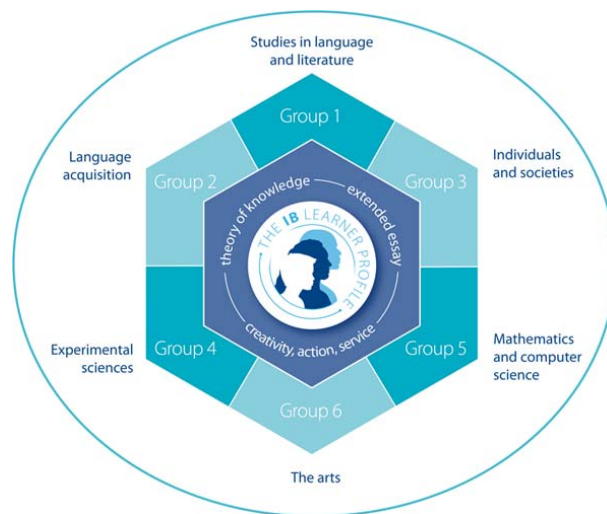


## Guidance on the suitability of International Baccalaureate English qualifications for UK university entry.

We are sending this statement to all UK universities in order to provide clarification regarding the acceptability of IB English qualifications for study in higher education. This statement relates to IB language courses for first teaching in September 2011 (January 2012 for Southern hemisphere schools) and first examinations in 2013. We are aware that universities have discretion as to which qualifications are acceptable. We also know that a number of universities – Manchester, Surrey and others - have already evaluated IB language courses and have included them on an accepted list.

We are aware that applicants to UK universities must show evidence that they have an acceptable level of English language competence – equivalent to level B2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Almost all IB students applying to UK universities will have taken one or other of the IB's English language courses, and the aim of this document is to provide guidance to universities on equivalence. The IB's language programmes are groups 1 and 2 below.



### English courses for first examination in 2013 are as follows:

#### Group 1 – Studies in language and literature.

English courses available in this group are:

- Literature Higher level
- Literature Standard level
- Language and Literature Higher level
- Language and Literature Standard level
- Literature and Performance Standard level

These courses are designed for students whose best language is English. A student registered for one of these courses will have no trouble with studying in English. Many will be applying for English literature or linguistics courses.

## Group 2 – Language Acquisition

English courses available in this group are:

- English B Higher level
- English B Standard level
- English Ab Initio Standard level

English B Higher level is designed to meet the criteria for CEFR level C1 in the four domains of reading, writing, listening and speaking. English B Standard level is designed to meet the criteria for CEFR level B2 again in the four domains of reading, writing, listening and speaking. There will be English B students who exceed CEFR level B2 performance even though they have studied the standard level course. Students often choose English B standard level rather than higher level to enable them to study a particular combination of subjects at higher level.

As its name implies, English *ab Initio* is a beginner's course and universities may wish to check the level of English of any student offering it.

When actual candidate work is available from the first examinations in 2013 the IB will complete the required analysis to definitively align the courses in Group 2 Language Acquisition against internationally recognised language frameworks such as the CEFR.

### **Circumstances in which an IB applicant might not have an IB English qualification:**

1. Whilst most applicants take the IB Diploma in English, it is also possible to take IB subjects in Spanish or French. Thus an applicant from a Spanish school, for example, could have Spanish in Group 1 and, say, Chinese in Group 2.
2. An applicant who has IB Certificates might have taken several subjects but not English.

The IB would expect universities to require such students either to take one of the IB English qualifications, or assess students' proficiency in English by other means such as an IELTS or a TOEFL test.

This statement supersedes any previous pronouncements that relate to IB students' proficiency in English and university entrance.



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Director General

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