

feature

The expansion of the IB

Independent schools in the UK agree that the International Baccalaureate is a popular selling point with international and domestic students alike.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma has been offered in schools in the UK for nearly 30 years. However, dissatisfaction with changes brought in to the traditional A-level system in 2000 has recently caused the IB to be adopted by a growing number of schools looking for a credible alternative to A-levels.

Jill Rutherford from Oakham School in Rutland explains her school's decision to introduce the programme in 2001. "This was at the same time as the introduction of the new AS/A2 exams and the then-head of Oakham School introduced the IB as a means of keeping the breadth of subjects that we offer at GCSE," she says. Under the IB curriculum, students are required to take six subjects, including a foreign language, instead of the three usually taken at A-level.

According to Rutherford, the number of schools offering the IB in the UK has grown at a rate of 10 to 15 per cent per year in the last few years. At Ardingly College in Haywards Heath, the IB diploma has been available to students since 2001. John Langford at the college says that the decision was made to offer it because they wanted "to offer an alternative to a system that was becoming discredited, an option for international students, a more demanding option than A-level [and a] better preparation for university".

While some schools are new converts to the attractions of the IB, others have long recognised the qualification's merits as a selling point for international students. Graham Lacey from Sevenoaks School in Kent says that they have been offering the IB to students for 26 years.

"It was considered a suitable complement to the decision to attract more students from abroad to the school," says Lacey, adding that the qualification was initially launched at the same time as two international boarding houses for boys and girls were opened by the school.

He continues, "Over the years, an increasing number of English students began to opt for the IB. This provided a background to the decision in 2000 to go over to an all-IB school" – this decision will see the phasing out of all A-levels by September 2006.

St Clare's in Oxford is another school that has phased out A-levels in favour of the IB. "We are the oldest established IB school in England," claims Nick Lee at St Clare's. "We have always had a commitment to international education. We were teaching A-levels to a mixture of British and international students. The IB was a good bet for both groups."

Schools offering the IB report that it is often a key component of their international marketing plans. Chris Hiscock from Marymount International School in Kingston-upon-Thames says, "I travel overseas to fairs and we attend UK exhibitions. We also recruit students through overseas agents. After we explain [that we offer the IB] it is very well received."

Rutherford says that the diploma is a "major factor in the school" and generates large international interest. She adds, "We receive up to six enquiries per day from international students and their parents interested in taking the IB diploma here. Students are joining the school at the age of 10 to 13 because they look forward to taking the IB here."

In terms of its prestige within higher education circles in the UK, the IB also appears to be riding the wave of current popular opinion. "It offers a distinct attraction to university admissions tutors because its method of grading provides a finer calibration at the top end," asserts Lacey. He explains, "Anyone achieving approximately 36 points out of a maximum of 45 could be considered to have the equivalent of three A grades at A-levels. So an IB candidate who has achieved 42 points, for example, really is someone special to a top and popular university."

subject focus

Film studies

There are a number of options for students wanting to take a film studies course.

Location	Name of institution	Types of courses	Subject areas	No. start dates p/yr	No. students in dept.
Australia					
Perth, WA	Edith Cowan University	ug,pg	a,d,l,p,s,sc	2	1,600
Canada					
Galiano Island, BC	Gulf Islands Film School	ce,sh	a,d,l,p,s,sc,o	32	400
Toronto, ON	York University	ug,pg	d,l,p,s,sc,o	1	300
Vancouver, BC	VFS	ce,pg,sh	a,d,l,p,s,sc,o	6	4,200
New Zealand					
Auckland	New Zealand Film Academy	sh	d,l,p,s,sc,o	4	12
Nelson	Nelson Marlborough Institute of Tech.	sh	d,l,p,s,sc,o	2	24
UK					
Canterbury	Canterbury Christchurch University	ug,pg	a,d,l,p,s,sc,o	1	115
London	London Film Academy	pg,sh	d,l,p,s,sc,o	13	50
USA					
Chicago, IL	Columbia College Chicago	ug,pg	a,d,l,p,s,sc,o	2	2,000
Los Angeles, CA	American Film Institute	pg	d,p,sc,o	1	240
Los Angeles, CA	Los Angeles City College	ug	d,l,p,s,sc,o	2	500
Rockport, ME	The International Film Workshops	ce,ug,pg,sh	a,d,l,p,s,sc,o	–	15
Winston-Salem, NC	North Carolina School of the Arts	ug,pg	a,d,l,p,s,sc,o	1	240

ce continuing education sh short courses sc script writing l lighting s sound a animation p production d direction o others pg post graduate ug undergraduate