GUIDELINES: Creativity Action Service
For 11th and 12th graders

Minimum requirement: 150 hours over two years; roughly 50 hours of each component.
It is important to understand that this core requirement is not about “ticking off hours” just to say it is done. Creativity means the arts and other experiences that involve creative thinking. Action is physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle. Service is an unpaid and voluntary exchange that is of service to someone else. Each of these activities should have a learning benefit for the student. The rights, dignity and autonomy of all those involved are respected.

For student development to occur, CAS should involve:
- Real, purposeful activities, with significant outcomes
- Personal challenge—tasks must extend the student and be achievable in scope
- Thoughtful consideration, such as planning, reviewing progress, and reporting
- Reflection on outcomes and personal learning

All proposed CAS activities must meet the above four criteria!!! CAS activities should continue on a regular basis for as long as possible throughout the program, and certainly for at least 18-20 months (from the summer before 11th through to April of 12th grade).

CAS activities and their completion are linked to the IB learner profile, IB mission statement, theory of knowledge, and ethical education. Activities should have significant outcomes. The emphasis is on helping the student to develop their own identities, have personal growth as they think, feel and act their way through ethical issues.

CAS aims to develop students who are:
- Reflective thinkers – they understand their own strengths and limitations, identify goals and devise strategies for personal growth
- Willing to accept new challenges and new roles
- Aware of themselves as members of communities with responsibilities towards each other and the environment
- Active participants in sustained, collaborative projects
- Balanced – they enjoy and find significance in a range of activities involving intellectual, physical, creative and emotional experiences.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: As a result of their CAS experiences as a whole, including their reflections, students must provide evidence that they have:
- Increased their awareness of their own strengths and areas for growth: They are able to see themselves as individuals with various skills and abilities, some more developed than others, and understand that they can make choices about how they wish to move forward.
- Undertaken new challenges: A new challenge may be an unfamiliar activity, or an extension of an existing one.
- Planned and initiated activities: Planning and initiation will often be in collaboration with others. It can be shown in activities that are part of larger projects, for example, ongoing school activities in the local community, as well as in small student-led activities.
- Worked collaboratively with others: Collaboration can be shown in many different activities, such as team sports, playing music in a band, or helping in a kindergarten. At least ONE project involving collaboration and the integration of at least two of creativity, action and service IS REQUIRED.
- Shown perseverance and commitment to their activities: 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.
- **Engaged with issues of global importance:** Students may be involved in international projects but there are many global issues that can be acted upon locally or nationally (for example, environmental concerns, caring for the elderly).

- **Considered the ethical implications of their actions:** Ethical decisions arise in almost any CAS activity (for example on the sports field, in musical composition, in relationships with others involved in service activities). Evidence of thinking about ethical issues can be shown in various ways, including journal entries and conversations with CAS advisors.

- **Developed new skills:** As with new challenges, new skills may be shown in activities that the student has not previously undertaken, or in increased expertise in an established area.

All eight outcomes listed above must be present for the student to complete the overall CAS requirement. Some may be demonstrated many times, in a variety of activities, but completion requires only that there is SOME evidence for every outcome. **It is the QUALITY of the activity (its contribution to the student’s development) that is of most importance.** The guideline for the minimum amount of CAS activity is approximately two hours per school week, with a reasonable balance between creativity, action and service. However, “hour counting” is not encouraged.

Therefore, as a student you need to carefully plan your CAS activities, try new things and record and reflect. All projects should have a definite goal or outcome, and should be planned and evaluated. You cannot count for CAS any activities that relate to coursework, extended essay research, and TOK essays and activities, nor can you count mundane, repetitive and non-engaging undertakings. In choosing CAS activities, look for endeavors that meet as many of the learning objectives as possible, and address more than one aspect of CAS (Creativity, Action, Service), if possible. **It is better to plan a few things that are significant, rather than to do lots of little, unconnected things.**

**CREATIVITY**

Creative activities should have a definite goal or outcome. They should be planned and evaluated like all CAS activities, and should represent some unique, individual, identifiable creative initiative by the student. Creativity is not merely participating in or observing “the arts.” It is also not following specific directions, such as following a recipe. Tasks must extend the student beyond the regular scope of their involvement and meet the learning criteria as set forth by IB. Appropriate CAS activities are not merely “more of the same”—more practice, more concerts with the school band, and so on. Music, dance, drama or art activities, that students are involved with outside the Diploma Program subject coursework, may count as CAS activity if they meet the required objectives. Again, these should not be “more of the same”, but the student should find ways to “extend” the things they are passionate about into new areas. Creativity can also involve planning service activities, and implementing them in creative ways.

**ACTION**

To avoid possible confusion, it is appropriate to note that the use of the term “action” in CAS relates specifically to physical exertion in a physical activity, not merely being involved in “doing” something. Athletics coaches may work with the student to incorporate relevant CAS principles and practice into training schedules for the benefit of the student. Setting goals, planning, and reflecting on their achievement can help training sessions meet CAS requirements. “Extending” the student may go further. For example, an accomplished athlete may pass on some of their skills and knowledge to others by coaching a team, or working individually with another athlete. An athlete might become involved in a new sport: if their chosen sport is entirely individual, perhaps they should try a team game or vice versa. Some excellent “action” activities are not sporting events or competitive, but involve physical challenge by demanding endurance (such as long-distance trekking) or the conquest of personal fears (for example, rock climbing.). Caution must be taken to ensure the safety of such activities. A student’s “action” may
also be physical exertion as part of a service activity or project. Fitness training, if it is organized with specific goals and directives, may also count as CAS, even if it is done independently.

SERVICE

It is essential that service activities have learning benefits for the student, otherwise, they are not experiential learning, hence not CAS. This rules out mundane, repetitive activities, as well as “service” without real responsibility. A learning benefit that enriches the student personally is in no way inconsistent with the requirement that service be unpaid and voluntary. It is imperative that Service hours be carefully planned and that the student identify needs towards which a service activity will be directed. Meaningful communication should take place between the student and the benefiting individual or organization to maximize the outcomes. This approach, based on a collaborative exchange, maximizes both the potential benefits to the recipients and the learning opportunities for the students. Ideally, such prior communication and consultation will be face-to-face and will involve the students themselves. Where this is not possible, students need to work with appropriate partners or intermediaries, such as NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and make every effort to ensure that the service provided is appropriate, and that they understand the human consequences of their work, for both individuals and communities. Service activities must actually provide a service. Merely learning about a need and increasing one’s awareness (class, seminar, club, etc.) is not CAS by itself, though it can lay the groundwork for a project. Service hours should provide direct contact with the beneficiary, allow for interactive communication between the student and the beneficiary, and involve personal initiative and responsibility by the student.

SOME OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

For a political activity to qualify for CAS it must meet these criteria:

- Safe and secure
- Does not cause or worsen social divisions
- Has specific learning opportunities and responsibility for the student (not mundane and repetitive busywork—mailings, door-to-door, phone calls, etc.)

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

It is recognized that this is a sensitive and difficult area. The general rule is that religious devotion, and any activity that can be interpreted as proselytizing does not count as CAS. Some relevant guiding principles are that CAS activities should enlarge the student’s experience, encourage them towards greater understanding of people from different social or cultural backgrounds, and include specific goals. Activities done as part of the church education or worship experiences do not qualify. Work done by a religious group in the wider community, provided that the objectives are clearly secular, may qualify as CAS. Another key issue is whether students are able to make choices and use their own initiative.

Plan your activity

- What strategies are you using to meet the CAS criteria?
- Is it a significant activity?
- Is it new, or an “extension?”

Set goals and anticipated outcomes.
Keep a journal about your activity and progress, keeping the 8 CAS directives in focus.
Reflect on your overall learning experience.
Over your two years (11th and 12th), your CAS activities should address each of these learning objectives at least once, and every CAS activity should meet at least one of these requirements.

1. Increased awareness of your own strengths and areas for growth.
2. New challenges
3. Planned and initiated activities
4. Collaborative work with others
5. Perseverance and Commitment to the activity
6. Engagement with issues of global importance
7. Ethical considerations
8. New skills developed

**DOCUMENTATION OF CAS**

- Using the CAS progress log you must record your activity before starting the activity and discuss your progress with your CAS advisor.
- Students are encouraged to keep a journal recording their actions, feelings, personal growth, etc. Look at the 8 learning outcomes and make sure your activities are meeting these expectations.
- Progress will be reviewed periodically by checking CAS Project Logs and reviewing Reflection Forms. Juniors need to complete 75 hours by April of the junior year. Then during the senior year you must complete the remaining 75 hours of activity, turn in all of your Reflections Forms CAS advisor and complete the CAS Student Final Summary form with the CAS advisor.

**Failure to meet these requirements and deadlines is a violation of the Hillside IB contract. If you have not completed the CAS requirement, then you cannot earn the full IB Diploma.**