What is “CAS”?  

CAS is an NIHS graduation requirement that all students complete projects of Creativity, Action, and Service.

CAS projects must total at least 150 hours:

- 50 hours of Creativity
- 50 hours of Action
- 50 hours of Service

Each student will brainstorm ideas and create a preliminary plan for CAS at the end of 10th grade.

What are the purpose and spirit of the CAS requirement?  

The International Baccalaureate Organization (IB) created the CAS requirement to encourage students to establish lifelong habits that will make them well-rounded human beings and contributing global citizens. The CAS requirement is IB’s assertion that important learning takes place not only in the classroom, but also outside of it. “CAS enables students to enhance their personal and interpersonal development through experiential learning.” A student’s “CAS program should be both challenging and enjoyable, a personal journey of self-discovery.” Many students’ “CAS activities include experiences that are profound and life-changing” (All quotes in this document are taken from the IB Creativity, Action, Service Guide).

In making a CAS plan and completing, recording, and reflecting upon CAS activities, NIHS students should keep in mind and respect both the purpose and the spirit of CAS. Students should avoid having a shallow goal of ticking off hours to complete the requirements—instead, they should conceptualize and complete CAS projects that will contribute significantly to their personal growth.

- Every CAS project should be planned beforehand to include “real purposeful activities with significant outcomes.”
- All CAS projects must contain an element of “personal challenge,” which encourages the student to stretch outside his or her comfort zone.
- After completing each CAS project, the student must write a 300+ word reflection that explains how the activity challenged the student and contributed to his or her personal growth.

We ask students to internalize and respect the purpose and spirit of CAS as they plan, complete, and reflect upon their CAS projects.

How can I ‘respect the spirit’ of the CAS requirement?

Follow the rules and guidelines in this document closely. In addition, design your CAS projects so that your completing them satisfies IB’s recommended “learning outcomes” for CAS, listed here:

- Increase your awareness of your own strengths and areas for growth
- Undertake new challenges
- Plan and initiate activities
- Work collaboratively with others
- Show perseverance and commitment in your activities
- Engage in issues of global importance
- Consider the ethical implications of your actions
- Develop new skills

Revised May 2010
What are the CAS Guidelines?

- Students may begin CAS projects the summer after 10th grade. We recommend that students complete 10 to 50 hours that summer.
- We strongly recommend that students complete 75 hours junior year, and 75 hours senior year.
- Service learning hours may also support work toward the 4J Honors Diploma and National Honor Society service requirements.
- CAS activities could be combined. For instance, a student could earn creativity, action, and service hours at once in a project by coaching a youngsters’ sports camp if the student is creating the activities and participating with the youngsters. (Remember that 150 hours total must be completed.)

What are the CAS Rules?

- CAS activities may not be for pay or for credit.
- Each CAS project must be pre-approved by an NIHS 11th or 12th grade teacher. Students complete and get a signature on the “NIHS CAS Project Plan & Approval” form before beginning the project.
- Each CAS project requires that the student have a mentor to monitor the student’s progress and to evaluate his or her performance.
- CAS mentors must be over 21 and may not be a relative of the student.
- CAS is meant to be an enriching accompaniment to academic work; therefore, “to attempt to count the same work for both a subject or extended essay [sr. project] and CAS would constitute malpractice.”
- Students who join NIHS after the beginning of 11th grade will have their CAS requirement pro-rated for the time remaining until graduation. For example, a student who joins NIHS at the beginning of 12th grade will be required to complete only 75 hours of CAS.
- Students may submit no more than three (3) projects per CAS category. This requirement ensures that students will have enough time working on every project to make it a quality experience. It also ensures that students will not need to write more than nine (9) 300+ word reflections on CAS projects.
- IB states: “The general rule is that religious devotion, and any activity that can be interpreted as proselytizing, does not count as CAS.”
- No student may claim more than 8 hours per day for any CAS activity.
- Travel time to and from a CAS project site does not count.
- At least half (25) of all service learning hours must be completed outside of and unrelated to school.

What is “Creativity”?  
“Creative activities should have a definite goal or outcome [a product, so to speak]. They should be planned and evaluated like all CAS activities.” Activities that are primarily creative can be used to satisfy the “Creativity” requirement. Examples of Creativity include . . .

- Creating works of art: paintings, ceramics, sculptures, fabric art, drawings, graphics
- Learning a new art by taking a non-credit class
- Learning to play a new musical instrument
- Tackling a difficult musical piece and mastering it for a performance
- Creating a video game or web page
- Acting in a drama
- Building a set or doing the costuming for a drama
- Writing creatively to produce short stories, poetry, or a novelette
- Working on creating the school newspaper or yearbook
- Choreographing a dance performance
- Making a film

Here are examples of activities that do NOT qualify as Creativity (Remember to respect the spirit of CAS):
- Painting the church (this is Service)
- Dancing (this is Action)
- Planning a dance to raise funds for charity (this is Service)
What is “Action”?

Action activities are primarily physical and involve “challenge by demanding endurance” and coordination. Action means moving your entire body in a calculated way, persevering mentally, and exercising physically. Examples of Action include . . .

- Participating on a school or city athletic team – set specific performance goals before the season starts.
- Taking a non-credit yoga, dance, gymnastics, or aerobics class – set performance goals before you start.
- Participating in a long-distance walk or run (1/2 marathon or marathon)

Here are examples of activities that do NOT qualify as Action (Remember to respect the spirit of CAS):

- Painting the church (this is Service)
- Supervising children as they play at a camp (this is Service)
- Playing with toddlers at a daycare center (this is Service)

What is “Service”?

“Service” means service learning in our community. Service must be for a non-profit organization, and must not be for pay, for credit, or for a relative. To provide for the greatest personal growth, we encourage students to complete their service off-campus. In addition, “it is essential that service activities have learning benefits for the student . . . . This rules out mundane, repetitive activities, as well as ‘service’ without real responsibility.” Service Learning describes activities that are designed primarily to help others in need. Examples of Service Learning include . . .

- Working at the Community Garden for Food for Lane County: cultivating, weeding, planting, harvesting
- Being a receptionist at White Bird medical clinic
- Caring for the children at the Relief Nursery
- Working with the pets at Greenhill Humane Society
- Acting as a Spanish / English interpreter at the Volunteers for Medicine clinic
- Organizing a canned food drive for Food for Lane County
- Organizing a car wash or can drive to raise money for charity.
- Coaching a younger kids’ sports team through KidSports
- Being a counselor at a summer camp, the Science Factory, or other summer children’s program
- Starting an after-school sports class or program for disabled youth
- Traveling to Mexico with a youth group to build a house during spring break
- Tutoring younger or less able students academically as part of an organized program
- Mentoring younger students as part of an organized program
- Reading to or playing games with the elderly at a retirement or assisted living home

Here are examples of activities that do NOT qualify as Service Learning (Remember to respect the spirit of CAS):

- Fundraising for a club or team of which you are a member
- Fundraising for an activity or trip that you will eventually participate in
- Helping to organize the prom or other school dance
- Work as an NIHS Student Leader, unless it is time spent outside of regular meeting time organizing a charity or mentoring event
- Being a teacher’s aide (not a challenge to the student’s “comfort zone”)
- Cleaning Autzen Stadium or Mac Court, even for charity (a “mundane, repetitive” activity)
- Washing cars or collecting cans for charity (a “mundane, repetitive” activity)

Frequently Asked Questions

Why can’t a relative or someone under 21 be my CAS supervisor?

Why can’t I do my CAS work independently?

One of the aims of the CAS requirement is that students transcend their boundaries. Finding older mentors in the community encourages students to establish relationships that can help them to become part of the broader community and can serve as a support network for the student in the future.

Revised May 2010