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History of the IBO

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The International Baccalaureate Organization was founded in Geneva, Switzerland in 1968 as a non-profit educational foundation. Its original purpose was to facilitate the international mobility of students preparing for university by providing schools with a curriculum and diploma recognized by universities around the world. Since then its mission has expanded, and it now seeks to make an IB education available to students of all ages.

The IB diploma

The IB diploma was created in English and French by teachers at the International School of Geneva with increasing assistance from several other international schools. The programme that led to the diploma consisted of a common pre-university curriculum and a common set of external examinations for students in schools throughout the world. The Diploma Programme (DP) sought to provide students with a truly international education—an education that encouraged an understanding and appreciation of other cultures, languages and points of view. Schools that first offered the DP were predominantly private international schools, but they included a very small number of private national institutions and schools belonging to state education departments. This has changed over the years and today 43% of all DP schools belong to governments (with no tuition fees).

The following schools participated in trial examinations in 1968:

Atlantic College, Wales
 International School of Geneva
 United Nations International School (UNIS), New York
 International College, Beirut
 International High School, Copenhagen
 Iranzamin International School, Teheran
 North Manchester High School for Girls.

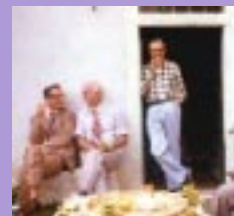
Funding of the IBO

The IBO was funded by Unesco, the 20th Century Fund, and the Ford Foundation until 1976. From 1977 the Heads Standing Conference (HSC) of Diploma Programme (DP) schools was formed and they began to pay the IBO an annual registration fee. In countries where state schools offered the DP, the governments made financial contributions, and some continue to do so on a reduced basis. In return for these fees, the IBO helped schools implement the DP, offered training workshops and teaching materials to IB teachers, and managed a system of external examinations for IB diploma candidates.

Recognition of the IB diploma by universities

Universities' acceptance, or "recognition" of the IB diploma initially came through the efforts of educational leaders and public figures such as Lord Mounthatten, John Goormaghtigh (director of the

Personal memories
and...



[Gérard Renaud](#), (in the middle of the picture) former general of the IBO



[David Wilkinson](#), principal of the Mahindra United Vignette College

... experiences of
IB schools



[St Clare's](#), Oxford, United Kingdom (1970: Alec Peterson, IBO director general, Bishop Kenneth Riches and Anne Dreyer OBE, principal of St Clare's College, Narrabundah College, Australia)

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such as Lord Mountbatten, John Goormaghtigh (director of the European Centre of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), and Alec Peterson (director of the Department of Educational Studies, Oxford University), who had close ties with governments. From the early 1980s, regional offices have been promoting the IB diploma to universities and governments, with the support of IB schools in their areas. Some governments hesitated to grant recognition because they feared that IB schools would lure their most promising students away from the national educational system. However, as they came to understand that the Diploma Programme is a complement to their educational system and could help to improve national schools, they began to accept the IB diploma at a growing rate. Today, the diploma is accepted by universities around the world, including the best universities in North America, the UK, continental Europe, and Australia, where the majority of diploma graduates enter higher education.

IBO regional offices

The IBO opened four regional offices between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s. The first to be established, in 1977, was IB North America (IBNA), located in New York. IBNA works with schools in the US, Caribbean and Canada. The IBO is popular among US public schools because it is seen as an answer to a perceived decline in the quality of public education. In addition, the IBO's international focus helps US schools to work with and benefit from increasingly multi cultural student populations.

In 1982, under the leadership of the head of an international school in Uruguay, the IBO established a regional office in Buenos Aires (IB Latin America, or IBLA) to promote the Diploma Programme in Latin America. That same year it created an office in Singapore (IB Asia Pacific, or IBAP) that was headed by a senior official with the United World College in Singapore. The IBO's Africa, Europe, and Middle East regional office (IBAEM) first opened in London in 1978. After several interim moves, IBAEM settled in Geneva in 1994.

Middle Years Programme and Primary Years Programme

To give younger students access to an IB education, in 1994 the IBO added the Middle Years Programme (MYP), a curriculum for students aged 11-16, and in 1997 it adopted the Primary Years Programme (PYP) for students aged 3-11. These programmes were not then fully formed, but the IBO has developed them so that they are now well rounded and complete. As with the Diploma Programme, the MYP and PYP seek to provide students with an international perspective and critical thinking skills.

Presidents of the IBO Council of Foundation

1968-1981	John Goormaghtigh	director of the European office of the Carnegie endowment for international peace
1981-1984	Seydou Madani Sy	rector of the University of Dakar, Senegal and later minister for justice and special advisor to the president of Senegal
1984-1990	Piet Gathier	director general of secondary education, the Netherlands
1990-1996	Thomas Hagoort	international lawyer, USA
1996-1997	Bengt Thelin	director general of education, Sweden
1997-2003	Greg Crafter	former minister for education in South Australia, lawyer
2003-	Monique Seefried	Center for the Advancement and Study of International Education, IISA

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USA

IBO directors general

Alec Peterson 1968-77

Gérard Renaud 1977-83

Roger Peel 1983-98

Derek Blackman 1998-99

George Walker 1999-

Assisting governments

In addition to serving schools, the IBO has, since its founding, helped governments in the development and reform of state education systems. In 1978, the IBO formed the Standing Conference of Governments (SCG) from countries that contributed to the IBO. SCG existed until 2000 and a new Government Advisory Committee was established in 2000 to meet with the director general of the IBO on a regular basis. Recent projects and activities with governments are to be found in the "[universities and governments](#)" section of this web site.

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