University application strategies for IB Coordinators and counselors

Alex Klaiss, Prague British School (PBS), Czech Republic
What will we be looking at today?

• Main criteria for students’ IB choices
• Information that PBS provide their students to make informed choices
• Pre-requisites from previous study
• How schools can help students take suitable IB courses
• Specific national secondary school requirements and/or university entrance criteria that can influence IB choice decisions
• Assisting students with “looking ahead” to post-secondary studies
• The importance of being candid with students from the outset
What we will not be focusing on

- Linking IBDP with the IBCC
- Advising toward non-academic careers
Main criteria in considering IB course selections

- Subjects the student enjoys studying
- Which subjects represent an “achievable challenge”?
- National educational board or specific university requirements
- School-set IB pre-requisites met?
- What is the student’s intended course at university?
- What subjects is the student good at?
Information for students, parents

- PBS course synopsis booklet
- IB Fair and Information Evening for Year 11 students (second year IGCSE) in March
- When in doubt, students to prioritize IB courses that interest them
- Look at university websites (also UCAS) – intense competition: (LSE Maths HL)
- Working together with parents; awareness of their influence on their children
- Awareness of “less typical” careers
PBS pre-requisites (for overall admission to the program)

- 6 grades of A*-C in IGCSE or the Pre-IB program for overall admission to full IBDP
- 3 grades of A*-B at IGCSE or Pre-IB for consideration of Higher Level subjects
- Subject-specific requirements!
### PBS pre-requisites (Groups 1 & 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>PRE-REQUISITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English A: Lit</td>
<td>HL</td>
<td>IGCSE English 1(^{st}) lang.: B and IGCSE Lit.: B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English A: LL</td>
<td>SL</td>
<td>IGCSE English 1(^{st}) lang and IGCSE Lit.: Average of C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Lang A</td>
<td>HL/SL</td>
<td>Native-language ability, skill in literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language B</td>
<td>HL</td>
<td>IGCSE 2(^{nd}) lang.: B*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language B</td>
<td>SL</td>
<td>IGCSE 2(^{nd}) lang.: C*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lang. ab initio</td>
<td>SL</td>
<td>Good attitude in all previous language studies!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUBJECT</td>
<td>LEVEL</td>
<td>PRE-REQUISITE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B&amp;M, History, Geography, ITGS</td>
<td>HL</td>
<td>IGCSE <strong>B</strong> in the respective subject or a similar Humanities subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B&amp;M, History, Geography, ITGS</td>
<td>SL</td>
<td>IGCSE <strong>C</strong> in the respective subject or a similar Humanities subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>HL/SL</td>
<td>Strong ability in Maths and English at IGCSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>HL/SL</td>
<td>Strong ability in Maths; interest in the Sciences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# PBS pre-requisites (Group 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>PRE-REQUISITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology, Chemistry, Physics</td>
<td>HL</td>
<td>IGCSE B in that subject or IGCSE AA in Coordinated Science (Physics – also Maths grade B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology, Chemistry, Physics</td>
<td>SL</td>
<td>IGCSE C in that subject or: IGCSE CC in Coordinated Science and teacher approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESS</td>
<td>SL</td>
<td>IGCSE CC in Coordinated Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Starting 2015: Science pilot)</td>
<td>SL</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PBS pre-requisites (Group 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>PRE-REQUISITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>HL</td>
<td>IGCSE A in Maths Extended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>SL</td>
<td>IGCSE B in Maths Extended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths Studies</td>
<td>SL</td>
<td>IGCSE C in Maths (D need to take an entrance exam in late August)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## PBS pre-requisites (Group 6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>PRE-REQUISITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>HL</td>
<td>IGCSE <strong>A</strong> in Music, ABRSM Level 6 and previous recording experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>SL</td>
<td>IGCSE <strong>C</strong> in Music or proven interest in music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre/Visual Arts</td>
<td>HL</td>
<td>IGCSE <strong>B</strong> in the respective subject or proven success in acting/art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre/Visual Arts</td>
<td>SL</td>
<td>IGCSE <strong>C</strong> in the respective subject or proven interest in acting/art</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measures we undertake at PBS

• Adherence to the pre-requisites attained at IGCSE or pre-IB
  • Check national qualifications if new entering student from another country
• Academic probation for borderline incoming students
• Meetings with parents to discuss Diploma Courses or full Diploma
• No course changes after Sept. 20
• Autumn: “Monday meetings” with UCAS students; workshops for CommonApp students
• Possibility of focusing on Prague-based English-speaking private universities after IB
• Currently in a potentially temporary “CEM hiatus” (ALIS)
Now let’s focus on post-IB!

• Key initial thoughts:
  • WHAT to do – university, learn a trade, gap year?
  • WHERE to study (if university)?
    • Distance from family
    • Large/small university
    • Campus or integrated in a city
    • Money issues
    • Climate, seacoast, affinity for the region, etc.
  • Rankings: e.g. Times, Guardian, Shanghai

• “Limiting factors”
  • Cost (incl. dearth of scholarships)
  • Grades
  • Course/major not available
UK universities: things to consider

• Application keys:
  • Personal statement (the “3” parts)
  • Predicted grades (combining optimism with realism)
  • Reference (subject teacher, HoD)
• Standardized tests, where applicable (BMAT, HAT, PAT, UKCAT, TSA, etc.)
• 3 years (Scotland 4)
• £9000+, Scotland much less
• The “points game”!

The UCAS website!
UK universities: subject-specifics

- Let’s look at some subjects
  - Medicine (Chemistry + 1 Science + Maths HL)
  - Engineering (Physics HL + Maths HL)
  - Physics (Physics HL + Maths HL)
  - Art/Music (High grade at HL + good portfolio)
- Not sure? Take ‘facilitating subjects’
  - Mathematics, English, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Geography, History and Economics (min. 2 at HL)
- Oxbridge-specific requirements
- UK university-specific requirements should be checked asap on UCAS and at university
- See Russell Group Report “Informed Choices”
USA universities: things to consider

- More emphasis on extra-curricular activities
- Elite US universities looking for leadership experience as well as top grades
- SATs
- Student and adviser “proficiency” in CommonApp
- Flexible path for “late bloomers” and/or Courses candidates
  - Community college → 4-year university
- Sometimes higher costs
  - 4 years (although credit often given for good IB scores)
  - Tuition
  - Flights
Other possibilities

- Canada, Hong Kong, or the Netherlands (sample)
  - Quality, tradition
  - English-speaking programs
  - Often, lower cost than England, Wales, USA
- University in the home country
  - Native language, or in English
- Other continental European programs in English
  - Jacob’s University in Bremen
  - Webster University – Vienna, Geneva, Leiden, etc.
  - Schiller Int’l Univ. – Paris, Madrid, Heidelberg
  - John Cabot University in Rome
  - European University – Barcelona, Geneva, Munich
  - Anglo-American University in Prague

*Need to research carefully, check accreditation and/or visit*
Other national requirements

- Germany (Abitur)
  - **NO** Maths Studies or ESS accepted
  - Maths **OR** Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) must be at HL
  - German A HL or SL, but no self-taught
  - Check document from Ministry of Culture (originally written in 1986, frequently revised since)
- Austria – need Austrian curriculum courses, even if the subject is virtually the same as at IB!
- Czech Republic (Maturita)
  - Czech A: Literature
- USA - SATs
Important considerations

• Staying positive – working within the realm of student capacity
• Students’ overall happiness
  • Watch out for depression, eating disorders, etc.
• Reinforce the notion that universities highly respect the IBDP and that IB graduates more likely to attend selective universities
• Ability to do the work within the IBDP frameworks
  • Diploma vs. Diploma Courses
  • Taking on an “unnecessary” HL course
  • External revision courses and/or private tutoring
  • We recommend only as an extension for those students putting in a strong effort already
Main conclusions

Let’s revisit the introductory slide!

- Which subjects represent an “achievable challenge”?
- What is the student’s intended course at university?
- What subjects is the student good at?
- Subjects the student enjoys studying
- National educational board or specific university requirements
- School-set IB pre-requisites met?
Sources consulted

• The World University Rankings (The Times Higher Education)
• The Guardian University Guide
• Shanghai Jiao Tong University (for rankings)
• The Russell Group Report on Informed Choices
• IB research presentation entitled “Slides for Coordinators: Research findings about the IB Diploma Programme”, 2012.
• OSC newsletters: Gwen Martinez “How to make the right IB subject choices” and Layla Moran “Choosing your IB subjects: Don’t Panic!”
• The UCAS website (for entry requirements course descriptions)
• Input from my fellow IB Coordinator colleagues at the various Prague schools as well as my IB teachers!
• Windermere School’s pamphlet “IB Subjects: Making the Right Choice: A Guide for Parents and Students”
Do you have any questions?