



SIS HANDBOOKS

SOTOGRADE HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

HANDBOOK





Accredited



Founded in 1885

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SIS Mission Statement

We inspire learning and intercultural understanding, enriqueciendo la vida de nuestros niños y nuestro mundo.

The major features of the mission statement are the emphasis we place on teaching and learning (inspired learning); the promotion of intercultural understanding and the whole notion of enrichment both of our children's lives and, through contribution and service, the lives of others.

Upper School Diploma Programme Philosophy Statement

We believe in the education of the whole person as a life-long process.

The SIS Diploma programme promotes the education of the whole person by emphasising intellectual, personal, emotional and social growth through all domains of knowledge.

Learning is focused on the dynamic combination of knowledge, skills, independent critical and creative thought and international-mindedness.

We espouse the SIS values as a profile of the whole person as a lifelong learner.

Sotogrande International School has provided a high quality academic and extra-curricular programme for the local and international community of southern Spain since 1978.

A team of well-qualified and experienced teachers nurture and stimulate our Upper School students.

It is our aim to inspire students to realise their full potential as young adults, learners and individuals who can set and attain personal goals.

OVERVIEW

This overview provides a summary of how courses are organized in the last four years of school for students normally aged 14-18 years. At SIS students either follow a path-way leading to the SIS High School Diploma (HSD) or to the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma.

High School Diploma Courses

M4 and M5 (US grades 9 & 10)

Students in M4 and M5 follow MYP programmes in up to eight subject areas: English, Additional Language, Experimental Sciences, Mathematics, Social Sciences, Physical Education, Technology and the Arts. Students also have the opportunity to complete a Personal Project in M5.

D1 and D2 (US grades 11 & 12)

Students in D1 and D2 follow two-year programmes in up to six subject areas: English, Additional Language, Experimental Sciences, Mathematics, Social Sciences and an Elective which may be taken from the Arts or as a second subject from one of the other areas. Students also participate in the Creativity, Action, Service programme.

Year Name	US Grade Level
M4	9
M5	10
D1	11
D2	12

This handbook describes the course offerings in the Upper School (D1/D2) for award of the **SIS High School Diploma**.

Students on the High School Diploma Programme choose five or six subjects in D1 from the following groups.

SIS current course offerings for D1/D2

Group 1	Studies in language and literature	English Literature, English Language & Literature, Spanish Language & Literature, German Literature
Group 2	Language acquisition	English B, Spanish B, French B ¹
Group 3	Individuals and Societies	Business and Management, Economics ² , Geography, History
Group 4	Experimental Sciences	Biology, Physics, Environmental Systems and Societies, Chemistry ¹ , Computer Science ¹
Group 5	Mathematics	Mathematics, Mathematical Studies
Group 6	The Arts	Theatre, Visual Arts, Music

¹ only offered as an elective 6th choice

² offered as **both** a Group 3 choice **and** an elective 6th choice

These choices are subject to change and for the most up to date offering please go to: [HSD course choices](#)

Creativity, Action, Service (CAS)

Creativity, action, service is at the heart of the Diploma Programme and is given great value at SIS, where we provide an extensive programme of global citizenship and community service opportunities. CAS involves students in a range of activities alongside their academic studies throughout the Diploma Programme. The three strands of CAS, which are often interwoven with particular activities, are characterized as follows.

Creativity: arts, and other experiences that involve creative thinking.

Action: physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle, complementing academic work elsewhere in the Diploma Programme.

Service: an unpaid and voluntary exchange that has a learning benefit for the student. The rights, dignity and autonomy of all those involved are respected.

All proposed CAS activities need to meet these four criteria:

- real, purposeful activities, with significant outcomes
- tasks must provide personal challenge and be achievable in scope
- thoughtful consideration, planning, reviewing progress, reporting
- reflection on outcomes and personal learning.

It is also essential that CAS activities do not replicate other parts of the student's Diploma Programme work.

CAS is not formally assessed but students need to document their activities and provide evidence that they have achieved eight key learning outcomes.

High School Diploma Subjects at SIS - D1/D2

Group 1

Studies in Language and Literature: Language A

Language A is designed for students who have experience of using the language of the course in an academic context. The study of texts, both literary and non-literary, provides a focus for developing an understanding of how language works to create meanings in a culture, as well as in particular texts.

Literature: English, German, Russian

The literature course is directed towards developing an understanding of the techniques involved in literary criticism and promoting the ability to form independent literary judgments. The study of literature can be seen as an exploration of the way it represents the complex pursuits, anxieties, joys and fears to which human beings are exposed in the daily business of living. It provides opportunities for encouraging independent, original, critical and clear thinking. Through the study of a wide range of literature, the course encourages students to appreciate the artistry of literature and to develop an ability to reflect critically on their reading. Works are studied in their literary and cultural contexts, through close study of individual texts and passages, and by considering a range of critical approaches.

Language and Literature: English, Spanish

The focus of the language and literature course is directed towards developing and understanding the constructed nature of meanings generated by language and the function of context in this process. The course comprises four parts - two relate to the study of language and two to the study of literature. A key aim of the course is to encourage students to question the meaning generated by language and texts. Helping students to focus closely on the language of the texts they study and to become aware of the role of each text's wider context in shaping its meaning is central to the course.

Group 2

Language Acquisition: Language B

These courses are designed to provide students with the necessary skills and intercultural understanding to enable them to communicate successfully in an environment where the language studied is spoken. This process encourages the learner to go beyond the confines of the classroom, expanding an awareness of the world and fostering respect for cultural diversity. Both independent and collaborative learning is encouraged.

English B, Spanish B, French B

Language B is an additional language-learning course designed for students with some previous learning of that language. The main focus of the course is on language acquisition and development of language skills. These language skills should be developed through the study and use of a range of written and spoken material. Such material will extend from everyday oral exchanges to literary texts related to the culture(s) concerned.

Spanish ab initio

The language ab initio course is organized into three themes. Each theme has a list of topics that provide the students with opportunities to practise and explore the language as well as to develop intercultural understanding. Through the development of receptive, productive and interactive skills, students should be able to respond and interact appropriately in a defined range of everyday situations.

Group 3

Individuals and Societies

Group 3 subjects explore the interactions between humans and their environment in time, space and place.

History

History is the process of recording, reconstructing and interpreting the past through the investigation of a variety of sources. It gives people an understanding of themselves and others in relation to the world, both past and present. It is an exploratory subject that poses questions without providing definitive answers. In order to understand the past, students engage with it through exposure to primary historical sources and through the work of historians. Historical study involves selection and interpretation of data and critical evaluation of it. Students of history learn to appreciate the relative nature of historical knowledge and understanding, as each generation reflects its own world and preoccupations and as more evidence emerges.

Business Management

Business management examines business decision-making processes and how these decisions impact on and are affected by internal and external environments. The course is designed to develop an understanding of business theory, as well as an ability to apply business principles, practices and skills. The course considers the diverse range of business organizations and activities and the cultural and economic context in which business operates. Emphasis is placed on strategic decision-making and the day-to-day business functions of marketing, production, human resource management and finance. Links between the topics are central to the course, and this integration promotes a holistic overview of business activity.

Geography

Geography is firmly grounded in the real world and focuses on the interactions between individuals, societies and the physical environment. It identifies trends and patterns in these interactions and examines the processes behind them. It also investigates the way that people adapt and respond to change. Geography describes and helps to explain the similarities and differences between spaces and places. The course integrates both physical and human geography, and students acquire elements of both scientific and socio-economic methodologies. Geography examines relevant concepts and ideas from a wide variety of disciplines. This helps students develop an appreciation of, and a respect for, alternative approaches, viewpoints and ideas.

Economics

The study of economics is essentially about dealing with scarcity, resource allocation and the methods and processes by which choices are made in the satisfaction of human wants. As a social science, economics uses scientific methodologies that include quantitative and qualitative elements. The course emphasizes the economic theories of microeconomics, which deal with economic variables affecting individuals, firms and markets, and the economic theories of macroeconomics, which deal with economic variables affecting countries, governments and societies. These economic theories are applied to real-world issues. Prominent among these issues are fluctuations in economic activity, international trade, economic development and environmental sustainability.

Group 4 Sciences

Through studying any of the group 4 subjects, students should become aware of how scientists work and communicate with each other. While the “scientific method” may take on a wide variety of forms, it is the emphasis on a practical approach through experimental work that distinguishes the group 4 subjects from other disciplines and characterizes each of the subjects within group 4.

There is no one scientific method for gaining knowledge of, or finding explanations for, the behaviour of the natural world. Science works through a variety of approaches to produce these explanations, but they all rely on data from observations and experiments and have a common underpinning rigour. The explanation may be in the form of a theory, sometimes requiring a model that contains elements not directly observable. Producing these explanations often requires an imaginative, creative leap. All of these explanations require an understanding of the limitations of data, and the extent and limitations of our knowledge. Science requires freedom of thought and open-mindedness.

The group 4 project is an interdisciplinary activity in which all science students (apart from Environmental Systems and Societies) must participate. It mirrors the work of real scientists by encouraging collaboration between schools across the regions. The emphasis is on the processes involved in scientific investigation rather than the products of such investigation.

Biology

Biology is the study of the science of living things and how they function. Students cover a variety of topics including cells, genetics, biochemistry, human health, ecology, plant science and evolution. Practical work and modeling using ICT is an important component of the course. Students can choose two option units from a selection to tailor the course towards their interests.

Environmental Systems and Societies SL

The course and involves a trans-disciplinary approach drawing from Science (especially Biology), Geography, Economics, Politics, Sociology and Philosophy. The prime intent of the course is to provide students with a perspective on the interrelationships between natural systems and

human societies, enabling them to make informed personal responses to the global and local environmental issues that surround us in the news.

Physics

Students study the properties and interactions of matter and energy. Main themes include mechanics, atomic and nuclear physics, waves, thermal physics, and electricity and magnetism. Option topics include biomedicine, historical physics, astrophysics and general and special relativity. Calculus is not a requirement, however, HL students must have a strong mathematical background.

Chemistry

Chemistry is an experimental science that combines academic study with the acquisition of practical and investigational skills. It is called the central science, as chemical principles underpin both the physical environment in which we live and all biological systems. Chemistry is a prerequisite for many other courses in higher education, such as medicine, biological science and environmental science. The course includes the following themes: atomic theory, the periodic table, bonding and structure, organic chemistry and energy.

Computer Science

Computer science requires an understanding of the fundamental concepts of computational thinking as well as knowledge of how computers and other digital devices operate. Computational thinking involves the ability to think procedurally, logically, concurrently, abstractly, recursively and think ahead; to utilize an experimental and inquiry-based approach to problem-solving; to develop algorithms and express them clearly and to appreciate how theoretical and practical limitations affect the extent to which problems can be solved computationally.

We have placed *Chemistry* and *Computer Science* as second science elective choices for students interested in pursuing the physical sciences, computer science, engineering, the biological sciences or medicine at university.

Group 5

Mathematics

The nature of mathematics can be seen as a well-defined body of knowledge, as an abstract system of ideas, or as a useful tool. Mathematical knowledge provides an important key to understanding the world in which we live. Individual students have different needs, interests and abilities and, for this reason, there are three different courses in mathematics. Each course is designed to meet the requirements of a particular group of students. Therefore, great care should be taken to select the course that is most appropriate. In making this selection, individual students are advised to take account of the following factors:

- their own abilities in mathematics
- their own interest in mathematics
- their other choices of subjects within the Diploma Programme
- the subjects they wish to study in future
- their choice of career.

Mathematics

This course caters for students who already possess good knowledge of mathematical concepts, and who are equipped with the skills needed to apply mathematical techniques correctly. The majority of students will expect to need a sound mathematical background as they prepare for future studies in subjects such as chemistry and economics. The course focuses on introducing important mathematical concepts through the development of mathematical techniques in a comprehensible and coherent way.

The internally assessed component, the exploration, offers students of both HL and SL mathematics the opportunity for developing independence in their mathematical learning.

Mathematical Studies

This course is equivalent in status to mathematics SL, but addresses different needs. It has an emphasis on applications of mathematics, and the largest section is on statistical techniques. It is designed for students with varied mathematical backgrounds and abilities. It offers students opportunities to learn important concepts and techniques and to gain an understanding of a wide variety of mathematical topics. It prepares

students to be able to solve problems in a variety of settings, to develop more sophisticated mathematical reasoning and to enhance their critical thinking. The individual project is an extended piece of work based on personal research involving the collection, analysis and evaluation of data. Students taking this course are well prepared for a career in social sciences, humanities, languages or arts.

Group 6

The Arts

Theatre

The course is designed to encourage students to examine theatre in its diversity of forms around the world. This will be achieved through a critical study of the theory, history and culture of theatre, and will find expression through workshops, devised work or scripted performance. The course emphasizes the importance of working individually and as a member of an ensemble. Students are encouraged to develop the organizational and technical skills needed to express themselves creatively in theatre.

Visual Arts

This course emphasizes experimentation and investigation both technically and theoretically. It is designed to encourage students to research and explore the impact art has had on societies and cultures throughout history. The course comprises the work book, which records and illustrates in detail the research, experimentation and development leading towards the studio work, which is the range of finished and final pieces of art made ready for a final exhibition. The course is designed to enable students to study visual arts in higher education and also welcomes those students who seek life enrichment through visual arts.

Music

The music course has a very broad curriculum examining a wide range of genres from Western Art Music, to World Music to Jazz and Blues. Students are encouraged to investigate music from many different cultures and to find common musical links. All students receive a thorough grounding in music theory and gain experience in performance recording and how to plan a repertoire. Higher level students also work on their compositional skills and have the opportunity to create their own works using computer technology and specialist programmes. The HL music course is designed for the specialist music student with a background in performance and composition who may pursue music at a university or conservatoire level.

Assessment and the Grading System

Assessment of achievement in each subject of the HSD Programme is based on coursework amounting to 20-50% of the total marks, depending on the subject, and final examinations taken in May of D2.

Each subject is graded on a scale of 1 (minimum) to 7 (maximum), as shown below. The grades are referenced to grade criteria rather than to performance of any group of students in any particular year.

Grade	Description
7	Excellent
6	Very Good
5	Good
4	Satisfactory
3	Mediocre
2	Poor
1	Very Poor

Award of the High School Diploma - Graduation Requirements

The SIS High School Diploma is awarded subject to satisfactory completion of the following requirements. Each course at SIS earns 1 credit over the course of one academic year. A student can earn up to 8 credits in M4, 9 credits in M5, and 6 credits in each of D1 and D2, making a total of up to 29 credits by graduation. Students must achieve a minimum of 24 credits in accordance with the requirements below:

4 credits	English
2 credits	Mathematics
2 credits	Experimental Sciences
2 credits	Additional Mathematics or Science
3 credits	Social Sciences
2 credits	Additional Language
9 credits	Other Electives*

* Other electives include credits in the Arts, Physical Education, Technology and the Personal Project as well as any credit above and beyond minimum requirements in any subject group. The high number of Elective credits is

designed to accommodate transfer students of varied educational backgrounds who may have had a less traditional educational experience, such as home schooling or sports coaching outside of school.

University Recognition

The American High School Diploma provides entry to higher education in the USA and many other countries, usually in combination with US [SATs](#). The SATs have been redesigned, effective March 2016 [Redesigned SAT](#).

Entry to Spanish universities is through the High School Diploma in conjunction with the general 'Selectividad' examinations. Official courses offered by Spanish State universities are usually studied in Spanish and some Autonomous Communities may request that non-Spanish students sit Spanish language university entrance examinations.

Universities offering courses in English may also require evidence of English language proficiency through an English language test. This is particularly true of the UK and United States and students for whom English is not their first language may be required to achieve a minimum level in [IELTS](#) or [TOEFL](#) tests.

Entry Requirements

At SIS we are keen to recruit students who are able to develop both academically and personally within an environment that fosters personalized learning and development. Students must demonstrate the academic potential to be successful in their chosen course of study. We value the unique attributes of applicants outside the academic domain, recognising the importance of merit and potential in these areas as important contributors to school life.

All applicants are judged on the basis of merit and potential, including their motivation to benefit from the range of opportunities available within the school and the contribution that a student can make to school life.

External applicants will normally be required to take admissions tests in both English and Mathematics. Applicants for whom English is not their mother tongue will be required to take an English proficiency test if they have been studying in a school where English is not the language of instruction.

Each applicant's individual case will be considered on its own merits. Please note that promotion within SIS from M5 to D1 is not automatic.

SIS HSD Subject Options 2015 - 2017

Name: _____

There are six columns representing the six subject options of the IB curriculum at SIS. You may only choose one subject from each option group.

Students normally choose 5 or six subjects.

Please note that this choice is provisional. Some options will not run if classes are not viable.

English A or B

- English A Literature
- English A Lang & Lit
- English B

Other Language

- Spanish B
- Spanish ab initio
- Spanish A Lang & Lit
- Russian A Literature
- German A Literature

Individuals & Societies

- Business & Management
- Economics
- Geography
- History

Experimental Sciences

- Biology
- Physics
- Environmental Systems and Societies

Mathematics

- Mathematics
- Math Studies

Arts or optional choice**

- Theatre
- Music
- Visual Arts
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Economics

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