

# CAS Handbook

Luther College High School



# What is CAS?

Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) is at the heart of the Diploma Program and is central to Luther's mission and educational philosophy. With its holistic approach, CAS is designed to strengthen and extend students' personal and interpersonal learning. It is one of the three essential elements in every Diploma Program student's experience and it is a mandatory component of the curriculum for all students in grades 11 and 12. It involves students in a range of activities alongside their academic studies throughout their final two years of school.

CAS enables you, the student, to enhance and reflect upon your personal and interpersonal redevelopment through experiential learning in the three CAS strands:

- Creativity - Exploring and extending ideas leading to an original or interpretive product or performance
- Activity - Physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle
- Service - Collaborative and reciprocal engagement with the community in response to an authentic need

Participation in CAS is one of the many ways that the IB Diploma Programme helps you develop the attributes of the IB Learner Profile:

- Inquirers
- Communicators
- Caring
- Reflective
- Knowledgeable
- Principled
- Risk-Takers
- Thinkers
- Open-Minded
- Balanced

## **CAS connects to your subjects.**

The topics you study in all your IB subjects have potential connections to CAS. Allow yourself to consider the opportunities for creativity, physical wellness, and the local and global issues that connect to what you're learning in your courses and consider the CAS experiences that could arise from those.

## **CAS connects to TOK.**

CAS is an important part of developing your *personal knowledge* by helping you gain awareness of the world in a range of diverse and challenging situations. It also helps develop your understanding of how *shared knowledge* is constructed in different communities, cultures, and experiences. CAS will cause you to reflect on your beliefs and assumptions, connecting you to your experience in TOK.

## **CAS connects to the extended essay.**

As you become more aware of local and global issues, it may provide opportunities for you to understand issues on a deeper level through academic research. As you participate in CAS experiences, be sure to ask yourself questions that will lead to deeper inquiry.

# Designing your CAS Program

Your CAS program is just that—yours! You get to decide what experiences will form your CAS program. Here is what you need to consider in designing your CAS program:

## *The CAS Learning Outcomes*

You complete the CAS program by providing evidence and reflections that show you have achieved each of the CAS learning outcomes at least once during the 18 month period of the Diploma Programme.

Learning Outcome	Descriptor
Identify own strengths and develop areas for growth	Students are able to see themselves as individuals with various abilities and skills, of which some are more developed than others.
Demonstrate that challenges have been undertaken, developing new skills in the process	A new challenge may be an unfamiliar experience or an extension of an existing one. The newly acquired or developed skills may be shown through experiences that the student has not previously undertaken or through increased expertise in an established area.
Demonstrate how to initiate and plan a CAS experience	Students can articulate the stages from conceiving an idea to executing a plan for a CAS experience or series of CAS experiences. This may be accomplished in collaboration with other participants. Students may show their knowledge and awareness by building on a previous experience or by launching a new idea or process.
Show commitment to and perseverance in CAS	Students demonstrate regular involvement and active engagement in CAS.
Demonstrate the skills and recognize the benefits of working collaboratively	Students are able to identify, demonstrate, and critically discuss the benefits and challenges of collaboration gained through CAS experiences.
Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance	Students are able to identify and demonstrate their understanding of global issues, make responsible decisions, and take appropriate action in response to the issue either locally, nationally, or internationally.
Recognize and consider the ethics of choices and actions	Students show awareness of the consequences of choices and actions in planning and carrying out CAS experiences.

## *CAS Strands*

Your CAS program must include balanced involvement in each of the three CAS strands over the 18 month period that you are in the Diploma Programme.

### **Creativity**

*Exploring and extending ideas leading to an original or interpretive product*

A CAS experience involving creativity will involve exploring your own sense of original thinking and expression. The form this could take is limitless. Forms could include visual and performing arts, digital design, writing, film, culinary arts, crafts, and composition. You might choose to deepen your skill or extend your involvement in a creative form in which you have prior experience or try something new. A CAS experience in creativity will involve new challenges or objectives.

*Approaches to creativity*

- Ongoing creativity - You may already be engaged in creative pursuits, and this will provide excellent opportunities for your CAS program. In your CAS program, look for opportunities to extend and develop your skills and participation in your ongoing creative pursuits.
- School-based creativity - Luther offers you many opportunities to participate in activities that exercise creativity. You might consider being part of the musical (set design, sound and lighting, acting, singing, etc.), paint murals for LIT, participate in improv, or join a creative club, for example.
- Community-based creativity - There are many community organizations that provide opportunities for creativity. You might wish to become involved in a theatre group, contribute toward an art exhibition, take cooking classes, or participate in other opportunities. The best community-based creativity experiences will be ones that take place regularly, build relationships, and allow you to grow and reflect upon your talents, interests, passions, emotional responses, and imagination.
- Individual creativity - You might wish to engage in solitary creative experiences like composing music, developing a website, writing a compilation of short stories, creating arts and crafts, or painting a series of portraits. Like other CAS experiences in creativity, individual creative pursuits are best when they take place over an extended duration of time rather than being “one-offs”.

### **Activity**

*Physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle*

The aim of the Activity strand is to promote lifelong healthy habits related to physical well-being. You are free to determine what this looks like for you! You might consider being involved in individual and team sports, aerobic exercise, dance, outdoor recreation, fitness training, or any other form of physical exertion that contributes to a healthy lifestyle. If you already participate in sports or other physical activities, try to determine how you could develop and extend your participation. You could take on a leadership role to help others develop their skills, develop a skill area where you are currently weak, or set and reflect upon other goals to help you progress in your activity.

### *Approaches to activity*

- Ongoing activity - You might already be involved in school teams or clubs that involve physical activity. Continuing your involvement there can be part of your CAS program, but you're encouraged to set personal goals in keeping with the principles of CAS.
- School-based activity - Taking advantage of school-organized opportunities for physical activity, like taking a physical education class or participating in wellness days, can be part of CAS. Just remember to set goals that allow you to complete the CAS outcomes and extend your involvement beyond being a passive participant.
- Community-based activity - Out-of-school sports and activity groups provide great opportunities for CAS. Look for opportunities to engage in regular participation that builds relationships rather than "one-offs".
- Individual activity - You may wish to initiate CAS experiences that are solitary, such as training to run a 10K race, completing a strength conditioning plan, biking, or any other activity. These experiences should take place over an extended time rather than just being single events.

### **Service**

#### *Collaborative and reciprocal engagement with the community in response to an authentic need*

The aim of service in CAS is to identify and address authentic community needs by applying your personal and social skills in real-life situations involving decision-making, problem-solving, initiative, responsibility, and accountability. Service learning can take several forms:

- Direct service - You are interacting directly with the people, environment, or animals that will benefit from your actions (e.g. one-on-one tutoring, developing a garden in partnership with refugees, working in an animal shelter)
- Indirect service - Though you do not see the recipients of your service, your actions demonstrably benefit the community or environment (e.g. redesigning a website for a non-profit organization, writing picture books to teach a language, nurturing tree seedlings for planting)
- Advocacy - Speaking on behalf of a cause or concern to promote action on an issue of public interest (e.g. awareness campaigns, performing a play to reduce bullying, creating a video on sustainable water solutions)
- Research - Collecting information through varied sources, analysing data, and reporting on a topic of importance to influence policy or practice (e.g. environmental surveys to influence the school, contribute to a study of animal migration, compile effective means to reduce litter in public spaces, conducting social research with at-risk groups)

### *Approaches to service*

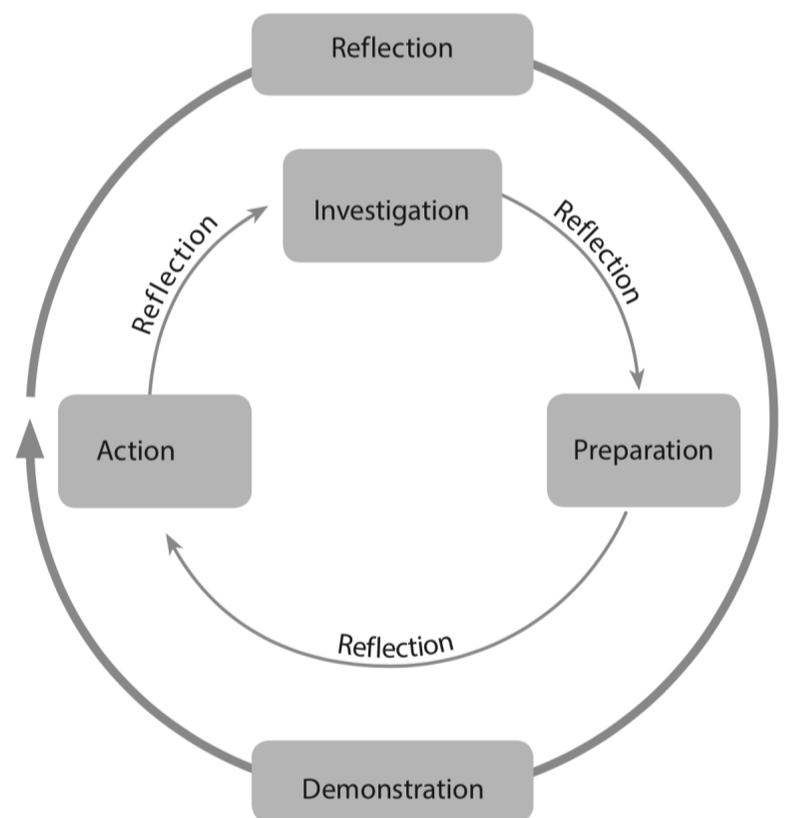
- Ongoing service - Investigate a need that leads to a plan of action implemented over time.
- School-based service - Work to serve authentic needs within your school.

- Community-based service - Serve authentic needs in the wider community, especially on a regular basis.
- Immediate need service - Service in response to an emergent need such as a disaster, especially including research on the causes and issues around such an event
- Fundraising - Raising money for a worthy organization, especially when learning about the organization, communicating directly with the organization, and sharing the importance of the fundraising with others. This type of service is especially valuable when augmented with direct, advocacy, or research service.
- International service - Service can be performed in other parts of the world, but students are encouraged to serve locally first and to work to understand how their service experience abroad relates to the issues in their own community.
- Volunteerism - Participation in service experiences organized by other students, the school, or an external group
- Service arising from the curriculum - Initiating a project based on a need you learned about in one of your classes (e.g. monitoring and improving a local ecosystem in response to a study of freshwater ecology in ESS)

### CAS Stages

The CAS stages should be followed whenever possible in planning a CAS experience. The inner ring of the diagram represents the process you would go through in planning your CAS experience. To plan a CAS experience, you will:

- **investigate** by identifying your interests, skills, and talents, as well as areas for personal growth and development; and by determining the purpose of (or, for service, the need addressed in) your CAS experience.
- **prepare** by clarifying roles and responsibilities (especially if the CAS experience involves group work), developing a plan for action, identifying resources and timelines, and acquiring any needed skills.
- **act** by implementing your idea or plan individually, with a partner, or in a group
- **reflect** by describing what happened, expressing feelings, generating ideas, and raising questions. Reflection is not something you only do at the end of an experience. It should be something you do throughout as you examine your feelings, evaluate what you are doing, revise your plans, and make connections to your own context, knowledge, and experiences.



The outer ring of the diagram represents how you will summarize your experience by adding **reflections** and **evidence** to your CAS portfolio on ManageBac. In demonstrating what you've done, you also invite responses from others, which could prompt further reflection.

## CAS Experiences

As you plan your CAS program, you'll need to select your CAS experiences carefully. Here are some things to consider as you plan.

- **CAS is not about counting hours.** There is no hours requirement for CAS. You complete CAS by demonstrating sustained involvement over your two years in the Diploma Programme, by having balance of creativity, activity, and service, and by providing reflections and evidence that show you've achieved the CAS outcomes.
- **There is no minimum or maximum number of experiences.** CAS experiences can be short-term or long-term. As long as you have been involved in CAS throughout the two years and have balance among the strands, you don't need to worry about how many experiences you've recorded.
- **There are no grades in CAS.** CAS is graded only on a pass/fail basis. If you achieve the outcomes and provide reflections and evidence to show it, you pass!
- **CAS experiences must be unpaid and can't be a part of your IB Diploma.** (However, taking a class that isn't part of your IB Diploma, like band, choir, or physical education, could be part of your CAS portfolio!)
- **Some other things don't count for CAS.** Things that are merely passive, like attending an art exhibition or a concert, could form part of a CAS experience, but on their own aren't CAS experiences. Although many faith-based and political activities will count for CAS, there are a few exceptions. If you are unsure, consult your CAS advisor.

## The CAS Project

The CAS project is a collaborative, well-considered series of sequential CAS experiences that engages at least one of the CAS strands. During your time in the Diploma Programme, you will have the opportunity to participate in two school services days. The service days are planned around the model of the CAS project. You must designate one of these service days as your CAS project. As a diploma student, you should demonstrate leadership and initiative in the planning, action, and reflection stages and provide evidence and reflection on the CAS outcomes in your CAS portfolio. This is a wonderful opportunity for the rest of our school to benefit from your knowledge and experience in the CAS program.

# Your CAS Portfolio

Your CAS portfolio is your record of your CAS program. Luther uses ManageBac to maintain CAS portfolios, and you will be given an account to access ManageBac. ManageBac allows you to keep record of all your CAS experiences, your progress toward achieving the outcomes, your balance of the three strands, and your reflections and evidence. It also allows your supervisors to submit their reports and the CAS Coordinator to keep track of your progress. Once your portfolio is finalized, it will be used to determine whether you have successfully completed CAS.

## *Reflections*

Whenever you engage in a CAS experience, there is opportunity for reflection. Consider how you are feeling, what you are learning, challenging and/or exciting moments and how you responded to them, connections to other knowledge and experiences, and keep record of those thoughts. Enter those thoughts into your CAS portfolio in ManageBac as often as you have them. A reflection doesn't have to be a piece of formal writing. It can be simply a couple of sentences. The best reflections will take place throughout the experience and show learning and growth in light of the CAS outcomes.

## *Evidence*

Upload evidence of your involvement to your CAS experience in ManageBac. Evidence could include, but is not limited to, planning documents, letters, emails, certificates, photos, videos, news articles, programs, rosters, or anything else that verifies your participation

## *Supervisor Review*

ManageBac will ask you to designate a supervisor. It should not be a fellow student or family member, but otherwise can be anyone who can verify your involvement. To officially mark a CAS experience as complete, have ManageBac send the review to your supervisor. The supervisor will be asked to verify that you have achieved the outcomes you associated with the experience, and once they've done so, your CAS experience will be marked as complete in ManageBac.

# Interviews

To ensure that you are on track to complete your CAS program, there will be three scheduled interviews with your CAS advisor. These interviews will be recorded in your CAS portfolio by your advisor. Of course, you should talk to your CAS advisor much more than three times! They are your resource to help you as you work toward balance in your IB Diploma Programme.