International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme Subject Brief

Mathematics:

Mathematics – Higher level

First assessments 2014 – Last assessments 2020

The IB Diploma Programme (DP) is a rigorous, academically challenging and balanced programme of education designed to prepare students aged 16 to 19 for success at university and life beyond. The DP aims to encourage students to be knowledgeable, inquiring, caring and compassionate, and to develop intercultural understanding, open-mindedness and the attitudes necessary to respect and evaluate a range of viewpoints.

To ensure both breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding, students must choose at least one subject from five groups: 1) their best language, 2) additional language(s), 3) social sciences, 4) experimental sciences, and 5) mathematics. Students may choose either an arts subject from group 6, or a second subject from groups 1 to 5. At least three and not more than four subjects are taken at higher level (240 recommended teaching hours), while the remaining are taken at standard level (150 recommended teaching hours). In addition, three core elements—the extended essay, theory of knowledge and creativity, action, service—are compulsory and central to the philosophy of the programme.

These IB DP subject briefs illustrate four key course components.

I. Course description and aims
II. Curriculum model overview
III. Assessment model
IV. Sample questions

I. Course description and aims

The IB DP higher level mathematics course focuses on developing important mathematical concepts in a comprehensible, coherent and rigorous way, achieved by a carefully balanced approach. Students are encouraged to apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems set in a variety of meaningful contexts. Development of each topic should feature justification and proof of results. Students should expect to develop insight into mathematical form and structure, and should be intellectually equipped to appreciate the links between concepts in different topic areas. They are also encouraged to develop the skills needed to continue their mathematical growth in other learning environments. The internally assessed exploration allows students to develop independence in mathematical learning. Students are encouraged to take a considered approach to various mathematical activities and to explore different mathematical ideas. The exploration also allows students to work without the time constraints of a written examination and to develop the skills they need for communicating mathematical ideas.

The aims of all mathematics courses in group 5 are to enable students to:

- enjoy and develop an appreciation of the elegance and power of mathematics
- develop an understanding of the principles and nature of mathematics
- communicate clearly and confidently in a variety of contexts
- develop logical, critical and creative thinking, and patience and persistence in problem-solving
- employ and refine their powers of abstraction and generalization
- apply and transfer skills to alternative situations, to other areas of knowledge and to future developments
- appreciate how developments in technology and mathematics have influenced each other
- appreciate the moral, social and ethical implications arising from the work of mathematicians and the applications of mathematics
- appreciate the international dimension in mathematics through an awareness of the universality of mathematics and its multicultural and historical perspectives
- appreciate the contribution of mathematics to other disciplines, and as a particular "area of knowledge" in the TOK course.

II. Curriculum model overview

Component	Recommended teaching hours
Topic 1 Algebra	30
Topic 2 Functions and equations	22
Topic 3 Circular functions and trigonometry	22
Topic 4 Vectors	24
Topic 5 Statistics and probability	36
Topic 6 Calculus	48

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Option syllabus content Students must study one of the following options. ***Topic 7*** Statistics and probability ***Topic 8*** Sets, relations and groups ***Topic 9*** Calculus ***Topic 10*** Discrete mathematics	48
Mathematical exploration A piece of individual written work that involves investigating an area of mathematics.	10

III. Assessment model

Having followed the mathematics higher level course, students will be expected to demonstrate the following:

- Knowledge and understanding: recall, select and use knowledge of mathematical facts, concepts and techniques in a variety of familiar and unfamiliar contexts.
- Problem-solving: recall, select and use their knowledge of mathematical skills, results and models in both real and abstract contexts to solve problems.
- Communication and interpretation: transform common realistic contexts into mathematics; comment on the context; sketch or draw mathematical diagrams, graphs or constructions both on paper and using technology; record methods, solutions and conclusions using standardized notation.
- Technology: use technology, accurately, appropriately and efficiently both to explore new ideas and to solve problems.
- Reasoning: construct mathematical arguments through use of precise statements, logical deduction and inference, and by the manipulation of mathematical expressions.
- Inquiry approaches: investigate unfamiliar situations, both abstract and real-world, involving organizing and analysing information, making conjectures, drawing conclusions and testing their validity.

Assessment at a glance

Type of assessment	Format of assessment	Time (hours)	Weighting of final grade (%)
External		5	80
Paper 1 (non-calculator)	Section A: Compulsory short-response questions based on the core syllabus. Section B: Compulsory extended-response questions based on the core syllabus.	2	30
Paper 2 (graphical display calculator required)	Section A: Compulsory short-response questions based on the core syllabus. Section B: Compulsory extended-response questions based on the core syllabus.	2	30
Paper 3 (graphical display calculator required)	Compulsory extended-response questions based mainly on the syllabus options.	1	20
Internal			20
Mathematical exploration	The individual exploration is a piece of written work that involves investigating an area of mathematics.		

IV. Sample questions

- The vectors a, b, c satisfy the equation a+b+c=0. Show that a×b=b×c=c×a.
- Consider the following system of equations:

  $x + y + z = 1$
  $2x + 3y + z = 3$
  $x + 3y - z = \lambda$

  where $\lambda \varepsilon R$.

  A. Show that this system does not have a unique solution for any value of λ.

  B. i. Determine the value of λ for which the system is consistent.
  ii. For this value of λ, find the general solution of the system.

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