

## TAKING ALL THE RIGHT STEPS

Bavarian International School helps its Diploma Programme students choose goals, such as going to a good university, and then provides support to help them achieve those goals.

Since 1996, the Diploma Programme (DP) has been part of the fabric of Bavarian International School, which has one campus in Munich, Germany, and one just north of the city. The school began in 1991 as a second campus for Munich International School, says Secondary School Deputy Principal Brett Meuli, and “it was always intended that the school would offer the DP.” Given the diverse nationalities of the school’s students (there are 56 countries represented this year), Meuli says, the DP is the only logical qualification. The school chose to adopt the programme for three reasons in particular: it is both broad and rigorous, and therefore is ideal preparation for university; it is globally recognized and transferable; and in some cases, students get university credit for their DP courses.

Some 95% of DP students at the school were in the Middle Years Programme (MYP) beforehand. The academic strength of the DP appeals to them, Meuli says, along with the confidence that they will be well-prepared for good universities worldwide. Bavarian International School (BIS) helps them make choices that will put them in a good position to attend the universities they choose. That helps explain the growth in the DP cohort from 7 students in 1996 to 150 today.

Parents and students naturally have questions about the programme before grade 11, whether they are familiar with the International Baccalaureate (IB) from the MYP or are beginning their IB experience with the DP. They ask about transferability and how universities view the DP, for example. Meuli and his colleagues emphasize that the DP is recognized internationally, talk about its academic strength and explain how the school counsels students as early as grade 10 on the right steps to take towards university.

While the school makes a lot of information available on its website, meetings with the DP coordinator, head of pastoral care and Meuli are easy to arrange, he says. “We are talking, visiting and chatting during the day...One-to-one conversation really reassures them more than digital information. It is time-consuming, no question.” With very few exceptions,

**Bavarian International School (private):  
preschool-12**

**First offered the Diploma Programme:  
1996**

**Total number of students:  
1,080**

**Secondary school deputy principal:  
Brett Meuli**

**Director:  
Chrissie Sorenson**

“  
*The Diploma Programme  
was anticipated to be a  
natural fit from when the  
school opened.*

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— **BRETT MEULI, SECONDARY  
SCHOOL DEPUTY PRINCIPAL,  
BAVARIAN INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOL**

BIS grade 10 students enter the DP. Some students earn the BIS high school diploma, which includes taking several DP courses in addition to internally assessed and accredited courses.

During those conversations, Meuli tells parents and students that the DP provides the best preparation possible for university. He does not sugarcoat the demands of the programme, but points out the importance of a long-term perspective. "We push our kids really, really hard, but they have an awful lot of support," he says. If they do the work to get through the DP, life at university will be much easier, Meuli says. While they may get credit for college courses, the way that they study also is valuable. BIS wants to make students successful once they leave the school, he explains.

He notes IB research that reported on the success rate of students with an IB background compared with the success rate of students who took Advanced Placement (AP) courses. The IB students had a rate of 100%, while the AP students had a 75% rate of success. "There's a strong connection between success at the Diploma [Programme] and success at university," Meuli says.



"It's easy for us [teachers and staff] to stand up and say the Diploma Programme is good preparation," says Brett Meuli, Bavarian International School secondary school deputy principal, "but the true voices are from the alumni." Meuli cites the example of one alumna. She came back to the school after one year at Princeton University in the US and told Meuli that she wanted to talk with students to tell them how much the DP contributed to her first year at university.

Bavarian International School provides support in many ways for students preparing for university, including:

- a monthly newsletter that details news relevant to each year group for grades 9-12, including developments relating to applications, finance, scholarships in different countries, apprenticeships, summer school and internships
- students learn how to use the school career database, university and career search engines, and how to write a CV
- the school hosts parent–student workshops for small groups on subjects such as how to enter medicine, art and design, and psychology; how to research and prepare for university entry in the US, the UK and The Netherlands; and how to write personal statements, letters of intent and college essays
- regular lunchtime student reading groups focus on medicine and health, psychology, education and philosophy
- the creativity, activity, service (CAS) component of the DP offers opportunities for students to commit to projects that support their future applications, as well as broaden their experience
- a university handbook features advice on building a personal profile, up-to-date research links, a timeline, interviews, CVs, campus visits, and advice about opportunities in Germany, The Netherlands, the UK and the US.