






**EF ACADEMY**

# IB Diploma Handbook

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OXFORD

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# Introduction to the IB Diploma Programme

Welcome to the IB Diploma Programme at **EF Academy Oxford**.

The International Baccalaureate Diploma is one of the world's most respected academic qualifications — not only for the depth and breadth of knowledge it requires, but for the personal growth, independence, and global perspective it fosters in every student.

At EF Academy Oxford, we are proud to offer the IB Diploma in a diverse and inclusive international environment. You will be challenged, supported, and encouraged to think critically about the world and your place in it. This handbook will introduce you to the core components of the programme, outline the expectations ahead, and signpost the people here to support your success.

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## A Message from the Head of School

**Welcome to the IB Diploma programme. You are embarking on a tremendously worthwhile educational adventure.**

The IB Diploma is highly valued by the world's best universities for its all-round academic challenge. IB students study three subjects in depth and three for breadth across a range of academic competencies. They develop their independent-mindedness, global citizenship, and pre-university skills not only across their chosen subjects, but also through the “core”: Theory of Knowledge (TOK), the Extended Essay (EE), and Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS).

This guide is designed to give you detailed information on the IB Diploma programme at EF Academy Oxford, as well as the academic Pathways to Success which will help you to achieve the best possible results. If you have any questions, please contact the IB Coordinator, Dr Alexandra Hendriok, or myself.

All your teachers on the IB Diploma programme, together with the University Guidance Director, Dr Mark Zumbuhl, are here to support you in your studies and in the decisions that you need to make in order to achieve your university ambitions.

**Mark Fletcher-Single**  
*Head of School*

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## **A Message from the IB Diploma Coordinator**

**Welcome to your IB Diploma Programme at EF Academy Oxford — your journey begins here.**

Think of these next two years as an adventure: a journey of discovery, challenge, and growth. Along the way, you'll explore new ideas, sharpen your thinking, and develop skills that will serve you far beyond the classroom. There may be a few steep climbs, but you won't be travelling alone.

Here at EF Academy, you're supported by a team of experienced and dedicated teachers who are ready to guide you through the IB's academic challenges. You will also be assigned a personal tutor — a subject specialist from your university pathway — who will meet with you regularly to support both your academic progress and wellbeing. You'll also work closely with a dedicated Pathway Manager who will help you develop your study techniques and academic habits. And you'll benefit from the expert guidance of our university advisor, Dr Mark Zumbuhl, who will help you plan confidently for the next stage of your journey.

As someone who has taught in a variety of international and national schools — including in Kenya, Algeria, Israel, Germany, Italy, Belgium, and the UK — I've seen a wide range of educational systems. From that experience, I can confidently say that the IB stands out. It offers the best preparation I know for both university and life: not only strong academics, but also independence, critical thinking, and a global perspective.

And as a parent of three children in education myself, I understand just how important this time is. These two years will ask a lot of you — but they will also shape you in meaningful ways. And when things get tough (and they sometimes will), we'll be here to support you — whether that means a practical solution, a bit of perspective, or just someone to listen.

So, take a deep breath, step forward, and embrace the journey. You're going to do great things — and we're excited to walk this path with you.

**Dr Alexandra Hendriok**  
*IB Diploma Programme Coordinator*

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## Getting Started with the IB: What to Expect in Your First Term

Your first term as an IB Diploma student is all about finding your rhythm — getting to know your subjects, your teachers, your support network, and the expectations of the programme.

For some of you, the IB will feel familiar. For others, it may be a completely new way of learning. Either way, we'll guide you through the transition and make sure you're supported, challenged, and set up to succeed.

The IB is about more than just managing subjects — it's about developing good habits, reflecting on how you learn, and engaging with ideas that matter. That process begins from day one.

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### What Happens in Term 1

The first half term is a time of transition — but also of momentum. You'll cover a lot in a short space of time. Here's what to expect:

- **Subject Confirmations**  
You'll finalise your subject choices and levels (Higher Level or Standard Level) following baseline assessments and discussions with your subject teachers, Academic Tutor, Pathway Manager, and the IB Coordinator.
- **IB Core Introductions**  
You'll be introduced to the three Core components of the IB:
  - **Theory of Knowledge (TOK):** exploring how we know what we know
  - **Extended Essay (EE):** a 4,000-word independent research project
  - **Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS):** personal growth through experiences beyond the classroom
- **Academic Tutor Support**  
You'll be assigned an Academic Tutor — a subject specialist from your university pathway — who will meet with you regularly to monitor your academic progress, discuss your wellbeing, and support your development across the programme.
- **Pathway Support**  
You'll also attend pathway sessions, which focus on building effective study skills, managing workload, and understanding what's required for your chosen academic path.
- **Assessment Grades (AGs)**  
Your first formal assessments will take place this term, helping you understand what's expected at IB level and where you may need to focus.
- **Effort Grades (EGs)**  
Every few weeks, you'll receive an effort grade from each teacher — a helpful measure of your consistency, engagement, and independence.
- **Academic Reports**  
At the end of the term, you'll receive your first Academic Report. This includes subject feedback, effort and assessment grades, and a written comment from your Academic Tutor.

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### Settling In — With Support

Starting the IB can feel intense. You're learning how to manage six subjects, keep up with internal deadlines, and balance academic, social, and personal expectations.

At EF Academy Oxford, we support you through:

- Regular check-ins with your **Academic Tutor**
  - Guidance from your **Pathway Manager**
  - **Booster sessions** in subjects where further support is needed
  - **Supervised Study**, where effort grades suggest more structure is helpful
  - **Clubs, societies, and CAS activities** to help you connect and decompress
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## **You Don't Have to Be Perfect — Just Present and Engaged**

The IB is a long-term journey. In your first term, the goal isn't to master everything — it's to build momentum.

Focus on:

- Showing up with curiosity and a willingness to try
- Asking questions and making use of feedback
- Reflecting regularly on your progress and your habits
- Taking care of your wellbeing and supporting others around you

This term is about building a strong foundation — and we're here to help you do just that.

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## Understanding the IB Curriculum and Core

The IB Diploma Programme offers an academically rich and internationally respected qualification. It combines six academic subjects with a core programme that encourages reflection, independence, and a deeper understanding of the world around you.

At **EF Academy Oxford**, we will support you in balancing your academic workload, developing critical skills, and preparing for university and beyond. Your choices and progress are closely aligned with the university pathway you are working towards.

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### Subject Choices and Flexibility

All students have selected their subjects during **Pathway Calls** prior to joining. These choices were made with your university goals and academic interests in mind — with advice from our academic team, the IB Coordinator, and the Director of University Guidance.

We understand, however, that your understanding of a subject may change once teaching begins. That's why we allow **subject changes during the first 4–6 weeks** of the course.

After this period, subject changes are generally **not permitted**, as:

- You will have covered a significant amount of subject content that would be difficult to make up in a new course
- Class dynamics and curriculum planning are set by this point
- It's important to begin building consistency and depth across all six subjects as early as possible

If you are considering a change in the early weeks, speak with your subject teacher, Academic Tutor, and the IB Coordinator as soon as possible.

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## The IB Diploma Structure

You will study **six subjects** in total:

- **Three at Higher Level (HL)** — your areas of academic strength or intended focus
- **Three at Standard Level (SL)** — to maintain academic breadth

Subjects are selected across the following groups:

1. **Studies in Language and Literature**
2. **Language Acquisition**
3. **Individuals and Societies**
4. **Sciences**
5. **Mathematics**
6. **The Arts** (*or a second subject from Groups 1–5*)

Your chosen subjects support your university goals through one of our five **Pathways to University**.

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### What's the Difference Between Higher Level and Standard Level?

Most IB students take three subjects at **Higher Level (HL)** and three at **Standard Level (SL)**. You will have confirmed your HL/SL choices during your Pathway Call, but small adjustments are still possible during the first few weeks of the programme.

Here's what you should know:

- **HL subjects involve approximately 240 hours of teaching time**
- **SL subjects involve approximately 150 hours**
- HL students often complete additional units or more complex internal assessments
- In some subjects (like Sciences or Literature), the difference in content is significant; in others, it is mainly the depth of treatment

You should only pursue a subject at Higher Level if you have a **genuine aptitude or high motivation** in that area. HL subjects also align closely with your **chosen university pathway**, so consider both your strengths and future goals carefully.

You'll also need to plan your time effectively:

- Expect to spend at least **3 hours per week per HL subject** on independent study
- For SL subjects, plan for around **1.5 hours per week**

Your Pathway Manager and the IB Coordinator can advise if you're considering a level change. You're also encouraged to refer to the **University Guidance Handbook** for subject-specific entry requirements.

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### The Five Pathways to University

Our academic programme is structured around the following five university pathways. Your Academic Tutor and Pathway Manager will support your development within your chosen area:

1. **Science, Technology and Engineering**  
Emphasising Mathematics and at least one Science subject, often at Higher Level
2. **Bio-Medical Sciences**  
Includes Higher Level Biology and Chemistry, alongside Mathematics and relevant electives
3. **International Relations, Economics, Law and Politics**  
Focuses on subjects like Global Politics, History, Economics, and Languages
4. **Business, Finance and Management**  
Combines Business Management, Economics, and Mathematics with strong language or writing subjects
5. **Arts, Media and Cultural Studies**  
Encourages expression through Literature, Languages, Visual Arts, and Humanities subjects

Your Pathway influences the support you receive, the university preparation sessions you attend, and the skills you will develop over time.

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## The IB Core

All IB students complete the **Core**, which includes:

- **Theory of Knowledge (TOK)** — exploring how knowledge is constructed and understood
- **Extended Essay (EE)** — a 4,000-word academic research paper in a subject of your choice
- **Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS)** — experiences that promote personal growth, engagement, and balance

We stand by the ethos of CAS as a vital part of a balanced education. Not only is it a formal requirement of the IB, it also helps students stand out in competitive university applications. CAS reflections are recorded on **ManageBac** throughout the programme.

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## **Progress and Expectations**

As an IB student at EF Academy Oxford, you are expected to:

- Meet deadlines and respond to feedback
- Take increasing ownership of your learning
- Stay open to new ideas and perspectives
- Balance academic demands with personal wellbeing

Your **Academic Reports** will include:

- Effort and assessment grades from each subject
  - Written comments from your subject teachers and Academic Tutor
  - A summary from the **Director of University Guidance**, outlining your progress and next steps
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## Assessment and Expectations in the IB Diploma

Assessment in the IB Diploma Programme is designed not just to measure achievement, but to support growth. You'll be challenged to think independently, engage critically with ideas, and reflect on how your knowledge is developing across all subjects.

At **EF Academy Oxford**, you'll receive regular feedback through formal assessments, progress reports, and ongoing conversations with teachers, your Academic Tutor, and Pathway Manager. Our goal is to help you understand where you are, where you're going, and how to get there.

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### Assessment Grades (AGs)

Approximately every six weeks, you will receive an **Assessment Grade (AG)** in each subject. These are based on formal, IB-style tasks such as essays, investigations, presentations, or timed exam questions.

Teachers use IB criteria to assess your performance, helping you build familiarity with the Diploma's standards. Over time, these grades provide a helpful indicator of your academic development and readiness for final IB assessments.

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### Effort Grades (EGs)

You will also receive **Effort Grades (EGs)** every three weeks, based on your:

- Organisation and preparedness
- Focus and participation in class
- Completion of homework
- Use of feedback and willingness to improve

Effort Grades reflect your approach to learning — not your academic achievement — and help identify students who may benefit from **Supervised Study** or other targeted support.

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## Internal Assessment (IA)

Every IB subject includes a major **Internal Assessment (IA)** project. These assignments typically contribute **20–30% of your final subject grade** and are completed over an extended period under teacher supervision.

Examples of IAs include:

- A science investigation
- A mathematical exploration
- A historical source analysis
- A business case study
- An oral commentary or creative portfolio

While your teacher marks your IA, a sample is **moderated externally** by IB examiners to ensure global consistency and fairness. This moderation process is key to the IB's reputation for reliability and rigour.

IA timelines will be confirmed in Year 2 — but you will begin building the necessary skills early in Year 1.

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## Final IB Examinations

Your final IB exams take place in **April and May of Year 2**, and in most subjects they account for **70–80% of the final grade**.

These exams:

- Cover the full two-year course
- Are set and marked by external IB examiners
- Require long-term preparation, ongoing revision, and exam technique development

Your subject teachers and Pathway Manager will help you structure your revision and prepare effectively — and you'll receive guidance throughout Year 2.

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## Independent Study Expectations

Each week, you should dedicate time to reviewing class material, completing homework, and preparing for assessments:

- **3 hours per week per HL subject**
- **1.5 hours per week per SL subject**

This is in addition to time spent on IAs, TOK, EE, and CAS. Developing strong time management early on will reduce stress and increase your confidence over time.

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## Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is a core principle of the IB Diploma. You are expected to act with integrity in all aspects of your work — whether writing an essay, completing research, or participating in a discussion.

This means:

- Citing sources using appropriate referencing conventions
- Clearly distinguishing between your own ideas and those of others
- Avoiding plagiarism, duplication of work, and unacknowledged collaboration

You'll receive training in referencing and citation throughout the programme. Academic honesty is not just a requirement — it's a skill that prepares you for university-level research and writing.

As an IB learner, you are expected to be **principled** — acting with honesty, fairness, and respect for others.

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## IB Diploma Award Criteria




To be awarded the IB Diploma, students must meet specific academic and programme-wide standards. The **maximum score** is **45 points** — based on:

- Up to **7 points per subject** across six subjects = **42 points**
- Up to **3 additional points** for combined performance in:
  - **Theory of Knowledge (TOK)**
  - **Extended Essay (EE)**

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### Minimum Requirements for the IB Diploma

To earn the full Diploma, you must:

-  Complete all **CAS** requirements
-  Achieve a **total of 24 points or more**
-  Earn an **average grade of at least 4** per subject

In addition:

- No **“N” (non-submission)** for TOK, EE, or any subject
- No **grade E** in either TOK or EE
- No **grade 1** in any subject
- No more than:
  - **Two grade 2s** (HL or SL)
  - **Three grade 3s** or lower (HL or SL)
- Earn **at least 12 points across your HL subjects**  
*(If you take 4 HLs, only your best 3 count)*
- Earn **at least 9 points across your SL subjects**  
*(If you take 2 SLs, you must earn at least 5 combined)*
- Have **no academic misconduct penalties** issued by the IB

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### Diploma Outcomes

- **Successful candidates** receive:
  - The official **IB Diploma**
  - A **Diploma Programme (DP) Results** document showing:
    - Subject grades
    - Core point total
    - CAS completion
- **Unsuccessful candidates** receive:
  - **DP Course Results** for completed subjects and core components

## Bilingual IB Diploma

You may be awarded a **Bilingual IB Diploma** if you meet one of the following:

- Earn a grade 3 or higher in **two Group 1 languages**
  - Earn a grade 3 or higher in both:
    - A **Group 1 language**, and
    - A **Group 3 or Group 4 subject** taught in a different language
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## Tracking Your Progress – Reports, Predictions and Support

At EF Academy Oxford, we don't wait until your final exams to measure progress. We track how you're doing from the very beginning — using regular assessments, effort checks, and feedback conversations to help you grow as a learner.

You'll receive **three different types of grades**. Together, they give you a clear and honest picture of your academic journey and help us understand how to best support you.

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### **Effort Grade (EG) – every 2–3 weeks**

This reflects your overall attitude to learning. It includes:

- Focus and contribution in class
- Organisation and completion of homework
- Responsible use of independent study time
- Attendance and punctuality

Effort Grades are reported on a scale from **1 to 5**:

- A **'5'** means excellent consistency and independence
- A **'3'** indicates acceptable effort with room to improve
- A **'1'** signals serious concern and likely intervention

If your average Effort Grade falls below 3, you may be placed in **Supervised Study** until your teachers observe sustained improvement.

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### **Assessment Grade (AG) – every 6–8 weeks**

This is your mark on a formal piece of IB-style assessed work — such as a timed essay, oral presentation, or data analysis. It helps track how well you're applying skills and knowledge against IB expectations.

Assessment Grades are based on:

- Task-specific rubrics and IB marking criteria
- A best-fit judgement aligned to the IB 1–7 scale
- Your performance at a particular moment in time

These tasks also help prepare you for your Internal Assessments and final IB examinations.

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## **On-Track Grade (OTG) – every 6–8 weeks**

Your OTG is not a prediction — it's an honest snapshot of where you are right now and whether you're on track to reach your target outcomes.

Within the first 6-8 weeks, you will begin receiving **On-Track Grades (OTGs)** — internal working grades that reflect where you are currently performing in each subject.

These grades:

- Combine evidence from assessments, classwork, and engagement
- Are based on professional judgement using IB criteria
- Help identify whether you're on course to meet your goals
- Inform your preparation and discussions ahead of final predictions

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## **Predicted Grades**

Early in Year 2, your teachers will provide **IB Predicted Grades**, which are submitted as part of your university applications.

These are informed by:

- Your performance in assessments and classwork over time
- The quality of your internal coursework
- Your consistency, effort, and response to feedback
- Judgements based on IB assessment criteria and professional expertise

Predicted Grades reflect the level your teachers believe you are most likely to achieve if your current trajectory continues.

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## **Academic Reports**

You will receive **three formal Academic Reports** each year, published on **ManageBac** and shared with your parents or guardians.

Each report includes:

- Your latest **Effort, Assessment, and On-Track Grades**
- Feedback from each of your subject teachers
- A reflective comment from your **Academic Tutor**
- A university planning summary from the **Director of University Guidance**

These reports are reviewed in tutor meetings and form the basis of your **Parent–Teacher Consultation Days**.

## When Support is Needed

If your progress dips or you're struggling to stay on track, we will respond quickly and supportively. You may be offered:

- **Booster sessions** in individual subjects
- Placement in **Supervised Study** (mandatory if EG average is below 3)
- 1:1 meetings with your **Academic Tutor** or **Pathway Manager**
- A formal **Academic Contract** with clear targets and review points

Support is designed to help you reset your routines, regain confidence, and move forward with clarity and purpose.

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## Developing Independent Study Habits

One of the most important skills you will develop during your IB Diploma is how to study independently.

At EF Academy Oxford, we expect you to take ownership of your learning from the start. This means knowing how to plan your time, reflect on feedback, and manage your responsibilities across six subjects and the IB Core.

Independent study is not something you do alone — it's something you learn to do well, with support from your teachers, Academic Tutor, and Pathway Manager.

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### What Does “Independent Study” Look Like in the IB?

Independent study in the IB is more than just completing homework. It includes:

- Preparing for assessments and revising content regularly
- Reading academic texts, case studies, and source material
- Planning and completing Internal Assessments and your Extended Essay
- Reflecting on teacher feedback and actively making improvements
- Meeting CAS deadlines and documenting your learning through reflections
- Managing a demanding schedule with deadlines across multiple subjects

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### How Much Time Should I Be Studying?

You are expected to complete **10–12 hours of independent study per week**, depending on your subject levels.

Subject Level	Suggested Weekly Study Time
Higher Level (HL)	3 hours per subject
Standard Level (SL)	1.5 hours per subject

This does not include time spent on Core components like the Extended Essay, TOK, and CAS — which should be planned separately and in advance.

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## Study Spaces and Evening Expectations

All students are expected to take part in independent study between **7:30pm and 9:00pm, Monday–Thursday**. You can:

- Use the **Cherwell Campus classrooms** for quiet evening study
- Make use of our shared access to **Oxford Brookes University** study spaces (until 9:00pm)
- Study in small, productive **groups with classmates**, especially for discussion-based or collaborative subjects

Consistent evening study habits reduce stress, support long-term retention, and ensure you're always preparing ahead — not catching up.

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## Study Support Through Your Pathway

Your **Pathway Manager** and **Academic Tutor** will support your study habits through:

- Weekly or biweekly check-ins and reflections
- Guided planning around major assessments
- Study strategy workshops and resources
- Advice on academic reading, writing, and revision tools

If you're struggling to manage your time, you are not alone — the earlier you speak up, the sooner we can help you build a more sustainable routine.

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## Good Habits to Build Now

Here are a few practical tips from successful IB students:

- Create a **weekly planner** to balance study, CAS, and rest
  - Use **spaced revision** and **active recall** to boost memory
  - Review class notes **within 24 hours** to reinforce understanding
  - Break large tasks into smaller steps and give each a deadline
  - Use **quiet zones** during evening study and avoid distractions
  - Take regular **brain breaks** and get enough sleep
  - Be honest with your tutor or Pathway Manager if you're falling behind
- 

Strong study habits now will reduce stress later. Independent learning is not about being perfect — it's about being **consistent, reflective, and willing to improve**.

By the time you finish the IB, you'll have the academic mindset and self-discipline that universities are looking for — and the confidence to apply them anywhere.

## CAS and Life Beyond the Classroom

One of the most distinctive — and rewarding — parts of the IB Diploma is **CAS: Creativity, Activity, Service**.

More than a requirement, CAS is a philosophy. It encourages you to live fully, develop as a person, and reflect on how your actions shape the world around you.

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### What is CAS?

You'll take part in **creative, active, and service-based experiences** throughout the two-year IB programme, and reflect on what you learn through them.

Every student must complete:

- **One long-term CAS project** (lasting at least one month)
- **Ongoing participation** across the three strands
- **Regular reflections** showing how you've grown, challenged yourself, and contributed to others

You'll track your progress and reflections using **ManageBac**.

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### Examples of CAS at EF Academy Oxford

Your CAS journey is personal, but here are just some of the opportunities available:

- **Creativity:** Photography club, student newspaper, music performance, creative writing, digital design
- **Activity:** Yoga, football, gym training, climbing, basketball, dance sessions, hiking
- **Service:** Volunteering at local charities, peer mentoring, organising campus events, fundraising campaigns, community gardening

You can also propose your own activities — so long as they align with CAS goals and are approved by the CAS Coordinator.

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### Why CAS Matters

**CAS is a core component of the IB Diploma — just as essential as any of your six academic subjects.**

It is not assessed through exams, but successful completion is required in order to be awarded the Diploma.

What sets CAS apart is how it **bridges your academic learning with real-life experience**. It challenges you to:

- Explore new ways of thinking
- Push yourself beyond your comfort zone
- Engage with the wider community
- Reflect on your values, actions, and personal development

Rather than focusing on outcomes, CAS focuses on **growth**. It's about the process: setting goals, learning from challenges, and discovering new sides of yourself.

CAS helps you become:

- A more confident, balanced individual
- A compassionate member of your community
- A resilient learner who understands the value of perseverance and self-awareness

Universities recognise the importance of CAS, because it shows you're not just academically capable — you're **well-rounded, reflective, and socially engaged**.

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### **A Culture of Balance and Belonging**

CAS is more than a box to tick. It's a reflection of who we are.

At EF Academy Oxford, we are proud of our inclusive, respectful, and globally diverse community. We expect every student to:

- Engage with others with curiosity and kindness
- Participate fully in school life, both inside and outside the classroom
- Embrace challenge and difference as part of your learning journey

Your CAS journey is an invitation to step up, get involved, and discover what you're capable of — not just academically, but as a person and a member of the global community.

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## The IB Core – Theory of Knowledge and the Extended Essay

In addition to your six academic subjects and CAS, the **IB Core** also includes two powerful elements that develop your ability to think critically, research independently, and communicate with clarity:

- **Theory of Knowledge (TOK)**
- **The Extended Essay (EE)**

Together, they help you grow as a scholar and a global thinker — and prepare you for the demands of university-level work.

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### Theory of Knowledge (TOK)

TOK asks you to explore one central question:

**How do we know what we claim to know?**

Through this course, you'll examine how knowledge is constructed in different disciplines — from the natural sciences to the arts — and how your own perspectives shape your understanding of the world.

Expect to:

- Discuss knowledge questions in a collaborative and philosophical environment
- Evaluate sources, perspectives, and real-world issues
- Reflect on how culture, language, and values influence what we know
- Write a formal TOK Essay
- Design and deliver a **TOK Exhibition** using real-world objects to explore a knowledge theme

TOK is about thinking critically, asking better questions, and learning to articulate complex ideas with clarity.

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### The Extended Essay (EE)

The EE is a **4,000-word independent research essay** on a topic of your choice — related to one of the subjects you're studying.

It is your opportunity to:

- Explore an area you're passionate about
- Frame a clear research question
- Conduct in-depth reading and analysis
- Develop formal academic writing skills
- Work one-to-one with a supervisor over several months

You'll receive structured guidance and feedback throughout, but the work — and the growth — is your own. Completing the EE builds the kind of confidence and skill that sets IB students apart in university applications.

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### Why It Matters

Both TOK and the EE are unique to the IB — and they're part of what makes this programme so internationally respected.

They show universities that you can:

- Think independently and reflectively
- Communicate with structure and purpose
- Research, analyse, and evaluate evidence with academic integrity
- Take responsibility for your learning and manage a major project over time

These are not just school tasks — they are foundations for university and beyond.

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## University Preparation

One of the most exciting aspects of your IB journey is preparing for what comes next.

Whether you're applying to **UK universities, US liberal arts colleges, European programmes, or top global institutions**, EF Academy Oxford offers **individualised, expert support** to help you reach your goals.

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### Your University Guidance Team

You will be supported by:

- **Dr Mark Zumbuhl**, our Director of University Guidance
- Your **Academic Tutor**
- Your **Pathway Manager**
- Your **IB teachers**, who offer insight and references from their subject expertise

This team works with you over two years to explore your interests, identify options, and shape a strong, well-informed application strategy.

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### What Makes Our Support Unique?

At EF Academy Oxford, university preparation is not just a final-year activity — it's an **integrated part of the academic experience**.

You will benefit from:

- **1:1 university meetings** from Term 1 of Year 1
- Targeted support based on your **academic Pathway**
- Help identifying courses, countries, and universities that align with your strengths and aspirations
- Dedicated sessions on personal statements, motivation letters, essays, and interview prep
- **UCAS support**, including predicted grades, references, and course choices
- **International application guidance** for the US, Canada, the Netherlands, Europe and beyond
- Access to university fairs, open days, and alumni Q&As

We help you ask the right questions, understand what different systems require, and stay ahead of deadlines.

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## Predicted Grades and Applications

Universities often rely on **Predicted Grades** to make conditional offers. These are based on:

- Your Assessment Grades (AGs)
- Your Effort Grades (EGs)
- Your On-Track Grade (OTG)
- The professional judgement of your subject teachers

IB Predicted Grades are issued in **Term 3 of Year 1**, once we have enough evidence to make fair and realistic judgments. These are submitted as part of your UCAS or Common App applications in Year 2.

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### Example University Offers (Typical)

To give you an idea of what universities may ask for, here are some real-world examples of IB offers received by EF Academy students and other IB applicants:

University	Course	Typical IB Offer
<b>University of Manchester (UK)</b>	Business Management	36 points with 6,6,5 at Higher Level
<b>University College London (UK)</b>	International Relations	38 points with 6,6,6 at Higher Level
<b>University of Amsterdam (NL)</b>	Psychology (English-taught)	32–34 points with good HL grades
<b>NYU (USA)</b>	Liberal Studies	Holistic review, typically 36+ points
<b>University of Toronto (Canada)</b>	Life Sciences	34–36 points, HL Biology and Chemistry
<b>Sciences Po (France)</b>	Europe and Africa Programme (Dual Degree with UCL)	37+ points and strong personal statement
<b>King's College London (UK)</b>	Biomedical Sciences	35 points with 6,6,5 at HL including Biology
<b>Warwick (UK)</b>	Economics	38–39 points with 6,6,6 in HL Maths

Note: Some courses may also have **specific subject requirements** at Higher Level (e.g. HL Maths or HL Biology) or require **English proficiency** such as a valid **IELTS certificate**.

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## Staying Informed and Organised

You will receive:

- A **University Roadmap**, detailing the key steps of the process
- Ongoing feedback and updates through your **Academic Reports**, including notes from the Director of University Guidance
- Access to tailored resources and timelines through ManageBac and your university planning folder
- Advice about **English language requirements**, including valid IELTS scores (where needed)

We also recommend consulting the **University Guidance Handbook** for full details about international systems, testing requirements, and strategic choices.

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University preparation at EF Academy Oxford is built around you — your interests, your potential, and your ambitions.

We don't just help you get into university — we help you choose the right one, with the confidence and readiness to thrive once you're there.

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## Oxford Is Our Campus – A Home Away from Home

Your time at EF Academy Oxford will be about much more than your IB subjects. It's a time for **finding your voice, exploring the world around you**, and growing as a person.

We are a small, close-knit international school with students from around the world. That diversity brings life and energy to our community. Your IB journey will be shaped not only by what you learn, but by **who you meet**, how you live, and how you choose to contribute.

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### A Home in the Heart of Oxford

Our campus is based in one of the world's most famous university cities — a place where centuries of learning, innovation, and global thinking come together.

You'll be just a short walk or bus ride from:

- The **Bodleian Library** and **Weston Library** — ideal for independent reading and research
- **Oxford's museums**, including the Ashmolean, Pitt Rivers, and Museum of Natural History
- The beautiful **University Parks** and riverside walks along the Thames and Cherwell
- Independent bookshops, galleries, cafés, and performance spaces
- Historic colleges and cloisters — open to the public and full of inspiration
- Weekly markets, student-friendly cinemas, and exhibitions at **Modern Art Oxford**

You'll also have access to:

- **Oxford Brookes University** facilities, including study spaces, cafés, and the sports centre
- **Evening study sessions until 9:00pm** at Oxford Brookes or on the Cherwell Campus
- A vibrant and international student atmosphere — where young people from across the world come to learn, live, and explore

Oxford isn't just where you live — **Oxford is your campus**. Use it. Explore it. Let it challenge and inspire you.

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## Life on Campus

Life outside the classroom is an essential part of the IB experience. You'll have space and time to pursue the things that matter to you.

You'll have opportunities to:

- Join clubs and activities that reflect your interests or culture
- Take part in student-led initiatives — such as the **culture fair**, **student council**, or **ambassador programme**
- Explore creativity through **music, art, media, performance, or writing**
- Take part in fitness, wellness, and service opportunities that link with **CAS**
- Join weekend trips to London, Cambridge, Bath, and beyond — or enjoy walks, cinema nights, and games on campus

You'll be supported by a dedicated team of **boarding staff**, **wellbeing staff**, and **academic mentors** who work together to ensure you feel safe, supported, and empowered.

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## Balance and Belonging

The IB Diploma is demanding — but your wellbeing, identity, and sense of belonging matter just as much as your grades.

At EF Academy Oxford, we are committed to creating a school environment where:

- Every student feels **seen, heard, and valued**
- Differences are respected and celebrated
- Kindness, fairness, and open-mindedness shape how we learn and live together

This is central to our **DEIB commitment** (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging), and it's what allows you to be your whole self — not just your academic self.

We expect everyone in our community to:

- Treat others with kindness and curiosity
- Communicate with empathy and respect
- Stand up against prejudice, exclusion, or unfairness in any form

We also know that **academic success depends on balance**. We encourage you to take care of yourself through:

- Movement, exercise, or time outside
- Creative projects and screen-free downtime
- Talking to friends and adults you trust when things feel heavy
- Making space for connection, celebration, and joy — not just deadlines

You're not just joining a school. You're becoming part of a **global, compassionate, and forward-thinking community** of learners, leaders, and changemakers.

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## Welcome to the Journey

Your IB experience at EF Academy Oxford will be shaped by far more than your lessons and exams. You're about to become part of a global, supportive, and ambitious community — and everything you put in, you'll get back tenfold.

Here, you'll learn to think deeply, act responsibly, reflect with integrity, and prepare for a future that's truly your own.

We can't wait to see the person you'll become here.

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### Key People to Know

If you have questions or need support, these are the people who can help:

Role	Name	How They Can Help
Deputy Head of School (Academics)	Dona Jones	Academic matters, IB guidance, academic reports
IB Coordinator	Dr Alexandra Hendriok	Core requirements, subject combinations, internal deadlines
Director of University Guidance	Dr Mark Zumbuhl	University planning, personal statements, global applications
Pathway Managers	Alyona Lake & Kate Krivich	Study skills, Pathway Support, academic organisation
Academic Tutors	Assigned in Week 1	Day-to-day support, mentoring, general guidance
Boarding Team Lead	Donna Balsdon	Residential life, wellbeing, support outside of class
Examinations Officer	Beatrice Fanti	Exam timetables, regulations, access arrangements
Inclusion Coordinator	Jenny Turvey	Learning support, access arrangements, SEN provision
Head of Language & Literature	Emma Bardos	Pathway: Arts, Media and Cultural Studies; English & IELTS support
Head of Humanities	Ronan Clarke	Pathways: International Relations, Economics, Law and Politics; Business, Finance and Management
Head of Science	Amy Webber	Pathways: Bio-Medical Sciences; Science, Technology and Engineering
Head of Mathematics	Jocelyn Faulkner	Pathway: Science, Technology and Engineering

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## Your Welcome Checklist

Before or shortly after arrival, make sure you:

- ✔ Log in to your EF Academy email and ManageBac
- ✔ Complete your ManageBac student profile
- ✔ Confirm your IB subject selections with the IB Coordinator
- ✔ Meet your Academic Tutor and Pathway Manager
- ✔ Attend orientation and welcome sessions
- ✔ Explore the Cherwell and Cotuit campuses
- ✔ Join at least one CAS activity or club
- ✔ Save key contacts and ask questions — no question is too small

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## Expectations and Community Standards

We expect every IB student to:

- Attend all lessons, CAS activities, and meetings punctually
- Meet internal deadlines for assessments, including the EE, TOK and IA work
- Communicate respectfully and contribute thoughtfully in class
- Take care of their wellbeing — and support the wellbeing of others
- Show academic integrity in all work submitted
- Participate fully in school life — and help build an inclusive, compassionate community

We believe in high standards, but we're here to support you every step of the way.

When challenges arise — academic or personal — speak to someone. There's always help available. This is a school that listens.

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**Welcome to EF Academy Oxford. Your IB Diploma journey starts here.**  
And we are proud to take it with you.

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