



Natrona County High School CAS Handbook

The Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) diploma requirement takes seriously the importance of life outside the world of scholarship. It recognizes that for life to be meaningful and fulfilling there needs to be a balance between academic self-absorption and the necessity of interacting with the world around us—outside of school. CAS encourages students to grow and to share with the broader community.

To earn an IB diploma, you must reach outside the classroom to grow as an individual and recognize your role in relation to others. CAS is given as much importance as any other element of the Diploma Programme. Successful completion of CAS is a requirement for the IB Diploma.

CAS formally begins during your junior year and continues regularly, ideally on a weekly basis, for at least **18 months** with a reasonable balance between creativity, activity and service.

All CAS students must maintain and complete a CAS portfolio as evidence of your engagement with CAS. The CAS portfolio is a collection of evidence that showcases CAS experiences and contains your reflections. At NCHS, students are registered with an online account through Managebac for this purpose.

CAS experiences may involve one or more of the three CAS strands. A CAS experience may be a single event or may be an extended series of events. However, you must undertake one CAS project of at least one month's duration that challenges you to show initiative, demonstrate perseverance, and develop skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, and decision-making. This CAS project can address any single strand of CAS or combine two or all three strands.

The three CAS strands:

Creativity is exploring and extending ideas, leading to an original or interpretive product or performance.

Music, theatre, film, design technology, visual arts, dance, fashion and other experiences that involve creative thinking fall under creativity (for example, joining a choir or engaging with fashion design).

Activity is physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle.

Taking on a new sport or extending your ability (for example, with football, yoga, dance, aerobics classes, biking or hiking), counts as activity.

Service is collaborative and reciprocal community engagement in response to an authentic need. By investigating and identifying a community need, then determining a plan of action that respects the rights, dignity and autonomy of all involved (for example, reading to the aged or advocating for a cause), you are performing service.

CAS experiences may cover more than one strand; for example, planning sports events for disadvantaged children may involve both service and activity. Some CAS experiences may involve all three strands; for example, choreographing a performance that promotes the work of a non-profit organization involves creativity, activity and service.

Learning Outcomes:

Completion of CAS is based on student achievement of the seven CAS learning outcomes. Through your CAS portfolio, you should provide evidence demonstrating achievement of each learning outcome. Creativity, activity, service (CAS) is intended to be a collection of enjoyable and challenging experiences determined **by you** to extend your abilities.

*****Through your CAS experiences, you are to achieve the following learning outcomes:**

- **LO1 -- Identify your own strengths and develop areas for personal growth**
- **LO2 -- Demonstrate that you have undertaken challenges and developed new skills in the process**
- **LO3 -- Demonstrate how to initiate and plan a CAS experience**
- **LO4 -- Show commitment to and perseverance in your CAS experiences**
- **LO5 -- Demonstrate the skills and recognize the benefits of working collaboratively**
- **LO6 -- Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance**
- **LO7 -- Recognize and consider the ethics of choices and actions (Use CAS experiences to understand the ethical systems explored in TOK.)**

Student responsibilities

- Thoroughly familiarize yourself with CAS guidelines and requirements.
- Meet with Mr. O'Connor at least three times during your CAS programme and again at its conclusion. Be sure to come prepared with your Managebac portfolio up-to-date.
- Base your choices on your interests, skills, and talents, in addition to your identified areas for growth, in order to stay motivated. But you definitely want to challenge yourself!
- Balance your experiences between creativity, activity and service.
- Initiate or engage in at least one CAS project in collaboration with others that extends over at least one month.
- Use the CAS stages as much as possible when considering, planning and undertaking your CAS experiences. Be sure to apply these to service and to the CAS project.
- Ask questions along the way when you need assistance or clarification.
- Document your experiences in a portfolio. You will want pictures, flyers, etc., as well as a description of each experience.
- Participate in meaningful reflection as a way to capture your experiences and summarize your evidence linked to the learning outcomes.
- Enjoy CAS! That is most important—to participate in experiences that assist your personal growth and offer you a world of possibilities.

Note: Experiences completed as part of the requirements of the DP subjects, including theory of knowledge and the extended essay, cannot be counted as part of your CAS portfolio.

The five CAS stages are as follows:

1. **Investigation:** Students identify their interests, skills and talents to be used in considering opportunities for CAS experiences, as well as areas for personal growth and development. Students investigate what they want to do and determine the purpose for their CAS experience. In the case of service, students identify a need they want to address.
2. **Preparation:** Students clarify roles and responsibilities, develop a plan of actions to be taken, identify specified resources and timelines, and acquire any skills as needed to engage in the CAS experience.
3. **Action:** Students implement their idea or plan. This often required decision-making and problem-solving. Students may work individually, with partners, or in groups.
4. **Reflection:** Students describe what happened, express feelings, generate ideas, and raise questions. Reflection can occur at any time during CAS to further understanding, to assist with revision plans, to learn from the experience, and to make explicit connections between their growth, accomplishments, and the learning outcomes for personal awareness. Reflection may lead to new action.
5. **Demonstration:** Students make explicit what and how they learned and what they have accomplished, for example, by sharing their CAS experience through their CAS portfolio or with others in an informal or formal manner. Through demonstration and communication, students solidify their understanding and evoke response from others.

The CAS stages provide a framework that enables students to:

- Increase self-awareness
- Learn about learning
- Explore new unfamiliar challenges
- Employ different learning styles
- Develop their ability to communicate and collaborate with others
- Experience and recognize personal development
- Develop attributes of the IB learner profile

For a singular CAS experience, students may begin with investigation, preparation, or action. For ongoing CAS experiences, beginning with investigation is advised. In these ongoing experiences, the action stage may lead students back to investigation or preparation as they further develop, expand and implement new or related ideas.

Creativity--Exploring and extending ideas leading to an original or interpretive product or performance

Creativity in CAS provides students with the opportunity to explore their own sense of original thinking and expression. Creativity will come from the student's talents, interests, passions, emotional responses, and imagination; the form of expression is limitless. This may include visual and performing arts, digital design, writing, film, culinary arts, crafts and composition. Students are encouraged to engage in creative endeavors that move them beyond the familiar, broadening their scope from conventional to unconventional thinking.

If students are accomplished in a particular creative form, for example, music, painting or acting, they may choose to extend their involvement and deepen their skill level. Within their field, students can define new challenges and objectives to fulfill creativity in CAS. For example, a musician may compose and perform a guitar solo; an artist may create a new sculpture or photographic series; an actor may present an original dramatic piece. By striving for new possibilities, students may discover ways to meet challenges and identify strengths that carry them forward with curiosity and continued innovation. When demonstrating creative expression, students may showcase their product or performance in a variety of ways, for example, through a recording, a presentation, an exhibition, social media or shared discussion. Creativity in CAS is NOT met by the appreciation of the creative efforts of others, such as attending a concert or art exhibition.

Creativity can be inspired and informed by the student's Diploma courses. For example, students can meet new challenges and objectives in creativity using the skills developed in the visual arts course, or find new ways of expression utilizing elements in the design technology course. However, creativity experiences must be distinct from, and may not be included or used in, the student's Diploma course requirements.

Approaches to creativity

There are many approaches to creativity, such as:

- **Ongoing creativity:** A student may already be engaged in creativity as part of a school group or club, or through some other form of sustained creativity. Students may continue in this as part of their creativity; however, students could also be encouraged to further extend and develop their participation if appropriate.
- **School-based creativity:** Students are encouraged to participate in meaningful creativity and to explore their own sense of original thinking and expression. In school, there may well be appropriate creativity opportunities in which the students can engage. These creativity experiences could be part of the school's service CAS projects, a school club, timetabled creativity sessions, or other opportunities.
- **Community-based creativity:** Participating in creativity within the local community advances student awareness and understanding of interpersonal relationships with others, particularly if the creativity experience involves the local community. Creativity experiences best occur with a regularity that builds and sustains relationships while allowing the growth

of students' talents, interests, passions, emotional responses, and imagination. For example, students could be encouraged to join a community-based theatre group, contribute towards a community art gallery, create a sculpture for the community park, take cooking classes, or other opportunities.

- **Individual creativity:** Students may decide that they wish to engage in solitary creativity experiences such as composing music, developing a website, writing a compilation of short fiction stories, designing furniture, creating arts and crafts, or painting a series of portraits. Such creativity experiences are of most benefit when they take place over an extended duration of time. Students can be encouraged to set personal goals and work towards these in a sustained manner. Risk assessment of such solitary creativity experiences should be conducted with the student beforehand if applicable.

Activity--Physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle

The aim of the "Activity" strand is to promote lifelong healthy habits related to physical well-being. Pursuits may include individual and team sports, aerobic exercise, dance, outdoor recreation, fitness training, and any other form of physical exertion that purposefully contributes to a healthy lifestyle. Students are encouraged to participate at an appropriate level and on a regular basis to provide a genuine challenge and benefit.

Students who regularly participate in suitable activity experiences are encouraged to develop and extend their participation. Students could expand personal goals, explore different training models to enhance their existing sport or become involved in a new sport. For dedicated student athletes, maintenance of a planned rigorous training program is appropriate.

Approaches to activity

There are many approaches to activity, such as:

- **Ongoing activity:** A student may already be engaged in activity as part of a school team or club, or through some other form of sustained physical exercise. Students may continue in this as part of their activity; however, they should set personal goals in keeping with the principles of CAS. Students can also be encouraged to further extend and develop their participation if appropriate.
- **School-based activity:** Students are encouraged to participate in meaningful activity that benefits their physical well-being. In school there may well be appropriate activity opportunities in which the student can engage. These activity experiences could, for example, be part of the school curriculums, a school sports club, or timetabled sports sessions. Students may elect to initiate a school-based activity such as basketball or tennis and engage other CAS students or any student within the school.
- **Community-based activity:** Participating in activity within the local community advances student awareness and understanding of interpersonal relationships, particularly if the activity experience involves members of the local community. However, single events of activity can lack depth and meaning. When possible, activity experiences best occur with a regularity that builds and sustains relationships while allowing the growth of physical well-being of the students. For example, rather than a single activity experience at a community-based fun run, students could be encouraged to join a community-based running club, a dance class, an aerobics class or an out-of-school sports group.
- **Individual activity:** Students may decide that they wish to engage in solitary activity experiences such as, for example, attending a gym, bicycling, roller-skating, swimming, or

strength conditioning. Such activity experiences are of most benefit when they take place over an extended duration of time. Students can be encouraged to set personal goals and work towards these in a sustained and correctly applied manner. Risk assessment of such solitary activity experiences should be conducted with the student beforehand if applicable.

Service--Collaborative and reciprocal engagement with the community in response to an authentic need.

The aim of the “Service” strand is for students to understand their capacity to make a meaningful contribution to their community and society. Through service, students develop and apply personal and social skills in real-life situations involving decision-making, problem-solving, initiative, responsibility, and accountability for their actions. Service is often seen as one of the most transforming elements of CAS by promoting students’ self-awareness, offering diverse occasions for interactions and experiences and opportunities for international-mindedness. Use of the CAS stages in developing a service experience is recommended for best practice.

Service within CAS benefits all involved: students learn as they identify and address authentic community needs, and the community benefits through reciprocal collaboration. Service fosters development of abilities, attitudes and values in accordance with the IB mission statement and the IB learner profile. As such, CAS service experiences are unpaid.

When defining “community”, consideration must be made to situation and culture. The community may be the school; however, it is recommended that service experiences extend beyond the school to local, national and/or international communities. Community involvement includes collaboration with others, as students investigate the need, plan and implement their idea for service.

There is an advantage of students conducting service locally. Local interactions allow for developing relationships, observing and participating in sustained change, and meeting challenges through collaboration. From the local context, students can extend their thinking and knowledge to understanding global issues. Students can also extend local service to global impact through partnerships with CAS students in other cities and towns, countries and continents. Technology affords opportunities for networking, sharing of initiatives, partnerships and impact.

Four types of service action

It is recommended that students engage with different types of service within their CAS programme. These types of action are as follows.

- **Direct service:** Student interaction involves people, the environment or animals. For example, this can appear as one-on-one tutoring, developing a garden in partnership with refugees, or working in an animal shelter.
- **Indirect service:** Though students do not see the recipients of indirect service, they have verified their actions will benefit the community or environment. For example, this can appear as re-designing a non-profit organization’s website, writing original picture books to teach a language, or nurturing tree seedlings for planting.
- **Advocacy:** Students speak on behalf of a cause or a concern to promote action on an issue of public interest. For example, this may appear as initiating an awareness campaign on hunger, performing a play on replacing bullying with respect, or creating a video on sustainable water solutions.

- **Research:** Students collect information through varied sources, analyze data, and report on a topic of importance to influence policy or practice. For example, they may conduct environmental surveys to influence their school, contribute to a study of animal migration, compile effective means to reduce litter in public spaces, or conduct social research by interviewing people on topics such as homelessness, unemployment or isolation.

Approaches to service

There are many approaches to service, such as:

- **Ongoing service:** When investigating a need that leads to a plan of action implemented over time, students develop perseverance and commitment. They observe how their ideas and actions build on the contributions of others to effect change. Their reflections may show deeper awareness and knowledge of social issues.
- **School-based service:** While students are encouraged to participate in meaningful service that benefits the community outside school, there may well be appropriate service opportunities within the school setting. In all cases an authentic need must be verified that will be met through student action. Service needs met at a school may prepare students for further action within the larger community; for example, by tutoring within the school, students may then be better prepared to tutor at a community center.
- **Community-based service:** Participating in service within the local community advances student awareness and understanding of social issues and solutions. However, single incidents of engagement with individuals in a service context can lack depth and meaning. When possible, interactions involving people in a service context best occur with a regularity that builds and sustains relationships for the mutual benefit of all. For example, rather than a single service experience at a retirement facility, students can decide to establish regular visits when they realize their efforts are valued and have reciprocal impact.
- **Immediate need service:** In response to a disaster, students often want to move towards immediate action. Typically they quickly attempt to assess the need and devise a planned response. Later, the students can be reminded and encouraged to further investigate the issue to better understand underlying causes. This provides greater context even if the service action has already taken place. With increased knowledge, students may commit to ongoing assistance, for example, such as joining with prevention or community resilience initiatives regarding an environmental issue.
- **Fundraising:** The preferred approach is for students to initially develop their understanding of the organization they choose to support and the issues being addressed. Students can draw from their interests, skills and talents to plan the method and manner of fundraising. Ideally, students directly communicate with the organization and establish accountability for funds raised. Sharing the rationale for the fundraising educates others and advocates the chosen cause. Students can also be asked to consider other ways to augment their contribution through direct, advocacy, or research service.
- **International service:** Students are encouraged to participate locally in service before considering service opportunities outside their country. When participating in international service, students must understand the background and the circumstances of an identified and authenticated need to support their involvement. When direct communication with an overseas community is not possible, students could cooperate with an outside agency to provide an appropriate service. Students do benefit from serving in an international context when able to make clear links to parallel issues in their local environs and they understand the consequences of their service. Schools must ensure that commercial providers, if

used, act in accordance with the aims of the IB mission statement and CAS requirements. Additionally, schools must undertake risk assessment to ensure the safety of students.

- **Volunteerism:** Students often volunteer in service experiences organized by other students, the school or an external group. In such cases, students benefit from prior knowledge of the context and the service need. Being informed and prepared increases the likelihood that the students' contribution will have personal meaning and value. Utilizing the CAS stages prior to volunteering is highly recommended.

Reflection

Reflection is a dynamic means for self-knowing, learning and decision-making. Four elements assist in the CAS reflective process:

- **Describing what happened:** Retell memorable moments, identifying what was important or influential, what went well or was difficult, obstacles and successes.
- **Expressing feelings:** Articulate emotional responses to experiences.
- **Generating ideas:** Rethinking or re-examining choices and actions increases awareness about self and situations.
- **Asking questions:** Questions about people, processes or issues prompt further thinking and ongoing inquiry.

Reflection allows students to:

- Deepen learning
- Consider relevance of experience
- Explore personal and group values
- Recognize the application of knowledge, skills and attitudes
- Identify strengths and areas for development
- Gain a greater understanding of self and others
- Place experience in a larger context
- Generate relevant ideas and questions
- Consider improvements in individual and collective choices and actions
- Transfer prior learning to new situations
- Generate and receive constructive feedback
- Develop the ongoing habit of thoughtful, reflective practice

Portfolio

You must maintain a portfolio to document your CAS experiences. This portfolio should be submitted through Managebac. If you wish to maintain your CAS portfolio in other forms also (such as notebook, scrapbook, webpage, Blog, etc.), you may do so, but what is submitted through Managebac must contain the following elements:

Profile: In this section, include your interests, skills and talents, plans and goals for your CAS programme. At the start of CAS, map your interests against the three strands of CAS to identify possible CAS experiences. A consideration of how your personal value system aligns with the values expressed by the IB, with a particular focus on the IB learner profile, could also be included when developing a student profile. In addition, developing an awareness of yourself in relation to the CAS learning outcomes is a significant part of the profile. Through an understanding of the CAS aims and learning outcomes, you will be able to identify both short-term and long-term goals in your CAS programme.

Experiences: This section chronicles your journey in CAS, incorporating a variety of reflections, learning moments, personal achievements, and how you have utilized the CAS stages. This section would demonstrate that you have actively engaged in your individual CAS programme. All throughout CAS, you can add your reflections regarding your ongoing personal development and self-awareness

Evidence: In this section, collect the evidence of your involvement and achievements in CAS. Evidence could include, but is not limited to, planning documents, letters, emails, certificates, acknowledgments of participation and achievements, photographs, videos, and so on. You should also correlate your involvement with the CAS learning outcomes and may extend your thoughts to future ambitions within and outside the CAS programme.

Your portfolio should be kept up-to-date and your progress be discussed with Mr. O'Connor during your four conferences. These conferences will take place at approximately the following times:

Junior Year:	December/January	Discuss your CAS goals and ideas Show what you have accomplished thus far
	May/June	Evaluate your first year Discuss plans for your summer and next year
Senior Year:	September/October	Present goals for year

Discuss how things are going

Before April 15th

Your portfolio should be complete
Evaluate your CAS experience

Learning outcome descriptors:

LO 1: Identify own strengths and develop areas for growth

The student:

- is aware of own strengths and weaknesses
- is open to improvement and growth opportunities
- is able to propose activities according to own interests and talents
- is willing to participate in different activities
- is able to undertake a thoughtful self-evaluation
- is able to see themselves as individuals with various abilities and skills, some more developed than others.

LO 2: Demonstrate that challenges have been undertaken, developing new skills in the process

The student:

- participates in an experience that demands an appropriate personal challenge; this could be with new or familiar experiences
- is willing to become involved in unfamiliar environments and situations
- acquires new skills and abilities
- increases expertise in an established area
- shows newly acquired or developed skills or increased expertise in an established area.

LO 3: Demonstrate how to initiate and plan a CAS experience

The student:

- is able to articulate the CAS stages including investigation, preparation, action, reflection (ongoing) and demonstration, moving from conceiving an idea to carrying out a plan for a CAS experience or series of CAS experiences
- demonstrates knowledge and awareness by building on a previous CAS experience
- shows initiative by launching a new idea or process
- suggests creative ideas, proposals or solutions
- integrates reflective thoughts in planning or taking initiative
- is aware of roles and responsibilities when designing an individual or collective CAS experience
- shows responsible attitude to CAS project planning
- is able to develop a coherent action plan taking into account the aim or purpose, activities and resources.

LO 4: Show commitment to and perseverance in CAS experiences

The student:

- demonstrates regular involvement and active engagement with CAS experiences and CAS project
- is able to foresee potential challenges to the initial plan and consider valid alternatives and contingencies
- demonstrates adaptability to uncertainties and changes
- gets involved in long-term CAS experiences and CAS project.

LO 5: Demonstrate the skills and recognize the benefits of working collaboratively

The student:

- shares skills and knowledge
- listens respectfully to proposals from peers
- is willing to take on different roles within a team

- shows respect for different points of view and ideas
- makes valuable contributions
- is responsible for participating in the group
- readily assists others
- is able to identify, demonstrate and discuss critically the benefits and challenges of collaboration gained through CAS experiences.

LO 6: Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance

The student:

- recognizes the global implications of local issues
- is able to identify global issues in the local or national community
- shows awareness of issues of global importance and takes concrete and appropriate actions in response to them either locally, nationally or internationally
- gets involved in CAS projects addressing global issues in a local, national or international context
- develops awareness and responsibility towards a shared humanity.

LO 7: Recognize and consider the ethics of choices and actions

The student:

- recognizes ethical issues
- is able to explain the social influences on one's ethical identity
- takes into account cultural context when making a plan or ethical decision
- identifies what is needed to know in order to make an ethical decision
- articulates ethical principles and approaches to ethical decisions
- shows accountability for choices and actions
- is aware of the consequences of choices and actions regarding self, others involved and the community
- integrates the process of reflection when facing an ethical decision
- shows awareness of the potential and varied consequences of choices and actions in planning and carrying out CAS experiences.