

Harrison High School
International Baccalaureate

***Creativity, Action, Service
Handbook***



Why CAS?

CAS is central to the IB hexagon and to the IB mission and program. Students cannot receive an IB diploma without successfully completing the CAS program. CAS is meant to be an enjoyable extension of academics that encourages students to become good citizens. CAS promotes international understanding and challenges students to become part of the larger community. Students learn and practice new skills and discover new interests. CAS requires students to take risks, interact with the world around them, and consider the ethical implications of their actions. While engaging in CAS, students complete a portfolio of their activities including reflections about their experiences and evidence of personal growth – this portfolio often differentiates a student from other academic high achievers during the college application process.

What is CAS?

CAS stresses the importance of experiential learning. **CAS** is an acronym for **C**- Creativity, **A**- Action and **S**- Service which is defined as follows:

- **Creativity:** the arts and other experiences involving creative thinking.
- **Action:** physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle, complementing academic work elsewhere in the IB Diploma Program.
- **Service:** an unpaid and voluntary exchange that has a learning benefit for the student. The rights, dignity and autonomy of all those involved are respected.

The main principles of the CAS program involve developing students into internationally minded people who, by recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. Students are encouraged to “think globally and act locally” and that “if they believe in something, they must not just think or talk or write, but must act.”

There are four criteria that must be met for each CAS activity:

- Activities should be real and purposeful with significant outcomes.
- Tasks should involve personal challenge and be achievable in scope.
- Activities should involve thoughtful consideration: planning, reviewing progress, reporting, etc.
- Students should reflect on outcomes of the activity and on personal learning.

As part of the CAS requirement, students will complete approximately 150 hours of **CONTINUOUS** service with a reasonable balance between creativity, action and service. Students should begin working on CAS in September of their junior year and should continue their work until at least February of their senior year. The emphasis, however, is not on the hours but on the reflection process that the student engages in during and after the activity. Student reflections should involve critical thinking in evaluating the success of the activity against the original goals. At the conclusion of the diploma program, a diploma candidate must convince a panel that he/she met the objectives for CAS to qualify for an IB diploma.

What are some examples of CAS Projects?

- **Creativity:** school plays, painting, photography, literary magazine, choreography, music lessons & performance, film club, dance classes & performances, youth group activities
- **Action:** sports (school or elsewhere), sailing, weightlifting, skating, rock climbing, yoga, hiking
- **Service:** tutoring, nursing home visits, service-oriented clubs, helping elderly neighbors, Harrison food pantry, big brother/sister, raising awareness and funds for issues of global awareness

What is NOT CAS?

CAS should be an interesting variety of activities that you find worthwhile and rewarding, and that are mutually beneficial to you and to your community. Generally, CAS is active and involves interaction with others. In addition, CAS activities allow for personal growth. Examples of activities, which would **NOT** qualify as CAS include:

- any class, activity or project that is already part of the Diploma Program (classes that are not part of the Diploma Program may qualify).
- simple, tedious and repetitive work.
- a passive pursuit, e.g. museum, theatre, exhibition, concert visits.
- family or religious duties.
- work experience that only benefits the student, or that involves financial gain.
- fundraising with no clearly defined end in sight.
- an activity where there is no responsible adult on site to evaluate your performance.
(Note: Your parent cannot supervise your CAS project.)
- activities that cause division amongst different groups in the community such as political activities or religious proselytizing.
- working in an old people's or children's home when you:
 - have no understanding of how the home operates.
 - are just making sandwiches or working a cash register.
 - have no contact with the elderly people or children.
 - do not perform a service for other people.
 (The above example can be applied to many other activities purporting to be CAS.)

The Learning Outcomes

As a result of their CAS experiences, students need to show that evidence of personal growth. As part of the reflection process, students provide evidence that they have met each of the following learning outcomes through their CAS activities.

Outcome 1: increased their awareness of their own strengths and areas for growth

They are able to see themselves as individuals with various skills and abilities, some more developed than others.

Outcome 2: undertaken new challenges

A new challenge may be an unfamiliar activity, or an extension to an existing one.

Outcome 3: planned and initiated activities

Planning and initiating will often be in collaboration with others. It can be shown in activities that are part of larger projects (for example ongoing school activities in the local community, as well as in small student-led activities).

Outcome 4: worked collaboratively with others

Collaboration can be shown in many activities such as team sports, playing music in a band, or helping in a kindergarten. At least one project involving collaboration and the integration of at least two of creativity, action and service, is required.

Outcome 5: shown perseverance and commitment

A student needs to attend regularly and accept a share of the responsibility for dealing with problems that arise in the course of activities.

Outcome 6: engaged in issues of global importance

Students may be involved in international projects but there are also many global issues that can be acted upon locally or nationally (for example, environmental concerns, caring for the elderly).

Outcome 7: considered the ethical implications of your own actions

Ethical decisions arise in almost any CAS activity (for example, on the sports field, in musical composition, in relationships with others involved in service activities). Evidence of thinking about ethical issues can be shown in various ways including journal entries and conversations with CAS Coordinator/advisers.

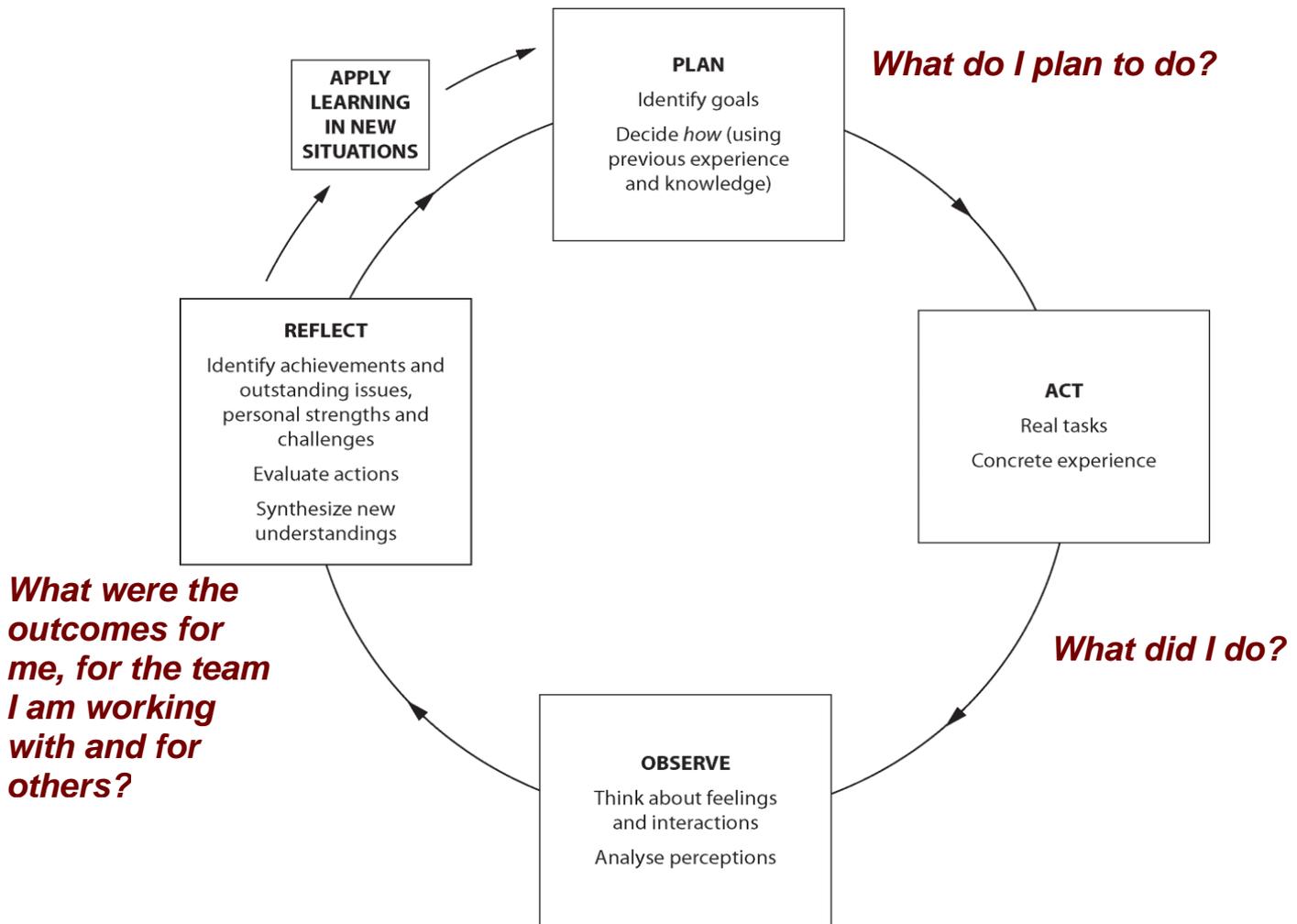
Outcome 8: developed new skills

As with new challenges, new skills may be shown in activities that the students has not previously undertaken, or in increased expertise in an established area.

All eight outcomes must be present for a student to complete the CAS requirement. Some may be demonstrated many times in a variety of activities, but **completion requires only that there is some evidence for every outcome.**

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is at the heart of every CAS experience. Please realize that experiential learning involves much more than just the activity itself: planning, acting, observing and reflecting are all crucial in making the experience as valuable as possible.



Reflection

Reflection is an integral part of your CAS experience. Experiential learning involves much more than simply planning and doing an activity. Experiential learning also involves documenting personal growth as a result of engagement in an activity both during and after the activity.

Reflections may not come naturally. To develop a valuable reflection that illustrates personal growth start simply with the following questions:

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

Once the “What...?” questions listed above are answered, consider the following questions which help to illustrate personal growth:

- How did you feel while participating in the activity?
- What did I perceive?
- What did I think about the activity?
- What did the activity mean to me?
- What was the value of the activity?
- What did I learn from the activity?
- How might I apply what I learned in the activity to other aspects of my life?
- Did this activity cause a change in perspective?

*Reflect on SIGNIFICANT experiences and activities. Depending on the activity, you may reflect once a week, once every time something memorable occurs or at least once every two to three weeks. **IT IS EXPECTED THAT STUDENTS WILL GENERATE QUALITY REFLECTIONS ON A CONTINUOUS BASIS.** It is recommended that students compose 10 quality reflections per marking period. It is not necessary to write reflections about routine activities.*

Sample Reflections

Reflections of a Musician

- **Creative:** I practiced flute and competed in the Symphonic Festival Senior Concerto Division.

After incessant hours of practicing flute and occasionally sacrificing my academic grade, I received first place in the Symphonic Festival. This was completely new to me because in all the competitions I participated, I always received 2nd, 3rd, or even no place.

I acquired two important realizations from this experience. First, I learned that judges look at the whole performance. When I walked into my audition room, I was so nervous that I messed up on the very first note. I was quite flustered, and my accompanist and I had to start over. Throughout the five minutes and thirty seconds of my music, the B flat swam back and forth in my head. At the end of my audition, I was quite sure that I did not even place due to that one note, but rather, the judge said, "You overcame your first mistake very well." I did not know what to make of this comment because I thought the judges only looked to mistakes to penalize. However, she assured me that the most important element in music is the whole performance, not the trivial mistake. In addition, it was how I reacted after the mistake that mattered. My ability to still give my best performance knowing that I had messed up is part of musicianship. But I know that is not quite true. My ability to spring back up after a mistake is not only part of musicianship but also part of life. Whenever, I fail, I need to push myself up from the ground and run the journey of life again.

The second realization is actually rather depressing. After I got over the shock of getting 1st place, instead of feeling happy, I felt relief. I was relieved that I had another proof of my passion that I could include in my college resume; after the relief, a wave of anger and sadness came over me. I felt as if I had deceived my passion for music for merely an achievement. Even though it is not possible for me to go from defeat to defeat, from competition to competition without some level of strong passion, I was saddened that there were ulterior motives to my winning, that I had to prove my passions to college admissions officers by winning.

In retrospect, I do not think I learned two different lessons that day. I believe it was merely two faces of the same realization. While the society does care about the overall performance, what counts are the results. I acknowledge that it is impossible for colleges to look into every applicant's passion, but why do these passions have to turn into mere calculations in the process? **This student's reflection illustrates the shift in focus within the CAS program. She makes a valid point; CAS is about the experience, not "mere calculations."**

I was actually quite ambivalent about including the second, rather sad, epiphany about this experience because it was not a "positive" learning. However, life is not always happy, and throughout life, all of us are going to have to face the harsh and benevolent realities. Therefore, I included the second portion.

Reflections of an Individual New to Volleyball

- **Action:** I joined an intramural volleyball club at my school – I had never played before.

My stomach was upset the first day we suited up. It seemed as if everyone knew exactly what they were doing, everyone but me. My friend was so patient and kind, helping me understand the rules, the regulations and where to stand. I found serving the ball most intimidating. All eyes were on my... I thought I would die. The game went much faster than I imagined. Everyone is always in motion and all the players were most serious about winning. This made me a bit uncomfortable as the group dynamic was new for me. I found it difficult not to be in control all the time. **This paragraph shows evidence of self-awareness and opportunity for growth.**

The activity is becoming more important to me. It gives me a sense of belonging. It's fun to see other players in the hallway and be able to say hello and know we belong to a club together. My high school is so large, it can be easy to feel a bit alone. **This activity has a goal, which supports the criteria for a long-term commitment and opportunity for growth. In addition, it is a new skill. The reflection reveals student's feelings and concerns.**

Reflections from a Visitor to a Nursing Home

- **Service:** I visited someone in the nursing home who did not have many visitors.

This is what I am good at. I love old people. My grandmother is the most important person in my life. She has a very good friend, Margaret, who had to go to a nursing home. When I heard that not many people visit Margaret, I knew I had to do something. I was so surprised to see that more people than Margaret were happy to see me. Who knew that so many families forget the older family members? **(This is a good opportunity to discuss ethics.)** It was so sad. I look forward to reading to these people. We have the best conversations about all the characters in the books and we try to figure out what will happen next in each story. It's funny how we usually move from the books to talking about real life and real people. The best stories are usually not in the books, they are stories from the lives of these old people. I think I look forward to visiting them more than they look forward to seeing me. One sad part though, one of my favorite people, Jack, died last week. I don't know exactly how to handle this or what to do say. This will be a struggle for me. I will still go back to the nursing home, but I need some time to process before I write about it. **This activity was mutually beneficial for both the student and recipients of service. The opportunities for growth are evident.**

How to Get Started: Student Responsibilities

- ✓ Complete the Personal Inventory Form in this packet.
- ✓ Brainstorm activities that you would like to engage in to meet your CAS requirement. Refer to local newspapers, community organizations or school organizations for ideas. Remember, CAS requires that you engage in 18 months of continuous service.
- ✓ Complete the form “Does my Activity Qualify as CAS?”
- ✓ Consult the calendar in this packet and note all important dates/deadlines.
- ✓ Login to Managebac and engage in a tutorial to learn how to use it. Decide on a first project and submit a proposal via Managebac. The project should include:
 - The Name/Type of project or activity
 - Whether the project meets the criteria for Creativity, Action or Service (or a combination)
 - The Learning Outcomes you hope to achieve by working on this project
 - The name of the agency/team/club AND the name and phone number (or email address) of the adult who will supervise your activity
- ✓ Sign up for your initial interview with Ms. Blunt. Be prepared to bring the following items to the interview:
 - Signed “Student CAS Contract”
 - “Personal Inventory Form”
 - “Brainstorming Ideas” form and “Does My Activity Qualify as CAS?” form
 - Completed proposal on Managebac

Once you have completed your initial interview and your project(s) has been approved:

- ✓ *Keep track of your hours* in your HHS planner and then transfer your hours into Managebac. Many colleges will ask for evidence of perseverance and commitment – a log of your hours will provide this evidence.
- ✓ *Begin to collect evidence* that you can use to show personal growth during your CAS experience. You will need at least 10 pieces of physical evidence that shows that you have completed your CAS requirement. Physical evidence can include letters of commendation from your supervisor, physical objects such as a piece of artwork or sporting equipment, photographs, etc.
- ✓ *Post journal entry reflections, photographs, pod casts, imovies etc. to Managebac* documenting your growth. (Please see sample reflections). Depending on the activity, you may reflect once a week, once every time something memorable occurs or at least once every two to three weeks. You will receive feedback on your reflections through Managebac. Also, feel free to ask questions via Managebac.

Tips for Parents

Parental encouragement and support is often a vital part of helping students complete the IB diploma and/or CAS. Below are some ideas of how parents can support their students:

- ✓ Familiarize yourself with the CAS requirements
- ✓ Discuss the requirements/opportunities with your student
- ✓ Share your own experiences and reflect upon your own personal growth through your participation.
- ✓ Explore your student’s interests with him/her and look through listings of possible activities together.
- ✓ Encourage your student to build on previous experiences.
- ✓ Get involved: attend games, plays, concerts. Provide transportation when necessary.

HHS CAS Personal Intake Form

1. List all extracurricular activities in which you are involved. Include sports, music, drama, clubs, etc.

2.
 - a. Do you take any electives outside the core 6? If so which ones?

 - b. Do you take any lessons or classes outside of school? Which ones?

 - c. What would you like to learn more about?

3. What skills do you have? For example, can you draw, organize events, understand computers, coach a sport, play an instrument, etc.?

4. Are there any new skills you wish to develop? Have you always wanted to play the piano, start a work out club to get into shape, become a better public speaker?

5. What community, national, global problems concern you the most?

6. What career interests do you have?

7. Describe your typical day. What days/times are you available to work on CAS?

BRAINSTORMING IDEAS

Your plan will most probably adapt over time as you reflect on your activities and your interests and preferences change. This plan therefore is not set in stone, but is an excellent place to start.

In which activities will you get involved? (You can place an activity in more than one box).

	Activity Description	Date (Month, Year)	Approximate Duration (in hours)
A group activity where you will collaborate with others.			
An activity that combines two of creativity action or service.			
An activity that will be a new challenge to you.			
An activity that will be an extension of an existing one.			
An activity where you will learn a new skill.			
Involvement with international projects (either locally, nationally, or internationally).			
An activity that will involve collaboration with others.			
An activity that you will initiate.			

Which activities will be based at school?

Which activities are further away from school but still in Harrison?

Are there projects that you may have opportunities to engage in that are outside of the Town of Harrison? Explain.

DOES AN ACTIVITY QUALIFY AS CAS?

You must have your CAS activities approved in advance by the CAS Coordinator (Ms. Blunt). This sheet will help you determine if your planned activity is suitable for your CAS portfolio.

Activity title: _____

Is this activity intended to meet the Creativity, Action or Service requirement (or a combination)? How?

Is the activity a **new role** for me?

Is it a **real task** that I am going to undertake? (Do I have to plan, do and reflect?)

Does it have **real consequences** for other people and for me? (Does it fulfill a need?)

What **do I hope to learn** from getting involved?

How can this activity **benefit other people**?

Which **Learning Outcomes** will this activity enable me to meet? How?

How can I **reflect** on this activity?

Have you found an adult supervisor yet?

Name of Supervisor: _____

Email: _____
 Phone Number: _____

CAS CALENDAR

Month	IB Year One	IB Year Two
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participate in CAS orientation ➤ Brainstorm possible CAS projects ➤ Schedule initial interview with CAS Coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Student progress checkpoint. Students should make sure that they have met or have a plan to meet learning outcome #6 (engage in issues of global importance)
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Initial interview must be completed by October 1 ➤ Choose CAS activities/Get approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review each student's progress in CAS and contact students and their parents that have not been meeting the CAS requirements.
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ At least one project should be underway 	
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Student progress checkpoint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Student progress checkpoint. Students should plan to complete their CAS requirement by February. Make any final adjustments to projects at this time.
December		
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Student progress checkpoint. Students should consider their progress with their CAS Coordinator/Advisor and adjust their activities as necessary. 	
February		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students begin to assemble 10 pieces of evidence and final reflections (must include at least 10 sample reflections) ➤ Schedule Final CAS Interviews ➤ Final CAS Interviews Begin
March		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Final CAS Interviews should be completed
April		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CAS should be completed
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Student progress checkpoint ➤ Students should have met at least 4 learning outcomes and should have engaged in at least two projects involving creativity, action and service (or a combination of two) ➤ Orientation & Initial interviews begin for incoming 10th graders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ IB EXAMS
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review students progress ➤ Set CAS goals for the summer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CAS CELEBRATION

Summary Checklist (I know I completed CAS if...)

1. I planned and completed a series of CAS activities that were real, purposeful activities with significant outcomes; involved personally challenge; required thoughtful consideration and reflection on outcomes and personal learning.
2. I can demonstrate that I accomplished all 8 learning outcomes during a continuous 18 month CAS commitment.
3. I can demonstrate a reasonable balance between creativity, action and service activities.
4. I completed at least one “super project” that involved collaboration and integration of at least two of creativity, action and service and was of a significant duration.
5. I collected at least 10 pieces of evidence that provide proof that I participated as I claim.
6. I reflected on EACH of my individual CAS activities and created a portfolio of my activities using Managebac.
7. I can reflect on my 18-month CAS commitment as a whole. I can provide at least 10 sample pages from my on-going reflections to show my personal growth in addition to the 10 pieces of evidence that I collected while engaging in the activities.
8. I scheduled and completed an initial (at the beginning of my junior year) and final interview (after February of my senior year) with my CAS Coordinator and at least one interim interview that helped me monitor my progress throughout my CAS experience.



Student CAS Contract



Please read the following agreement, check each statement indicating that you have read and understood the implications of that statement and then sign the form in the appropriate place. Please note that both the student and a parent/guardian must sign this form before CAS work can commence.

_____ I acknowledge that I have received this booklet and that I have read and understand the contents within.

_____ I am a willing participant in the philosophy of CAS and will wholeheartedly support in its successful implementation.

_____ I understand that if I am completing a service project/activity off school property it is required that I am clear about my responsibilities, and to whom at the site I am to report (my parent cannot be my supervisor). Further, I must not participate in any activity involving the use of dangerous or potentially dangerous tools and/or equipment. Under no circumstances should I be exposed to or perform service in an area that involves dangerous activities. I should not operate a motor vehicle and should not drive while engaged in the service experience. I should not perform service at either unreasonably early or late hours of the day or evening. If engaged in clinical, medical, hospital or related settings, I should not attend to any duties resulting in exposure to fluids, excretions, or contaminations known to be harmful, contagious, or injurious. My safety and supervision is of the utmost importance.

_____ I understand I must get approval for each CAS project/activity from the CAS Coordinator for all projects both on and off school property before I can begin work on that project/activity.

_____ I understand that if I am reported for adverse behavior while pursuing CAS activities, show lack of interest or sincerity, am habitually late or absent after agreeing to work a project, that I will be asked for a written explanation that will need to be signed by my parents or guardian.

_____ I hereby agree to save and hold harmless Harrison Central School District and any of its employees from all cost, injury and damage incurred while participating in an CAS activity on or off-site, and from any other injury or damage to any person or property whatsoever.

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent Name: _____

Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____