



# *MYP Parent's Guide*

## MYP Parent Guide

Qatar Academy

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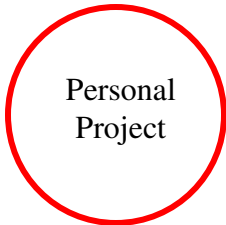
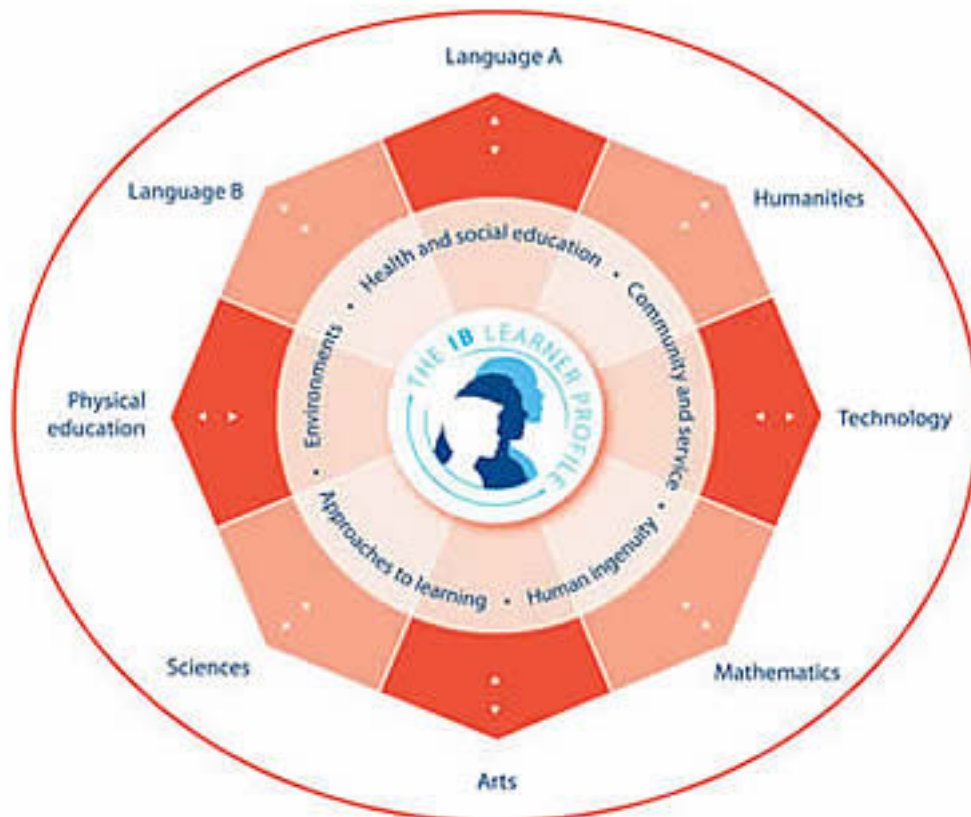
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## Why the MYP?

The Senior School follows the Middle Years Program (grades 6-10) and the Diploma Program (grades 11 and 12), offered by the International Baccalaureate. Both programs are based on the premise that for students to become fully-informed and contributive citizens of an increasingly globalized world, schools must teach them to be excellent communicators, to be aware of multiple cultures, including their own, and to make connections between their learning and their lives.

Qatar Academy believes that the MYP is the best system of education to ensure that our students will develop a broad knowledge base, strong academic and intellectual skills, and the ability to apply their knowledge and skills to the world beyond school. The MYP has been designed specifically to meet the needs of students in grades 6 through 10. Student at this age are not yet adults, but are no longer young children, so the program provides structure and support as students develop independence, responsibility and intellectual curiosity.

## MYP Programme Model



The MYP programme model includes eight subject areas, the Areas of Interaction (AOI), the Personal Project, and the student. The MYP strives to develop students' capabilities through carefully considered learning experiences in each of the listed subjects, utilizing the AOI, and culminating in each student's completion of a Personal Project. Information about each of these elements is included in subsequent sections.

## **Subject Area Overviews**

### **English**

QA's English course of studies is designed to assist students in developing the highest possible control over their use of the English language. The course of study emphasises the development of the skills needed for effective oral and written communication: coherence, clarity, precision, fluency and critical thought. Of equal importance is the development of the ability to work with literature, including sophisticated analysis of a variety of quality texts. Students will study texts from around the world, covering many different physical locations, cultures, historical periods, and writing styles over the course of the five year programme.

### **Arabic**

As the host language, Arabic holds a crucial position in the lives of our students. For linguistic, cultural and religious reasons, the teaching of Modern Standard Arabic is given high value at Qatar Academy.

All students of Arabic Cultural Heritage are required to take Arabic A in QA Senior School. See below for further details on this point, taken from the QA Language Policy.

#### *Course of Studies*

To provide for the development of language skills in all students, regardless of prior experience, QA Arabic classes in all grades provide a rich language environment. Classes focus on the major language areas of reading, listening, speaking and writing, and all students are provided with appropriate opportunities to improve their abilities in each area.

Two separate Arabic classes are offered: Arabic A and Arabic B; each has a different focus in order to meet the needs of students with different linguistic backgrounds. Arabic A classes are designed to further develop the linguistic abilities of students who are already fluent or close to fluent in Arabic. Students in Arabic A read full-length works of Arabic literature, write academic essays and produce original creative writing, for example. The goal for Arabic A students is to have advanced fluency and language abilities equal in English and Arabic.

The Arabic B course is designed for international students who are working towards fluency. Students in Arabic B work at gaining the ability to communicate in Arabic, both in writing and orally. Arabic literature is explored as students gain command of the language, but is not the focus of the course. The goal for Arabic B students is to have functional fluency by the end of grade 10.

Since international students may have different levels of experience with Arabic upon entry to QA Senior School, ranging from no previous exposure to several years of studying Arabic as an additional language, the Arabic B teachers provide a more intensive experience to new learners. The aim is to bring new Arabic learners up to a similar standard by the end of grade 10.

Arabic B is also offered as a two-year course in grades 9 and 10 ONLY for students who enter QA Senior School in grade 8 or 9 with no previous experience with Arabic. The aim of this course, called Arabic B Foundation, is to provide a solid basis of study in the language, with the ability to communicate on a simple level, both orally and in writing. Details of placement into Arabic B Foundation are provided below.

Upon entry into QA Senior School, each student is placed into Arabic A or B as appropriate for their background and ability level. This decision is made by the Arabic teachers after consideration of the student's prior history with Arabic, linguistic abilities, and cultural background (see below). Students who are entering QA Senior School directly from QA Primary School are placed with consideration for their experience in the Primary Arabic program. The Head of Modern Languages and the Arabic teachers examine transcripts and directly observe the abilities of students transferring from other schools, before making a final decision.

The decision regarding class placement is binding for the duration of grades 6-10; students may only be changed from A to B (or vice versa) during their first month in QA Senior School, and then only with the approval of their teacher, the Head of Department, the Senior School Principal, and the Curriculum Coordinator.

#### *Students with Arabic Cultural Heritage*

Qatar Academy believes that development of Arabic language abilities is of great importance for all students with Arabic cultural heritage. For this reason, students with clear Arabic cultural heritage are required to take Arabic A in grades 6-10. This includes all students with citizenship in an Arabic country, whether or not they also hold citizenship in a second, non-Arabic, country, as well as students with one or more Arab parents. Exceptions are made only after careful consideration on an individual basis. Grounds for exceptions include if a student has been raised primarily in a non-Arabic country, and has therefore had very little academic Arabic experience before entry to Qatar Academy Senior School. Students who have resided primarily in Arabic-speaking countries will not usually be exempted from the requirement to take Arabic A. Exceptions are not made for students who have the requisite cultural heritage or linguistic background, but who are underperforming due to poor effort or motivational factors. All exceptions must be approved by the student's teacher, the Head of Department, the Senior School Principal, and the Curriculum Coordinator, and must be made within one month of the student's entry to QA Senior School. If an exception is made, the student is required to study Arabic B; exceptions will not be made to allow students to study French or Spanish, except in the case noted below for students entering in grade 8 with no Arabic experience.

### *Students Entering in Grade 7*

Subsequent to the requirements above, students who enter QA in grade 7 are placed according to their ability. Students with no or limited experience of Arabic as an additional language are placed into Arabic B classes, while those who are fluent (or very close) enter Arabic A. The Head of Modern Languages will arrange for screening to determine the appropriate placement of new students.

### *Students Entering in Grade 8*

Subsequent to the requirements above, students who enter QA in grade 8 are placed according to their ability. Students with some experience of Arabic as an additional language are placed into Arabic B classes, while those who are fluent (or very close) enter Arabic A. Students with clear Arabic Cultural Heritage, but with no knowledge of Arabic prior to matriculation, are exempt from taking Arabic in grade 8 only, and will be placed in a study hall for the year; French and Spanish classes are available to these students instead of study hall, if the student has appropriate background in one of those languages. In such cases, the student would take French or Spanish only during Grade 8, and switch to Arabic B Foundation at the start of Grade 9. Students without clear Arabic Cultural Heritage must be placed into either French or Spanish, and must continue study in that language through the end of Grade 10. The Head of Modern Languages will arrange for screening to determine the appropriate placement of new students.

### *Students Entering in Grade 9*

Subsequent to the requirements above, students who enter QA in grade 9 are placed according to their ability. Students with appropriate experience of Arabic as an additional language are placed into Arabic B classes, while those who are fluent (or very close) enter Arabic A. Students with no knowledge of Arabic prior to matriculation are placed into Arabic B Foundation class for grade 9 and 10. Students with clear Arabic Cultural Heritage must be placed into the appropriate level of Arabic; students without Arabic Cultural Heritage will be placed into either Arabic, French or Spanish, depending on the student's background and preference, and room available within those courses. The Head of Modern Languages will arrange for screening to determine the appropriate placement of new students.

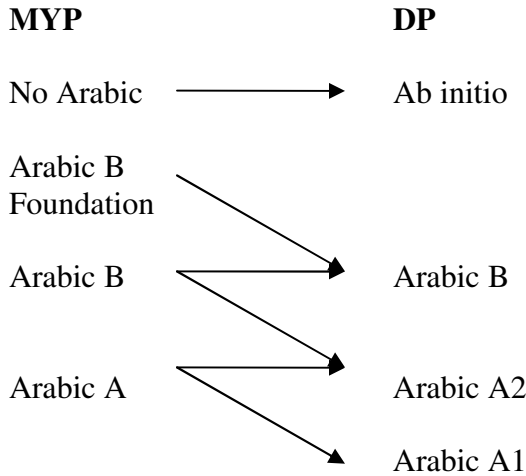
### *Students Entering in Grade 10*

Subsequent to the requirements above, students who enter QA in grade 10 are placed according to their ability. Students with appropriate experience of Arabic as an additional language are placed into Arabic B classes, while those who are fluent (or very close) enter Arabic A. Students with no knowledge of Arabic prior to matriculation are exempt from taking Arabic, and must be placed in a French or Spanish class. The Head of Modern Languages will arrange for screening to determine the appropriate placement of new students.

### *Flow into IB Diploma*

The chart below indicates the main options for each student as they enter the Diploma Program. As with all DP course selections, it will be important to have individual discussions with each student about their options, particularly considering their overall

program. Students may be able to take Arabic at a level other than that indicated here, depending on the strengths and interests of the student overall. However, such flexibility is limited; students who have taken MYP Arabic A may not take DP Arabic B, nor may a student who has taken MYP Arabic B take Arabic Ab initio.



### **French and Spanish**

French B and Spanish B courses are offered in Qatar Academy Senior School.

#### *Students with and without Arabic Cultural Heritage*

Students who have clear Arabic Cultural Heritage are required to take Arabic A. Full details are provided in the Arabic section of this document. This section on French and Spanish does not apply to these students, except in the case of a student entering QA in grade 8 with no previous Arabic experience.

Students who do not have Arabic Cultural Heritage are required to take either Arabic A, Arabic B, French B or Spanish B. The choice between languages is made upon entry to the Senior School, and is binding for the duration of grades six through ten. Details about Arabic A and B are in the Arabic section of this document.

MYP French and Spanish are offered as additional languages, and therefore native and near native speakers will **not** be permitted to choose a language at which they have already achieved advanced or superior language proficiency.

#### *Students Entering in Grade 7*

Students entering Qatar Academy in grade 7 are placed into a French or Spanish course. Because students will be behind their peers when they join French or Spanish, families are strongly encouraged to find a tutor to assist the student in catching up as they transition back into a foreign language class.

### *Students Entering in Grade 8*

Students entering Qatar Academy in grade 8 with no experience in Arabic, French or Spanish are normally placed into a study hall in grade 8, since the student would be two years behind their cohort. The student then joins an Arabic, Spanish or French Foundation-level class in grades 9 and 10. In the case of students who have previous Spanish or French experience, the Head of Modern Languages will evaluate the student individually to determine whether they should be placed in a language class or in study hall for grade 8.

### *Students Entering in Grade 9 or 10*

Students entering Qatar Academy in grade 9 or 10 are normally placed into an Arabic, Spanish or French Foundation-level class. In the case of students who have previous Arabic, Spanish or French experience, the Head of Modern Languages will evaluate the student individually to determine whether they should be placed in Standard- or Foundation-level. Since students entering QA at grade 10 will likely be behind their peers when they join Arabic, French or Spanish, families are strongly encouraged to find a tutor to assist the student in catching up as they transition into a foreign language class.

### *Flow into IB Diploma*

In the DP, QA offers French and Spanish, both at ab initio and Language B levels. Students may choose either language; the level for each student will depend on the individual student's prior experience with that language.

### Mother Tongue Development

Mother tongue development is supported directly for students whose first language is Arabic or English. For students with other mother tongues, language development is encouraged and supported where possible. QA works with such families to find appropriate resources, including teachers, literature and cultural experiences. If families arrange for mother tongue instruction with an outside tutor, the school is willing to provide access to a classroom during the after-school activities times (Sunday through Wednesday, 2:20 to 3:20). For other needs, families are welcome to contact the school, which will consider each request on a case-by-case basis.

At the DP level, students may opt to take their mother tongue as a Self-Taught A1 language, if that language is not already offered at the A1 level at QA. Students interested in this option should discuss it with the DP Coordinator as early as possible. The school will make reasonable efforts to accommodate Self-Taught requests, but this option cannot be guaranteed due to potential scheduling considerations. However, up through the 2007-8 school year, the school has been able to accommodate all Self-Taught requests, and hopes to be able to continue doing so.

### **Sciences**

In grades six to eight science will be taught in an integrated, sequential fashion. Integrated science allows students to look at topics from the approach of all science disciplines: Life, Physical, Earth and Space sciences. This will allow students to see the interconnected nature of science (as an example, concepts and issues from other branches

of science, such as physiology and health sciences) while allowing common themes to be revisited over a three-year period. Integrating the sciences provides an opportunity for a more relevant, less fragmented and stimulating experience for students.

The core elements of each of the three sciences studied in grade six to eight embody the following concepts: Life Science emphasizes a complex understanding of change, cycles, patterns, and relationships in the living world, while Physical Science stresses an in-depth understanding of the nature and structure of matter and the characteristics of energy, and Earth and Space Science connects the study of the Earth's composition, structure, processes, and history; it's atmosphere and oceans, and it's environment in space. Concepts, knowledge, and skill levels each year are studied in more depth so as to give students a sound foundation for further science courses.

Science in grades six to eight is taught in an investigative approach, providing students with a way of knowing through inquiry that contributes to the development of an analytical and critical way of thinking. Qatar Academy's Grade six to eight integrated science courses are designed to be relevant to the needs and interests of students, providing them with opportunities to explore the role of science in everyday life and the dynamic interactions between science and society.

In Grade nine all students will take the school's Life Science course which integrates biology with chemistry. In Grade ten Physical science, integrating physics and chemistry, will be offered. The focus of each of these courses is biology and physics respectively, however chemical processes will be integrated in both programs allowing each student to have a strong chemistry foundation. Students taking this sequence will have a broad and deep knowledge of chemistry, not only for further success in the IB science sequence, but also for matriculation in university.

## **Humanities**

Students undertaking humanities courses at Qatar Academy will become familiar with the fundamental concepts of the social sciences such as: **History** – where students come to understand the fundamental concepts of time, cause and consequence, continuity and change, similarities and differences through both chronological and thematic study; **Geography** – where students come to understand the human and natural environments and the role humans play as agents of change; **Economics** – where students evaluate theories and data in determining why people choose to use limited or scarce resources while attempting to satisfy their unlimited wants; and **Business** – where students can adapt to and lead change, are knowledgeable about current business practices and can make ethical decisions in a diverse and competitive global economy. The humanities courses are taught in an integrated fashion allowing students to see the interrelatedness among history, geography, and economics. Delivering content in an integrated fashion enables teachers to connect each discipline rather than teach it in isolation, it further allows students to build bridges of understanding among each discrete discipline.

The study of the humanities rests on a broad range of knowledge that requires students to engage in complex thinking, to raise questions and to marshal evidence in support of their

answers. Classroom instruction challenges students to engage in complex thinking by drawing upon chronological analysis, historical / geographical and economic data and interpretation, social science research, and synthesizing and evaluating a broad and diverse body of knowledge. These skills are developed in all QA humanities courses through the study of significant history, geography and economic ideas from the era or society that is being studied.

Imbued throughout the humanities courses are certain skills necessary to be successful at university. In each course students are expected to know the mechanics of writing and basic grammar, and are expected to communicate their ideas with clarity and coherence. Basic mathematical and statistical knowledge is further expected as students read and understand graphs and analyze and interpret statistical data so as to better understand economic, historic, and geographic knowledge.

### **Physical Education**

Physical Education has a unique and significant place within the MYP programme, as it contributes to the development of the student's physical, intellectual, emotional and social maturity, as well as their sporting ability.

Students will study a range of sports and activities that will improve their physical skills and understanding, teamwork and communication, while encouraging a healthy lifestyle and enjoyment of sport.

In Physical Education, we study

- **Invasion games** – Basketball, Football, Floor Hockey, Handball
- **Net games** – Badminton, Volleyball and Table Tennis
- **Striking games** – Softball and Rounders
- **Movement** – Gymnastics and performance movement
- **Aquatics** – Swimming, Personal Survival and Life Saving
- **Track & Field Athletics**
- **Integrated Fitness Programme**

While teaching such activities, we focus on the following **key areas**:

- **Knowledge and understanding** of sport and the importance of physical activity to a healthy lifestyle
- **Planning and performing** a series of linked movements that **communicate** ideas, for example, a dance expressing sadness
- Developing **skills and tactics** in a range of physical activities and applying **health and fitness principles**
- **Support and encouragement** of others, individually and in groups
- **Respect** for the student's physical environment
- **Sensitivity** to their own and other's **cultures**
- **Initiative, creativity** and a **willingness to improve**
- **Responsibility** for their own learning
- **Motivation, self discipline, organization** and **responsible behaviour**

- **Reflection** on performance and **goal setting** for the future

### **The Arts**

QA's Visual and Performing Arts courses are wide and varied and foster independent and logical thinking, along with creativity. Students taking these courses come to understand themselves as instruments of communication and expression that demonstrate mastery of basic oral and physical expression through sound, movement, and visual representations. They formulate and present difficult questions through their personal artistic visions. They are able to justify their aesthetic decisions when creating or performing a piece of work and know how to make decisions regarding the proper venue for performing or exhibiting any creative product. QA Arts courses enable students to develop their creativity and ingenuity by exploring a concept, an object, a space, or a sound. Rather than solely fixating on proper form, they seek to utilize knowledge of form to facilitate and support personal creative development.

Qatar Academy students are taught how to practice in a sustained, focused fashion without external supervision, how to manage their time, and how to discipline themselves to remain focused for extended periods of time while mastering the technical aspects of their area of endeavor. Time management and patience are essential for students in the arts. Starting a project when it is assigned without procrastination, learning to work in stages, and planning so that it can be completed in the amount of time given are critical skills for all arts students. Students prepared for study in the arts demonstrate intellectual curiosity and a willingness to experiment with media. They are aware and curious about genres with which they are not familiar and are eager to experiment with them. They are willing to learn (and be taught) about a diverse range of historical eras and practices related to the arts. Students will view and identify examples of artworks from a variety of cultural contexts to understand their function and meaning and understand how visual, spatial, temporal and functional values of artworks are tempered by society, culture and history.

### **Technology**

All Qatar Academy MYP Technology courses enable each student to not only utilize technology but to adapt it and apply it to solving problems. All technology courses address the issue of the uses of technology in a rapidly changing world that raise students' awareness of their responsibilities when making decisions and taking actions on important matters.

The aim of the Department's course of study is to introduce students to a wide variety of technologies to enable them to make informed decisions about further study and career choices. There is also a demand to explore the historical and contemporary context of the subject to understand its impact on society.

There are three strands of technology at Qatar Academy Senior School. They are information, materials, and systems. Each student will pursue study in all strands every year. These strands, taken together, form a comprehensive approach to the discipline.

QA's progressive sequence of technology requires students to develop and continually apply the skills involved within the design cycle, which include investigating, creating, planning, designing, and evaluating. The curriculum fosters an awareness of the development, application, impact, and implications of technology, while it encourages students to acquire and perfect these skills.

Technology at Qatar Academy is based on a model of learning that incorporates knowledge, research, skills and design principles in problem-solving contexts, while at the same time maximizing the use of local and global resources. This holistic method forms an integral part of the MYP course of study.

### **Mathematics**

Mathematics at QA is delivered in an integrated fashion from grades six to ten using a variety of instructional approaches. Each course consists of units of work related to number and operations, algebra, geometry, measurement and data analysis and probability. The courses spiral through the grade levels with common themes being revisited while the depth of study within these areas increases as the students progress through the programme. At every grade level the interdependence and connection between different areas of mathematics fosters the development of mathematical proficiency.

Beginning in grade nine, students who excel in mathematics will be offered an opportunity to take an enriched course that will have a broader base and will go into more content depth leading to a better foundation for IB Diploma higher level mathematics. There is the facility for students to move in both directions between the enriched course and the standard course at the start of grade ten, but the possibility of such movement is dependent on grades.

## **Areas of Interaction and Community and Service Requirements**

The MYP use the Areas of Interaction (AOI) to help students recognize and develop the overlap between different topics, classes and the outside world. There are five AOI:

1. **Environments:** used to examine the world in which we live, including both natural and manmade environments; students consider different ways of utilizing and protecting the world around us
2. **Health and Social Education:** considers both physical and mental health, including personal growth, social issues, and making informed choices
3. **Human Ingenuity:** examines human creativity and its impact on individuals, societies, and the world
4. **Approaches to Learning:** more personal than the other AOI, in that it relates to the individual student and learning styles; includes teaching a variety of learning and organizational strategies, from which students choose the most appropriate
5. **Community and Service:** considers the relationships between individuals, specific groups, and society at large; students examine both what they receive from society, and what they can contribute to improve society

All five AOI are used within the classroom, and it is expected that over the course of the programme students will gain a deep understanding of each area.

Community and Service holds a special place within the MYP, as all students are required to complete Community and Service requirements in each year of the programme. Beginning in grade 6 and 7, students begin learning about Community and Service within the weekly PSE period, working in small groups to accomplish school-initiated challenges. Gradually the emphasis shifts, so that as students rise through the grades, they complete fewer in-class projects and more independent projects (see table below). In each year, students maintain a Community and Service Reflection Journal documenting achievements and reflecting on their experiences. Students use this journal to document that they have completed all requirements for the MYP Certificate.

|          | <b>Community and Service Projects</b>                  |
|----------|--|
| Grade 6  | 1: supported (10 units)                                |
| Grade 7  | 1: supported (10 units)                                |
| Grade 8  | 2: 1 supported (10 units) and 1 independent (10 units) |
| Grade 9  | 2: independent (20 units)                              |
| Grade 10 | 1: independent (10 units)                              |

Students are provided with detailed information about the Community and Service programme, including requirements and support for independent projects. For more information about Community and Service, parents should contact the Community and Service Coordinator through the school secretary or visit the MYP wiki at: <http://qamyp.qataracademy.wikispaces.net>

## **Learner Profile**

All three of the IBO programmes utilize the same document to describe the qualities the school works to develop in each student. This document is called the Learner Profile, and includes ten elements which students should strive to become:

|               |             |            |
|---------------|-------------|------------|
| Inquirers     | Principled  | Balanced   |
| Knowledgeable | Open-minded | Reflective |
| Thinkers      | Caring      |            |
| Communicators | Risk-takers |            |

Students will encounter these ideas in their classes and throughout the school. Students will also reflect upon personal growth and development within the Community and Service Reflection Journals.

## **Personal Project**

In grade 10, all students will complete the MYP Personal Project, a year-long project on a topic of the student's choice. Most students consider this an exciting aspect of the programme, as they have an opportunity to show their talents in unique and creative ways.

Supervisors meet with students on a regular basis to share information about requirements and deadlines, and to provide advice about how to proceed. However, it is the students themselves who make decisions about what they will do and how they will achieve it.

A detailed Personal Project pamphlet is given to each student in the third term of grade 9, when students first begin to decide their topics. Copies are available from the school and on the MYP wiki (<http://qamyp.qataracademy.wikispaces.net>). The pamphlet lists deadlines and provides specific information about choosing a topic, working with a supervisor, organizational methods, MYP requirements, and assessment. Additional support is provided at the beginning of grade 10 and throughout the Personal Project process. For more information about the Personal Project, parents should contact the Personal Project Coordinator through the school secretary.

## **MYP Certificate and Record of Achievement**

Students are eligible for an MYP Record of Achievement if they attend Qatar Academy for at least the entire grade 10 school year. This official document, provided by the International Baccalaureate Organization, specifies the courses taken, grades earned, completion of Community and Service requirements, and Personal Project grade.

The MYP Certificate, also provided by the International Baccalaureate Organization, is awarded to students who fulfill more extensive requirements, including achieving at least a minimum grade in all subject areas. To earn the MYP Certificate, students must:

- In grade 10, earn a minimum average of 4 across all subject groups and the Personal Project
- In grade 10, earn at least a 2 in every subject group (Language A, Language B, Humanities, Physical Education, Sciences, Mathematics, Arts, Technology)
- Earn at least a 4 on the Personal Project
- Every year at Qatar Academy, meet the Community and Service Requirements
- Be enrolled in the MYP for at least the entire grade 9 and 10 school years.

Please note that students who join QA in grade 10 will be eligible for the Record of Achievement, but not the full MYP Certificate, due to the IBO's two-year MYP requirement.

For more details, contact the MYP Coordinator through the school secretary.

## **Teaching Resources and Textbook Philosophy**

The MYP focuses on meeting the needs of students and subject areas, and these needs vary between students, classes, schools, cultures and countries. In order to meet the specific needs of QA students, and to best teach the knowledge and skills students need, each subject area gives careful consideration when choosing teaching resources and textbooks. In most cases, the best materials come from a variety of sources, which means that a single textbook will not be suitable.

Students should expect to use a variety of materials in their classes. Teachers will provide clear information to students as to which resources are needed for different lessons. Parents who would like information about resources should discuss questions first with their child or children, who should be able to explain which resources are being used in each class. Further questions should be discussed with the teacher.

Please note that the use of a variety of materials means that students will not have a single textbook in most classes.

## **Assessment Principles**

### **Why do we assess?**

- We assess for success!
- Teachers use assessment to help students meet goals and to support student learning. Teachers also use assessment to guide students and help them be responsible for their learning.
- Students use assessment to learn about their progress – how they’re doing, what they’re doing well, and what might need more attention.
- Parents use assessment to find out how their children are doing.

### **How does MYP assessment work?**

- Teachers use various types of assessments (tests, projects, oral presentations, written paragraphs, essays, labs, etc.).
- Work is assessed using subject-specific criteria, which gives students very clear descriptions of quality work.
- Teachers might assess to sum up how students have done over a period of time (summative), or to see how students use a process, or how students do at the beginning of a unit of work (formative).
- Teachers assess what students turn in. If students don’t turn in work, teachers can’t give an accurate assessment.
- Teachers give frequent feedback to help students reach their goals.

### **What about grades?**

- The school uses MYP grades, from 1-7, to report on each subject at the end of each term. A description of each grade is included in the chart at the end of this section. Qatar Academy defines passing as 4 or above.
- To determine term grades, teachers first review a student’s achievement on the subject-specific criteria. This is done by looking holistically at everything students have done over the term, taking into account factors such as the difficulty and importance of specific tasks, and the development of skills over time. Once subject-specific criteria marks have been determined, a conversion chart is used to determine the overall 1-7 mark for the term.
- Students should be able to roughly estimate their marks at any point in the term by looking at the results of all the assessment tasks for a particular subject.

### **What should students do with the assessment information given to them by teachers?**

- Students should make sure they understand the criteria which will be used for each assessment task.
- Students should self-assess while planning and preparing for an assessment task, and ask: How am I doing?
- Students should carefully review all comments made by teachers, and use that information to improve in future tasks.
- Students should talk to their teachers about their progress. Teachers are very willing to provide assistance. (Please note that questions about individual progress may need to take place during a students' free time, as there is not enough time to do this during class for every student.)
- Students should keep track of their overall progress by using a Student Gradebook, found on the MYP wiki: (<http://qamyp.qataracademy.wikispaces.net>).

### **How does Qatar Academy ensure that its grades are fair and accurate?**

- Teachers within each subject area work together to plan major assessment tasks. This is a guarantee that assessment tasks are fair and valid in determining the level of student achievement.
- Teaching teams conduct team grading, working together to assess student tasks. This ensures that a student's task would earn the same mark from any QA teacher.
- Each subject area sends samples of marked student work to the IBO, where the accuracy of the marking is checked against international standards. This ensures that grades from Qatar Academy are the same as grades from other MYP schools around the world. If Qatar Academy is marking too low or too high, the IBO will provide the school with detailed information about how to be more accurate.
- Qatar Academy has sent samples of student work to the IBO since the 2005-6 school year. The results have largely been very positive, and the IBO has consistently found the school's marking to be within acceptable levels of accuracy.

### **How are final marks determined for the official IBMYP Certificates?**

- At the end of grade 10, QA teachers determine a student's final level of achievement for each subject, by looking holistically at the tasks students have done over the year, taking into account factors such as the difficulty and importance of specific tasks, and the development of skills over time.
- The achievement levels determined by QA are sent to the IBO, who review them carefully. Based on the assessment samples sent to the IBO earlier in the year, the IBO may raise or lower the levels in some subject areas, to ensure international consistency. Though Qatar Academy works very hard to ensure that there will be no changes in final marks, the school cannot make a guarantee that this will not happen.

### Grade Descriptors for Term Marks

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 7<br>Excellent    | A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them <b>almost faultlessly</b> in a wide variety of situations. There is consistent evidence of analysis, synthesis and evaluation where appropriate. The student <b>consistently</b> demonstrates originality and insight, and <b>always</b> produces <b>work of high quality</b> . |
| 6<br>Very Good    | A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them in a <b>wide variety</b> of situations. There is <b>consistent</b> evidence of analysis, synthesis and evaluation where appropriate. The student <b>generally</b> demonstrates originality and insight.   |
| 5<br>Good         | <b>A consistent and thorough understanding</b> of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them in a variety of situations. The student <b>generally</b> shows evidence of analysis, synthesis and evaluation where appropriate, and <b>occasionally</b> demonstrates originality and insight.   |
| 4<br>Satisfactory | <b>A good general understanding</b> of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them effectively in <b>normal</b> situations. There is <b>occasional</b> evidence of the skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation.   |
| 3<br>Mediocre     | <b>Limited</b> achievement against most of the objectives, or clear difficulties in some areas. The student demonstrates a <b>limited understanding</b> of the required knowledge and skills, and is <b>only able to apply</b> them fully in normal situations <b>with support</b> .  |
| 2<br>Poor         | <b>Very limited</b> achievement against all the objectives. The student <b>has difficulty</b> understanding the required knowledge and skills, and is <b>unable</b> to apply them fully in normal situations, <b>even with support</b> .  |
| 1<br>Very Poor    | <b>Minimal</b> achievement in terms of the objectives.  |

### Descriptors for Effort Marks

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| 7<br>Excellent    | The student <b>regularly</b> did work in addition to class requirements, and engaged in extra activities to further their understanding of the subject. The student <b>always</b> completed homework on time, and with <b>full attention</b> to set requirements. The student <b>frequently</b> asked appropriate questions and contributed to class activities <b>of their own initiative</b> . The student <b>always</b> came to class with all necessary items. |
| 6<br>Very Good    | The student <b>sometimes</b> did work in addition to class requirements, and engaged in extra activities to further their understanding of the subject. The student <b>always</b> completed homework on time, and with <b>full attention</b> to set requirements. The student <b>frequently</b> asked appropriate questions and contributed to class activities <b>of their own initiative</b> . The student <b>always</b> came to class with all necessary items. |
| 5<br>Good         | The student <b>almost always</b> completed homework on time, and with <b>good attention</b> to set requirements. The student regularly asked appropriate questions and contributed to class activities <b>of their own initiative</b> . The student <b>almost always</b> came to class with all necessary items.   |
| 4<br>Satisfactory | The student <b>usually</b> completed homework on time, and with <b>attention</b> to set requirements. The student <b>sometimes</b> asked appropriate questions or contributed to class activities <b>of their own initiative</b> . The student <b>usually</b> came to class with all necessary items.  |
| 3<br>Mediocre     | The student <b>sometimes</b> completed homework on time, and paid <b>some attention</b> to set requirements. The student <b>occasionally</b> asked appropriate questions or contributed to class activities <b>when requested by the teacher</b> . The student <b>sometimes</b> came to class with all necessary items.  |
| 2<br>Poor         | The student <b>rarely</b> completed homework on time, and paid <b>little attention</b> to set requirements. The student <b>rarely</b> asked appropriate questions or contributed to class activities <b>even when requested by the teacher</b> . The student <b>rarely</b> came to class with all necessary items.   |
| 1<br>Very Poor    | The student had minimal achievement in terms of the objectives.  |

For more information about assessment, please contact either the relevant teacher or the MYP Coordinator, depending on the question, through the school secretary.

### Academic Honesty

All students in the MYP are expected to demonstrate high standards of academic honesty. This includes completing their own work, documenting sources carefully, and not assisting or allowing others to be dishonest. Students are taught in class how to demonstrate honesty, and teachers regularly revisit the topic to ensure all students understand exactly what is acceptable or unacceptable. Cases of academic dishonesty are treated seriously, according to the school policy outlined in the Senior School handbook. The first consequence is a zero for the assignment, a letter to parents, and removal from the honor roll (if applicable) for that term. Further cases of academic dishonesty have weightier consequences.

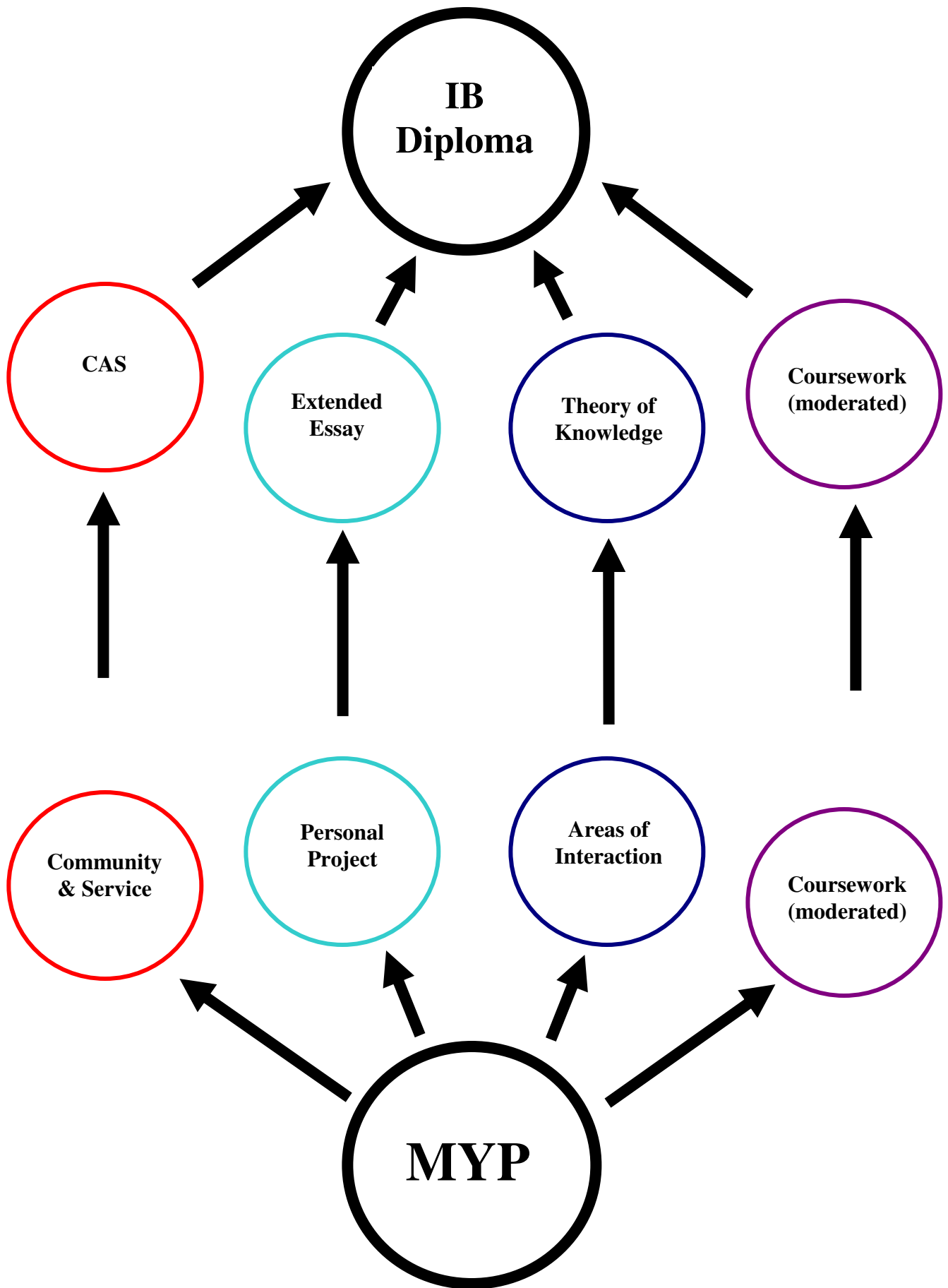
In addition, any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty jeopardizes their chance to earn an MYP Certificate. If the school feels that a student has been dishonest, the case must be documented and investigated. A single case of academic dishonesty, particularly in grades 9 or 10, may, depending on the circumstances, prevent a student from being eligible for the MYP Certificate.

For more details about the Academic Honesty Policy, please contact the Senior School Principal through the school secretary. There is also an Academic Honesty handbook available on the school website.

## **How does the MYP prepare students for the IB Diploma Programme?**

The MYP develops skills and knowledge necessary for success in the IBDP. By the end of the MYP, students should be able to plan, organize and complete their own learning activities with limited support. They should have strong communication skills using a variety of styles of communication, such as different languages and the specific styles of mathematics, sciences, humanities, arts, etc. Students should be able to identify and build on their strengths, as well as identify and accommodate their weaker areas.

In addition to these academic skills, over the course of the MYP, students will develop a strong knowledge and skills base in the different subject areas. These knowledge and skills help to prepare students for the greater challenges of the Diploma Programme.



## **Expectations for students and families**

Students should be responsible for their own learning by:

- Organizing themselves
- Asking questions when necessary
- Coming prepared to class with books, paper, pens, homework, etc...
- Working hard in class and at home
- Completing homework every night
- Studying even if there is no specific assignment
- Managing their time
- Planning ahead.

Families should help students do their best by:

- Talking with students regularly about what they are learning, and what they are expected to do
- Providing a quiet place for study and homework
- Providing appropriate materials, such as dictionaries, reading books, calculators, etc
- Setting regular hours for homework and study each night
- Making sure students get a minimum of 8 hours of sleep each night
- Making sure students eat a healthy diet
- Communicating with teachers about questions and concerns
- Checking that homework is completed.

## **Parent-Teacher-Student-School Communication**

Students at this level are learning to take responsibility for their own learning, and most communication about their progress therefore happens directly between students and teachers. Parents are always welcome to participate in the learning process, and should be active at home. It is always good to ask students about what homework they have, what assessments they are preparing for (or have just gotten back), what they are learning, and whether they would like any assistance. Parents are welcome to contact the school at any time during the school year. Appointments with individual teachers can be easily arranged through the school secretary.

Communication from the school to parents happens regularly. The Akbar, an on-line and printed publication (<http://www.qataracademy.edu.qa/output/page87.asp>), is updated weekly and contains information about general school business. At the beginning of each year, a back-to-school night allows parents to meet their children's teachers; handouts are provided about the course of study for each subject. At the end of each term, report cards provide specific information about each student's progress within each class. In the middle of each term, progress checks are sent home for any students who are earning a 3 or below. In addition, teachers may contact parents at any time if there is a major change in a student.

Detailed information about the school's curricular standards and benchmarks are available for several subjects through the school website

(<http://www.qataracademy.edu.qa/output/page70.asp>) and the MYP wiki

<http://qamyp.qataracademy.wikispaces.net>). This site will be updated as the school completes standards and benchmarks for all subjects.

For more information on the MYP, please contact Chad Schwaberow, the MYP Coordinator, through the school secretary.