



When it comes to offering an international education in Hong Kong that is wholly unique, few can beat the Upper School curriculum at Canadian International School, Hong Kong.



An Education Like No Other

Not only is it the only school outside of Canada that offers both the IB and Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), but it also stands out as a big school that has created an intimate environment that supports senior students to succeed and prepare themselves for their transition to university.

"We've established ourselves as one of the top international schools in Hong Kong and we are unique," explained Dr Chantelle Jackson-Boothby, Director of University Counselling at CDNIS, Hong Kong. "We are an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School and an Ontario Ministry of Education inspected and authorized institution – which means that our students undertake not only the IB Diploma Programme but also the globally recognised OSSD."

The OSSD is awarded by the Ontario Ministry of Education to students in Ontario, Canada based on their earning of 30 course credits, both compulsory and elective, between grades 9 and 12. The Ministry authorizes several international schools to award credits and the OSSD, inspecting them on an annual basis to ensure that its high standards are met. The Ontario curriculum is rigorous, progressive and student-centred, making it a natural complement to IB programmes.

Many students enjoy doing the OSSD because it is a non-exam-taking system, it is easy to convert credits and has a flexible academic system. It also has a high degree of recognition and admission rates for top-tier overseas colleges and universities.

In Hong Kong, CDNIS is the only school that offers the dual diploma of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma and IB Diploma programme. While this may sound daunting and rigorous, Jackson-Boothby reassures that CDNIS does a brilliant job intertwining the two diplomas so that students can easily do both.

"Yes, it sounds intense, but it's important to note that our students are not duplicating work," explained Jackson-Boothby. She explained that while students are undertaking both the IBDP and the OSSD, they're earning those credits across both curricula,



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Dr Chantelle Jackson-Boothby, Director of University Counselling at CDNIS, Hong Kong

so that whatever classes they take in the IB diploma programme, those then also meet the requirements for the OSSD and they gain credits there, too.

The key advantage of the dual diploma programme is that students finish high school with both of those diplomas under their belts, which helps them stand out from the crowd when applying to universities around the world.

To earn the OSSD, students are required to complete compulsory credits which are done alongside the IB credits, so "if they can be successful in both, this is something that looks very unique when students apply to university", Jackson-Boothby said.

Since many of the international schools and some local schools in Hong Kong offer the IB, British and American curriculums, students in Hong Kong who graduate with the IB and OSSD stand out.

"It's a really great way for students to differentiate themselves from their peers and it also shows that they can handle the rigours of these two programmes which translates well to the academic rigours of university life," Jackson-Boothby added.

On top of this, having the dual diploma recognition also means that students are not limited to applying to just Canadian universities. With both diplomas, the world becomes their oyster.

"Of course, by default and by sheer definition of studying the OSSD, it must seem like our students are only interested in going to Canada, but our students are applying globally, to universities in Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Hong Kong, etc." Jackson-Boothby emphasized.

"From a purely evaluative perspective, our students often will receive offers based on one curriculum or the other, which is great because they can be awarded offers from universities based on having met one of the two conditions," she said.

With such a unique programme, CDNIS has a brilliant track record of its students attending top-tier universities all over the world, from Johns Hopkins University in the USA to University



College London to the University of Edinburgh, University of Hong Kong, and universities in Canada such as the University of British Columbia, University of Toronto and McGill University.

Another stand-out aspect of the Upper School at Canadian International School of Hong Kong is its unique University Counselling Programme. Jackson-Boothby, along with her team of two other university counsellors which will be three next year, focus primarily on supporting students and their families on their university applications. Their aim is to ensure students are aware of all of the higher education options open to them.

"We want students to start thinking about their university goals early on and to make informed decisions both inside and outside of the classroom," says Jackson-Boothby.

While academic rigour is certainly a strength at CDNIS, Jackson-Boothby said that school life at CDNIS is also a big draw for any potential applicants.

"We pride ourselves in being a school that promotes community, we want students to explore their creativity and develop leadership skills," she said. The school is also committed to helping students clue in to what life is like outside of the classroom, as such they are constantly motivated by their peers to challenge and stretch themselves beyond the four walls of the school and to take part in its plentiful extra-curricular activities.

CDNIS credits its student successes to the support it provides and in the way the school prepares students for the challenges of a university environment. As a result of this commitment, Jackson-Boothby said that students who return from university express that their transition from secondary school to university was seamless thanks to the support that CDNIS provided.

"When we get down to what we want our students to accomplish in secondary school, we are really supporting them not only in the classroom but through mentorship academically and through counselling," she said.

