

STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

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Luisa Mandacaru
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Luisa Mandacaru received her IB diploma from the Oeiras International School in Barcarena, Portugal. She is currently studying biology at the University of Lisbon in Portugal.

Why did you originally decide to pursue an IB diploma?

I have always been very interested in a lot of different areas of study, and in Portugal, at the age of 15 you have to choose only one area to pursue your studies. The IB diploma offers you the opportunity to learn about all the areas you are interested in and not only one. I had done the whole Middle Years Programme (MYP) and starting the Diploma Programme (DP) seemed like the right path. It was the best decision of my life.

As an IB student, how did you shape your IB diploma studies to your interests?

When I began the IB diploma, I had no idea what I would do after. Most of my friends already knew which course they wanted to take in their undergraduate degree, so they simply chose the subjects that would be helpful to fulfill that choice. Since I was still thinking about the future I chose the subjects where I would have most fun; I thought that was a good way to start, and it was. It made those two years an extremely enjoyable challenge.

Tell us about your current work—was there a moment when you knew you wanted to pursue this career?

At the moment I am studying biology at the University of Lisbon. After being lost and having a hard time deciding what course I wanted to follow, I am now completely sure I chose the right one. I used the same method as the one I used to choose my diploma subjects, I chose the area where I was having the most fun.

As an IB student did you have a mentor or teacher that left a strong positive impression?

My teachers were all very good, and very passionate about whatever they were teaching, but my Spanish B teacher really was the most inspiring. She really gave me some life lessons that I will never forget, inspiring me to be the best I could ever be, saying "if you are going to do it, do it well, aim to be the best in the world." To her, there really are no boundaries separating you from success.

Did the extended essay, TOK, or CAS prepare you for university?

Theory of knowledge (TOK) has been fundamental in class discussions about ethical issues as well as in making strong arguments and conducting a logical pathway of thoughts. My creativity, activity, service (CAS) project is still in place making a strong difference in my life. CAS is not something you do, is something you become. CAS was and still is part of my life.

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