Dear prospective Grade 12 students and their families,

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME FOR 2015 ENTRY

Over the next few months, students in Grade 11 (or equivalent if applying from another school) will be making decisions in collaboration with their teachers with regard to what to study in the IB DP. This letter offers an overview of the IB DP (some of which is adapted from the IB website, [www.ibo.org/diploma](http://www.ibo.org/diploma)) as well as detailing ISM’s subject offering and requirements for students to enter studies in Grade 12. In Grades 12 and 13, all students work on IB DP courses. Almost all aim for the ‘full’ IB Diploma, which is recognised by universities all over the world. Alternatively, some internal candidates may pursue a ‘lighter’ programme by following four or five individual IBDP courses, which may be recognised by some universities in Britain and America, but does not carry the global recognition of the ‘full’ IB Diploma.

ISM has offered the IB Diploma Programme since 1987 and this experience and expertise is certainly evident in the results and university admissions that our students gain, year on year. For more information on our IBDP assessment record, please refer to the annual ISM Assessment Handbook, or attend one of our informative presentations.
Introduction to the IB DP

The IB DP is a challenging two-year curriculum for students aged 16 to 19. It leads to a qualification that is widely recognized by the world's leading universities. Students learn more than a collection of facts. The Diploma Programme prepares students for university and encourages them to:

- ask challenging questions
- learn how to learn
- develop a strong sense of their own identity and culture
- develop the ability to communicate with and understand people from other countries and cultures.

The Curriculum

The curriculum is illustrated by a hexagon (see previous page) with the three parts of the core at its centre. Students study six subjects selected from the subject groups. Normally three subjects are studied at higher level and the remaining three subjects are studied at standard level. All three parts of the core – extended essay, theory of knowledge and creativity, action, service – are compulsory and are central to the philosophy of the Diploma Programme.

Extended essay (EE): The extended essay has a prescribed limit of 4,000 words. It offers the opportunity to investigate a topic of individual interest, and acquaints students with the independent research and writing skills expected at university.

Theory of Knowledge (TOK): The interdisciplinary TOK course is designed to provide coherence by exploring the nature of knowledge across disciplines, encouraging a metacognitive approach enhancing critical learning and promoting an appreciation of other cultural perspectives.

Creativity, action, service (CAS): Participation in the school’s CAS programme of experiential learning encourages students to be actively involved in artistic pursuits, sports and community service work, thus encouraging students to personally take action and fostering their awareness and appreciation of life outside the academic arena, while developing in them the key qualities of goal setting, active planning, ongoing self-assessment and evaluation.

For a more in-depth overview of the IB DP and the differences between the full IB Diploma and individual IB DP courses, please see the ISM IB Diploma Handbook, downloadable from the school website.
IB DP Subject Groups

Students must choose one subject from each of the groups below. Please note that all students follow courses in English (within group 1 or 2), Italian (within group 1 or 2) and Mathematics (within group 5). Full course descriptions can be read in the ISM IBDP Handbook, downloadable from the school website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Courses offered by ISM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Studies in Language &amp; Literature</td>
<td>Either English A Literature or English A Language &amp; Literature or Italian A Language or Japanese A (Literature) or self-taught Language A (with private teacher)#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Language Acquisition</td>
<td>Either Language B: English, French, Spanish, Italian or Mandarin# or Language abinitio (beginners): Italian# or a 2nd Language A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Individuals &amp; Societies</td>
<td>Either Geography or History or Economics or Business Management or Environmental Systems &amp; Societies###</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Experimental Sciences</td>
<td>Either Biology or Physics or Chemistry or Environmental Systems &amp; Societies###</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Mathematics</td>
<td>Either Mathematics High or Mathematics Standard or Mathematical Studies#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 The Arts *</td>
<td>Either Visual Arts or Theatre or a 3rd Language or a 2nd Group 3 subject or a 2nd Group 4 subject</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note that if a student does not wish to pursue an ‘Arts’ subject in Group 6, they have the option to study either a 3rd Language or a 2nd Group 3 subject or a 2nd Group 4 subject.
** Environmental Systems & Societies is a transdisciplinary subject that can be studied as either a Group 3 and/or a Group 4 subject – it meets the criteria for both groups. However, it may not be studied in conjunction with Biology.
# These subjects are only offered at Standard Level.

Please note that all of the courses listed are dependent on a minimum class size being reached and on timetabling options available. We will try to satisfy all students’ needs, but no guarantees about course availability can be made.
Choosing IB DP Subjects

The demands of the IB DP cannot be underestimated. Higher level courses take students deeply into their specialist disciplines while the overall range of activities guarantees a personal preparation that is valuable for adult life and that is especially relevant to the demands of university study. The choice of subjects usually requires much advice and guidance. Questions to bear in mind include:

- the difficult academic demands of the subjects at Higher level;
- admission requirements for certain university faculties (see section on university requirements);
- the relevance of courses for the student’s possible career;
- timetable limitations (not all combinations are possible).

Assessment

At the end of the two-year programme, students are assessed both internally and externally in ways that measure individual performance against stated objectives for each subject.

Internal assessment

In all subjects, at least some of the assessment is carried out internally by teachers (typically 20-30 per cent), who mark individual pieces of work produced as part of a course of study. Examples include oral exercises in language subjects, projects, student portfolios, class presentations, practical laboratory work, mathematical investigations and artistic performances.

External assessment

- Some assessment tasks are conducted and overseen by teachers without the restrictions of examination conditions, but are then marked externally by examiners. Examples include world literature assignments for language A, essays for theory of knowledge and the extended essay.
- Because of the greater degree of objectivity and reliability provided by the standard examination environment, externally marked examinations in May of Grade 13 form the greatest share of the assessment for each subject (typically 70-80%).

The grading system is criterion based (results are determined by performance against set standards, not by each student’s position in the overall rank order); validity, reliability and fairness are the watchwords of the Diploma Programme’s assessment strategy.
Italian Universities

International Baccalaureate Diplomas issued by the International School of Milan are recognised as diplomas of “maturità” (passing the “Stato conclusivo” examination) of the study routes “Liceo Linguistico”, “Liceo Scientifico” e “Liceo Scienze Umane”. The requirement for this recognition is for students to choose study paths determined by law and updated according to "D.M. 18 ottobre 2010, applicativo del D.P.R. 2 agosto 2010, con Decreto del 13 marzo 2012". The study paths recognised and currently offered by the International School of Milan are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic Route</th>
<th>Scientific Route</th>
<th>Human Sciences Route</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Italian A – Literature (higher level)</td>
<td>Italian A – Literature (higher or standard level)</td>
<td>Italian A – Literature (higher or standard level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Language B (higher level)</td>
<td>Language B (higher or standard level)</td>
<td>Language B (higher or standard level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 History or Economics or Geography (higher or standard level)</td>
<td>History or Economics or Geography (higher or standard level)</td>
<td>History (higher level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Chemistry or Physics or Biology or Environmental Systems* (higher or standard level)</td>
<td>Chemistry or Physics or Biology (higher or standard level)</td>
<td>Chemistry or Physics or Biology or Environmental Systems* (higher or standard level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Mathematics or Mathematical Studies* (higher or standard level)</td>
<td>Mathematics (higher level)</td>
<td>Mathematics or Mathematical Studies* (higher or standard level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Language B (higher or standard level)</td>
<td>Chemistry or Biology or Environmental Systems* or Visual Arts (higher or standard level)</td>
<td>Geography or Economics or Visual Arts (higher or standard level)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The subjects chosen must obviously meet the IB requirements for the award of an IB Diploma.
* the Environmental Systems and Mathematical Studies courses are only offered by the IB at standard level.

Italian Universities will require results to be legalized by the Consulate in Geneva and a system is in place to have this done by the school in the Spring of Grade 13. It should be noted, however, that some private universities apply the above requirements with some flexibility and their policies may be different each year and even with each student.

The school organises a number of events related to Italian University admissions and updates will be provided via the weekly bulletins. For more information, contact Ms. Congedo (mcongedo@ism-ac.it).
UK universities

The Diploma is fully recognized by British Universities and students will undergo a full programme of university research and counselling throughout Grades 12 and 13. As well as looking at individual university websites, spend some time researching courses and course requirements at:

Universities and College Admissions Service: [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

The best UK universities will typically expect and require good grades in the following courses for entry onto certain degree programmes, for example:

- **Architecture:** Mathematics HL, Physics HL, Visual Arts HL
- **Economics:** Mathematics HL, Economics HL
- **Engineering:** Mathematics HL, Physics HL
- **Law:** History HL, English A HL
- **Medicine:** Mathematics HL, plus two group 4 subjects at HL
- **Politics/International Relations:** History HL

There are also requirements for other courses as well, which can be researched on the UCAS website. For more information, contact Ms. Barton ([kbarton@ism-ac.it](mailto:kbarton@ism-ac.it)).

US universities

We work with an external US universities consultant who is based in Milan: Ms. Myers ([mmyers-edm90@post.harvard.edu](mailto:mmyers-edm90@post.harvard.edu)). She can advise individual students on the application and admissions process, but to get a general idea you may wish to first consult [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). The SAT test is required by most US universities, in addition to the highly regarded IB Diploma.

Universities Elsewhere

If you wish to apply to a University outside of Britain, Italy or America, it is wise to contact the university in question before making your IB subject choices. This is because some countries have specific requirements that are completely inflexible. You should use the country search facility on the IB website ([www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org)) for up-to-date information. There are external consultants operating in Italy, such as [www.omniadmissions.com](http://www.omniadmissions.com) who may be able to provide further assistance in this area.
Requirements for entry into Grade 12 for internal candidates

(external candidates should refer to our Secondary School Admissions Policy)

Performing well in the MYP is the key requirement for entry into Grade 12, although other aspects may be taken into account, such as the students’ disciplinary record and the grade awarded for the Personal Project (a minimum of a 3 is expected).

The student’s average score, including the Personal Project, come the end of Grade 11 determine whether or not:

- the student will be admitted into Grade 12
- the student will be admitted to the 'full' IB Diploma, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVERAGE POINTS</th>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 4.0</td>
<td>No entry into Grade 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 – 4.49</td>
<td>Individual IB DP courses (ISM Diploma only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.50 – 5.00</td>
<td>IB Diploma negotiation of subjects and on trial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5.00</td>
<td>'Full' IB Diploma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: The following criteria, which must be met by the end of grade 11, also apply when wanting to study subjects at Diploma level:

1. To pursue a subject at Higher Level, it will be necessary to score at least a 5 in that subject at MYP. For some courses, a minimum of a level 6 is advisable.
2. To pursue a subject at Standard Level, it will be necessary to score at least a 4 in that subject at MYP. For some courses, a minimum of a level 5 is advisable.
3. Mathematics will require the following in MYP Mathematics criterion A (Knowledge & Understanding):
   - To study the subject at HL – a minimum of 7 out of 8
   - To study the subject at SL – a minimum of 5 out of 8.
4. Courses that you have not studied before will take other aspects into account. To study Economics SL/HL or Business Management HL, you must have attained at least a level 5 in Maths and will be expected to be studying Maths Standard or Maths High at Diploma level.
**Action needed**

1. Have productive discussions at the December three-way conferences, check your December and February reports and identify specific areas for improvement in each of your subjects.
2. Discuss, as a family, what your options are in terms of universities and careers;
   a. Consider in which country(ies) you may choose to study;
   b. Consider what university course(s) you want to take and what the requirements for admission are.
3. Seek advice from your teachers. Grade 11 ‘options week’ in February, as well as the 3-way conferences in December and April will provide excellent opportunities to discuss choices with subject teachers, the Grade Coordinator, IB Diploma Coordinator, Dean (regarding university requirements) and Principal of Upper Years.
4. Make your provisional choices on the form attached.

Please refer to the Diploma Programme page of the ISM website ([www.ism-ac.it](http://www.ism-ac.it)) for more extensive information about the programme, including handbooks and presentations. Furthermore, there will be an IB DP Introductory Presentations for parents of Grade 11 prior to the aforementioned 3-way conference. You are also free to contact us at school.

Kind regards,

IAIN SACHDEV  
Principal of Upper Years
Once you have spoken to your teachers and to your parents, please return this sheet to your form tutor no later than **Wednesday 4th March**. These provisional choices are not binding and are subject to availability. You must choose **one subject** from each of groups detailed on page 3 of the letter and indicate your provisional choices below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Delete as appropriate</th>
<th>Level (HL/SL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Language &amp; Literature</td>
<td>Either A (Literature) or A (Language &amp; Literature)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Language Acquisition</td>
<td>Either B or abinitio or A (Literature) or A (Language &amp; Literature)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Individuals &amp; Societies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Experimental Sciences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6*</td>
<td>The Arts / Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) I have read the information regarding the requirements for Italian universities. I understand that my provisional course selection **does / does not** meet these requirements (delete as appropriate).

b) I have read the information regarding the requirements for entry into Grade 12. My **average score** on the February interim report was ................. (please complete to two decimal places).

Signed (student)..................................  Signed (parent).................................. Date........................................