



Stony Point High School
IB Diploma Programme
CAS Student Handbook

Revised: September 2020

In this document you will find:

- Information and advice about CAS
- Descriptions of each strand
- A step-by-step guide
- The official proposal questions
- The 7 learning outcomes
- The reflection questions
- The 5 stages of CAS
- FAQs

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CAS:

“CAS” stands for Creativity, Activity, and Service, and is a mandatory component of the IB Diploma. CAS requires students to set their own self-improvement goals and participate in a variety of rewarding and challenging life experiences. CAS was designed to balance out your academic life with some fun, challenging, and inspiring real-life experiences. YOU get to learn and experience what YOU want, and set your own goals for success! In your other classes you acquire knowledge of the world, and through CAS you acquire knowledge of yourself and others. CAS encourages us to enjoy life, try new things, learn new skills, challenge ourselves, and have fun! Success in CAS, as in life, is not about perfection; it’s about growth and progress.

WHAT IS CAS? CAS stands for CREATIVITY, ACTIVITY, SERVICE

CREATIVITY:

This involves activities that nurture your creative side. You could try painting, take a pottery class, learn to play a musical instrument or learn a new song, try photography, cooking, karaoke, film studies, shoot and edit a video, write poetry and short stories, and so on. This also includes activities that involve creative problem solving, planning, brainstorming, building, and DIY projects. Teaching your creative skills to others can also count.

ACTIVITY:

This involves nurturing your physical, nutritional, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. You could try a healthy diet, work out to get in shape, read a self-help book to improve some aspect of your life, try yoga or meditation, and if you already play a sport, you can set goals to improve certain skills within that sport. Teaching these skills to others can also count.

SERVICE:

This involves unpaid volunteer work, like fundraising for a variety of causes, beautification projects, serving the less fortunate, and otherwise volunteering your time.

-Direct service: Close interaction with the people, animals, or environment being served.

-Indirect service: Students may not meet or interact with those who benefit from the service.

-Research and Advocacy: Students collect information on a topic of importance (research) and then report on it to increase awareness and promote change (advocacy).

OTHER?

There are plenty of activities that meet the spirit and philosophy of CAS (self-improvement, self-knowledge, edification) but don't quite fall within the 3 traditional CAS strands. If you have an idea, just run it by me and I will consider it. For example, learning a new "adulting" skill; self-study of a topic not covered in school; experiencing a different culture; visiting a museum, attending a theatre or musical performance, attending workshops, unpaid internships, and more!

WHAT DOES NOT COUNT FOR CAS?

- Activities you get paid for
- Activities that benefit only your immediate family
- Activities that are already a part of an IB course curriculum
- Some religious or political activities (my discretion)
- Activities that are too trivial, easy, or involve simple, repetitive tasks done in isolation.

DOCUMENTATION AND REFLECTION:

- All of your CAS work is logged into managebac.
- Once you participate in your CAS experience, you must add it to your portfolio in managebac.
- All experiences require DOCUMENTATION.
- Documentation requires you to prove that you participated in the experience. The most common evidence for proof is to upload photos and supervisor reviews.
- HALF of your experiences require reflection.
- Save your reflections for the experiences that were exceptionally fun, insightful, and meaningful.

THE MAJOR CAS "PROJECT"

All students must participate in at least ONE CAS project. Your project is supposed to be an especially meaningful and significant CAS experience, where you take on an important leadership role. It should last at least one month, from initial planning stages to completion, and it must be collaborative. The people you work with do NOT have to be in IB or even affiliated with the school.

Disclaimer for 2020/2021: Because of Covid 19 and our current quarantine conditions, some CAS experiences may have to be avoided or modified for safety reasons, especially ones that might involve collaboration and close contact with others. Please seek clarification from parents and your CAS coordinator when participating in collaborative CAS experiences.

THE OFFICIAL CAS PROPOSAL:

Once you have an idea for CAS, you should complete the official CAS proposal below and email it to the CAS coordinator for approval. Once you receive an approval email from me, you may then create the experience in managebac and participate in the experience. If you would like to run the idea by your coordinator first before you spend time writing the proposal, just to be sure it counts, that is also acceptable.

1. Give your CAS experience a descriptive title, number it, and give the date.
Example: (#14 3/25/21 "Volunteering at the animal shelter")
2. Describe your experience in detail, including your roles and responsibilities.
3. Is this independent or collaborative?
4. Is this experience Creativity, Activity, Service, or Other? Explain.
5. Predict which of the 7 learning outcomes you will meet, and how. (see below or in the CAS guide)
6. How will you learn or grow from this experience?
7. Determine the steps necessary to accomplish your goals and give yourself an approximate deadline.
8. Determine where you can go for assistance, advice, and information. What resources and supplies might you need, and how will you acquire them?
9. Who will supervise this CAS experience?
10. Are there any risks involved with this experience? Explain
11. How will you document your project? (journals, spreadsheets, photos, videos, feedback from others, etc.)

SPONTANEOUS PROPOSALS:

Spontaneous CAS experience proposal: (for CAS-worthy experiences that were unplanned. This proposal will obviously be sent after the fact.)

1. Give your CAS experience a descriptive title and date, and number it.
2. Describe your experience in detail.
3. Was this experience Creativity, Activity, Service, or multiple? Explain.
4. Which of the 7 learning outcomes does this meet?
5. Who can act as the supervisor for this experience?
6. Were there any risks involved with this experience? Explain.
7. How did you document this experience?

THE CAS LEARNING OUTCOMES

All CAS experiences must meet at least ONE of these 7 learning outcomes, and you must meet each outcome at least once.

1. Identify own strengths and develop areas for growth: Students are able to see themselves as individuals with various abilities and skills, of which some are more developed than others.
2. Demonstrate that challenges have been undertaken, developing new skills in the process: A new challenge may be an unfamiliar experience or an extension of an existing one. The newly acquired or developed skills may be shown through experiences that the student has not previously undertaken or through increased expertise in an established area.
3. Demonstrate how to initiate and plan a CAS experience: Students can articulate the stages from conceiving an idea to executing a plan for a CAS experience or series of CAS experiences. This may be accomplished in collaboration with other participants. Students may show their knowledge and awareness by building on a previous experience, or by launching a new idea or process.
4. Show commitment and perseverance in CAS experiences: Students demonstrate regular involvement and active engagement in CAS.
5. Demonstrate the skills and recognize the benefits of working collaboratively: Students are able to identify, demonstrate and critically discuss the benefits and challenges of collaboration gained through CAS experiences.
6. Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance: Students are able to identify and demonstrate their understanding of global issues, make responsible decisions, and take appropriate action in response to the issue either locally, nationally or internationally.
7. Recognize and consider the ethics of choices and actions: Students show awareness of the consequences of choices and actions in planning and carrying out CAS experiences.

CAS REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Once a CAS experience is complete, if the experience is particularly meaningful, enjoyable, or challenging, students should write a reflection by answering the questions below. A few sentences for each question is sufficient. Ultimately, students should reflect on HALF of all experiences. These questions are already in managebac.

1. Describe what happened with this experience and to what extent you met your goals.
2. What did you learn about yourself and about others through this experience?
3. What abilities and values have you developed through this experience?
4. How has this experience affected you emotionally or changed your perspective?
5. Which learning outcomes did you accomplish and how?

The five CAS stages are as follows.

1. Investigation: Students identify their interests, skills and talents to be used in considering opportunities for CAS experiences, as well as areas for personal growth and development. Students Investigate what they want to do and determine the purpose for their CAS experience. In the case of service, students identify a need they want to address.
2. Preparation: Students clarify roles and responsibilities, develop a plan of actions to be taken, identify specified resources and timelines, and acquire any skills as needed to engage in the CAS experience.
3. Action: Students implement their idea or plan. This often requires decision-making and problem solving. Students may work individually, with partners, or in groups.
4. Reflection: Students describe what happened, express feelings, generate ideas, and raise questions. Reflection can occur at any time during CAS to further understanding, to assist with revising plans, to learn from the experience, and to make explicit connections between their growth, accomplishments, and the learning outcomes for personal awareness. Reflection may lead to new action.
5. Demonstration: Students make explicit what and how they learned and what they have accomplished, for example, by sharing their CAS experience through their CAS portfolio or with others in an informal or formal manner. Through demonstration and communication, students solidify their understanding and evoke response from others.

CAS STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE:

1. Think of an idea for an experience that counts for CAS, complete the official proposal, and email it to the CAS coordinator. (If you're not sure your idea will count, you can run it by the coordinator first, either during class or through an email, before you write up the proposal.)
2. Once you receive an approval response from me, you may create the CAS activity in managebac and complete all the necessary information. Upload your proposal as well. Make sure to give your CAS activity a descriptive title and put the current date in the title as well.
3. Participate in your activity according to the timeline you set for yourself.
4. Upload reflections and documentation along the way if appropriate.
5. Choose an adult who is in charge to act as the supervisor for your CAS project. Once you complete your CAS project, this supervisor will submit valuable feedback and an official review. If there is no adult supervisor available, you may put me down as your supervisor.
6. Once you have finished your activity, upload any remaining documentation (required) and complete a final reflection (if necessary). Double check that all of your documentation and reflections were correctly uploaded. Ask your supervisor to complete the supervisor review. Requesting the supervisor review is the very last thing you should do.

SUPERVISORS

For most CAS experiences, you must name a supervisor. This should be an adult who can vouch for your participation in the activity. Once you finish the activity, you will solicit a supervisor review through managebac (usually email) which asks them to briefly comment on your performance. Your parents cannot be your supervisor, nor can other students. If there is no supervisor available (like for solo activities) then you may put ME as the supervisor for that activity, but this should occur no more than a third of the time. Most of your experiences should be collaborative.

TIMELINE

Officially, CAS lasts 18 months, starting in September of your Junior year.

- September will be month 1 (submit goals, counts as first meeting)
- May is month 9 (second meeting)
- March is month 18
- Summer months do count and are a great way to get ahead
- I review all CAS portfolios at the end of March
final meeting in April.
- I submit my final assessment to IB in May

ADVICE AND REMINDERS:

- EVERYTHING should be emailed to me for approval first BEFORE beginning the activity and BEFORE putting it into managebac. There shouldn't be anything in MB that I haven't seen and approved.
- If you maintain the 2 experiences per month pace, you will easily reach the minimum 36 experiences in 18 months.
- Look for the "short and sweet" CAS opportunities to balance out the longer, more involved experiences.
- Look for things you already do that could count. You don't have to start everything from scratch!
- Pay attention to the announcements; there are lots of opportunities for CAS experiences going on all the time.
- Use the CAS google classroom and Schoology group to announce and find CAS opportunities.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- **Can I finish all my CAS experiences/reflections in just a few months?** No, you can't. IB requires "consistent and regular participation" in CAS. Completing just 2 CAS experiences each month will put you on pace to finish.
- **Can I repeat the same kind of activity multiple times?** After about the third similar activity, I will encourage you to step out of your comfort zone and try other experiences.
- **Since we only have to reflect on half of our experiences, can I reflect on just the first 18 and then not do anymore after that?** No, you must be regular and consistent with your reflections. Save them for the most meaningful and memorable experiences.
- **Can my parents or other students be my supervisor?** No, sorry.
- More FAQ to come!