

# Special Education Policy

## International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme

Utica Academy for International Studies

Utica Community Schools

Sterling Heights, MI, USA



*This policy was created in 2015 by the Utica Academy for International Studies  
IB Special Education Committee.*

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## **UAIS Special Education Policy**

The IB Program and the Utica Academy for International Studies will meet all state and federal educational requirements for students completing our curriculum. UAIS will act in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure all students with a documented diagnosis will be given the same opportunity for personal success.

## **UAIS Philosophy**

The mission of UAIS is to engage our students and to cultivate their abilities through individualized attention and the support of our community of educators, learners, and parents. This collaborative environment and the rigorous, comprehensive, and internationally-minded curriculum challenge the learner to grow personally and academically. As our students develop into enlightened, globally-aware citizens, the skills and understanding that they acquire at UAIS will help them lead today and improve tomorrow.

## **Special Education Mission**

It is the mission of the UAIS program that every child with a documented diagnosis requiring educational accommodations will be given the same opportunity for personal and academic success to help them become self-sufficient, productive members of society.

## **Principles**

All special arrangements that may be authorized by the IB are based on the following principles. These principles are taken verbatim from Candidates with Special Needs, pages 4-5.

1.1 The IB must ensure that a grade awarded to a candidate in any subject is not a misleading description of that candidate's level of attainment, so the same standards of assessment are applied to all candidates, regardless of whether or not they have special needs.

1.2 Special arrangements are intended to reduce the adverse effects of a candidate's special needs when demonstrating his or her level of attainment. The special arrangements requested for a candidate must not give that candidate an advantage in any assessment component.

1.3 The special arrangements described in this document are intended for candidates with the intellectual capacity to meet all assessment requirements leading to the award of the diploma or certificates.

1.4 The school, not the IB, is responsible for establishing whether the Diploma Programme can be taught and assessed. Advice may be sought from IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org)) before a school

accepts a student with special needs; however, this advice is restricted to the implications for internal and external assessment and does not extend to teaching methods and resources.

1.5 If it can be demonstrated that a candidate's lack of proficiency in his or her response language(s) (English, French or Spanish) arises from a diagnosed need, special arrangements may be authorized. (For subjects in groups 3 to 6, all candidates are allowed to use a translating dictionary in the written examinations.)

1.6 The IB aims to authorize special arrangements that are compatible with those normally available to the candidate concerned. However, authorization will only be given for arrangements that are consistent with the policy and practice of the IB. It should not be assumed that the IB will necessarily agree to the arrangements requested by a school. Coordinators are required to provide information on both the candidate's usual method of working in the classroom and under assessment conditions.

1.7 The IB is committed to an educational philosophy based on international mindedness. Therefore, the special assessment needs policy of the IB may not reflect the standard practice of any one country. To achieve equity among candidates with special assessment needs, the policy represents the result of a consideration of accepted practice in different countries.

1.8 The IB will ensure that, wherever possible, arrangements for candidates with a similar type of need are the same. Given that cultural differences occur in the recognition of learning issues and the accommodations allowed, some compromise may be necessary to help ensure comparability between candidates in different countries.

1.9 If special assessment arrangements are necessary for a candidate, consultation with the IB is mandatory. Similarly, if a [Middle Years Program] or Diploma Programme candidate has difficulties meeting the requirements for creativity, action, service (CAS), the appropriate IB regional office must be consulted. Any exceptions are stated in this document. However, a school may provide any kind of special arrangement for a candidate during his or her study of the Middle Years Program assessments or Diploma Programme or trial (practice) examinations.

1.10 A school must not inform an examiner of a candidate's condition or adverse circumstance. Similarly, in the case of internally assessed work, teachers must not make any adjustments when marking a candidate's work. If appropriate, the IB will ensure that reasonable adjustments are considered.

1.11 The IB treats all information about a candidate as confidential. If required, information will only be shared with appropriate IB personnel and members of the final award committee, who will be instructed to treat such information as confidential.

1.12 If special arrangements are authorized for internal assessment, the IB may require the candidate's work to be submitted to IB Cardiff for scrutiny.

1.13 The list of special arrangements available is revised regularly. The IB will consider alternative arrangements proposed by a coordinator, provided those arrangements could be made available to all other similarly affected candidates.

**IB classified specific learning issues, language, and communication disorders that might affect candidates are as follows. This list is not meant to be exhaustive of all possible situations.**

### **Learning disabilities**

- Significant issues in reading, writing, spelling, or manipulating numbers associated with issues in processing symbolic language (for example, problems interpreting music notation, dyslexia, dyscalculia).
- Speech and language issues characterized by communication problems (for example, aphasia, dysphasia, articulation problems).

### **Emotional and behavioral issues (EBD)**

- Includes: attention deficit disorder (ADD)/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); [Note: HCPS categorizes ADD/ADHD as OHI, Other Health Impaired] withdrawn, depressive or suicidal attitudes; obsessive preoccupation with eating habits; school phobia; substance abuse; disruptive antisocial and uncooperative behavior; and anger, frustration and violence.

### **Physical and sensory conditions**

- Physical disabilities include a wide range of conditions that are not always immediately obvious, but affect mobility.
- Sensory issues: hearing—embraces an extensive range of hearing loss from mild to profound and can present communication difficulties; visual—includes difficulties with either the structure or function of the eye, affecting vision.

### **Medical conditions**

- The most common being: congenital heart disease, epilepsy, asthma, cystic fibrosis, hemophilia, sickle cell anemia, diabetes, renal failure, eczema, rheumatoid disorders, allergies, leukemia and other cancers.

## **Mental health issues**

- A wide range of conditions that can affect a person's state of mind, ranging from psychotic conditions, such as schizophrenia and manic depression, to eating disorders, anxieties and emotional distress caused by circumstances in a candidate's life.

## **Technical language**

- This refers to terminology specific to the subject being tested. It may be the target of the assessment and must be known by the candidate to understand fully the subject.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Of the School**

- In accordance with Board Policy 6275 regarding access to the IB programme at UAIS, all students have the opportunity to have equitable access to Specialty Programs through an open and accessible process. The Board of Education is committed to developing, maintaining and supporting Specialty Programs. The District implements Specialty Programs to provide students the opportunity to participate in programs that address their interests and talents and to attend programs with students from diverse backgrounds and experiences. The Board of Education is committed to promoting equity and diversity in Specialty Programs, including the outreach, admission and selection process, through an alignment with the Excellence, Equity and Access Policy.
- The school will provide guidance and information so that students with special needs can make informed decisions concerning application to UAIS.
- UAIS counseling as well as UCS Special Education specialists and site Special Education coordinators will provide the coordinator and teachers with all IEP's and 504 plan documentation.
- Special Education case managers and/or school counselors will provide updates and host meetings for updates in IEP's and 504 plans. The site administrator, UAIS coordinator, Head of Program and teachers will be invited to these meetings with a minimum of one week's notice.
- UAIS coordinators and counselors will communicate vertically with the student's previous school as he or she matriculates into the program.
- The UCS Special Education Department and parents will communicate with the UAIS coordinator any current medical diagnosis and associated testing accommodations upon application.

- The UAIS coordinator will apply to the IBO in a timely manner for students' accommodations in assessment type as medically diagnosed and identified by the UCS Special Education Department.
- The UCS Special Education Department and parents will communicate with the UAIS counselor any current medical diagnosis and associated testing accommodations upon application. The UAIS counselor, in coordination with the home school counselor, will then apply to the necessary state and federal testing organizations in a timely manner for students' accommodations as deemed medically necessary and as identified by the UCS Special Education Department.
- The UCS Special Education Department will oversee and supervise classroom accommodations.
- UCS will facilitate the provision of appropriate accommodations such as but not limited to additional time, rest periods, separate testing space, technological aides, reading aids (readers, prompters, Braille, interpreters), and assessment/assignments in special color or type size, audio recordings, assignment modification, extensions, and assistance or exemptions as specified by the student's IEP or 504 plan.
- UCS will inform the UAIS Counselor, who will then communicate with the staff, all relevant case information to facilitate meeting student needs.

#### **Of the Teacher**

- The classroom teacher, in conjunction with the Special Education case manager, will familiarize him/herself with the nature and needs of his/her students' medically diagnosed special needs by utilizing school and UCS resources and will be provided with a signed, current copy of the student's 504 plan or IEP.
- The classroom teacher will provide accommodation, in conjunction with the Special Education case manager as outlined in the student's IEP or 504 plan.
- The teacher will maintain discretion and confidentiality in providing these services.

#### **Of the Parent and Student**

- Upon matriculation into the program, or upon medical diagnosis, families will provide documentation to school officials for IEP's and 504 plans so that documentation can be provided to IBO and state/federal agencies for accommodation requests.
- Families will communicate with teachers, counselors, coordinator and special education case manager concerning their observations as to their child's needs to facilitate appropriate intervention strategies.
- Students will be proactive in seeking assistance from their teachers and the coordinator to meet their learning needs.

- Families will recognize and fulfill their responsibilities and play an active role in their student's education. This includes communicating any changes in need with all relevant parties and attending IEP meetings.

### **Professional Development for Instructional Staff**

UCS firmly believes that inspiring and informed teaching is the most important school related factor influencing student achievement. To that end, UCS is committed to supporting ongoing professional development for all instructional and support staff. Teachers, coordinators, counselors, and case managers are provided with the necessary means to attend a range of workshops, trainings, on and off-site learning and professional development opportunities.

### **Special Needs Policy Review**

This policy is evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis by the teachers and administrators within the Utica Academy for International Studies. It is the responsibility of the IB Coordinator, working in conjunction with the IBO, to fulfill the requirements and ensure the success of the UAIS Special Education Policy.