenson. Non-Stevenson students will utilize regional pick-up locations in the AM. Parents are responsible for transporting students to these regional stops. After school, students will be shuttled to their home junior high school and then take a bus home to their local stop. For more information see the Transportation and Parking page. Transportation will be provided to facilitate sports/extra-curricular participation.

How much will enrollment to the Academy cost?

There is no cost for enrollment. Payment of International Baccalaureate testing fees in 11th and 12th grades totaling approximately \$700.00 is a parental responsibility.*

Is this Academy related to the county program housed at Chippewa Valley Schools?

No. The Utica International Baccalaureate Diploma Program is part of the district's educational partnership with Armada Area Schools and Mount Clemens Community Schools. The partnership, known as the Alliance for Academic Excellence, is intended to expand learning opportunities for students enrolled in the three school districts. As part of the partnership, Armada and Mount Clemens students will be able to apply for enrollment to the Academy.

I'm satisfied with the program offered at my child's current school. Why should I pursue the Academy offering?

The Diploma Program is a comprehensive and balanced 2 year curriculum and assessment system that requires students to study courses across all disciplines. Through careful subject selection, students may tailor their course of studies to meet their needs. Regardless of the subject selection, all students will explore the connections between the six major subject areas, will study each subject through an international perspective, will reflect critically on what it means to be a 'knower', will pursue one subject in great detail through independent research, and will have an opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in local and community outreach.

Assessment of student achievement happens in a variety of ways throughout the course of the two-year program. It includes assessment of student work both by outside examiners, as well as the students' own teachers. All assessment undergoes careful review or moderation to ensure that a common, international standard is applied equally to the work of students around the world. Each subject area is also in a 5 year cycle of renewal, guaranteeing the most relevant, and contemporary high school curriculum anywhere in the world.

For these reasons, the IB Diploma is recognized as a superior education, preparing students to succeed at post-secondary institutions.

The IB Program sounds like a lot of extra work. What are the advantages of enrolling in the IB Program?

Students with IB Diplomas, who now attend universities, report that their involvement with IB has given them the tools needed to succeed at university and to make the most of their post-secondary education. In particular, students comment on their sense of preparedness, their self-confidence, their research skills, their ability to manage their time, and their willingness to be actively engaged in their own learning. Even more importantly, they have developed a sense of the world around them, their responsibility to it, and the skills with which to embrace the complexities of life. The IBO often employs a variety of phrases to describe these traits and abilities: "learning how to learn", "life-long learners", "critical and compassionate thinkers", and, "informed participants in local and world affairs".

What preparation do students need in order to succeed in the IB Diploma Program?

Students can prepare for the IB Diploma Program in a couple of ways: a) by succeeding the Academy's 9th and 10th grade pre-IB curriculum which is designed to assist students in developing a solid background for success in the IB subjects (grades 9 & 10), or, b) by demonstrating a high level of success in honors level classes (grades 9 and/or 10) that could translate to achievement in the IB subjects (and transferring into the IB Program). (Although only the last two years of high school (grades 11 & 12)

make up the actual IB Diploma Program, schools often refer to the entire 3 or 4 year sequence -pre-IB plus IB years- as the "Diploma Program".)

How many IB exams are there, and when do students take them?

A student will take six IB exams, including one literature course, one foreign language, one social science, one experimental science, one math, and one arts course. The arts course can be replaced by a second social science, a second experimental science, social science, or a third language. Of the six exams, three are taken at the standard level (after a minimum of 150 teaching hours), and three taken at the higher level (after a minimum of 240 teaching hours). A student, with permission from the Diploma Program Coordinator, may take 4 HL examinations.

IB students are expected to take their examinations at the conclusion of the 2 year Diploma Program. However, the IBO permits students to take one or two standard level examinations at the end of junior year, upon the recommendation of the school's IB Diploma Program Coordinator. Higher level exams can only be taken at the end of the senior year.

All students enrolled in the UAIS are expected to be Full Diploma Candidates who have completed their Extended Essay (EE), Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) Project, Theory of Knowledge (ToK) Essay, and their six subject examinations. Subject examination fees are the responsibility of the parent and student. The 2012 fees are \$745.

Can an IB exam be taken without having taken the course?

No. Part of the student's final grade comes from work done in the classroom.

What if, after enrolling in the IB Diploma Program, my child wants to leave and return to his home school?

As a student of the Utica Community Schools, your student will be welcomed back into the regular school program, with increased knowledge and possessing a background of academic rigor and challenge.

Does the IB Diploma satisfy the State of Michigan graduation requirements?

All UAIS students are considered Full Diploma Candidates (FDC) which means they are taking at least six IB courses in their junior and senior years and will be completing the CAS, Extended Essay and Theory of Knowledge components. These FDC students automatically meet and exceed the State of Michigan Merit Curriculum as long as they are taking a fourth year of mathematics during their senior year.

What is the "Extended Essay"?

The Extended Essay is a 4,000 word piece of original research conducted by each IB Diploma candidate. It is completed between second semester of junior year and first semester of senior year. The student researches and writes on a topic of his/her choosing, and has an Extended Essay Advisor, as well as a Faculty Coach to help with the essay.

What is "Theory of Knowledge"?

Theory of Knowledge, or TOK, is a seminar-type course that explores the linkages between subject areas (courses). It is part existential, philosophical, psychological and metaphysical. It, also, is taken between second semester junior year and first semester senior year. Students submit a presentation-tape and reflective paper, in order to successfully complete the course.

What is "CAS"?

CAS stands for Creativity-Action-Service. In order to successfully complete the IB Diploma Program, each student must have documented 150 hours of after-school activities (during junior & senior year) that are evenly split among creative, action, and service oriented endeavors. Every student has a CAS Advisor, and reflects on learning from the endeavors. (During pre-IB (grades 9 & 10) 50 hours must also be completed.)

Do all students who attempt the IB Program earn the IB Diploma?

No. According to the IB Key Indicators 2009 document, in 2009, of the 45,150 Full Diploma Candidates in the world taking May exams, 78.65% earned an IB Diploma. In 2005, that number was 27,971 of which 81.4% earned the diploma.

What if my student does not earn the full IB Diploma?

A student who is a Full Diploma Candidate (FDC) is considered to have completed one of the most rigorous high school curriculums available. One of the first selections on the Common Application and many university/college applications is how many IB or AP courses does your school offer, and how many did your student take. Secondly, it asks, "Is this student an IB Diploma Candidate". Universities, from locally to nationally and internationally recognized institutions recognize this curriculum and the FDC as being amongst the most rigorous, valid, and reliable predictors of college success.

Students not achieving the IB Diploma will still earn subject certificates. Those certificates work like AP tests earning students college credit and course recognition based on college course equivalencies.

How are the students who do not earn the IB Diploma awarded?

Students are awarded certificates for the examinations successfully completed, as well as a Utica Community Schools Diploma.

How can I get more information about the Academy and the IB Diploma Program?

Information will be available at our website <http://uais.uticak12.org>, by calling the Academy offices at 586.797.3100, or by Emailing Mr. Lietz at Thomas.Lietz@uticak12.org or Mr. Layson at Christopher.Layson@uticak12.org.