

## STEPS TO SUCCESS IN CAS

### **Step one:**

#### **Pre planning- Understand what CAS is.**

You must self-review at the beginning of your CAS experience and set personal goals for what you hope to achieve through your CAS program. This will involve identifying your interests, strengths, weaknesses, and resources. Read the CAS handbook and CAS guide, consult with the CAS coordinator and CAS advisors.

### **Step two:**

#### **Create and Develop a plan for completing your CAS requirements.**

During the September of your IB 1 year, you must develop a plan where you outline how you are going to achieve the CAS requirements. You will present your plan to the CAS coordinator at the beginning of October of your IB 1 year. This plan should outline some of the activities that you will do over the next 18 months, have a loose timeline for when you will complete these activities, and identify the learning outcomes that each activity will address. Make sure that each of your proposed activities (and any activity that you plan on counting as part of your CAS) meets all 4 requirements:

1. real, purposeful activities, with significant outcomes
2. personal challenge – tasks must extend the student and be achievable in scope
3. thoughtful consideration, such as planning, reviewing progress, reporting
4. reflection on outcomes and personal learning

If an activity doesn't fit any of these 4 requirements and does not involve learning, then it is not CAS-worthy. Please note that this plan is fluid and will change. Do not worry if your plan evolves over the 18 months of your CAS work.

All CAS students undertake a CAS project involving teamwork that integrates one or more of the strands of creativity, activity and service. Duration is a minimum of one month.

You are expected to take part in activities that involve you in the school community, national and the international community. You should plan on spending half a day at school week (at least four hours per week) or approximately 150 hours in total, with a reasonable balance between creativity, activity and service.

Remember that all the activities must be pre-approved by the CAS Coordinator before you start an activity.

### **Step three:**

#### **Maintaining and completing a CAS portfolio**

The CAS portfolio is used by students to plan their CAS program, reflect on their CAS experiences and gather evidence of involvement in CAS (for example: photographs, visual and audio recordings, documents, posters, programs of events or performances) that demonstrate participation in CAS and achievement of the seven CAS learning outcomes. The CAS portfolio can also reveal how you have developed the attributes of the IB learner profile. It is not formally assessed.

During the three scheduled CAS interviews the CAS portfolio is discussed and appropriate encouragement and advice is given. The CAS portfolio is used to showcase the student's CAS program and should be a source of pride for the student. You are given the choice of how the CAS portfolio is assembled, what you include and how it is shared.

While the IB does not require any particular form for the CAS portfolio, it can be digital, online, diary, written journal, artwork, video log, blog or a scrapbook, it is suggested to divide it into three sections: “**Profile**”, “**Experiences**”, and “**Evidence**”. Each section would be intended to assist students to better understand their engagement with CAS, reflect on their experiences, and provide evidence of their experiences. These three sections are offered only as an example of one way to organize a portfolio, the decision is up to you.

**Step four :**

**Reflections**

You must reflect on your CAS experiences as reflection is central to building a deep and rich experience in CAS. Experiential learning is at the heart of CAS and it involves much more than just planning and carrying out the activity itself. It also involves personal observation and reflection of your feeling and interactions, analysis of your perceptions, improves problem-solving, enables you to explore your strengths, limitations and influence future possibilities.

There are **four elements of reflection**:

- **Describing what happened:** Students retell their memorable moments, identifying what was important or influential, what went well or was difficult, obstacles and successes.
- **Expressing feelings:** Students articulate emotional responses to their experiences.
- **Generating ideas:** Rethinking or re-examining choices and actions increases awareness about self and situations.
- **Asking questions:** Questions about people, processes or issues suggest further thinking and ongoing inquiry

Reflection may not come naturally to you. To help you get started you should consider the following key questions:

- What did I plan to do?
- What did I do?
- How did I feel about the challenges?
- What were the outcomes, for me, the team I was working with, and others?

Other questions to ask would be, for example:

- How successful was I in achieving my goals? What difficulties did I encounter and how did I overcome them?
- What was the value of the activity?
- Why was the activity worthwhile?
- Would I do the activity again? Why?
- What did I learn about myself and others through this activity/ project? What abilities, attitudes and values have I developed?
- How did this activity/project benefit others?
- Did I maintain full attendance? Was I punctual? How would I summarize my effort and commitment?

## Forms of reflection

**During CAS, the form of reflection must take into account student choice.**

Reflection can appear in countless forms. CAS students should be able to identify forms of expression that have personal meaning and best enable them to explore their experiences. For example:

- A student might take photographs while hiking and use these to reflect in writing.
- Two students could compose a song describing how they helped children.
- A student might dramatize a poem to capture a feeling of creative endeavour.
- A student could produce a short video summarizing a CAS experience.
- A group of students create a poster highlighting aspects of a shared experience.

By encouraging students to choose forms of reflection that are personal and enjoyable, reflection becomes a means for self-discovery.

Student reflection may be expressed through a paragraph, a dialogue, a poem, a comic strip, a dramatic performance, a letter, a photograph, a dance, or other forms of expression. Students find greater value and purpose when they apply their own interests, skills and talents when reflecting. They discover that reflection can be internal and private or external and shared. It is possible students may wish to keep private certain reflections.

