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AL SAHWA SCHOOLS CAS Handbook



EDUCATE STUDENTS TO BECOME THE
LEADERS OF THE FUTURE

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Creativity, Activity and Service Handbook

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Creativity



Activity



Service

Al Sahwa Schools



MISSION

We are a learning community committed to our core values and Oman's rich cultural heritage while embodying high quality international education.

VISION

Educate students to become leaders of the future.

VALUES

Gratitude

Respect

Proactivity

CAS Overview

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AT THE CORE OF THE IB



Erika Hughes
CAS Coordinator
Head of Visual Arts



The world is changing at an increasingly fast pace, and both employers and post-secondary institutions are looking beyond grades and academics from high school graduates. They are seeking candidates with a diversity of character, as well as the ability to apply 21st century skills while adapting to the environment around them.

How do you define yourself beyond being a student who is studying courses and passing exams?

What are your passions, life experiences, skills sets and stories that showcase your true potential?

Whether it is passing grade 8 level music exams that show dedication and commitment, discussing global issues while representing Oman at the Model United Nations conference, or spending a week co-teaching in a sustainable education program in Tanzania, it is these transferable and professional skills that make individuals stand out.

The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), holds these experiences with great importance, placing CAS at the central core of the Diploma Programme.

Students are required to construct a CAS program which is a minimum of 18 months in duration and filled with "experiences". Instead of fulfilling a minimum number of hours, these experiences are required to meet a range of learning outcomes, be engaging, rewarding, but most importantly, foster personal growth. This enables students to have a larger variety of experiences, and focus on individual goal setting while learning new things.

All experiences and their capstone CAS Project, are required to be recorded with evidence and reflected upon. This allows students to show how they have met the learning outcomes, and what they would have done differently for next time. This often results in a powerful portfolio of achievements and successes.

CAS allows Diploma Programme students to connect their extra curricular activities with the outside world and apply them to real life situations. It is my sincere hope that through CAS, students will discover passions that they will carry with them through life.

What is CAS?

A GREAT WAY TO CONTINUING TO DO WHAT YOU LOVE

CAS is not only a way to get credit for something you're currently doing, but great motivation to try something new! It is also an opportunity to be involved in experiences that will help others within your community or aboard, what could be better?

Will the experience qualify for CAS?

- Does it have purpose and will it be worthwhile?
- Will the experience be enjoyable for you?
- What new possibilities or challenges could the experience provide?
- What might be the possible consequences of your CAS experience for you, others and the environment?
- Which CAS learning outcomes may be addressed?

A CAS experience must:

- Fit within one or more of the C, A, or S strands
- Be based on a personal interest, skill, talent or opportunity for growth
- Provide opportunities to develop attributes of the IB Learner Profile
- Foster personal growth based on individual goal setting

IB LEARNER PROFILE

Who are we becoming through our learning in MYP?

Adapted from: ibo.org/benefits/learner-profile/



INQUIRERS

As IB Learners we strive to:

- Nurture our curiosity
- Learn independently and with others
- Learn with enthusiasm all our life



KNOWLEDGEABLE

As IB Learners we strive to:

- Develop and use conceptual understanding to explore knowledge
- Engage with issues and ideas that are important in our lives and for the whole world



THINKERS

As IB Learners we strive to:

- Express ourselves confidently and creatively to analyze and take action on complex problems
- Show initiative in making reasoned and ethical decisions



COMMUNICATORS

As IB Learners we strive to:

- Express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language
- Collaborate effectively by listening carefully to the perspectives of others
- Share our ideas respectfully



PRINCIPLED

As IB Learners we strive to:

- Act with integrity, honesty and a strong sense of fairness and justice for all
- Take responsibility for our actions and their consequences



OPEN-MINDED

As IB Learners we strive to:

- Appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the traditions and values of others
- Seek and evaluate a range of points of view
- Grow from our experiences



CARING

As IB Learners we strive to:

- Show empathy, compassion and respect
- Commit to service learning
- Act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world



RISK-TAKERS

As IB Learners we strive to:

- Work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas
- Develop innovative strategies
- Be resourceful and resilient in the face of challenge, change and uncertainty



BALANCED

As IB Learners we strive to:

- Balance different aspects of our lives - intellectual, physical, and emotional
- Create well-being for ourselves and others
- Recognize our interdependence with other people and the world in which we all live



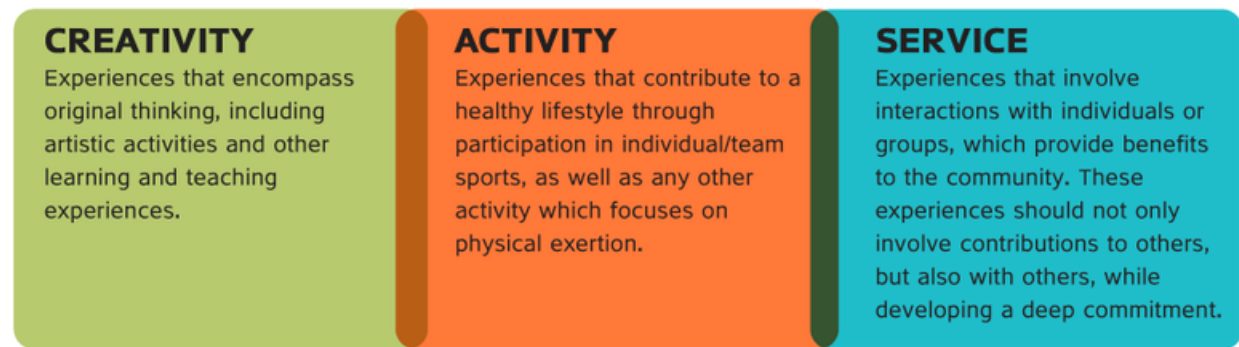
REFLECTIVE

As IB Learners we strive to:

- Consider the world, our own ideas and our experiences thoughtfully
- Understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development

Icons by Freepik on Flaticon. Poster by @Belyk

What are the CAS strands?



What are examples of possible CAS experiences?

CREATIVITY

- Form a performance group (dance, singing, ect.)
- Participate in a school musical or play
- Play a musical instrument in the school band or independently
- Design a local NGO's website
- Paint the background and props for the musical in the art club
- Learn culinary skills by creating all the recipe in a cookbook
- Start a photography club and teach younger children Photoshop skills
- Create recycled art sculpture to promote waste reduction around the school

ACTIVITY

- Train for a marathon or long distance run
- Bi-Weekly Hiking trips with friends based on commitment and planning
- Personal Fitness Planning
- Become PADI certified
- Take part and commit to a team sport outside of school
- Give a martial art a try: Judo, Taekwondo, Karate
- Take Tennis lessons

SERVICE

- Organize a letter writing campaign for a cause
- Host a speaker and film series to raise aware on an issue relevant to the community
- Plan a conference to raise awareness about education equality
- Provide reusable water bottles to replace single use water bottle at the school
- Spend one hour a week at a care home
- Junior CPR program
- Have a stall at a school events to promote one of the UNSDGs you are passionate about
- Plan a school garden and involve the PYP students
- Organize Earth Day at the school with various events happening over a week
- Organize a tree planting event in the local community in conjunction with an NGO
- Organize a series of beach clean ups
- Volunteer at the local animal shelter
- Help an elderly neighbor tidy their garden, or walk their dog a few times a week
- Volunteer in your local library reading to children
- Volunteer with the PTA organization at their monthly meetings

Four Tips For Successful Service Learning

AVOID SHORT TERM RELATIONSHIPS

Search for relationships that are sustainable by only committing to something that requires you to return on multiples occasions. Makes sure to really think if you can make this type of commitment with your current academic schedule and after school activities. Often times these organizations rely on your support. Draft a contract with your activity supervisor as a first step to show your commitment to the experience, but also to define your role, making sure it is meeting some of the personal goals you have set out within the CAS program.



FUNDRAISING

When collecting funds from the school and local community it is very important that you have a goal in mind of what this money will be raised for. Express this to those who have donated, as people will often be motivated knowing where their contribution is going. Keep detailed notes on how much money was collected and how it was used.



AUTHENTIC NEED

Get to know the cause or organization you are raising money for prior to your event. This will often be the first stage of CAS planning; research. Find out their largest needs and concerns and consider if fundraising is the best option. It can be motivating to raise a specific amount for a particular item such as an X-Ray machine for the local children's hospital. Ultimately make sure that the funds are responding to an authentic need.



EXTEND BEYOND AWARENESS

It is always a good idea to publicize what you have learned and fundraising events and volunteering are one way to do that, but how can you transform your learning into something more tangible? As part of your planning process, think about how you can transform the knowledge into action. How can you create sustainable or lasting change regarding the issue?



What is not CAS?

CAS is focused on quality over quantity, and requires students to look outside of the classroom to plan experiences. This does not mean you can't be inspired by a topic in class, and extended that learning into our school community, this is actually encouraged. The more engaged and passionate you are about a topic the more likely you are to follow through with the stages of planning and have a successful experience.

What disqualifies something from being a CAS Experience?

- Any class project or assignment which is already part of the student's Diploma Programme.
- Any experience for which a student is personally rewarded whether financially or with some other benefit (unless this benefit is passed on in full to a worthy cause).
- Doing simple, tedious and repetitive work, like re-shelving books in a library.
- Doing one-off tasks with little commitment or personal growth.
- Undertaking a passive pursuit, such as visiting a museum, art exhibit, or sports event, unless it clearly inspires work in a related activity.
- Service projects that do not meet a genuine need, do not require any real responsibility, or do not offer learning potential for the student volunteer.
- All forms of duty for family members.
- Experiences which cause division or conflict among different groups in the community.
- Fundraising with no clear purpose or end.
- Any experience that does not meet one learning outcome.
- Any experience which has not be pre-approved by the CAS Coordinator or CAS Advisor.
- Any experience without a supervisor.
- Religious and political activities (some exceptions may apply, such as putting together Ramadan food packages).



CAS Requirements

No two CAS programs will be the same, as no two students are the same. A fulfilling and worthwhile CAS program will follow your personal interests and make you feel motivated to pursue experience which will enrich your life. Frequently checking in with your CAS Coordinator and CAS advisor is the best way to make sure that you are on track.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

- The program shows a reasonable balance between the C, A and S strands.
- At least one CAS project which involves multiple strands.
- 18 months of consistent CAS experiences.
- At least one ongoing experience.
- All 7 learning outcomes have been address and reflected upon.
- A minimum of three CAS interviews with either your CAS Coordinator or CAS Advisor
- Complete documentation of experiences (proposal, planning, supervisor form, reflection)
- A completed CAS Portfolio

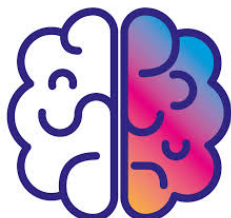
THE 7 LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF CAS



1. Identify your own strengths and develop areas for personal growth.



5. Demonstrate the skills and recognize the benefits of working collaboratively.



2. Demonstrate that challenges have been undertaken, developing new skills in the process.



6. Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance.



3. Demonstrate how to initiate and plan a CAS experience.



4. Show commitment to and perseverance in CAS experiences.



7. Recognize and consider the ethics of choices and actions.

Learning Objectives Explained

Early on in the program your CAS Coordinator will ensure that you understand all seven learning objectives (LOs). They will demonstrate by planning experiences for you to participate in prior to you being asked to plan ones yourself.



1. Identify your own strengths and develop areas for personal growth.

Students are able to see themselves as individuals with various abilities and skills, of which some are more developed than others.

When you leave your comfort zone, you learn things about yourself. For example, when you organized the fundraiser for Bhutan, were you patient with other people? If not, why not? Maybe you could try to improve this area of personal growth.



2. 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.

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3. 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.

This one's easy! When you are organizing your CAS events or activities, just make sure you keep notes on how you organized them, who you contacted and what the organizational process was like. Be minded of how to correspond in a timely, organized and civilized manner.



4. Show commitment to and perseverance in CAS experiences.

Students demonstrate regular involvement and active engagement in CAS.

At a minimum, this implies attending regularly and accepting a share of the responsibility for dealing with problems that arise in the course of activities. You may underestimate the amount of time needed to properly organize and execute an event. Don't give up when things get tough, but ask yourself, what can I do to make things better?



5. 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.

Collaboration can be shown in many different activities, such as team sports, playing music in a band, or helping in a kindergarten. Make sure to include in your reflection how you operate and interact with others.



6. 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.

There are so many global issues right now it's hard to know which one to support most. Global warming, the refugee crisis, homelessness, cancer research? CAS Coordinator advice – pick one per year and focus on what you can do to help that cause from where you are. My personal focus this year will be the reduction of plastic and single-use items in my life and at Al Sahwa. If this is also a passion of yours, please come and see me. You can also have a look at the UN Sustainable Development goals and see which issue you are interested in and can tackle.

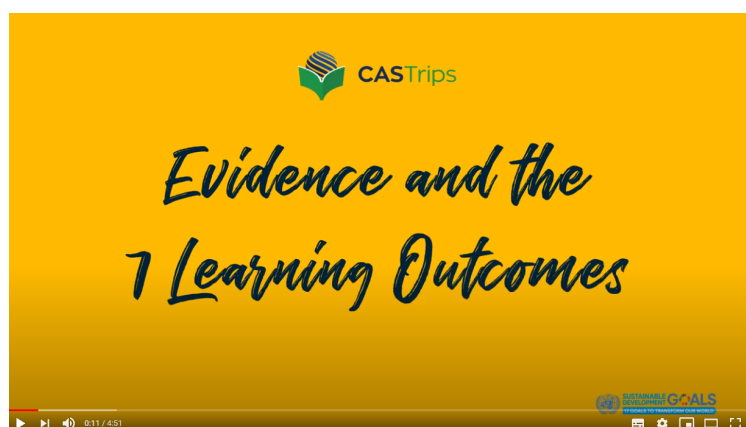


7. Recognize and consider the ethics of choices and actions.

Students show awareness of the consequences of choices and actions in planning and carrying out CAS experiences.

The things you do and the choices you make have consequences. Think about the CAS activities you are doing and how they affect others. Is what you are doing right or wrong? How?

VIDEO LINKING THE LEARNING OUTCOMES TO EVIDENCE



<https://bit.ly/2TBOLD9>

The CAS Project

Your CAS project should be the highlight of your time in CAS and should follow a true passion.

What are the mandatory requirement for a CAS project?

- Your CAS project should address a significant global issue. The IB uses the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs)
- Your project will involve teamwork, but large groups should be avoided.
- A minimum of two strands are required to be integrated into the project.
- The student must meet with the CAS Coordinator or Advisor to discuss the project and obtain signed approval before beginning the project and the planning stages.
- The CAS Project must be of significant duration, no less than a month.
- The CAS Project should address a genuine need, especially if a service project, and the conclusion of the project should demonstrate a successful meeting of this need.
- The CAS Project requires students to follow and document the CAS stages when planning and conducting the project.
- The CAS Project should be done prior to the start of the second year of the Diploma Programme.
- It is required that the CAS Project be reflected upon either with the CAS Coordinator or Advisor. It is strongly encouraged that you share what you have done with your school community by visiting a class.



Please visit:

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

How can I integrate the UNSDGs from home?

1.Run a social media fundraising campaign to raise money that helps people in India's slums or South Africa's townships access soap, masks and other crucial products needed at this time. GoFundMe has created six simple steps to help you start your next online fundraising campaign.

2. Practice your cooking skills and donate your tasty creations to food shelters in need, so that no one has to be hungry during this pandemic. Alternatively contact NGOs like food banks working in your area and ask what they need or how can you help during this time.

3.Not everyone is fortunate enough to attend an international school. Many public schools lack funding and students often suffer due to limited learning resources. Connect with students in your immediate area either in small study groups or a scheduled group online to help them not fall behind in their studies. Each of you have strengths academically that you can offer, or try teaming up!

4. Make sure you and your family reduce your plastic consumption during this time of quarantine. Check out the Eye On Plastic project by Plastic Free Campus to find out exactly how this can be done through a fun, eye-opening project.



What are the planning stages I must show in my project?

Your CAS Advisor will support you to make sure that you follow these steps correctly. When we are eager about something we tend to rush, but really try to take your time. It is also important to remember that decisions, especially withing school, take time. I may take up to three weeks to get an event such as a fundraiser approved by all the levels of administration. Thorough preparation, thought, planning and time always go into the most success projects.

1. INVESTIGATION

Students identify their interests, skills and talents to be used in considering opportunities for CAS experiences, as well as areas for personal growth and development. Students investigate and research what they want to do and determine the purpose for their CAS experience. In the case of service, students identify a need they want to address. Identifying a UNSDG that interests you and researching this at both a local and global level is a good starting point.

2. PREPARATION

Students clarify and assign roles and responsibilities, develop a plan of action to be taken, identify specific resources and timelines, and acquire any skills as needed to engage in the CAS experience. Make sure to submit the project proposal form at this stage.

3. ACTION

Students implement their idea or plan. This often requires decision-making and problem solving. You will mostly likely require teacher supervision, so make sure to plan in advance.

4. REFLECTION

Students describe what happened, express feelings, generate ideas, and raise questions. Reflection can occur at any time during CAS to further understanding, to assist with revising plans, to learn from the experience, and to make explicit connections between their growth, accomplishments, and the learning outcomes for personal awareness. Reflection may lead to new action.

5. DEMONSTRATION

Students make explicit what and how they learned and what they have accomplished. By sharing their CAS experience through their CAS portfolio or with others in an informal (advisor discussion) or formal manner (presentation to PTA or class). Through demonstration and communication students solidify their understanding and evoke responses to others.



CAS Reflections

Reflections are the center of CAS and are mandatory for each experience. Multiple reflections are expectation for your project, one at each stage of the planning process. Reflections are a key strategy for self-improvement, that allow for making important, targeted changes and improvements. You have the freedom to be as creative as you want with your reflections as long as you addressing your targeted learning outcome and reflecting on your goals.

How do I reflect properly?

An experience without reflection is just another experience and is not CAS. Reflection is what makes a CAS experiences a true learning experience.

When you reflect on your experiences, you think, write, and talk about them. You share the experiences with others and relate them to other experiences that you have had. You become aware of your feelings. Reflection allows you to learn during and from your experiences. Learning takes place when you combine theory and practice, thought and action, observation and interaction. Reflection is a skill that needs to be developed.

Ask the following questions to help guide you:

- What did I plan to do?
- What did I actually end up doing?
- What were the outcomes, for me, the team I was working with, and others?
- How did I meet the outcomes? Address each outcome in your reflection.

Keep these key factors in mind:

- Description (memorable, important, influential),
- Difficulties (obstacles, challenges)
- Expression, (articulate emotional responses to your experience, look at different perspectives),

TYPES OF ACCETABLE REFLECTIONS

For some students and some kinds of reflection (such as private, individual, subjective), writing is the best tool for reflection. However, for many, reflective writing does not come naturally. It can, to some extent, be "modeled" in oral discussion of more public, less sensitive matters, either as an end in itself or as a prelude to writing. But writing is by no means the only possible outcome of reflection. You can present your activities orally to peers, parents or outsiders. You can make scrapbooks, photo essays, videos or web logs. You can use journals or make up varied portfolios. All of these are valid reflective forms and all can be uploaded to the Google Websites we will be creating

Examples Include:

- A student might take photographs while hiking and use these to reflect in writing.
- Two students could compose a song describing how they helped children.
- A student might dramatize a poem to capture a feeling of creative endeavour.
- A student could produce a short video summarizing a CAS experience.
- A groups of students could create s digitally designed poster which shares the experience.

EXAMPLES OF WELL WRITTEN REFLECTIONS

(ADAPTED FROM THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF PANAMA)

Volunteer at the Minneapolis Children's Hospital – Service

The children were very open in accepting me. They were always the ones who made this brief interaction between two strangers seem comfortable. Through the compassion I constantly saw in these very sick children I was exposed to an amazing outlook on life. One of the false assumptions I made about working at Children's was that as a result of my work I would feel good about myself for giving my time to these children. In fact, I did feel good about myself but it was not because of what I had given. Instead it was the children who gave to me. From them I learned how positive and selfless people can be..."

Activity: Volleyball – Junior Varsity (Action)

Goal- I haven't played volleyball for very long. I am really not much of an athlete, but my best friend, Kathy, promised me I would love this sport if I gave it a try. This is definitely out of my ordinary type of activity. I am a runner and prefer to work out alone. Volleyball seems like another way to improve my fitness level, have fun and work with a group. I have to admit that I am a bit nervous about trying something so public. Activity to date: My stomach was upset the first day we suited up. It seemed as if everyone knew exactly what they were doing, everyone but me. My friend was so patient and kind, helping me understand the rules, the regulations and where to stand. I found serving the ball most intimidating. All eyes were on me...I thought I would die. The game went much faster than I imagined. Everyone is always in motion and all the players were most serious about winning. This made me a bit uncomfortable as the group dynamic was new for me. I found it difficult not to be in control all the time. This activity is becoming more important to me. It gives me a sense of belonging. It's fun to see other players in the hallway and be able to say hello and know that we belong to a club together. My high school is so large, it can be easy to feel a bit alone.

EXAMPLE OF A POORLY WRITTEN REFLECTION

Volunteer at the Minneapolis Children's Hospital – Service

"Today I got to the nursing home at 2:00. Talked to some ladies. Passed out popcorn at the movie. Went home at 4:00. When you volunteer at the nursing home, the residents really make you feel appreciated. It makes it all worthwhile.

Reflection is not:

- forced
- right or wrong good or bad
- marked or graded
- difficult
- copying what someone else said
- predictable
- to be judged by others
- only a summary of what happened
- done to please someone else
- waste of time
- only written
- only discussion
- only led by teachers.

The CAS Process

Determine your personal growth goals for CAS. Each experience you plan should also have individual goals. This helps both you and your supervisor have a focus.

Submit an **Experience Form** (CAS Google Drive), which outlines which **LOs** you want to achieve and **wait for approval** or requested adjustments.

Prior to starting, go over the **Supervisor Form** with your supervisor and discuss goals.

Start your experience and enjoy yourself.



As you are completing your experience, make sure to collect **evidence** as you go. If ongoing, try to **reflect** every 2-3 weeks.

After the experience is complete, make sure the Supervisor Form is **returned to the CAS coordinator**. Soft copy is the best format.

Add your final **reflection**, and **evidence** to your **CAS Portfolio** bringing the experience to a close. Reflecting on the **feedback** from your supervisor is also a good starting point.

Start the process all over again! Make sure that you are consistently engaging in experience over the duration of **18 months**.

The CAS Portfolio

The CAS portfolio is a requirement of the IB Diploma Programme, but it is increasingly becoming a document that is used beyond its originally intended purpose. Many students are using the CAS portfolio as a presentation document for proof of past performance and future job placements.

What are the mandatory requirements for the portfolio?

Al Sahwa is a Google For Education Reference school, so each student will be creating a Google Site as the platform for their portfolio.

Your completed CAS program must include:

- A summative reflection that describes your participation in the CAS program including personal development, benefits to others and how you achieved each of the required learning outcomes, specifically referencing your CAS experiences.
- A separate CAS Section for each one of the three components: Creativity, Activity and Service where you organize your experiences alongside their reflections and evidence.
- Evidence of planning in collaboration with others on at least one project. This can take the form of meeting agendas, google documents, ect.
- At least one experience engaging with issues of global importance (UNSDGs) at both the local and global levels.
- Evidence of development of new skills based on the personal goals you set out at the beginning of the program.
- Your CAS Portfolio will have all required components neatly presented in your Google Site.
- It will be assessed as a presentation document and be completed in all aspects by the deadline set by the CAS Coordinator.

EXAMPLES OF STUDENT PORTFOLIOS

Please note that these are just examples and are presented in different format than what is expected from you.

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<https://bit.ly/3mq3Wc2>

<https://bit.ly/3eeM552>

<https://bit.ly/3jC6Okk>



Student and Parent Contract

CAS is a core part of the IB Diploma alongside academic studies. Students are asked to complete experience that touch on the notion of Creativity, Activity and Service whilst showing evidence of achieving the seven Learning Outcomes.

Creativity – The arts and other experiences that evoke creative thinking

Activity – Physical exertion contributing to positive and healthy lifestyle

Service – A voluntary and unpaid experience that has a learning benefit for the student

These experiences should reflect initiative, demonstrate perseverance, a challenge and develop skills such as collaboration, problem solving and decision-making. CAS allows students to enhance their personal and interpersonal development through a practical, hands-on experience, rather than solely focusing on education inside the classroom. Thoughtful consideration in the form of planning, reflecting and reporting are fundamental to a successful CAS Project. Students are asked to reflect on the outcomes of their projects in regards to their learning achievements, contributing towards their personal and professional development. By participating in CAS activities, students become well-rounded young adults.

As a student enrolled in the IB Diploma Program Al Sahwa School, I _____ agree to initiate, participate, and complete activities/projects in order to fulfill the Creativity, Activity and Service component of the International Baccalaureate Programme. I understand that I must meet the criteria listed below:

- Study the CAS Handbook
- Initiate and plan a CAS project
- Develop a personal plan
- Regularly participate
- Regularly create CAS reflections that prove the achievement of the 7 Learning Outcomes
- Respect Deadlines
- Create a visual portfolio which showcases the evidence of my learning
- Assume responsibility for all documents and CAS portfolio

Date:

Student Signature:

Parent or Guardian Signature:

Al Sahwa Schools is a Candidate School* for the IB Diploma Programme. This school is pursuing authorisation as an IB World School. These are schools that share a common philosophy—a commitment to high quality, challenging, international education that Al Sahwa Schools believes is important for our students.

*Only schools authorised by the IB Organisation can offer any of its four academic programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the Diploma Programme, or the Career-related Programme (CP). Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorisation will be granted. For further information about the IB and its programmes, visit <http://www.ibo.org>