

CAS interviews: Introduction

CAS interviews are important in the CAS process and serve as a means of:

- checking and reinforcing student understanding of CAS
 - assisting students to consider whether they are enjoying CAS and maximizing the opportunities and possibilities of CAS
 - ensuring students know about available resources to support them in CAS
 - giving students an opportunity to reflect upon their CAS experiences to date
 - inviting students to show evidence of achieving CAS learning outcomes
 - allowing students to discuss CAS successes and ways of meeting challenges
 - reviewing and monitoring student progress.
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First CAS interview

There is a minimum of three scheduled CAS interviews during a student's DP. Ideally, the first interview is scheduled during the very early stages of the DP. Prior to this interview, be certain that students have attended a CAS orientation and have access to relevant information. Students may also have attended one or more group sessions that review key elements of CAS, so they have an established understanding and look forward to their CAS programme.

Be sure to review some of the "Teaching strategies" chapters in the TSM for suggestions of diverse ways to introduce CAS in engaging and dynamic ways that inspire students. When these are done **prior** to the first interview, students may come to the first interview prepared, for example, by knowing their interests, being familiar with the learning outcomes or having several ideas that show they are approaching their CAS programme with meaning and purpose.

The purpose of the first interview is to:

- gauge the student's understanding of CAS
 - find out the interests of the student
 - discuss the student's plans for CAS experiences
 - review the learning outcomes of CAS, ensuring his or her understanding and seeing how the student might achieve these outcomes
 - ensure the student is aware of ways to gather evidence of CAS.
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Questions are offered for each of these discussion topics as examples. Please adjust and adapt them for what is meaningful for your CAS students and their CAS programme.

Understanding

Students need to have a firm understanding of the CAS programme and the many opportunities available. If the word “requirements” is over-emphasized, students may be preoccupied with checking items off a list when they are done. School has many requirements; however, what is most important in CAS is the level of involvement and personal commitment. How students regard the programme will deeply influence how they participate.

Questions to ask

- Do you have any questions or concerns about CAS?
 - Which aspect of the programme excites you the most? Which aspect seems most challenging?
 - What do you most hope to achieve from CAS?
 - How do you think your CAS programme will enable you to grow? How do these areas of growth apply to the attributes of the IB learner profile?
 - What have you learned about the CAS stages, and how can the stages help you in CAS?
 - How will you plan for an equal distribution of CAS strands across your CAS experiences?
 - What organizational and time-management strategies do you have in place to ensure that CAS remains an ongoing focus of your IB journey?
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Your school’s CAS handbook can be the primary reference for the student; any basic questions should be answered through the CAS handbook. However, let students know they can always approach the CAS coordinator or advisers to assist with their understanding.

Student interests

Ensuring that students have identified areas of interest is important for determining their CAS experiences. The questions below may assist the student in identifying their interests, which leads to knowing what they would like to do for CAS.

Note: A document available on this TSM, “**Teaching strategy: Creating a personal profile**”, is designed to assist with this key understanding.

Questions to ask

- What are your main interests? How can you incorporate these interests into your CAS programme?
 - What do you enjoy doing after school? Could this be part of any CAS experience?
 - What are your personal goals? How could they be achieved through CAS?
 - What do you expect to gain from CAS? What do you hope to accomplish?
 - How can you advance your skills and talents through CAS?
 - What school, community or other groups or teams are you already involved in?
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- Have you had any previous experiences that you would view as CAS?
 - How could something you do currently (for example, swimming) be made into a CAS experience with new opportunities to add skills and meet challenges?
 - What do you think your role could be in effecting change for the better?
 - What issues of local significance concern you most? How could you address these in your CAS programme?
 - How do these local issues also have global significance?
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Student plans for CAS

Students may arrive at their first interview with different levels of preparation regarding their plans. If you want students to have a prepared outline of their CAS programme, advise them with ample time before the interview. Alternatively, use this first interview to help them create a basic outline, mind map or plan.

Questions to ask

- What would you enjoy doing for creativity? Activity? Service?
 - Have you made any plans for creativity? Activity? Service? For each, what are you hoping to learn or do you have skills you want to develop?
 - Have you researched any groups that you could become involved in for any of the CAS strands? What are you doing to expand your options?
 - What ideas do you have for a CAS project? Are these ideas worth developing for a month or more? What additional ideas do you have or backup plans if this is not viable?
 - Who will you work with for your CAS project?
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CAS learning outcomes

Review the learning outcomes and ensure that students understand each one. For a group session on the learning outcomes, refer to this TSM under **“Teaching strategy: Understanding learning outcomes”**.

Questions to ask

- How would you summarize these learning outcomes?
 - Can you summarize each of these learning outcomes in your own words?
 - From the plans you already have, do you see any opportunities that may be helpful in meeting these learning outcomes?
 - What learning outcome appears as something you will easily do?
 - What learning outcome might present a significant challenge?
 - What learning outcome might you address in the first six months of your CAS programme?
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Evidence of CAS

Part of the students' responsibility is to provide evidence that they have met the CAS learning outcomes through their accumulated experiences, have balanced their time in creativity, activity and service and have completed at least one project. How will they provide this evidence? This is important to discuss during the first interview.

Questions to ask

- Have you thought of how you will keep evidence (and the types of evidence) that you are engaging with CAS and are meeting the CAS outcomes?
 - How often do you plan to use your CAS portfolio?
 - How will you reflect on your CAS experiences? Are there any preferred ways you like to reflect? (Note: The student may require suggestions or examples to develop a more diverse approach to reflection.)
 - How can you keep track of your plans and meeting the learning outcomes through your portfolio?
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Second CAS interview

The purpose of the second interview is to:

- discuss advancements in the student's engagement with CAS
 - provide oversight regarding the student's progress towards fulfilling CAS requirements
 - discuss collection of CAS evidence
 - provide the opportunity for the student to reflect verbally on his or her CAS involvement.
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The following notes and suggestions for questions may assist CAS coordinators/advisers.

General advancements

This interview is the opportunity to remind students that CAS is meant to be enjoyable and beneficial to themselves and others with whom they are engaging. Refer to the CAS handbook as needed to clarify misunderstandings and provide examples of CAS experiences; this also models how to use the resource. Be sure to reference the CAS stages to reinforce understanding and application during the students' continuing CAS experiences and CAS project. As always, the interview allows for general feedback on CAS efforts and participation.

Questions to ask

- What has been most enjoyable and beneficial for you thus far in CAS?
 - What has been a highlight of creativity? Activity? Service?
 - What do you hope to achieve most from CAS? How can you do this?
 - When have you investigated, prepared and taken action so far in creativity, activity and/or service, or with your CAS project?
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- What have you developed for your CAS project—your goals, who are you collaborating with, whether the project involves creativity, activity and/or service, your roles and responsibilities, and your progress to date?
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CAS programme

Students by now fully understand their responsibility towards completing CAS, so specific aspects can be reviewed. If an area appears most challenging, support can be discussed to move the student forward.

Questions to ask

- What have been the biggest challenges for your CAS involvement, and how have you overcome them?
 - What difficulty has been hardest to overcome? Where might you need support at this time?
 - Have you ensured an equal balance across the three CAS strands? If not, how will you rectify this?
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Evidence of CAS

Students need to be engaged in CAS for a period of at least 18 months from the start of the DP. Apart from verbal discussions, students are responsible for showing evidence of their participation in CAS through their CAS portfolio. Evidence can take many forms including, but not limited to, reflections and other forms of documentation such as photos, files, planning documents, emails, meeting minutes, certificates, videos, art, music and journals.

Questions to ask

- What have you learned from your involvement in CAS?
 - How have you used reflection to gain insights or understandings?
 - In what ways have you especially enjoyed and learned from reflecting?
 - Do some of your reflections include the four elements—what happened, how you feel, ideas and questions?
 - Can you describe a situation where reflection happened very naturally and easily? Did you have a guided reflection opportunity that was helpful?
 - Does your collected CAS evidence show ongoing CAS involvement? Are there ways in which this could improve?
 - In what ways have your CAS experiences, including your project, assisted you in achieving one or more learning outcome?
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Verbal reflection

Ensure time for a verbal interchange that allows the student to reflect on what has occurred and what has been accomplished. Do take notes for the student, and review them as the interview concludes.

Discussion prompts

- Outline a skill that you have strengthened or developed from engaging in a CAS experience.
 - Explain something that has happened in CAS that provoked some strong emotions (“I was really excited when ...”; “I was sad when ...”; “I was really happy when ...”).
 - Choose a learning outcome and discuss your evidence of achieving it, and what stands out as most significant and memorable.
 - Five years from now, describe what is likely to stand out as a highlight from CAS.
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Third CAS interview

The summative interview for CAS is best scheduled near the end of the DP. The emphasis for this interview is for students to outline how they have achieved the CAS learning outcomes in addition to discussing their overall CAS programme. Moreover, the students can be guided to reflect on personal growth from multiple perspectives including enjoyment, personal awareness and development, achievements and challenges, larger understandings about the world around them, and how this experience might impact future choices and actions. This can lead to self-evaluation regarding what has been beneficial that may truly lead to lifelong integration of creativity, activity and service.

Several sets of questions are presented to consider. Always modify or use questions best suited for your student.

CAS programme

Questions to ask

- What did you most enjoy about CAS?
 - Did you manage to reach your goals?
 - What was your greatest challenge in CAS? How did you overcome this?
 - What have you achieved through CAS?
 - What have you learned about balancing your time with your choices and commitments?
 - How did knowing the CAS stages assist you? Where else can you apply these CAS stages in future learning or in life in general?
 - How do you already apply what you have learned from CAS in your daily life? How can this continue as you make future choices?
 - Looking ahead, have any new goals emanated from your CAS programme?
 - How did you integrate the three CAS strands in your overall programme?
 - Describe your CAS project: how you planned, who collaborated, your roles and responsibilities and the results of your collaboration. How were your expectations met or exceeded?
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Evidence from CAS

Questions to ask

- What has the role of reflection been in your whole CAS programme? Describe any way your experience with reflection has been helpful and memorable.
 - How could you use something similar to a CAS portfolio in future endeavours?
 - In what ways has the process of reflection and collecting evidence of your CAS experiences helped you develop the attributes of the IB learner profile? What would you do differently?
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CAS learning outcomes

Questions to ask

- How did you improve and develop your planning skills?
 - What did you learn about yourself and others?
 - What have you learned through working in collaboration with others?
 - What abilities and skills did you develop most significantly in CAS?
 - Did CAS help you to consider issues of global importance? How?
 - Which learning outcome did you find most easy to achieve? Most difficult to achieve?
 - What qualities did you discover and develop? What areas for growth were evident?
 - What challenges did you face, and how did you overcome them?
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Closing

Questions to ask

- What could be improved about the way CAS is organized in school?
 - What advice do you have for upcoming CAS students regarding making CAS enjoyable, sustained over time and meaningful?
 - Five years from now, what will you remember most about your CAS programme?
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(Data taken from IBO CAS Guide: Creativity, activity, service guide
For students graduating in 2017 and after)
