



UCC

UPPER CANADA COLLEGE

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UCC Graduation Pathways

IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME PATHWAY | FAQ

Below are frequently asked questions regarding the IB Diploma Programme (IB DP) Pathway at UCC.

SECTION 1. OVERVIEW OF THE IB DP PATHWAY

1.a. What is the IB DP Pathway?

Students will be automatically enrolled in the IB DP Pathway for their Year 11 and 12 studies. UCC has been offering an outstanding, broad liberal IB education through the IB DP since 1995. It is well-recognized and regarded by universities around the world. The IB DP Pathway includes the DP Core course (Theory of Knowledge (TOK); Extended Essay (EE); Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS)) and IB course selections across all six subject groups, ensuring breadth and depth of experience and excellent preparation for postsecondary studies.

When students begin their university counselling sessions in Year 10 they may consider applying to other graduation pathways — the IB DP Systems Transformation Pathway or the IB DP Courses Pathway.

1.b. What are some of the key features of the IB DP Pathway?

The IB Diploma Programme provides a strong IB liberal education to students in Years 11 and 12. Its core ethos reflects breadth, academic rigour and international mindedness. It offers excellent preparation for postsecondary studies.

Graduates of this pathway will earn both the IB Diploma and the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

1.c. Why is UCC introducing new graduation pathways?

UCC is a committed IB Continuum World School and we are evolving our program to best meet the needs of our students. The new UCC Graduation Pathways are being introduced to enhance student options in Years 11 and 12. The pathways will expand the breadth and depth of opportunities available to students so that they can find and pursue their passions at UCC and beyond.

1.d. Is this option more difficult than the other IB pathways?

Not necessarily. Students in the IB DP Pathway must take the DP Core course (Theory of Knowledge; Extended Essay; Creativity, Activity, Service) and select DP courses from across

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the subject groups according to the IB DP Pathway course selection requirements. The courses are the same rigorous IB courses offered to all Year 11 and 12 students (with the exception of the Systems Transformation: Innovation for a Better World course, which is only available to students in the IB DP Systems Transformation Pathway).

1.e. When will this pathway be available to UCC students?

UCC has been offering the IB DP since 1995. Students will automatically enter the IB DP Pathway in Year 11 unless their application to follow one of the other two graduation pathways — the IB DP Courses Pathway or IB DP Systems Transformation Pathway — is approved.

SECTION 2. CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

2.a. How is the IB DP different from the other two graduation pathways?

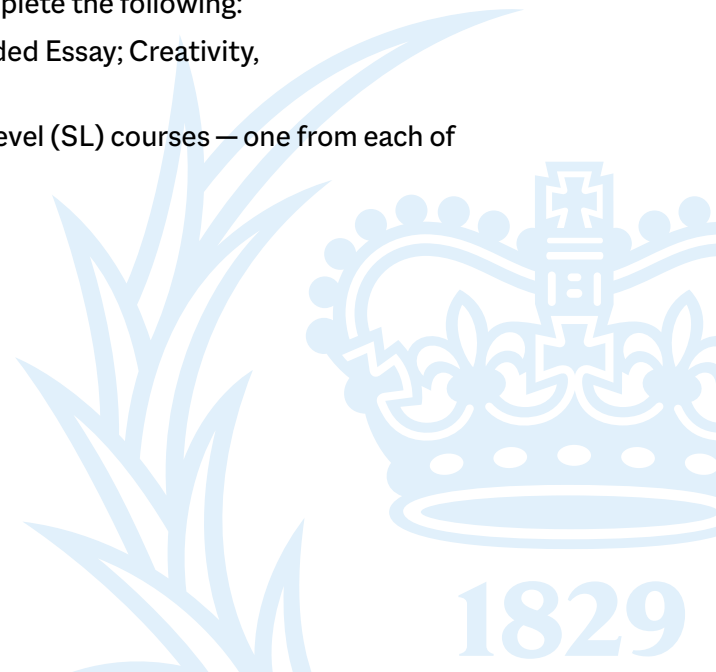
The Diploma Programme is excellent preparation for a wide variety of postsecondary programs and is highly regarded by top-tier universities around the world. Its core ethos reflects breadth, academic rigour and international mindedness.

The courses offered in this pathway are the same rigorous IB courses offered to all Year 11 and 12 students (with the exception of the Systems Transformation: Innovations for a Better World course, which is available only to students in the IB DP Systems Transformation Pathway). The main difference is that the IB DP Pathway has specific requirements for course selection across subject groups.

2.b. What does learning look like in the IB DP Pathway?

Students enrolled in this pathway are required to complete the following:

- DP Core course (Theory of Knowledge; Extended Essay; Creativity, Activity, Service)
- Three Higher Level (HL) and three Standard Level (SL) courses — one from each of the six subject groups





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2.c. What is UCC's new DP Core course and how does it relate to the three Graduation Pathways?

Starting in 2024–25, UCC has structured the IB DP Core components (Theory of Knowledge; Extended Essay; Creativity, Activity, Service) – into a single course. This approach supports scheduling and reinforces the complementary nature of these three components to foster in students an awareness of themselves, others, and the world. DP Core centers students' own experiences and their position and impact on their various communities, challenging them to explore “Who am I and who are we?”. This course achieves this through four common aims:

- to foster other-mindedness and encourage students to become responsible and actively involved global citizens
- to develop students' self-awareness and sense of identity, and provide an opportunity for reflection on their development of the attributes of the IB learner profile
- to encourage students to be flexible thinkers and doers, who overcome challenges both independently and collaboratively, and who can see connections between disparate things
- to enrich and add value to students' overall learning experiences—supporting, and being supported by, their academic studies in the rest of the programme

All three graduation pathways include the IB DP Core course, providing a common experience for all our Year 11 and 12 students that broadens their education and challenges them to apply their knowledge and skills with a focus on themes including leadership, ethics, empathy, collaboration, and metacognition.

In Theory of Knowledge (TOK), students reflect on the nature of knowledge and on how we know what we claim to know. The Extended Essay (EE) is an independent, self-directed piece of research, culminating with a 4,000-word paper. In Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS), students participate in a range of experiences and at least one real-world, meaningful project.

The DP Core course is about each individual student and how they know. TOK teaches that explicitly, CAS teaches it through experience, and the EE is a manifestation of that knowledge and passion. The course encourages students to see how they are connected to the systems around them, including how they are shaped by them, and how they can shape them.

UCC's DP Core course has been designed to complement all three graduation pathways, and in particular it extends some of the benefits of the new IB DP Systems Transformation Pathway to all our Year 11 and 12 students.

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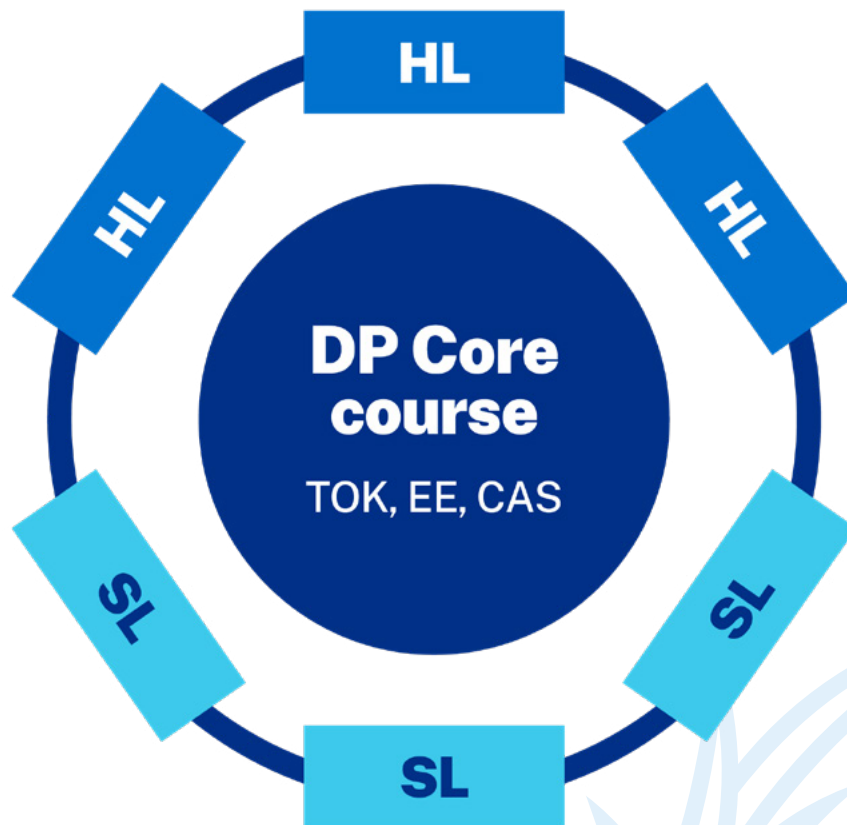
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For example, DP Core includes a focus on other-mindedness, notions of stakeholder and interrelationships in systems, which is foundational to systems thinking and design thinking. Furthermore, DP Core explores the impact of technology on knowledge and the ethical uses of current and emerging technologies. With clear links to the IB DP Systems Transformation Pathway, these areas of study are applicable across all three graduation pathways.

Students from all three graduation pathways will be mixed into the DP Core course sections so that students have the opportunity to engage with students in other pathways, as they do in other shared courses.





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2.d. Will graduates in this pathway earn the IB Diploma?

Yes. Graduates of the IB Diploma Programme Pathway will earn both the IB Diploma and the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

2.e. Are there final written externally assessed exams?

Yes. The majority of IB courses include a final written exam at the end of the programme. These exams are set and assessed externally by the IB.

SECTION 3. STUDENT SUITABILITY AND PATHWAY APPLICATIONS

3.a. Who is this pathway for?

All UCC students are automatically enrolled in this pathway unless their application to one of the other two pathways is accepted. The IB DP Pathway is well-suited for a broad range of interests and plans for postsecondary and follows completion of the IB Primary Years Programme and IB Middle Years Programme.

3.b. How can a student enter the IB DP Pathway?

UCC students will automatically enter this pathway for Year 11 and 12 unless they apply to one of the two new UCC graduation Pathways — the IB DP Courses Pathway or the IB DP Systems Transformation Pathway.

3.c. When do students need to decide if they want to follow this pathway or another pathway?

In the fall, Year 10 students will have opportunities to explore the three UCC Graduation Pathways in consultation with the University Counselling Office.

Students will automatically enter the IB DP Pathway unless they apply for admission to the IB DP Courses Pathway and/or the IB DP Systems Transformation Pathway.

3.d. Are there additional information sessions or meetings for Year 10 students?

The UCO holds annual information evenings where families can view a presentation and participate in a Q-and-A session. These meetings are announced in advance via Heads Up.

In 2025, sessions were held on October 30 and December 1. Please click below to view the presentation slides and watch the meeting recordings.

October: [Slides](#) | [Recording](#)

December: [Slides](#) | [Recording](#)

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3.e. When will Year 10 students meet with their counsellor to select their options?

Individual meetings for Year 10 students take place throughout January. The UCO team will email each student directly with instructions on how to book a dedicated time slot with their counsellor.

3.f. How will students be selected for this pathway?

Students will automatically enter the IB DP Pathway when starting Year 11 unless they apply and are accepted for one of the other graduation pathways — the IB DP Courses Pathway or the IB Systems Transformation Pathway.

3.g. What if students change their minds about their graduation pathway?

Our aim is that all students are able to make informed decisions about their learning pathway when they submit their final subject options. However, we know that sometimes thinking shifts in the subsequent months, or even in the first few weeks of a new course: for this reason, we support students in making changes to their subject package up until the Thanksgiving Weekend, after which transitions become more challenging. These changes are always dependent on the possibilities of the timetable and on space being available in classes.

An IB DP Pathway student could potentially switch to the IB DP Courses Pathway. It is unlikely that a student could switch to the IB DP Systems Transformation Pathway.

SECTION 4. UNIVERSITY RECOGNITION

4.a. How do universities view the IB DP Pathway?

UCC is an academically strong school — committed to its renowned delivery of the IB Programmes, which are recognized as the gold standard in university preparation.

This pathway allows for myriad university options (consistent with the breadth and depth of postsecondary destinations of UCC graduates).

4.b. How can students get advice on whether this course suits their university goals?

In the fall, families will have multiple opportunities to explore the new UCC Graduation Pathways and how they are suited to students' preferred university destinations at information sessions. Information is also available on UCC's website.

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Additionally, Year 10 students will have meetings with their university counsellors to discuss their postsecondary aspirations and the pathway options best suited to support their plans and interests.

Students are encouraged to make their initial subject selections for Year 11 by reflecting on their interests and strengths, the kinds of learning they enjoy, and the experiences they want to have in their learning program as a whole.

4.c. What if students don't know what they want to study at university? How can they make a decision about this pathway?

The IB DP Pathway provides a strong academic program and excellent preparation for postsecondary studies. Graduates of the IB DP Pathway will have myriad opportunities for acceptance to universities and postsecondary programs.

UCC Graduation Pathways | Additional Resources

[FAQ | IB DP Courses Pathway](#)

[FAQ | IB DP Systems Transformation Pathway](#)

