

CAS Quick Start Guide

ozark.managebac.com

sarafloyd@ozarktigers.org

cascorner.wordpress.com

What is CAS?

Creativity: Arts and other experiences that involve creative thinking.

Action: Physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle.

Service: an unpaid and voluntary exchange that has a learning benefit for the student.

For student development to occur, CAS should involve:

- ☑ Real, purposeful activities, with significant outcomes
- ☑ Personal challenge—tasks must extend the student and be achievable in scope
- ☑ Thoughtful consideration, such as planning, reviewing progress, reporting
- ☑ **Reflection** on outcomes and personal learning

Learning Outcomes

As a result of their CAS experience as a whole, including their **reflections**, there must be evidence that students have:

1. Increased their awareness of their own strengths and areas for growth: they are able to see themselves as individuals with various skills and abilities, some more developed than others, and understand that they can make choices about how they wish to move forward.

2. Undertake new challenges: a new challenge may be an unfamiliar activity, or an extension to an existing one.

3. Planned and initiated activities: planning and initiation will often be in collaboration with others. It can be shown in activities that are part of larger projects, for example, ongoing school activities in the local community, as well as in small student-led activities.

4. Worked collaboratively with others

Collaboration can be shown in many different activities, such as team sports, playing music in a band, or helping in a kindergarten. At least one project, involving collaboration and the integration of at least two of creativity, action and service, is required.

5. Shown perseverance and commitment in their activities

At a minimum, this implies attending regularly and accepting a share of the responsibility for dealing with problems that arise in the course of activities.

6. Engaged with issues of global importance

Students may be involved in international projects but there are many global issues that can be acted upon locally or nationally (for example, environmental concerns, caring for the elderly).

7. Considered the ethical implications of their actions

Ethical decisions arise in almost any CAS activity (for example, on the sports field, in musical composition, in relationships with others involved in service activities). Evidence of thinking about ethical issues can be shown in various ways, including journal entries and conversations with CAS advisers.

8. Developed new skills

As with new challenges, new skills may be shown in activities that the student has not previously undertaken, or in increased expertise in an established area.

All eight outcomes must be present for a student 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.

Responsibilities of the Student

- Plan, do and **reflect** (using ManageBac).
- Undertake at least three meetings with the CAS Coordinator (two meetings in year one and a final review in year two).
- Take part in at least one project.
- Keep records of their activities, achievements, and **reflections** (using ManageBac).
- Show evidence of achievement of the eight CAS learning outcomes (using ManageBac).

Reflection

Students might consider for each stage of an activity (before, during and after):

- How they felt
- What they perceived
- What they thought about the activity
- What the activity meant to them
- What the value of the activity was
- What they learned from the activity and how this learning (for example, a change of perspective) might apply more widely.

Projects

Students should be involved in at least one project involving teamwork that integrates two or more of creativity, action and service, and is of significant duration.

Recording and Reporting

Students should document their CAS activities noting in particular their **reflections** upon their experiences. This documentation may take many forms, including journals, blogs, videos, illustrations, and photography.

Where a school is required to submit student CAS records to the regional office, the records required will include up to 10 sample pages from the student's ongoing documentation (using ManageBac). These sample pages must include a list of the principal activities undertaken and evidence of both planning and reflection.

It must be possible for the IBO evaluator to tell: **what happened, why it happened, how it happened, what its value was, and what the student learned from it.**

Creativity

(Arts and other experiences that involve creative thinking)

Creative activities should have a definite goal or outcome. They should be planned and evaluated like all CAS activities. This can present something of a challenge where, for example, a student is a dedicated instrumental musician. It would be artificial to rule that something that is both a pleasure and a passion for the student could not be considered part of their CAS experience. How, though, can it help to fulfill CAS learning outcomes?

Perhaps the instrumental musician can learn a particularly difficult piece, or a different style of playing, in order to perform for an audience. The context might be a fund-raising activity, or the student might give a talk to younger children about the instrument, with musical illustrations. Appropriate CAS activities are not merely "more of the same"—more practice, more concerts with the school band, and so on. This excludes, for example, routine practice performed by IB music or dance students (as noted earlier), but does **not** exclude music, dance or art activities that these students are involved with outside the Diploma Program subject coursework.

Action (Physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle)

Similar considerations apply here. An outstanding athlete will not stop training and practicing in order to engage in some arbitrary, invented CAS physical activity. Setting goals, and planning and reflecting on their achievement, is vital. "Extending" the student may go further, for example, to asking them to pass on some of their skills and knowledge to others. If their chosen sport is entirely individual, perhaps they should try a team game, in order to experience the different pleasures and rewards on offer.

To avoid possible confusion, it is appropriate to note that the use of the term "action" in CAS is very different from that in the IB Primary Years Program (PYP). In CAS, action relates specifically to physical activity.

Service (An unpaid and voluntary exchange that has a learning benefit for the student)

It is essential that service activities have learning benefits for the student. Otherwise, they are not experiential learning (hence not CAS) and have no particular claim on students' time. This rules out mundane, repetitive activities, as well as "service" without real responsibility. A learning benefit that enriches the student personally is in no way inconsistent with the requirement that service be unpaid and voluntary.

It is essential that CAS activity is an extension to subject work. To attempt to count the **same** work for both a subject or extended essay and CAS would constitute malpractice.

Political and Religious Activity

The IB has no view on whether or not it is appropriate for students to be involved in political activities as part of their educational experience. Views on this vary considerably in different cultural contexts, so it is a matter for decision at local or school level.

However, where such activity is locally sanctioned, there is a question about whether or not it may qualify as CAS. It may be relevant to consider the following factors: is the activity safe, and will it cause or worsen social divisions?

Concerning religious activity, it is recognized that this is a sensitive and difficult area. Nevertheless, the general rule is that religious devotion, and any activity that can be interpreted as proselytizing, does not count as CAS.