Programme standards and practices

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International Baccalaureate Organization, Geneva, CH-1218, Switzerland

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Introduction

This *Programme standards and practices* document provides a set of criteria against which both the authorized school and the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) can measure success in the implementation of the three programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Diploma Programme. The school must make a commitment to work towards meeting all the standards and practices. These form the basis of a self-study, which schools undertake as part of the programme evaluation process. The evaluation report will contain commendations, recommendations and matters to be addressed based on the school's progress towards achieving these standards and practices.

For each standard there is a list of practices that are common to all programmes, followed by a list of programme-specific practices.

The IBO is aware that for each school, the implementation of an IB programme is a journey, and that the school will meet these standards and practices to varying degrees along the way. Nevertheless, there is a need for the IBO to ensure quality in the implementation of its programmes.

Section A: philosophy

Standard A1
There is close alignment between the educational beliefs and values of the school and those of the programme.

Practices
Common:
1. The school is committed to the principles defined in the IBO mission statement.
2. The school is committed to developing in students the qualities, attitudes and characteristics described in the IB learner profile.
3. There are clear and close connections between the school's published statements of mission and philosophy, and the beliefs and values of the programme.
4. The beliefs and values that drive the programme are shared by all sections of the school community (including students, teachers, administrators, members of the governing body and others, as appropriate).
5. The school is committed to continuous improvement.
6. The school promotes student inquiry and the development of critical-thinking skills.
7. The school provides a climate that encourages positive innovation in implementing the philosophy of the programme.
MYP:
8. The school works to strengthen holistic learning, communication and intercultural awareness within the programme.
9. The school ensures that teachers coordinate the curriculum to develop the areas of interaction, within and across subject groups, so that students acquire an understanding of each.
10. The school ensures concurrency of learning for each student across all subject groups.
Diploma Programme:
11. The school promotes concurrency of learning for each student.

Standard A2
The school promotes international-mindedness on the part of the adults and the students in the school community.

Practices
Common:

1. The school values and makes productive use of the diversity of cultures and perspectives that exist in the school and in the local, national and global communities to enhance learning.

2. The school expects and promotes a commitment to international understanding and responsible citizenship on the part of the adults in the school community.

3. The school encourages learning that fosters responsible citizenship and international-mindedness.

4. The school encourages student learning that strengthens the student's own cultural identity, and celebrates and fosters understanding of different cultures.

5. The school provides students with opportunities for learning about issues that have local, national and global significance, leading to an understanding of human commonalities.

6. The school develops a climate of open communication and careful expression of ideas, attitudes and feelings.

7. The school provides resources that offer access to different cultures, perspectives and languages.

8. The school provides a safe, secure and stimulating environment based on understanding and respect.

9. The school attaches importance to language learning through the development of each student's mother tongue and the acquisition of other languages, including the host country language.

10. The school supports members of its community for whom the school's language of instruction is not their mother tongue.

11. Where possible, the school ensures access to global information and recognizes the potential for wider communication through the availability and use of appropriate information and communication technologies (ICT).

12. The school takes advantage of the international network of IB schools teaching the same programme through e-mail or personal exchanges and attendance at conferences and workshops.

Section B: organization

Standard B1
The school demonstrates ongoing commitment to, and provides support for, the programme through appropriate administrative structures and systems, staffing and resources.

Practices
Common:
1. The governing body is explicitly supportive of the programme, and has allocated sufficient funding for the effective implementation and ongoing development of the programme.
2. Senior management regularly informs the governing body about the ongoing implementation and development of the programme.
3. The school has systems for implementing and monitoring the programme with input from all constituencies, including students.
4. The school's goals, strategies, time lines and accountabilities are available in written form to all members of the school community.
5. The school builds an understanding of, and support for, the programme throughout the school community.
6. The head of school/the school principal, programme coordinator, teaching staff and non-teaching professionals demonstrate an understanding of, and commitment to, the programme.
7. The school has appointed a programme coordinator with sufficient support and resources to carry out the responsibilities of the position.
8. The head of school/the school principal and programme coordinator have a good understanding of the principles of the programme and demonstrate pedagogical leadership.
9. There is a process for monitoring the work of the programme coordinator in accordance with the programme coordinator's job description.
10. The programme coordinator ensures that questionnaires and other requests for information sought by IB working groups and committees are completed by the appropriate members of staff.
11. The school provides staff who are appropriately qualified and trained to teach the programme.
12. The school contributes to the ongoing development of the programme by encouraging teachers to participate in appropriate IB activities (for example, applying to be members of IB working groups/committees, responding to requests for samples of student work).
13. Time for collaborative planning and reflection is built into all teachers' schedules.

14.	The school has systems in place to ensure the continuity of the programme; this includes an induction system for new staff and ongoing staff professional development.
15.	The school provides professional development opportunities for the head/principal, programme coordinator and teaching staff, including attendance at appropriate IB conferences, meetings and/or workshops, and access to the online curriculum centre (OCC).
16.	The school provides learning environments and opportunities for learning that support the pedagogy of the programme.
17.	The school allocates appropriate print and electronic resources to support the teaching of the programme.
18.	The school recognizes and promotes the role of the library/media centre in the implementation of the programme.
19.	The school provides specialist equipment (for example, scientific, technological) where needed to implement the programme safely and effectively.
20.	The school has a written language policy (including its provision for second-language teaching and mother-tongue language support) that meets the needs of the students and reflects the principles of the programme.
21.	The school provides effective support for students with learning and/or physical disabilities, as well as support for the professional development of their teachers.
22.	The school has systems in place to guide and counsel students whenever the need arises.
PYP:	
23.	The school offers a language, in addition to the language of instruction, to students from the age of seven. (Bilingual/dual language schools are not required to offer a third language to their students.)
MYP:	
24.	The school provides the necessary structures to ensure the effective implementation of the areas of interaction and the personal project.
25.	The school allocates adequate time for each subject group according to MYP requirements and the needs of the students.
26.	The school puts in place an organizational structure allowing coordination of the curriculum within MYP subject groups.
27.	Where there are partner schools, the MYP coordinator ensures that communication and common planning between individual members of the partnership are regularly maintained.
28.	The MYP coordinator facilitates meaningful interdisciplinary initiatives.

Diploma Programme:
29. The school provides an appropriate number of hours for all higher level (HL) courses, standard level (SL) courses and the theory of knowledge (TOK) course.
30. The school provides appropriate resources and staff to support the delivery of creativity, action, service (CAS).
31. The school provides appropriate and adequate space, supervision and security arrangements for examinations.

Section C: curriculum

Standard C1
A comprehensive, coherent, written curriculum, based on the requirements of the programme and developed by the school, is available to all sections of the school community.

Practices
Common:
1.   A comprehensive, coherent curriculum is available in written form to all sections of the school community (including students, teachers, parents, administrators and members of the governing body).
2.   The curriculum is developed with consideration for students' previous learning experiences and future educational needs.
3.   The curriculum clearly identifies the skills, concepts, knowledge and attitudes to be taught over time.
4.   The curriculum places appropriate demands on students according to their age and stage of development, and incorporates issues that are relevant to them.
5.   The curriculum encourages students to become aware of individual, local, national and global issues.
6.   The curriculum promotes all the attributes of the IB learner profile.
7.   The curriculum encourages students to develop strategies for their own learning and assessment, and to assume increasing levels of responsibility in this respect.
8.   The curriculum provides ample opportunity for student inquiry and the presentation of ideas.
9.   The curriculum provides opportunities for students to work both independently and collaboratively.
10.   The curriculum is sensitive to cultural, gender, linguistic, ethnic and religious differences.
11.   The curriculum is regularly reviewed in the light of programme developments.
12.   The school takes advantage of local community organizations and the expertise of other adults to foster learning within the scope of the curriculum.
13.   Where appropriate, the curriculum provides for learning experiences to be made visible to others through displays, posters, public performances etc.
14.   The school actively supports the development of the mother-tongue language of all students.

15.	The school provides opportunities for students to learn at least one language in addition to their mother tongue.

PYP:

16.	There is a coherent, articulated programme of inquiry.
17.	The programme of inquiry and corresponding unit planners are the product of sustained collaborative work involving all the appropriate staff.
18.	The programme of inquiry allows for a balanced inclusion of the subject areas.
19.	There is a system for regular review and refinement of individual units of inquiry and the programme of inquiry.
20.	Adequate time is allocated for each unit of inquiry to allow for extensive in-depth inquiry, according to the requirements of the programme.
21.	The curriculum includes the required number of units per year.
22.	For each subject area the school has adopted or developed a scope and sequence document that indicates the planned development of skills, knowledge and conceptual understanding.
23.	If the school adapts, or develops, its own scope and sequence documents for each PYP subject area, the level of overall expectation regarding student achievement expressed in these documents at least matches that expressed in the PYP scope and sequence documents.
24.	There is a systematic approach to integrating the subject-specific scope and sequences with the programme of inquiry, where such integration clearly enhances student learning.
25.	There is a carefully considered balance between disciplinary and transdisciplinary planning and teaching.
26.	There is adequate provision for the study of the host/home country, the culture of individual students, and the culture of others, including their belief systems.

MYP:

27.	The school fosters holistic education by ensuring that teachers consider the curriculum as a coherent experience, through the areas of interaction, in every year of the programme.
28.	The areas of interaction are developed within and across the academic disciplines, so that students acquire an understanding of each.
29.	Each area of interaction involves all subject teachers in raising awareness and providing appropriate learning experiences.
30.	Clear objectives and learning strategies have been developed for each area of interaction.
31.	The curriculum fulfills the aims and objectives of each subject group.

Diploma Programme:
32. The school provides appropriate information about the programme to potential students and advises them in their choice of courses.
33. There is a balance of subjects on offer in the school as well as an appropriate student schedule that provides for student access to the full diploma.
34. The school supports the central role of TOK by assigning adequate staffing and time for student learning and assessment, and establishing links to other subjects.
35. There is an appropriate and varied CAS programme.
36. The school provides guidance to students on progression to higher education and other career opportunities.

Standard C2

The school has implemented a system through which all teachers plan and reflect in collaborative teams.

Practices

Common:

1. All teachers are provided with the appropriate documentation, including relevant IBO publications, in preparation for all planning activities.

2. Planning at the school takes place collaboratively.

3. Planning at the school enables all teachers to gain an overview of the students' whole learning experience.

4. Planning at the school is based on agreed expectations for student learning and in the context of a coherent programme.

5. Planning at the school accommodates a range of learning needs and styles, as well as varying levels of competencies.

6. Planning at the school addresses assessment issues throughout the planning process.

7. Planning at the school recognizes that, in practice, all teachers are language teachers and consequently appropriate consideration is given to their responsibility in facilitating communication.

PYP:

8. Planning at the school focuses on strengthening the transdisciplinary nature of the curriculum and on ensuring that the pedagogy of the PYP is pervasive throughout the entire programme.

9. Planning at the school addresses all the essential elements (concepts, skills, knowledge, attitudes and action).

10. Planning at the school makes effective use of the PYP planning process across the curriculum and by all teachers.

11. Planning at the school includes provision for easy access to completed PYP planners.

12. Planning at the school provides opportunities for students to be involved in planning for their own learning and assessment.

13. Planning at the school is documented on PYP planners that are coherent records of the learning experiences of students in developing their understanding of central ideas.

MYP:	
14.	Planning at the school facilitates interdisciplinary learning to strengthen cross-curricular skills and deepen the understanding of wider concepts.
15.	Planning at the school includes the coordination of the five areas of interaction from years 1 to 5 to ensure progression of learning.
16.	Planning at the school includes the coordination of the curriculum within each subject group that is taught to all MYP students.
Diploma Programme:	
17.	Planning at the school includes the discussion and use of teaching and learning strategies appropriate to the objectives of the separate components of the Diploma Programme.

Standard C3

Teaching and learning at the school empowers and encourages students to become lifelong learners, to be responsible towards themselves, their learning, other people and the environment, and to take appropriate action.

Practices

Common:

1. Teaching and learning at the school builds on what students know and can do.

2. Teaching at the school allows students to become actively responsible for their own learning.

3. Teaching at the school uses a range and balance of teaching strategies to meet the objectives of the programme.

4. Teaching and learning at the school recognizes and reflects multiple perspectives.

5. Teaching and learning at the school addresses the needs of students who have reached different stages in their development and those who have different learning styles.

6. Teaching and learning at the school is supported by a range of appropriate resources, including ICT.

7. Teaching at the school engages students as critical thinkers with developing views of their own.

8. Teaching and learning at the school encourages students to take appropriate action in response to their own needs and the needs of others.

9. Teaching at the school meets the needs of students who are not proficient in the language(s) of instruction.

10. Teaching and learning at the school promotes the understanding and practice of academic honesty.

PYP:

11. Teaching at the school uses inquiry across the curriculum, and by all the teachers.

12. Teaching at the school provides for grouping and regrouping students for a variety of learning situations.

13. Evidence is collected of each student's engagement with inquiry in its various forms.

14. Students are shown how to reflect on their development and understanding through careful consideration of their work over time, and are able to articulate this development to others.

Standard C4

There is an agreed approach to assessment, and to the recording and reporting of assessment data, which reflects the practices and requirements of the programme.

Practices

Common:

1.	There is a written assessment policy in place that is available to all sections of the school community.
2.	Assessment at the school is viewed as being integral with planning, teaching and learning.
3.	Learning expectations and integral assessment strategies are made clear to students and parents.
4.	The school uses a balanced range of strategies for formative and summative assessment, which are reviewed regularly.
5.	Learning at the school involves students in both peer- and self-assessment.
6.	The levels of students' current knowledge and experience are assessed before embarking on new learning.
7.	Students are provided with regular and prompt feedback to inform and improve their learning.
8.	Assessment at the school provides students with regular opportunities for reflection on their own learning.
9.	There are efficient systems for recording data about student learning, which are in keeping with the requirements of the programme.
10.	The assessment process allows for meaningful reporting to parents about students' progress.
11.	Assessment data is analysed to provide information about the individual needs of students.
12.	Assessment data is analysed to inform the evaluation and subsequent modification of teaching and learning strategies.

PYP:

13.	Assessment addresses all the essential elements of the programme.
14.	Data, including evidence of development in terms of the IB learner profile, is reported to all participants in the learning process: students, parents, teachers and school administrators, and other schools at the time of transfer.
15.	Assessment at the school requires the storage of and easy access to student work showing evidence of the process of learning and progress over time.

MYP:
16.   Assessment is a continuous process and is designed to address the MYP objectives in each of the eight subject groups and the personal project, according to a criterion-referenced approach.
17.   The assessment focuses on process as well as product.
18.   Teachers/supervisors participate in the standardization of assessment, where appropriate.
Diploma Programme:
19.   Student learning is regularly assessed against the objectives and assessment criteria specific to each subject.

Section D: the student

Standard D1
Students learn to choose to act, and to reflect on their actions, so that they contribute to their own well-being and that of the community and the environment.

Practices
Common:
1.   The school provides a climate in which students learn to respect and value self-initiated action.
2.   Opportunities are provided for students to develop the skills and attitudes that lead to taking action.
3.   The school supports students in learning how to reflect on their experiences and make more informed, independent choices.
4.   The school provides opportunities for student action to be an integral part of the curriculum and/or an extension of the curriculum.
MYP:
5.   Community and service is part of all students' MYP experience in every year of the programme.
6.   Community and service is coordinated through every year of the programme to ensure progression of learning.
7.   Community and service involves all subject teachers in raising awareness of community issues.
8.   Community and service is monitored for each student and is reflected in the portfolio of achievement.
Diploma Programme:
9.   The school provides opportunities for students to choose their own CAS activities and to undertake activities in a local or international environment as appropriate.

Standard D2
In the final year of the programme, all students complete a programme-specific project that allows them to demonstrate a consolidation of their learning, in the case of the PYP and MYP, and to demonstrate the extension and development of their learning in the Diploma Programme.

Practices
Common:
1. Teachers/supervisors understand the requirements of the exhibition/personal project/ extended essay and how to assess it.
2. Teachers/supervisors guide students through each phase of the process.
3. Students are provided with formative feedback throughout the process.
4. Parents are informed about the nature of the exhibition/personal project/extended essay, its role in the programme and the work expected from the students.
PYP:
5. The exhibition is thoroughly planned well in advance and records are kept of the process.
6. All students are actively and productively involved in the exhibition from planning stages to the final presentation.
7. The exhibition reflects all major features of the programme including evidence of the five essential elements.
8. The exhibition incorporates a range of media and forms of expression (for example, written work, oral presentations, performances).
9. The exhibition is shared with members of the wider school community (for example, governing body, parents, secondary school colleagues and students).
10. There is adequate assessment of and reflection on the exhibition, with opportunity provided for input from students, parents and teachers.
11. There is appropriate monitoring of the exhibition, and adequate records are kept of teacher collaboration and reflection.
MYP:
12. Students are fully briefed on the nature, objectives and assessment criteria of the personal project.
13. Students have been adequately prepared for the process of the personal project through approaches to learning.

14.	Students are allowed to choose from a variety of projects according to the guidelines provided in the *Personal Project* guide.
15.	Students are provided with adequate individual supervision in the school.
16.	Students keep a process journal, and are aware that the process is as important as the product itself.
17.	Students have access to adequate resources in the school and community.
18.	Students are given the chance to present their project and its significance to an audience (for example, through an interview, class presentation or special event).
19.	All supervisors are fully briefed about the nature of their responsibilities and the work expected from the students.
20.	All supervisors participate in the standardization of assessment, where appropriate.
Diploma Programme:	
21.	The school promotes the value of the extended essay as a research exercise.
22.	Appropriate provision is made for the supervision of the extended essay.
23.	Students are fully briefed on the nature, objectives and assessment criteria of the extended essay.
24.	Students have access to adequate resources in the school and community.
25.	All supervisors are fully briefed about the nature of their responsibilities and the work expected from the students.