

Cherokee Trail High School



International Baccalaureate **CAS GUIDE**

What is CAS?

Creativity, activity, service (CAS) is at the heart of the Diploma Program. It is one of the three essential elements in every student's Diploma Program experience. It 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 average, CAS is intended to move you out of the academic arena and help you learn through life experiences. Yes, as an IB student, we know you are involved in many interesting activities. What we are asking you to do is consider how these activities help you to become a better person.

CAS is about:

- Reflective thinking – you understand your own strengths and limitations, identify goals and devise strategies for personal growth
- The willingness to accept new challenges and new roles
- Gaining awareness of yourself as a member of communities with responsibilities towards each other and the environment
- Being an active participant in sustained, collaborative projects
- Balance – you enjoy and find significance in a range of activities involving intellectual, physical, creative and emotional experiences

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, drawing, music, etc.
- **Activity:** requires physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle to complement the demands of the Diploma academic work, such as sports or dance classes.
- **Service:** an unpaid and voluntary exchange that has learning benefit for the student. The rights, dignity, and autonomy of all those involved are respected. Some examples include helping with activities for the elderly, leading a music ensemble for the visually impaired, coaching a sports team for disadvantaged children, environmental restoration and protection.

In order to demonstrate these concepts, students are required to undertake a CAS project. The project challenges students to:

- show initiative
- demonstrate perseverance
- develop skills such as collaboration, problem solving and decision making.

The emphasis of CAS is on experiential learning. At the same time, it 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 challenge – tasks must 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 3rd Quarter of your Senior year. The guideline for CAS experience is to strike a reasonable balance between creativity, activity and service. “Hour counting”, however, is not encouraged; CAS is about what you learned and how you have grown through your CAS experiences.

WHAT IS NOT CAS

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 real value, either for you or for other people, results from what you are doing, and no real reflection is possible.

Examples of activities that would not be considered CAS are listed below:

- 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 (unless this benefit is passed on in full to a worthy cause).
- A passive pursuit, such as a visit to a museum, the theatre, art exhibition, concert or sports event, unless it clearly inspires work in a related activity in which a student is engaged.
- Work experience that only benefits the student.
- All forms of duty in the family.

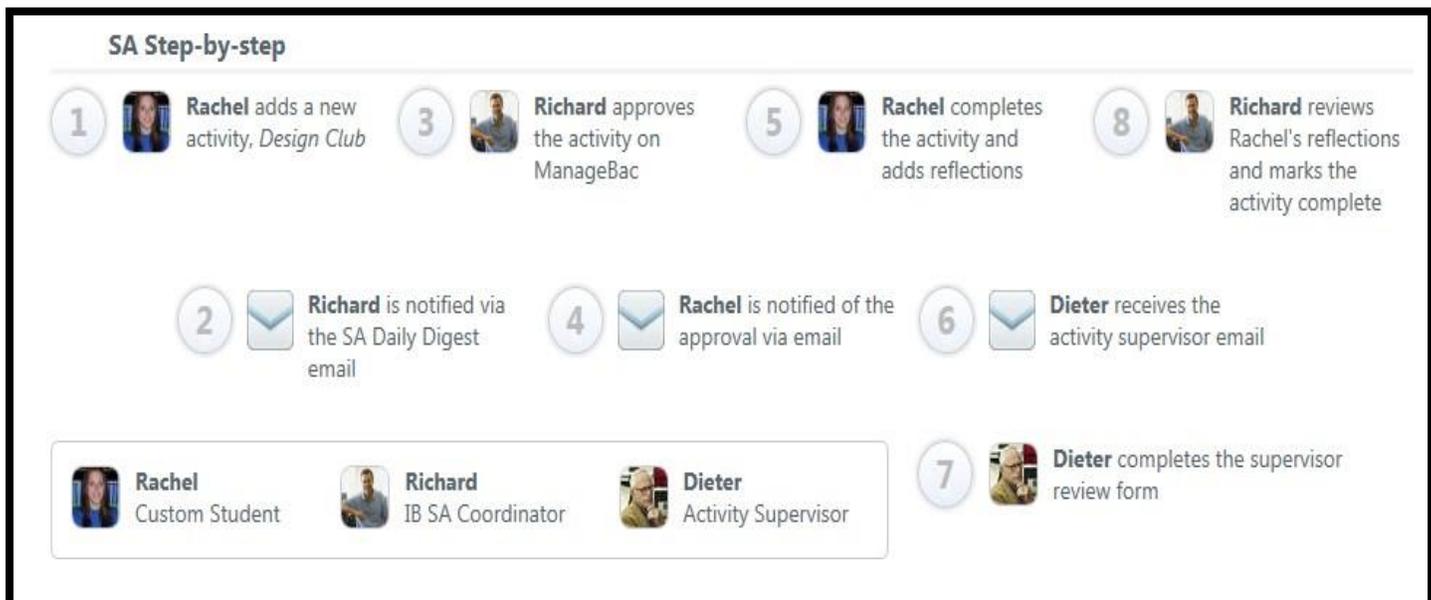
Steps for Success in CAS – Your Responsibilities

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 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

You must take part in a range of activities, **including at least one significant, enduring project (The Big Project)**, at least one each school year, or a large one that spans your junior and senior year, **some of which you initiate yourself** but, also involves teamwork and integrates two or more strands of creativity, activity and service. The project can be an activity you initiate through a school club or an activity outside of the school in which you are involved. You should plan to have a reasonable balance between creativity, activity and service. If you find that you have not engaged in activities relating to your project for longer than three to four weeks, it is time to get re-engaged.

- 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 project meets all three requirements in the “What is CAS?” section of the handbook.
- 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. You must plan your activities, carry them out, and reflect on what you have learned.

4. Recording and Reporting – the Portfolio

You must keep records of your activities and achievements 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 in this guide. This evidence can be in a variety of forms: scrapbooks, diaries, forum/blog entries, photo essays, videos/DVDs, 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.

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:** 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 you have made, 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:

- **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.
- **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.
- **Demonstrate how to plan and initiate a CAS experience**
Initiation and planning 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.
- **Show commitment to and perseverance in CAS experiences**
At a minimum, this implies attending regularly and accepting a share of responsibility for dealing with problems that arise in the course of activities.
- **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.
- **Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance**
You may be involved in international projects or there are many global issues that can be acted upon locally or nationally (for example, environmental concerns, caring for the elderly).
- **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 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 experience (its contribution to your development) is of the most importance. It is the experience and reflection upon the experience that counts; this is not merely an exercise to log hours.

CTHS APPROVED CAS EXPERIENCES

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/Choir (Creativity)

World Awareness Week – KIVA (Creativity/Service)

Drama/Plays/Stage Craft (Creativity/Activity)

Poetry STOMP – Writing (Creativity)

Principal’s Student Advisory Council (Creativity/Service)

Dance Team (inside and outside of CT) (Creativity/Activity)

Sports Teams (inside and outside of CT) (Creativity/Activity)

Edwards Foundation Large Animal Rescue (outside of school) (Creativity/Activity/Service)

Literary Magazine (Creativity/Activity/Service)

French and Spanish Clubs (Creativity/Activity/Service)

Habitat 4 Humanity (Outside of School) (Creativity/Activity/Service)

DECA/FBLA (Creativity/Service)

BSA (Creativity/Service)

Key Club (Creativity/Activity/Service)

Wish Week/Make-A-Wish Foundation (Creativity/Activity/Service)

Speech and Debate (Creativity/Service)

Model United Nations (Creativity/Service)

Tri-M Music Honor Society (Creativity/Service)

National Honor Society (Creativity/Service)

ADAMS Camp (Outside of School) (Creativity/Activity/Service)

Tutoring/Cougar Resource Center (Creativity/Service)

Recycling/Environmental Protection Club (Creativity/Activity/Service)



The club list changes yearly. Refer to the Activities & Clubs tab on the homepage of school website for a current list of clubs. This list is to be used as a guide to show how experiences within the clubs could relate to the CAS learning outcomes.

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

Best regards,

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

CAS Coordinators 2021-22

Seniors – last names A-J:

Paul Whipple
pwhipple@cherrycreekschools.org
720-886-1985

Seniors – last names K-Z:

Alisa Wills-Keely
awillskeely@cherrycreekschools.org
720-886-2012

Juniors (all):

Kris Atkin
katkin@cherrycreekschools.org
720-886-2040