

# MTHS IB CAS HANDBOOK:

BUILDING YOUR CREATIVITY,  
ACTIVITY & SERVICE  
PORTFOLIO



# INTRODUCTION - WHAT IS CAS?

CAS is one of the core components of the IB Programme. It is designed to be integrated into your coursework, afterschool activities and, actually, all facets of your life. It is a holistic approach that allows you to demonstrate every aspect of the IB Learner Profile in ways that are unique and interesting to you as an individual while helping you grow through authentic engagement with the local and global community. The key to success in CAS is to select experiences that you find enjoyable and interesting. So what does that mean? What is CAS?

**CAS** stands for **Creativity, Activity, and Service** and is defined in the IB CAS Guide as follows:

- ✚ **Creativity** – exploring and extending ideas leading to an original or interpretive product or performance
- ✚ **Activity** – physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle
- ✚ **Service** – collaborative and reciprocal engagement with the community in response to an authentic need

Involvement in CAS experiences should **begin at the start of the Diploma Programme** as a regular part of your IB experience, and **continue for at least 18 months** with a reasonable balance among the 3 strands.

Successful completion of CAS is based on the achievement of the **Seven Learning Outcomes**. Seven outcomes may sound daunting, but they are the common-sense natural outgrowths of any activity that may be undertaken to meet CAS requirements. You do not have to meet every outcome every time you participate in an activity, but must cover each one at least once in the body of your work. The **Seven Learning Outcomes** are:

1. Identify own strengths and development 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 recognize the benefits of working collaboratively
6. Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance
7. Recognize and consider the ethics of choices and actions

So, what kind of experiences can you pursue in the areas of Creativity, Activity, and Service that will help you achieve the Seven Learning Outcomes? **CAS experiences** may involve one or more of the 3 CAS strands and can be a single event, a series of experiences, or a collaborative project. The planning and execution of a CAS experience/project should have a duration of at least one month and, where appropriate, show evidence of use of the **Five CAS Stages** framework.

Successful completion of CAS is a requirement for earning the IB Diploma. To document your CAS experiences and show evidence of achievement of the seven learning objectives, you will be required to keep a **CAS Portfolio**. Your portfolio will be due May 1<sup>st</sup> of your senior year. It is graded on a Pass/Fail basis with a grade of “Pass” being required toward earning the IB Diploma.

The IB organization requires a minimum of **three (3) formal interviews/meetings** with the CAS coordinator at the beginning of the IB Programme, at the end of the first year, and again at the end of the IB Programme. For MTHS, you will actually meet with the CAS Coordinator more often than the minimum requirement to insure you remain on track and are properly documenting your experiences.

## **THE CAS STRANDS – Creativity, Activity, Service**

One of the biggest questions asked about CAS is, “Does everything related to CAS have to be something “new” that I have never done before or something that I do outside of the regular activities I do in school?” It is important that you know that the answer to this question is a resounding “NO!” You may use any activity you participate in or a class you take as long as you are not testing in it for the IB Diploma. The goal of CAS is to weave creativity, activity and service into your everyday routines at school and at home in the hope that you will continue to do so throughout your life.

Some examples of possible activities are included in the descriptions of each strand of CAS below. The suggestions offered are by no means an exhaustive list. If you have an idea, discuss it with your CAS Coordinator to see how it might fit into the CAS philosophy and become a part of your portfolio.

### **Creativity – exploring and extending ideas leading to an original or interpretive product or performance**

“Creativity in CAS provides students with the opportunity to explore their own sense of original thinking and expression. Creativity will come from the student’s talents, interests, passions, emotional responses, and imagination; the form of expression is limitless. This may include visual and performing arts, digital design, writing, film, culinary arts, crafts and composition. Students are encouraged to engage in creative endeavors that move them beyond the familiar, broadening their scope from conventional to unconventional thinking.” (IBO, 2012)

Ideas to meet the “C” in CAS:

- Sports Marketing Class – Create a business plan to present to the class; design an investing strategy, participate in the stock market game, and track your results
- Band, Chorus, Orchestra – Write a piece of music for the group to perform in public; participate in marching band and learn the new music and show; practice to improve and make it into county or states; try out for and participate in Troubadours
- Art – create a group of works to display at an art show; create a piece to enter in a juried show
- Theater – try out for a part in a school or local production; join scenery crew and help design and build the set
- Other activities that might fit – CADD, Design/Build, Culinary Arts, Creative Movement/Dance

### **Activity – physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle**

“The aim of the “Activity” strand is to promote lifelong healthy habits related to physical well-being. Pursuits may include individual and team sports, aerobic exercise, dance, outdoor recreation, fitness training, and any other form of physical exertion that purposefully contributes to a healthy lifestyle. Students are encouraged to participate at an appropriate level and on a regular basis to provide a genuine challenge and benefit.” (IBO, 2012)

Ideas to meet the “A” in CAS:

- PE class – Working to improve your time on the 1 ¼ mile run
- After school activities – Lifting - to improve overall strength; Sports Teams – participation while practicing and perfecting a new skill
- Outside of school – lowering your golf handicap; learning to kayak; running a marathon; skiing

### **Service – collaborative and reciprocal engagement with the community in response to authentic need**

“The aim of the “Service” strand is for students to understand their capacity to make a meaningful contribution to their community and society. Through service, students develop and apply personal and social skills in real-life situations involving decision-making, problem-solving, initiative, responsibility, and accountability for their actions. Service is often seen as one of the most transforming elements of CAS by promoting students’ self-awareness, offering diverse occasions for interactions and experiences and opportunities for international mindedness.” (IBO, 2012)

Ideas to meet the “S” in CAS:

- Community Service - Sunday School Teacher – Plan and prepare lessons for the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class; Eagle Scout – Plan and undertake repairs to a trail in the local park
- International Service – Go with the IB group to Jinotega, Nicaragua to teach English (spring or fall of every other year)
- Volunteerism - at the local food pantry, homeless shelter, handicapped riding stable, animal rescue shelter, etc.
- Participate in School Service Club Activities – Key Club, Mini-THON, Leo Lion’s Club, Operation Smile, Aavidum, Interact, Student Awareness, etc.

The most important thing to remember for any CAS activity is to include genuine and meaningful reflection on the learning and growth you have experienced as a result of your participation. The best guide to authentic reflection is to seize upon moments that inspire you or take on personal significance for you. Those are the moments to write about!

## **CAS LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Successful completion of CAS is based on experiences in the 3 CAS strands, ability to use the Five CAS Stages planning model, and achievement of the seven CAS Learning Outcomes. It is important to note that not all CAS experiences lead to a CAS Learning Outcome. Some of the learning outcomes may be achieved multiple times, while others may only be achieved once. The key to achieving each of these outcomes is the documentation in your CAS Portfolio that focuses on personal reflection.

### **THE 7 CAS LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The chart on the next pages includes each of the seven outcomes with descriptors. These are designed to assist you in identifying how and where you might be able to work on achieving the goal of each outcome.

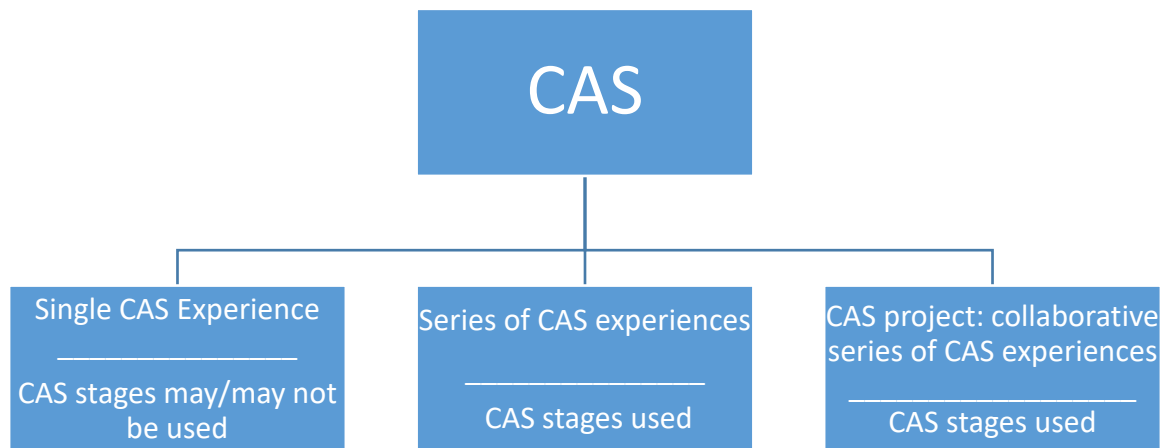
## CAS 7 LEARNING OUTCOMES

LO#	Learning Objective
<b>LO 1</b>	<b>Identify own strengths and areas for growth</b>
Descriptor	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is aware of own strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>• Is open to improvement and growth opportunities</li> <li>• Is able to propose activities according to own interests and talents</li> <li>• Is willing to participate in different activities</li> <li>• Is able to undertake a thoughtful self-evaluation</li> <li>• Is able to see her/himself as an individual with various abilities and skills, some more developed than others</li> </ul>
<b>LO 2</b>	<b>Demonstrate that challenges have been undertaken, developing new skills in the process</b>
Descriptor	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participates in an experience that demands an appropriate personal challenge; this could be with new or familiar experiences</li> <li>• Is willing to become involved in unfamiliar environments and situations</li> <li>• Acquires new skills and abilities</li> <li>• Increases expertise in an established area</li> <li>• Shows newly acquired or developed skills or increased expertise in an established area</li> </ul>
<b>LO 3</b>	<b>Demonstrate how to initiate and plan a CAS experience</b>
Descriptor	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is able to articulate the CAS stages including investigation, preparation, action, reflection (ongoing) and demonstration, moving from conceiving an idea to carrying out a plan for a CAS experience or series of CAS experiences</li> <li>• Demonstrates knowledge and awareness by building on a previous CAS experience</li> <li>• Shows initiative by launching a new idea or process</li> <li>• Suggests creative ideas, proposals or solutions</li> <li>• Integrates reflective thoughts in planning or taking initiative</li> <li>• Is aware of roles and responsibilities when designing an individual or collective CAS experience</li> <li>• Shows responsible attitude to CAS project planning</li> <li>• Is able to develop a coherent action plan taking into account the aim or purpose, activities and resources</li> </ul>
<b>LO 4</b>	<b>Show commitment to and perseverance in CAS experiences</b>
Descriptor	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates regular involvement and active engagement with CAS experiences and project(s)</li> <li>• Is able to foresee potential challenges to the initial plan and consider valid alternatives and contingencies</li> <li>• Demonstrates adaptability to uncertainties and changes</li> <li>• Gets involved in long-term CAS experiences and CAS project(s)</li> </ul>

<b>LO 5</b>	<b>Demonstrate the skills and recognize the benefits of working collaboratively</b>
Descriptor	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shares skills and knowledge</li> <li>• Listens respectfully to proposals from peers</li> <li>• Is willing to take on different roles within a team</li> <li>• Shows respect for different points of view and ideas</li> <li>• Makes valuable contributions</li> <li>• Is responsible for participating in the group</li> <li>• Readily assist others</li> <li>• Is able to identify, demonstrate and discuss critically the benefits and challenges of collaboration gained through CAS experiences</li> </ul>
<b>LO 6</b>	<b>Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance</b>
Descriptor	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes the global implications of local issues</li> <li>• Is able to identify global issues in the local or national community</li> <li>• Shows awareness of issues of global importance and takes concrete and appropriate actions in response to them either locally, nationally or internationally</li> <li>• Gets involved in CAS projects addressing global issues in a local, national or international context</li> <li>• Develops awareness and responsibility towards a shared humanity</li> </ul>
<b>LO 7</b>	<b>Recognize and consider the ethics of choices and actions</b>
Descriptor	<p>The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes ethical issues</li> <li>• Is able to explain the social influences on one's ethical identity</li> <li>• Takes into account cultural context when making a plan or ethical decision</li> <li>• Identifies knowledge necessary to make an ethical decision</li> <li>• Articulates ethical principles and approaches to ethical decisions</li> <li>• Shows accountability for choices and actions</li> <li>• Is aware of the consequences of choices and actions and their impact on self, others involved, and the community</li> <li>• Integrates the process of reflection when facing an ethical decision</li> <li>• shows awareness of the potential and varied consequences of choices and actions in planning and carrying out CAS experiences</li> </ul>

# CAS EXPERIENCES

A CAS experience is a specific event in which the student engages with one or more of the 3 CAS strands either as a single event, a series of events or a collaborative project.



A solid CAS portfolio will reflect a good mix of experiences (single; series; collaborative project) within the 3 strands (Creativity, Activity, Service). For example:

A singular event like kayaking on the Susquehanna one Saturday would not use all five CAS stages, but is certainly worth including in your portfolio as an “Activity” noting the preparation it took and reflecting on what you saw, did, and may have learned from the trip.

Participation in a series of planned events using the CAS stages, like teaching a 6 week course on computer technology at a senior citizen center, would fall neatly into the “Service” strand.

Working with a group of students over several weeks to help children at the local elementary school write, produce, build a set, and perform a play for the community would encompass the CAS five stages in both the “Creativity” and “Service” strands.

## GUIDELINES TO CAS EXPERIENCES

Talking through an idea with the CAS coordinator is sometimes the best way to understand whether it fits into your portfolio as a CAS experience. If in doubt, before meeting with the coordinator or undertaking an activity, there are four guidelines that should be applied to any proposed CAS experience.

A CAS experience must:

- ✓ Fit within one or more of the CAS strands
- ✓ Be based on a personal interest, skill, talent or opportunity for growth
- ✓ Provide opportunities to develop the attributes of the IB Learner Profile
- ✓ Not be used or included in the student’s Diploma course requirements

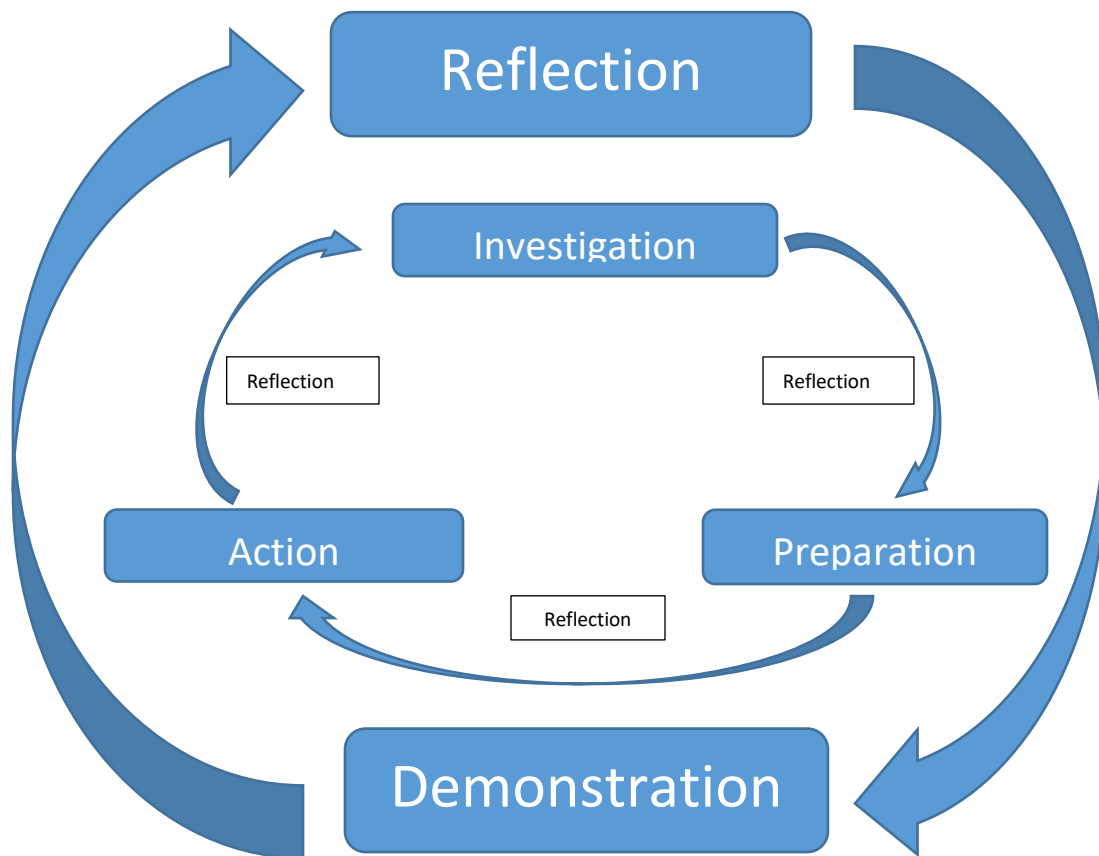
The following questions may also help you decide whether an experience is right for you AND fits into the CAS mold:

- ✓ Will I enjoy (or is there the potential for me to enjoy) participating in this activity?
- ✓ Does this make use of my talents, skills, and/or interests?
- ✓ Will this challenge me in ways I have not been challenged before?
- ✓ Is there potential for me to learn new skills? To grow as a person?
- ✓ Are there positive outcomes for others (or the environment) as a result of this experience?
- ✓ Which CAS strand does this fall within? Which of the CAS Learning Outcomes might this experience address?

Another consideration is whether the Five CAS Stages will all be present if the experience is a series of events or a planned collaborative project. So, what are the CAS Five Stages?

## THE FIVE CAS STAGES: A framework for CAS experience

The Five CAS Stages offer a framework to guide you as you plan and carry out experiences or collaborative projects. This process and sequence is easily transferable to many other aspects of life and future careers. The use of this process should be explicitly reflected in portfolio entries.





As noted in the diagram on the previous page, there are two parts to the five stages. The center represents the four key parts of the process: investigation, preparation, action, and reflection. The outer circle has two parts and guides students in summarizing their experience: reflection and demonstration.

## THE FIVE CAS STAGES

1. **Investigation** – Students identify their interests, skills and talents to be used in considering opportunities for CAS experiences, as well as areas for personal growth and development. Students investigate what they want to do and determine the purpose for their CAS experience. In the case of service, students identify a need they want to address.
2. **Preparation** - Students clarify roles and responsibilities, develop a plan of actions to be taken, identify specified resources and timelines, and acquire any skills needed to engage in the CAS experience.
3. **Action** – Students implement their idea or plan. This often requires decision-making and problem-solving. Students may work individually, with partners, or in groups.
4. **Reflection** - Students describe what happened, express feelings, generate ideas, and raise questions. Reflection can occur at any time during CAS to further understanding, to assist in revising plans, to learn from the experience, and to make explicit connections between their growth, accomplishments, and the learning outcomes for personal awareness. Reflection may also lead to new action.
5. **Demonstration** - Students make explicit what and how they learned and what they accomplished, for example, by sharing their CAS experience through their CAS portfolio or with others in an informal or formal manner. Through demonstration and communication, students solidify their understanding and evoke responses from others.

Now that you have all of the pieces, you can begin to put together a portfolio that hits each strand (Creativity, Activity, and Service), uses the Five CAS Stages (Investigation, Preparation, Action, Reflection, Demonstration) AND satisfies the Seven CAS Learning Outcomes.

## THE MTHS IB CAS PORTFOLIO

For Manheim Township High School's IB CAS program, you are required to keep an online portfolio and share it with the CAS Coordinator. This will allow the coordinator to monitor your progress and make suggestions to assist in building a complete document that will satisfy the IB CAS requirements. It is strongly suggested that you begin building your portfolio by November 1<sup>st</sup> or earlier of Year 1 of the diploma programme so that you can fulfill the 18 month requirement.

Your portfolio may use many forms of documentation including: journaling, charts, data, videos, pictures, recordings, etc. Continuous reflection throughout any experience is the key to a successful CAS Portfolio. A suggested format would be to begin with the Learning Outcome(s) addressed by the activity, followed by the CAS stages used and clear explanation of how each was a part of the experience. This should be followed by a narrative/journal of what was done with clearly labeled REFLECTIONS along the way. Meeting regularly with your CAS Coordinator will be very helpful in the planning, execution, and documentation of activities. If you have any question as to whether an activity fits the CAS mold, do not hesitate to ask.

## **FORMAL MEETINGS & INTERVIEWS**

During the two year IB Diploma Programme cycle, the CAS Coordinator will meet with students as a group at least once each year. Individual meetings will occur at least two times per year for about 25 – 50 minutes each time. The main objective of these meetings will be to insure that students are participating in appropriate activities to meet CAS requirements and that adequate documentation is included in student online portfolios.

As a part of the IB Programme requirements (and as a good practice in general), the CAS Coordinator will keep a written record for each student that indicates the date of each meeting. The notes may include a review of current portfolio progress, discussion of new or proposed activities/events, review of the 5 CAS Stages, and a review of which of the 7 Learning Outcomes have been met and which have yet to be addressed.

## **DUE DATES & DEADLINES**

Your portfolio should be set up so that those with the link have access in case your portfolio is selected by IB international for review. The link must be shared with the CAS Coordinator by February 1<sup>st</sup> of your senior year and completed for grading by May 1<sup>st</sup>. The portfolio is graded on a Pass/Fail basis and you must receive a grade of “Pass” in order to achieve your IB Diploma. Do not make the mistake of trying to write your entire portfolio at the end of your IB experience. Attempting to recreate/recall two years of activities and produce genuine reflections on the experience is virtually impossible and easily noticeable.

IB may send the names of 3-5 students to the IB Coordinator requesting that their CAS Portfolios be sent for evaluation. If your name is selected, the link to your portfolio will be shared with IB international for review purposes. It is important to ensure that your work reflects learning and growth in all three CAS strands, accomplishment of all 7 Learning Objectives, and the use of the 5 CAS Stages at least one in the body of your work. (A suggested format is included on the next page.)

As noted earlier in this handbook, CAS is the heart of the IB Programme and involvement in CAS activities should be an integral part of your life, both inside and outside of school. This should be a part of IB that you find fun, challenging, and rewarding – and, of course, recorded in your portfolio along the way. If you make journaling and reflection a regular and natural part of each event/activity, you will have no trouble passing the CAS portion of the IB diploma requirement.

# SUGGESTED CAS PORTFOLIO FORMAT

**LIST THE CAS STRAND** (at beginning of document – CREATIVITY, ACTIVITY, SERVICE)

**THE FIVE CAS STAGES WERE USED IN THIS SECTION:** YES NO (if YES, explain how)

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES MET:** (List & explain how they were met)

- **LO7 - Recognize and consider the ethics of choices and actions**

While volunteering at Lancaster General hospital I observed many nurses and doctors interacting with patients. It is important to maintain patient privacy and not share any of the information that I became aware of related to an individual and their family and the privileged communications between medical provider and patient. To share this with anyone would be a huge breach of trust and my ethical responsibilities to protect patient privacy.

**JOURNAL OF EXPERIENCE** (or any other title you choose to indicate that this section contains information about your experience and your reflections on that experience)

My experience volunteering at Lancaster General Hospital included two weeks of volunteer training. We began the training on *date etc.*