The IB Diploma Programme is an internationally benchmarked, rigorous academic curriculum designed to help learners develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills that will prepare them for success in university and other tertiary education. It is a pathway that is recognized by more than 3,500 educational institutions worldwide, including prestigious universities such as Harvard, Stanford, and Oxford. The programme encourages students to become internationally minded learners who embrace diversity, respect multiple viewpoints, and are committed to understanding and respecting the world’s cultural, national, religious, and ethnic differences.

1. **It offers academic breadth and depth**

We know graduates do well. In 2011, figures from the UK’s Higher Education Statistics Agency found that IB graduates were much more likely to be enrolling in one of the top 20 higher education institutions than entrants holding other qualifications.* Studying six subjects at Higher Level, where they receive 240 teaching hours in total, IB Diploma Programme students follow three subjects at Higher Level, where they receive 240 teaching hours in total. This doesn’t come at the expense of academic rigour, though. IB Diploma Programme students are not forced to narrow their choices while still at school, and can keep university options open. That’s why research by SRI International found that IB graduates were much more likely to be enrolled in one of the top 20 higher education institutions than entrants holding other qualifications.

2. **Graduates care about more than just results**

The creativity, action, service (CAS) requirement in the Diploma Programme encourages experiential learning—acquiring knowledge through direct experience. That could mean anything from building new homes in Africa to creating a newspaper for your local community. It gives students a perspective on the world, and the drive to plan their own activities and projects that help distinguish IB alumni in the university admissions process. As IB graduate Gregoire-Francois Legault, now studying at McGill University in Canada, puts it: “While some see (CAS) at first as a pain, most do way more than the 150 required hours.”

3. **It creates independent learners who feel prepared**

Every Diploma Programme graduate will have written an Extended Essay—an immersive research paper of up to 4,000 words that requires independent research and excellent organizational skills. A 2011 survey of university admissions staff undertaken by Cardiff University, UK found that the Extended Essay is considered by admissions officers as having a significant influence on the decision to accept an applicant. IB students comprise 2.4 per cent more likely to be admitted into the top 20 most prestigious universities, including Harvard, Princeton, Yale and Stanford.

4. **It’s a genuinely international qualification**

Major global challenges require global solutions—and the Diploma Programme aims to balance local and national identity with an international mindset as part of its commitment to building a better future. Students learn to see the world from different cultural perspectives, while learning another language that will help them communicate with peers from different backgrounds. “Like all IB programmes, the Diploma Programme aims to encourage students to become internationally minded people who recognize their common humanity and share guardianship of the planet,” explains Robert Harrison, Curriculum Manager for Continuum Development. “IB World Schools help students engage in inquiry, action and reflection on locally and globally significant issues across the curriculum.” And fittingly, the qualification is internationally benchmarked, allowing graduates to continue their studies anywhere in the world.

5. **Universities recognize it—and give credit for it**

The number of higher education institutions recognizing the Diploma Programme grew 21 per cent in 2011, backed by a proactive campaign of engagement, including a range of professional materials made available on the official IB website (www.ibo.org/recognition). And IB students are at an advantage with elite institutions: in the US, IB graduates are 2.14 per cent more likely to be admitted into the top 10 of the country’s most prestigious universities, including Harvard, Princeton, Yale and Stanford.

6. **The IB encourages critical thinking**

Students learn to look beyond the facts: to analyse sources, link one subject to another and question the consensus. Inquisitiveness and interpretation are among the key cognitive properties of IB education: a 2011 study by SRI International found that IB alumni are more likely to pursue a degree in a subject area that requires independent writing. Leading thinkers such as Professor Howard Gardner have identified the ability to reflect and critique as vital to effective 21st century learners.

7. **You’ll never need to learn time management**

All that rigorous, independent study leads to vital organizational techniques that only become more important when students reach university. Good study habits create learners who hit the ground running in higher education. The 2012 Chicago study of Diploma Programme students found that they were able to set aside time for homework and resist going out with their friends when they needed to study.

8. **It assesses more than examination techniques**

Diploma Programme assessments are summative, largely taking place over the two years of study. But ToK is only part of the picture: teachers in IB World Schools are encouraged to plan interdisciplinary classes. Seeing connections between subjects also helps prepare students for higher education studies, where learning is becoming less compartmentalized.

9. **Subjects aren’t taken in isolation**

One of the main differences between the Diploma Programme and other curricula is Theory of Knowledge (ToK)—classes that encourage students to make connections between subjects and gain the skills they need to become critical thinkers and more effective learners, rather than simply repositories of knowledge. IB ToK is only part of the picture: teachers in IB World Schools are encouraged to plan interdisciplinary classes. Seeing connections between subjects also helps prepare students for higher education studies, where learning is becoming less compartmentalized.

10. **And here are 10 more…**

The IB learner profile offers 10 qualities underpinning the Diploma Programme and the learners who embrace it. From “open-minded” to “balanced,” they form a framework for an international education that goes much deeper in meeting the needs of a changing world.