

Cherokee Trail High School



International Baccalaureate **CAS GUIDE**

What is CAS?

Creativity, activity, service (CAS) is at the heart of the Diploma Program. With TOK and the Extended Essay, it is an essential element in every student's Core Diploma Program experience. CAS involves students in a range of activities alongside their academic studies throughout the Diploma Program. *Successful completion of CAS is a requirement for the award of the IB Diploma.*

The Aim of Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS)

Because you are more than just a grade-point-average, CAS is intended to move you out of the academic arena and help you learn through life experience. We know that IB students are involved in many interesting activities. What we are asking you to do is reflect upon how these activities help you to become a better person. CAS is about:

- enjoying and finding significance in a range of experiences
- purposefully reflecting upon your experiences
- identifying goals, developing strategies and determining further actions for personal growth
- exploring new possibilities, embracing new challenges and adapting to new roles
- actively participating in planned, sustained, and collaborative CAS projects
- understanding that you are members of local and global communities with responsibilities towards each other and the environment

What defines the three strands of CAS?

- **Creativity:** any experiences that involve creative thinking such as planning activities, teaching, problem solving or taking a leadership role. They may also involve artist pursuits: painting, writing, music, etc.
- **Activity:** requires physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle to complement the demands of the Diploma's academic work, such as sports or dance classes.
- **Service:** an unpaid and voluntary exchange that has learning benefits for the student. The rights, dignity, and autonomy of all those involved are respected. Some examples include activities for the elderly, leading a music ensemble, coaching a sports team, environmental restoration and protection.

The emphasis of CAS is on experiential learning. At the same time, CAS provides an important counterbalance to the academic pressures of the rest of the Diploma Program. Student's should be challenged by the CAS program, but enjoy it as well. For many students their CAS activities include experiences that are profound and life-changing.

CAS should involve:

- Real, purposeful activities, with significant outcomes
- Personal challenges that extend the student and be achievable in scope
- Thoughtful consideration, such as planning, reviewing progress, reporting
- Reflection on outcomes and personal learning.

All CAS activities should meet these four criteria. CAS activities should continue on a regular basis for as long as possible throughout the program and certainly for at least 18 months or through the end of 1st semester of your Senior year. The guideline for the CAS experience is to strike a reasonable balance between creativity, activity and service. "Hour counting," however, is not encouraged.

If it has been a month since your last CAS experience, it is time to re-engage.

WHAT CAS IS NOT

CAS is not a points-scoring exercise. Generally, CAS is not taking place when the student is in a passive rather than an active role. There should be **interaction**. If you are passive, nothing of significant value, either for you or for other people, will come from what you are doing, and no real reflection is possible.

Some examples of activities that are NOT CAS are:

- Any class, activity or project that is already part of the student’s Diploma Program course.
- An activity for which a student is personally rewarded, either financially or with some other benefit.
- All forms of duty in the family.

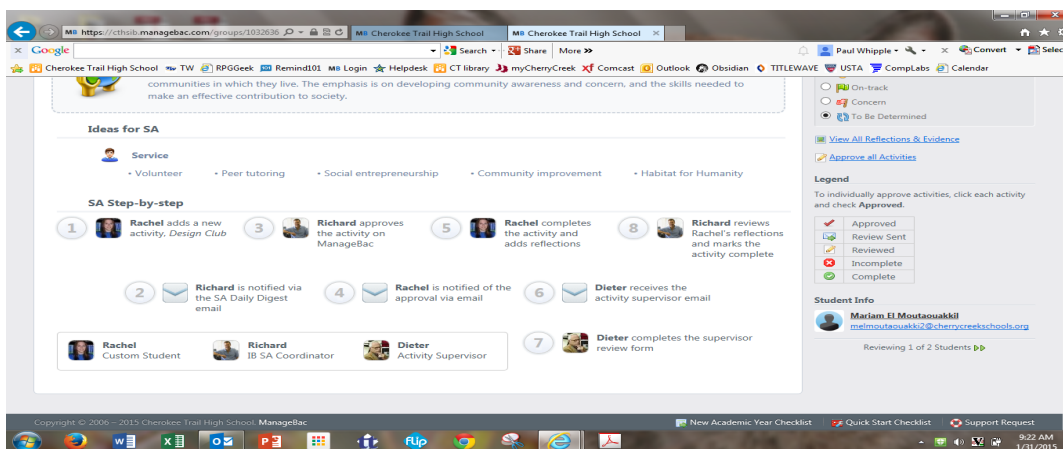
Steps for Success in CAS – Your Responsibilities

1. Self-Evaluation and Pre-planning (*Must be done BEFORE you begin activities*)

You must self-review at the beginning of your CAS experience and set personal goals for what you hope to achieve through your CAS activities. This will involve identifying your interests, strengths, weaknesses, and resources. Time for initial reflection will be provided at the beginning of junior year; **CAS activities cannot begin before your junior year. It is important that you check with your CAS Advisor via Managebac to verify that the activities will count towards CAS.**

2. Reporting in Managebac

After setting up your account, you will be able to enter your CAS project proposal, log experiences, write reflections, start creating your portfolio and more. Here is an example of how an activity flows through the Managebac system.



3. Create a CAS Project

Throughout your CAS experiences, you will take part in a range of activities, **including at least one significant project (The CAS Project)**. Some of you may chose projects that will be self-initiated; however, big projects might also involve teamwork and integrate two or more of creativity, action and service. The project can be an activity you initiate through a school club or an activity outside of school. In answer to the question, “how much time should I spend?”, please consider that students who spend some time each week, with a reasonable balance between creativity, activity and service, are successful in achieving their aims.

- You must submit a CAS project via Managebac for approval during the beginning of your junior year. The project should include an outline of what you plan to do, a loose timeline for completion, and the learning outcomes you think the project will address. Make sure the Big Project includes Creativity, Activity, and Service components
- Your project should include specific ideas as to how you will reflect on your activities: What questions will you be asking yourself, and how you will demonstrate reflection?
- Please note that your project is fluid and will change as you reflect and interact with your CAS advisor.
- Carry out your CAS project in the following stages: Investigation, Preparation, Action, Reflection, and Demonstration.

4. Recording and Reporting

You must keep records of your activities and reflections via Managebac, including photos, audio or video recordings whenever possible, as part of your CAS portfolio. You must provide evidence of your achievement of the **seven CAS learning outcomes** as presented later in this guide. This evidence can be in a variety of forms: scrapbooks, diaries, forum/blog entries, photos, videos, poetry, originally composed song lyrics, or essays. Your portfolio will reflect the sum of your CAS experiences and must demonstrate your achievement of all seven CAS Learning Outcomes.

5. Meet with your CAS advisors

You must meet with your CAS advisors at least three times with the final meeting serving as a summative review of your portfolio. These meetings will include a review of your plan and your documentation. Your CAS advisors will also review your reflections periodically during the process via Managebac. These meetings will take place at the beginning of your junior year, the beginning of your senior year, and the end of your senior year.

CAS Reflections

Experiential learning is at the heart of CAS. Experiential learning involves much more than just planning and carrying out the activity itself. **It also involves personal observation and reflection of your feelings and interactions**, which include analysis of your perceptions, identifying your achievements, outstanding issues, personal strengths and challenges, evaluating your actions and thinking about your new understandings. During the project, you should note feelings, thoughts, and observations while applying this learning to the next activity or situation. This is the spiral of self-evaluative feedback, change, and growth that drives experiential learning and CAS. What can you accomplish through the process of reflection?

- Taking charge: Being able to learn from experience gives us the power to influence the meaning and impact of things that we do or that happen to us.
- Increasing your problem solving ability: Being able to analyze problems, generate alternatives, and anticipate consequences are critical skills.
- Power to assess your personal impact: Ongoing reflection helps reveal and even determine what personal changes are occurring in self-image, new skills, and ideas about a career. It can give you the self-confidence to take on a bigger project or to use more of your skills.

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

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

Other questions to ask would be:

- How successful was I in achieving my goals? What difficulties did I encounter, and how did I overcome them?
- What did I learn about myself and about others through this activity/project? What abilities, attitudes, and values have I developed?
- Did anyone help me to think about my learning during this activity/project? If so, who helped and how did they help?
- How did this activity/project benefit others?
- How would I summarize my effort and commitment?
- What might I do differently next time to improve?
- How can I apply what I have learned in other life situations?
- What have I learned about ethical and global issues that are evident in our local, national, and world community? How do I feel about this? What are my views on these issues? What have I done to address these issues?

Reflect at the end of each activity, while the experience is fresh in your mind.

This does not mean an essay each time; remember that reflection can take different forms and media expressions. Reflections are a huge part of CAS, and you will learn how to do it and how to improve. Reflection involves observation, asking questions, and putting facts, ideas and experiences together to come up with new meaning.

CAS Learning Outcomes

To complete the CAS requirement, you must provide evidence that you have met all seven learning outcomes described below. Some may be demonstrated many times and in a variety of activities, but completion requires only that there is evidence for every outcome.

As a result of your CAS experience as a whole, including your reflections, you are able to:

- **STRENGTH & GROWTH: Identify strengths and develop areas for growth**
You are able to see yourself as an individual with various skills and abilities, some more developed than others, and understand that you can make choices about how you wish to move forward.
- **CHALLENGE: Demonstrate that challenges have been undertaken, developing new skills in the process**
A new challenge may be an unfamiliar activity or an extension to an existing one, showing continued growth.
- **PLANNING: Demonstrate how to plan and initiate a CAS experience**
Students can articulate the stages from conceiving an idea to executing a plan for a CAS experience or series of CAS experiences. This may be accomplished in collaboration with other participants. Students may show their knowledge and awareness by building on a previous experience, or by launching a new idea or process.
- **PERSEVERANCE: Show commitment to and perseverance in CAS experiences**
Students demonstrate regular involvement and active engagement. At a minimum, this implies attending regularly and accepting a share of responsibility for dealing with problems that arise in the course of activities.
- **COLLABORATION: Demonstrate the skills and recognize the benefits of working collaboratively**

Collaboration can be shown in many different activities such as team sports, playing music in a band, or helping in a kindergarten. This will include taking on different roles within the group and showing respect for different points of view and ideas. Students are able to demonstrate and critically discuss the benefits and challenges of collaboration.

- **GLOBAL SIGNIFICANCE: Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance**
Students are able to identify and demonstrate their understanding of global issues, make responsible decisions, and take appropriate action in response to the issue either locally, nationally or internationally.
- **ETHICS OF CHOICES AND ACTIONS: Recognize and consider the ethics of choices and 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--awareness of the consequences of choices and actions--can be shown in various ways, including journal entries and conversations with CAS advisors.

This focus on learning outcomes emphasizes that the quality of the CAS activity (its contribution to your development) is of the utmost importance. It is the experience and reflection upon the experience that counts; this is not merely an exercise to count or log hours.

Portfolio

The CAS Portfolio is a summation of all CAS experiences and can be in a format chosen by the student in consultation with the advisors. Written reflections, photos, videos, files and documents can all be included in the portfolio. Some students may prefer to record their reflections in a video blog, some may create a photo collage, some may print their written reflections, and others could create a piece of art that represents the overall CAS experiences.

The Portfolio will be displayed at the Senior Recognition Ceremony reception in May of senior year for Staff, other students, and families to see.

CTHS APPROVED CAS ACTIVITIES

	Creativity, Action and/or Service			Indicate which of the seven learning outcomes are addressed by each project/activity						
	C	A	S	STRENGTH & GROWTH	CHALLENGE	PLANNING	COLLABORATION	PERSEVERANCE	GLOBAL SIGNIFICANCE	ETHICS OF ACTION
Following is a list of activities and clubs at CTHS and how they apply to CAS. It is by no means complete. Activities outside of school are also highly encouraged.										
Orchestra/Jazz Band	X			X	X	X	X	X		X
World Awareness Week	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Drama/Plays/Stage Craft	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		
Poetry STOMP – Writing	X			X	X	X		X		
Principal’s Student Advisory Council	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dance Team	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		
Sports Teams (inside and outside of CT)	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		
Ceramics Club	X			X	X			X		
Literary Magazine	X			X	X	X	X	X		
French and Spanish Clubs	X			X					X	
Habitat 4 Humanity (Outside of School)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
DECA	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		
SAC			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Key Club			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Wish Week/Make-A-Wish Foundation			X	X	X	X	X	X		
Speech and Debate	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Model United Nations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tri-M Music Honor Society	X			X	X	X	X	X		
National Honor Society			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
ADAMS Camp (Outside of School)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tutoring/Cougar Resource Center	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

Environmental Protection Club	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
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This is by no means a comprehensive list - the club offerings change yearly. Refer to the Activities & Clubs tab on the Cherokee Trail website for a current list of clubs. This list is to be used as a guide to how the clubs relate to the CAS learning outcomes.

We look forward to working with you on the CAS requirement for your IB Diploma. Please contact us with any questions, or stop by and see us in the AP/IB Office (Room 171).

Best regards,

Karen Slusher
 IB Coordinator
kslusher@cherrycreekschools.org
 720-886-2040

CAS Coordinators 2023-24

Seniors:

Joy Place-Kranefuss
jplacekranefus@cherrycreekschools.org
 720-886-2033
 Office Room 192

Juniors:

Kris Atkin
katkin@cherrycreekschools.org
 720-886-1904
 Main Office

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