

## IB Exams/assessment costs

IB exams are sometimes cited for their seemingly high cost when compared to other rigorous assessments such as the AP exams or ACT/SAT exams which may also be used by colleges, students, and their families to assess achievement or college preparedness. IB exams differ greatly from these more well-understood forms of testing which are often completed in one sitting and include large portions of easy-to-grade multiple choice or short-answer questions.

IB exams include much more than a traditional one-sitting exam. A student taking one IB course may have:

- A two to four hour written exam in May including two or three different components – each scored by a different examiner;
- An internal assessment which is scored by the teacher and moderated by another examiner from outside the school; and,
- An external assessment scored by an examiner from outside the school.

All of these scores are compiled after assessments are completed and a single score from 1 to 7 is established based on the overall performance of the student against all the standards established for the course.

### May exams

The IB sit-down exams consist of two or three individual exams which are scored separately by different examiners. Only rarely (one of the three science exams) are multiple choice questions used. These assessments are scored by an examiner who must judge the answers against agreed upon criteria. The quality assurance within the evaluation process includes at least two tiers of higher examiners who check the accuracy of lower examiners' work. This quality assurance is done for all external assessments.

### External assessment

These include individually scored written assignments and oral exams in English and second languages. Other forms of external assessment include film production and analysis and video or audio recordings in performance-based courses such as music and dance. Visual arts students are evaluated on a combination of uploaded portfolios and journals which document their creative process over the two years of the course.

### Internal assessment

These assessments are completed during the course with the support of the teacher. This unique aspect of the IB exam process means that a student achieves a portion (from 15 – 50%) of their final grade based on work done in the classroom and which is graded by their IB teacher. These scores are moderated for accuracy by sending samples of scored work to expert IB teachers outside the school so that teachers' scores are checked for accuracy every year. Scores which are either too severe or too lenient are "moderated" up or down against the accepted standards.

In addition, students who seek to earn the IB Diploma submit a 4,000 word Extended Essay (research paper) and a 1,500 word Theory of Knowledge essay which are scored by more than one examiner at no additional cost beyond the initial registration fee.

IB's current pricing structure is to register the student for IB examinations for \$160 (a one-time fee) and then to charge \$110 per exam. Thus a student taking one exam is charged \$270 but two exams cost a total of \$380 and so on. A student taking exams in more than one year is only charged exam fees in the second year.

## What do IB Diploma Program courses aim to assess?

### From the IB assessment guide:

*DP assessment procedures measure the extent to which students have mastered advanced academic skills, for example:*

- *analyzing and presenting information*
- *evaluating and constructing arguments*
- *solving problems creatively.*

*Basic skills are also assessed, including:*

- *retaining knowledge*
- *understanding key concepts*
- *applying standard methods.*

*Examinations form the basis of the assessment for most courses. This is because of their high levels of objectivity and reliability.*

*They include:*

- *essays*
- *structured problems*
- *short-response questions*
- *data-response questions*
- *text-response questions*
- *case-study questions*
- *multiple-choice questions – though these are rarely used.*

*Internal assessment*

*Teacher assessment is also used for most courses. This includes:*

- *oral work in languages*
- *fieldwork in geography*
- *laboratory work in the sciences*
- *investigations in mathematics*
- *artistic performances.*