

CAS Handbook

for Students and Parents

Model Upper Secondary School of Agioi Anargyroi (PLAA)

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CAS at PLAA is a sustained 18-month journey of creativity, healthy action and meaningful service. This handbook explains what students must do, how the school supports them, and how families can follow progress.

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About Our School

The Model Upper Secondary School of Agioi Anargyroi (PLAA) is a public selective school located in the urban area of Athens. Students are admitted through entrance examinations and come from diverse socio-economic and geographical backgrounds across Attica, creating a dynamic and inclusive learning environment.

Our school is committed to academic excellence, critical thinking, and holistic development. Supported by a strong teaching body and a structured educational framework, PLAA fosters a culture of collaboration, responsibility, and intellectual curiosity.

As a candidate IB World School, we aim to develop internationally minded learners who are reflective, active, and engaged citizens. The school community—including teachers, students, and parents—actively collaborates to support meaningful learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom.

Within this context, CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) plays a central role in promoting experiential learning, personal growth, and meaningful engagement with both local and global communities.

1. What is CAS?

Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) is one of the three core elements of the IB Diploma Programme. It gives students opportunities to learn through experience, grow beyond the classroom and contribute meaningfully to the community.

CAS is not an extra subject and it is not graded with marks. However, successful completion of CAS is required for the award of the IB Diploma. Students are therefore expected to participate regularly, reflect on what they learn and maintain evidence of their engagement over time.

At PLAA, CAS is designed as a personalised programme. Students are encouraged to build a balanced plan based on their interests, strengths, values and areas for growth.

The three strands of CAS are:

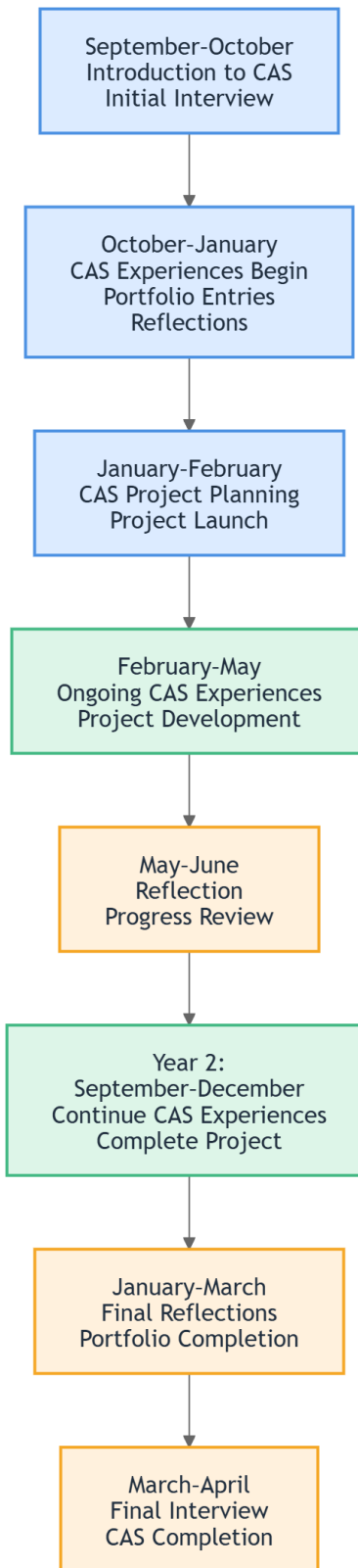
- Creativity: exploring ideas and producing or performing something original. Examples include music, theatre, film, writing, digital design, coding, photography, cooking, crafts or organising an intellectual or cultural event.
- Activity: physical exertion that contributes to a healthy lifestyle. Examples include team sports, running, hiking, cycling, dance, swimming, martial arts, gym training or structured personal fitness goals.
- Service: collaborative and reciprocal engagement with the community in response to an authentic need. Examples include tutoring, environmental action, awareness campaigns, volunteering and community support projects.

2. Why CAS matters

- discover new interests, talents and strengths
- develop confidence, initiative and independence
- learn to collaborate and lead responsibly
- build empathy and social awareness
- engage with local needs through a wider global perspective
- reflect on personal growth, ethical choices and impact

3. CAS requirements

Students are expected to complete a balanced and sustained CAS programme across the two years of the Diploma Programme.



Requirement	What this means at PLAA
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Duration	Active engagement for approximately 18 months, normally from September of DP1 until March of DP2, with no long gaps in participation.
Balance	Students should engage with all three CAS strands: Creativity, Activity and Service.
CAS experiences	Students should normally complete a range of substantial experiences. As a practical guide, 6-8 well-developed experiences usually provide a strong portfolio.
CAS project	At least one collaborative CAS project lasting a minimum of one month must be completed.
Learning outcomes	Across the whole programme, students must demonstrate all seven learning outcomes at least once.
Portfolio	Students must maintain a personal CAS portfolio with descriptions, reflections and evidence.
Meetings	Students take part in regular monitoring meetings. The school outline provides for a sequence of formal interviews and additional check-ins across both years.

Important note:

CAS is about quality, continuity and reflection rather than simply counting hours. Students should choose experiences that are purposeful, appropriately challenging and personally meaningful.

4. CAS experiences

A CAS experience is a specific activity or event in which a student engages with one or more of the three CAS strands: Creativity, Activity, and Service. These experiences can be single events, ongoing activities, or part of a series of experiences.

A meaningful CAS programme requires students to maintain a balance across all three strands, while also ensuring sustained engagement over the full duration of the programme (minimum 18 months).

Creativity

Creativity involves exploring and extending ideas, leading to an original or interpretive product or performance. It includes artistic expression as well as innovative thinking and problem-solving.

Examples include:

- visual or performing arts (music, theatre, film, painting)

- digital creation (design, coding, media production)
- organizing events or competitions
- teaching or creating learning materials

Students are encouraged not only to participate but also to develop new skills, set goals, and take creative initiative.

Activity

Activity focuses on physical exertion that contributes to a healthy lifestyle and overall well-being. It encourages students to develop discipline, perseverance, and long-term commitment to physical fitness.

Examples include:

- team and individual sports
- fitness training programmes
- outdoor activities (hiking, cycling, running)
- dance or movement-based activities

Students should demonstrate regular participation, goal-setting, and progress over time.

Service

Service involves collaborative and reciprocal engagement with the community in response to an authentic need. It is one of the most meaningful components of CAS, as it promotes empathy, responsibility, and social awareness.

Service must be:

- meaningful
- mutually beneficial
- based on real needs

Four Types of Service

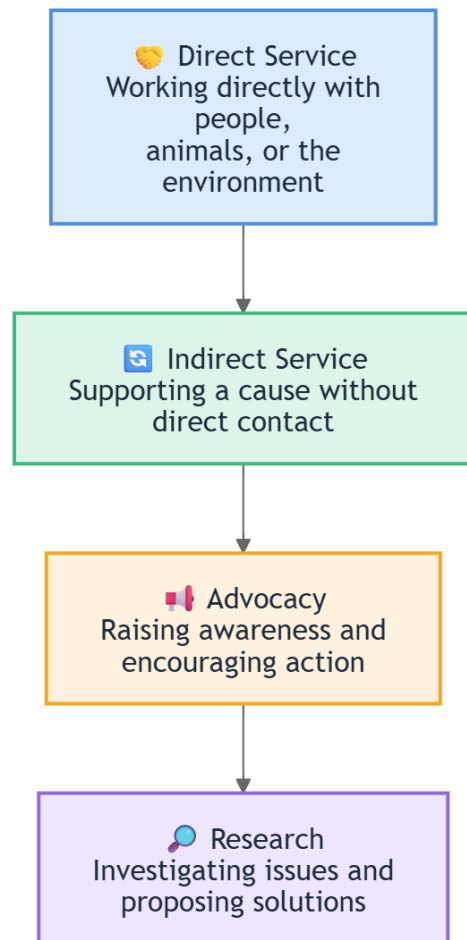
To enrich their CAS experience, students should engage in different types of service:

Direct Service: interaction with people, environment, or animals

Indirect Service: benefiting the community without direct contact

Advocacy: raising awareness or promoting action

Research: investigating issues and proposing solutions



Key Characteristics of CAS Experiences

A valid CAS experience should:

- involve active participation
- include personal challenge
- promote learning and development
- allow for reflection
- not be passive or routine

Examples of activities that do NOT count:

- passive attendance (e.g. watching events)
- routine daily tasks
- paid work (unless clearly structured as CAS with purpose)

Continuity and Progression

Students are expected to:

- engage in CAS regularly (weekly involvement recommended)
- show progression and development
- extend existing activities by setting new goals or challenges

CAS is not about completing isolated tasks, but about building a coherent and meaningful personal journey.

Four useful approaches to Service

Type of service	Description and examples
Direct service	Face-to-face interaction with people, animals or the environment, such as peer tutoring, park action or supporting younger students.
Indirect service	Action that benefits others without direct contact, such as resource drives, creating materials or organising support campaigns.
Advocacy	Raising awareness and encouraging action on an issue such as bullying, sustainability, inclusion or mental wellbeing.
Research	Investigating a community issue, gathering information and creating a report, presentation or resource that can support action or better practice.

5. Planning CAS with a local and global perspective

At PLAA, students are encouraged to design CAS experiences that respond to the realities of their own community while also understanding broader global issues. This means that students should explore needs, themes and challenges in Athens and the wider local environment, while connecting them to international perspectives when appropriate.

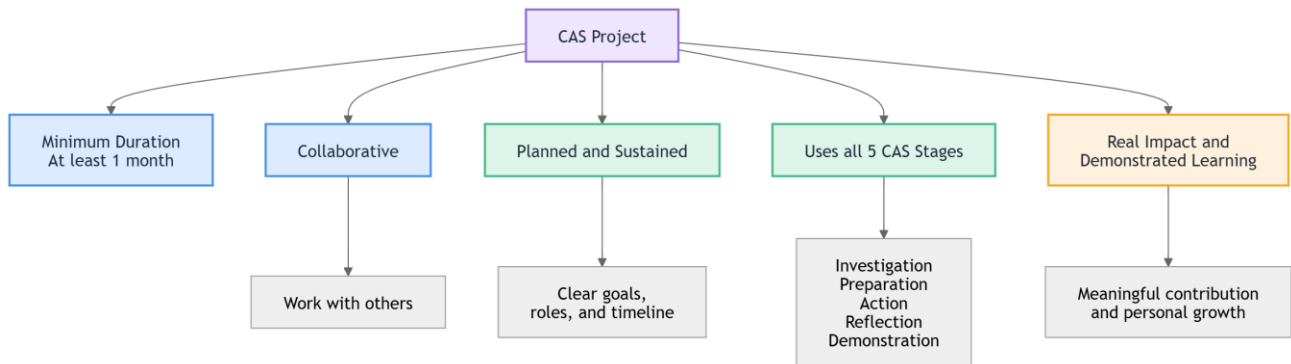
The UN Sustainable Development Goals can be a useful starting point for this planning. Students might focus on themes such as quality education, good health and well-being, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities, climate action or responsible consumption.

When planning a CAS programme, students should ask:

- What interests me and what strengths can I build on?
- What new skills or challenges do I want to take on?
- What need exists in the school or local community?
- How does this connect to a wider issue of global significance?
- How can I show that my experience is thoughtful, ethical and realistic?

6. The CAS project

The CAS project is a collaborative and sustained series of experiences that engages students in one or more CAS strands. Every student must complete at least one project during the programme.



A strong CAS project lasts at least one month and requires students to investigate, prepare, take action, reflect and demonstrate learning. It should involve shared responsibility, planning, problem-solving and commitment over time. **It is highly recommended that you organise your CAS project during IB1 as IB2 has a lot more work and responsibilities**

The CAS Project should also follow the **CAS stages: Investigation, Preparation, Action, Reflection, and Demonstration.**

A CAS project at PLAA should normally:

- be collaborative and involve clearly defined roles
- have a purpose connected to a real need, question or goal
- include all five CAS stages
- be appropriately supervised and approved before the main action begins
- be documented through planning notes, evidence and reflections

Possible project examples

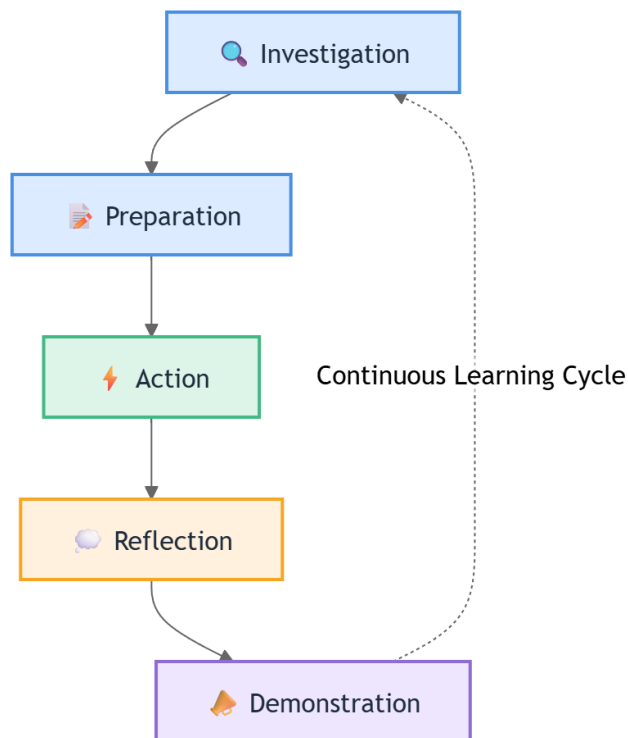
- organising a school or community sports event
- creating an art exhibition or performance linked to a social theme
- developing a peer tutoring or mentoring programme
- running a campaign on sustainability, wellbeing or digital citizenship

- planning a mathematics, coding or cybersecurity challenge for younger students

7. The five stages of CAS

Stage	What students do
Investigation	Identify interests, strengths, possible challenges and, in service, the authentic need to be addressed.
Preparation	Set goals, assign roles, plan resources, timeline, permissions and any safety considerations.
Action	Carry out the experience or project, adapting responsibly when necessary.
Reflection	Think about what happened, what was learned, what was difficult and what should change.
Demonstration	Share learning and outcomes through the portfolio, presentations, displays or other appropriate formats.

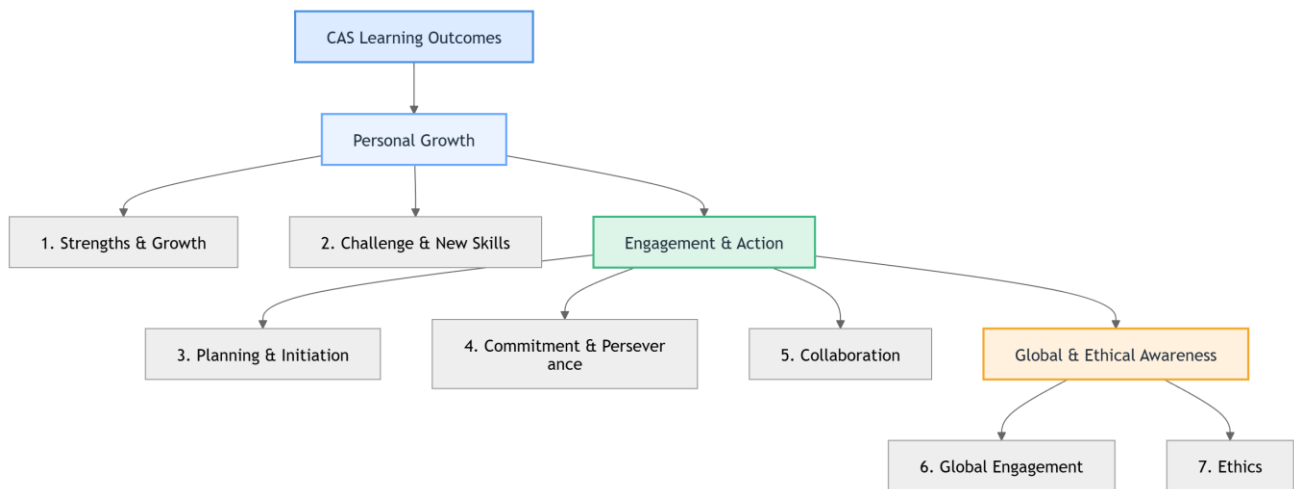
For a single CAS experience, not all five stages must always appear in the same depth. For the CAS project, all five stages are required.



8. The seven learning outcomes

#	Learning outcome
1	Identify own strengths and develop areas for growth.
2	Demonstrate that challenges have been undertaken, developing new skills in the process.
3	Demonstrate how to initiate and plan a CAS experience.
4	Show commitment to and perseverance in CAS experiences.
5	Demonstrate the skills and recognise the benefits of working collaboratively.
6	Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance.
7	Recognise and consider the ethics of choices and actions.

Students do not need to meet every learning outcome in every experience. Instead, they should build a balanced programme so that all seven are demonstrated across the full CAS journey. In most cases, 1-3 learning outcomes per experience is appropriate.



9. CAS portfolio, evidence and reflection

The CAS portfolio is the student's record of planning, participation, growth and achievement. At PLAA, all relevant evidence and documentation will be organised through the school platform/LMS and any forms adopted by the school.

The portfolio should be updated regularly - ideally weekly or shortly after important moments - so that evidence and reflection remain authentic and manageable.

The portfolio demonstrates:

- engagement in CAS experiences
- achievement of the **seven learning outcomes**
- personal growth and development over time

A good portfolio usually includes:

- description of the experience or project and its goals
- chosen strands and learning outcomes
- planning notes or forms
- photos, screenshots, programmes, certificates, emails, posters or other evidence
- short but meaningful reflections written, recorded or presented in another suitable format
- supervisor feedback or verification where required

Reflection

Reflection is central to CAS. It should move beyond simply describing what happened and should help the student understand learning, growth, challenges, impact and next steps.

Effective reflection helps students:

- understand their experiences more deeply
- recognize personal strengths and areas for growth
- evaluate challenges and achievements
- develop critical thinking and self-awareness

Reflection should move beyond simple description and include:

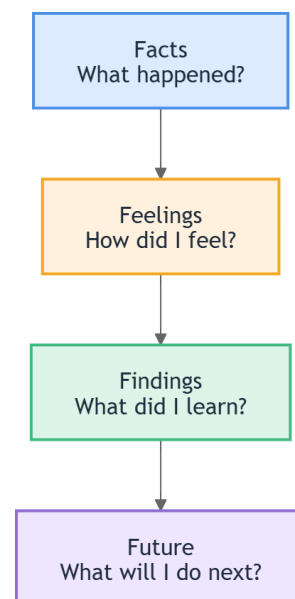
- thoughts and feelings
- analysis and interpretation
- connections to learning outcomes
- future improvements

Students may reflect through:

- short written entries
- audio or video reflections
- photo captions or annotated evidence
- mind maps, posters or visual reflections
- group debriefs recorded and summarised

A simple structure that often helps is the 4Fs:

- Facts - What happened?
- Feelings - How did I respond?



- Findings - What did I learn or realise?
- Future - What will I improve, change or continue?

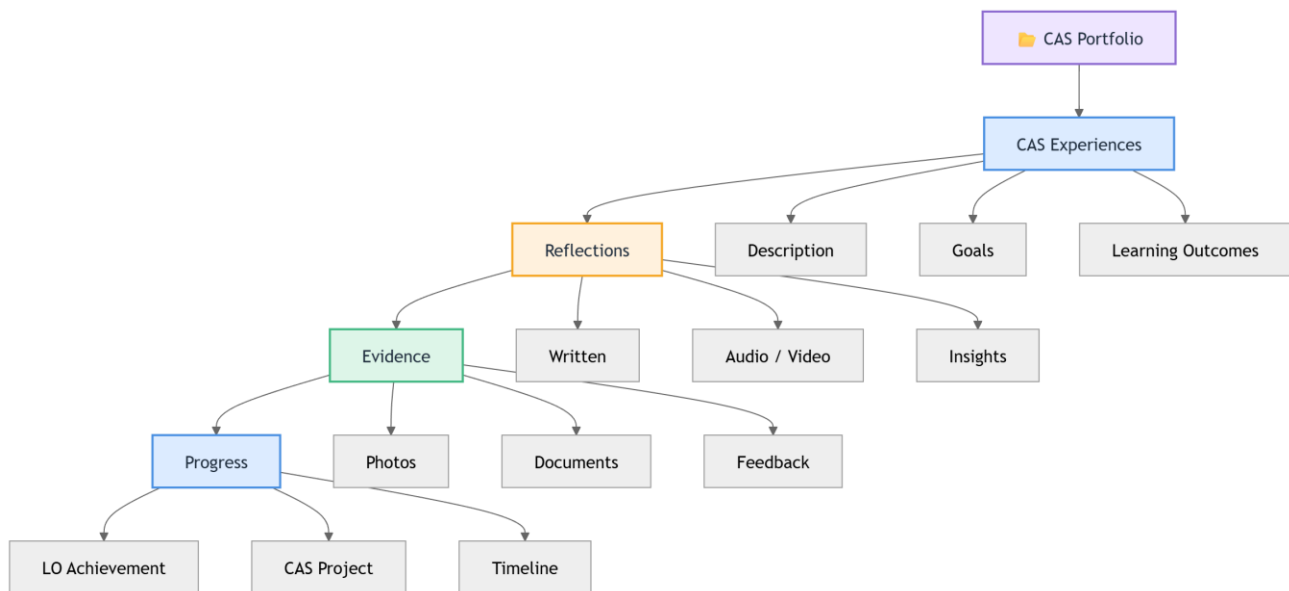
Evidence and Documentation

Evidence supports reflection and demonstrates participation.

Examples:

- photos and videos
- planning documents
- communication (emails, messages)
- certificates or feedback
- project materials

All evidence should be clearly linked to **learning outcomes**.



Use of AI and technology

Technology can support organisation and planning. Students may use digital tools to structure ideas, generate reflection prompts or organise project planning. However, CAS reflections and descriptions must remain the student's own authentic work. Any substantial use of AI should be acknowledged transparently.

10. Meetings, supervision and communication

Monitoring is an important part of CAS. According to the school's CAS outline, students meet the CAS coordinator and/or advisers through a sequence of formal interviews across DP1 and DP2, supported by additional regular check-ins.

The formal cycle normally begins with an initial interview at the start of DP1, continues with review meetings during the first year, resumes at the start of DP2 and concludes with a final review in March of DP2.

Main purposes of meetings

- to review the student’s plan and goals
- to monitor balance across Creativity, Activity and Service
- to discuss evidence and reflections
- to check progress toward the learning outcomes and CAS project
- to identify support, redirection or next steps where needed

Who supports CAS at PLAA?

Role	Main responsibility
CAS coordinator	Provides overall guidance, approves expectations, monitors progress and supports students, advisers and supervisors.
CAS advisers / mentoring staff	Help students plan, review progress and maintain continuity in their CAS programme.
Supervisors	Teachers or other appropriate adults who oversee a particular experience or project and verify participation when needed.
Parents and guardians	Are informed about the programme, can follow progress through school communication channels and may support or contribute as collaborators where appropriate.

Families are informed through meetings, the CAS handbook, school communication channels and ongoing school updates. Students’ achievements may also be shared through events, newsletters, displays and school social media where appropriate and permitted.

11. Tips for success and example ideas

Tips for success

- Start early and stay organised.
- Choose activities that genuinely interest you.
- Keep at least one meaningful experience active over time.
- Update your portfolio regularly instead of leaving everything until the end.
- Ask for approval and guidance before launching a large project.
- Reflect honestly - not just positively - and include difficulties as well as successes.

Example ideas

Creativity	Activity	Service
podcast, photography, school	running plan, hiking group,	peer tutoring, environmental

newsletter, coding challenge, short film	dance, cycling, fitness challenge	clean-up, awareness campaign, community support
poster design for events, creative writing, music or theatre performance	sports team, swimming, martial arts, volleyball tournament	supporting younger students, local charity collaboration, animal welfare action
art exhibition on a social theme, digital storytelling	wellbeing programme, outdoor activity organisation	researching a local issue and producing an advocacy resource

12. Celebrating CAS in the school community

CAS should be visible and valued within the life of the school. At PLAA, students' experiences and achievements can be celebrated through presentations, exhibitions, school events, newsletters, social media and exchanges between first-year and second-year students.

These opportunities help students demonstrate what they have learned, inspire younger students and strengthen the connection between school life, community engagement and the wider values of the IB Diploma Programme.

Appendix: CAS experience form

This form can be adapted for school use or transferred to the digital platform used by the school.

Student name / Grade	
Title of CAS experience	
Supervisor and contact details	
Goal of the experience	

Strand(s)

Creativity Activity Service

Selected learning outcomes

- Identify own strengths and develop areas for growth.
- Demonstrate that challenges have been undertaken, developing new skills in the process.
- Demonstrate how to initiate and plan a CAS experience.
- Show commitment to and perseverance in CAS experiences.
- Demonstrate the skills and recognise the benefits of working collaboratively.
- Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance.
- Recognise and consider the ethics of choices and actions.

Preparation and planning

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Action / implementation

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Reflection

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Global significance / ethical considerations

Evidence / documentation

Attach photos, certificates, or any evidence of participation

Supervisor comments and verification