

Language policy

Purpose and general principles

The IB is committed through its access agenda to reach students from a variety of cultural, linguistic and social backgrounds. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework that will ensure the IB's values and aims in relation to access and multilingualism are reflected in the organization's activities.

This document defines the ways in which the IB provides support to schools and teachers for the implementation of its programmes in different languages. It also provides guidelines to MYP and PYP schools that are implementing the programmes in languages not supported by the organization.

Support in the different languages will be reviewed on a regular basis, and for any particular language the level of support could be increased or decreased, if certain conditions are met.

The organization aims to provide materials and services of comparable high quality in all the languages supported.

Section A

Definitions

Working languages: The languages in which the organization communicates with its stakeholders and in which is committed to providing all the services needed for the implementation of the programmes.

Access languages: Languages that the IB has identified of strategic importance to meet its access agenda. The organization will provide selected services and documentation in those languages, mainly to support teachers, as specified in this policy.

Internal working language: English is the organization's internal working language, in which most operational and development activities take place. It is also the language of its governance, management and academic committees.

Levels of support

Working languages

Level 1

Languages in which **all** services and materials needed for the delivery and implementation of the **three programmes** (see annex 1) are offered.

In addition, the following is provided in those languages:

- Public web site.
- All promotional material.
- Official communication and documentation from HQ and global centres, and selected documentation from Board committees.

Level 2

Languages in which all services and materials needed for the delivery and implementation of **one or two programmes only** are offered (see annex 1).

Access Languages

Level 3

Languages in which **selected** services and materials, as detailed in annex 3, are offered in one or more of the programmes and in some subjects only.

Level 4

Languages in which a **limited range** of services and materials, as detailed in annex 3 are offered in one or more programmes.

Level 5

Only **bilingual glossaries** of programme terminology for the MYP and PYP are offered at this level.

Schools and teachers whose working language falls into this category will receive limited support in terms of services and materials in that language. Schools working in levels 3 to 5 languages need to have someone who can work and communicate in one of the IB's working languages, as there is no support for coordinators or heads in access languages.

Material produced by communications

Although all communications materials will be produced in level 1 languages only, some specific documents (targeted at universities, parents or funding organizations, for example) could be produced in a larger number of languages, following regional input and budget agreement, and within a quality assurance process set by the language services department.

Section B

Decision making process

New languages will be normally identified by the regional office and a formal, written proposal on a standardized form which will include a business case will be submitted by the regional director or the regional head of schools services to the language policy committee. The committee will consider each case on its own merits and will make a recommendation to the senior leadership team (SLT) for approval. This must precede review by the Education committee who will provide their recommendation to the IB Board for final approval. The changing of status of any languages will follow the same process as before. The **criteria** to introduce new languages or to change the level of support in a particular language will include:

- numbers of schools (authorized and candidate, possibly interested) already offering the programme in those languages,
- strategic considerations about specific languages in areas targeted for growth and access
- considerations on the quality of teaching and learning and implementation of the programmes
- risks to the organization
- costs and available funding.

Programmes committees will be informed of any changes to the policy.

Review of language status

All new languages will be monitored annually by the regional office concerned, and regional school services will provide a report to the committee on progress. A full review will take place every three years, or earlier if there are significant changes in the original assumptions or circumstances.

Language policy committee

The language policy committee will meet once or twice a year to review language policy issues, to consider introducing new languages or to change the level of support in a language. A report from the committee will be given to the Education Committee annually.

Funding

Costs for the services provided in the organization's languages will be covered by the IB fees, but external funding will be actively sought to cover at least setting up costs for new languages.

Quality assurance

All materials needed for the provision of services in the languages of the organization (except English, for which different arrangements apply) will be produced following a quality assurance process set by the language services department.

Availability of the language policy

The language policy will be available in the public web site.

Section C

Language subjects in the Diploma and MYP

In order to support the teaching of mother tongue, the organization will translate the subject guides (and in some cases teacher support materials) for languages identified by the Diploma and MYP global teams, using criteria that will include:

- numbers of students
- numbers of schools
- perceived and understood linguistic proficiency of teachers.

Languages will be identified by the DP languages curriculum or assessment heads or by the MYP languages curriculum manager, in cooperation with the regional programme managers. A formal, written proposal on a standardized form will be submitted to the language policy committee, which will consider each case on its own merits and will make a recommendation to SLT. The final decision will be submitted to the programme committees for information.

Publications in all languages will be available on the OCC and might be available for sale.

Annex 1

Services provided in level 1 languages

All services and materials needed for the delivery and implementation of the **three programmes** are offered. They include the following:

Programmes documents

- IB learner profile
- Guides to programme implementation, including cross-programme and continuum documentation
- Curriculum guides and Teacher support material *
- Standards and practices
- Handbook of Procedures for the DP

Assessment

- DP: Internal and external assessment services
- DP: Exam papers, markschemes, all examination material, subject reports *
- MYP: moderation services, moderation reports
- Material for examiners *
- Specimen papers and markschemes *

Services for teachers and coordinators

- Coordinator's handbooks
- Coordinator's notes
- IB Information Desk – IB Answers
- IBIS
- Online Curriculum Centre (OCC)

Authorization and evaluation

- Authorization and evaluation documentation
- Authorization and evaluation support from regional offices, including school visits

Professional development

- Workshops (either online or face-to-face)
- Training for workshop leaders
- Web services for workshop leaders

Other

- Rules for IB World schools,
- Rules for candidate schools
- General regulations
- Representation of working languages on curriculum development meetings
- IB store

All curriculum publications are available on the OCC and for sale in the IB store.

* See annex 2 for restrictions in the Diploma Programme

Communications

- Public web site
- All promotional material created by the communications team
- Official communication and documentation from HQ and the IB's global centres, and selected documentation from the Board committees.

Services provided in level 2 languages

All services and materials needed for the delivery and implementation of **one or two programmes only** are offered. Services included are as for level 1 languages, except for those under the heading "Communications".

Annex 2

Restrictions for the Diploma Programme in levels 1 and 2 languages

A Diploma Programme subject will only be supported in a particular level 1 or Diploma level 2 language if there has been an average of at least 50 candidates per year, over a three-year period, entered for the subject in that language. If there have been fewer than 50 candidates, no programme publications will be produced for the whole of that curriculum review cycle. However, should circumstances change significantly during a cycle, the IB will consider a review.

Note:

1. This does not apply to completely new subjects, offered for the first time by the IB. Curriculum documents for new subjects will be published in level 1 and Diploma level 2 languages.
2. This applies to all group 3–6 subjects.
3. There will always be one subject per group supported in each language, even if all subjects in that group have an average of fewer than 50 candidates per year; the subject with the highest number of candidates will be the one supported.
4. Schools will be advised of any such decisions at least one year before teaching of any revised course begins; any schools that have entered candidates during the three-year period will be contacted directly; the information will also be included in Coordinator's Notes and the Handbook of Procedures, and on the online curriculum centre (OCC) and HEADNET as news items.
5. At an appropriate point in the next curriculum review cycle schools will again be contacted and consulted, and the decision will be reviewed using feedback from schools. In order for schools to understand the nature of the subject and provide this feedback, a shortened version of the guide will be available online, for information only, in any level 1 or Diploma level 2 language in which the subject is not supported.

Restrictions for Diploma language subjects examinations

Exam papers for Group 2 language subjects will not be offered in a particular language unless there is a minimum of 30 candidates registered for any exam session.

Annex 3

Access languages

The services offered in the access languages levels will include:

Level 3

Diploma, MYP and PYP

- IB learner profile
- Guides to programme implementation
- Cross-programme curriculum and continuum documents
- Programme standards and practices
- Workshops (depending on numbers)

PYP

- Full range of curriculum materials

MYP

- Full range of subject guides
- Some teacher support materials

No assessment services are offered

Diploma

For agreed subjects:

- Guides, teacher support materials (in most cases, only the general guidelines will be translated)
- Relevant sections of Handbook of Procedures
- Exam material, subject reports
- Selected assessment services
- Specimen questions and markschemes
- Information for examiners, but where possible examiners must be able to understand one of the level 1 or 2 languages

Curriculum publications listed are available on the OCC and might be available for sale.

Level 4

Diploma, MYP and PYP

- IB learner profile
- Guides to programme implementation (for the MYP and PYP) and selected subject guides/curriculum material

Publications listed are available on the OCC, but there are no OCC pages in the language. Publications might be available for sale.

Level 5

- Bilingual glossaries of programme terminology for the MYP and PYP

Glossaries are available in the relevant programme pages in the OCC.

Annex 4

Policy on languages of instruction for the PYP and the MYP

A school could be authorized to offer the PYP or MYP in a language other than a working language for the programme provided that:

1. The coordinator is bilingual or has proven language support (to be able to communicate easily with the IB).
2. The head of school / pedagogical leader for the section(s) of the school involved in the programme has received at least introductory training (with interpretation if necessary).
3. The application received from the school includes a statement explaining how the school proposes to deal with the language issues in terms of support from local authorities, allocated resources, training of teachers and induction of new staff.
4. *For the MYP only:* At least one teacher in each of the eight MYP subject groups is proficient in a level 1 language or an MYP level 2 language.
5. All training is conducted by IB-approved leaders/trainers.
6. The school understands that the training and implementation process will likely take longer, and is closely monitored by the regional office.
7. All the school's documents submitted by the school to the IB in support of its application / programme evaluation, as well as all correspondence with the IB are written or translated in a working language for the programme.
8. The authorization and all visits (including evaluation) are conducted with an interpreter chosen/approved by the IB, at the expense of the school.
9. The school is committed to actively supporting its teachers in becoming more proficient in one of the IB's working languages for the programme.

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