



# Curriculum and Learning

Vienna International School

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### Vienna International School Profile

The Mission of the Vienna International School (VIS) is '*to empower all of our students to be successful and responsible in a nurturing and diverse learning community, so that they can achieve their potential in changing world*'.

Vienna International School opened in 1978 as a non-profit organisation to serve the United Nations and diplomatic communities in Vienna. It has the support and official recognition of the Austrian Government and the city of Vienna and is accredited by the Austrian Ministry of Education and the Council of International Schools. The school is governed by a Board of seven, four of whom are appointed by the United Nations, with three elected by the parent community.

The school is truly international with students coming from diverse backgrounds and representing more than 104 nationalities. The total school enrolment is 1400, with students aged between 3 and 19 years. More than 230 teachers, administration and support staff provide the students and the school community with high-quality educational programmes and support services. The language of instruction is English, with the learning of other languages and Mother Tongue languages being actively supported. More than 95% of students successfully complete the demanding courses of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, and choose to go on to higher education.

Parental involvement in their children's education is a highly valued feature of the school. Many parents also participate in a wide variety of student activities and events, and through the VIS Parent Teacher Association.

VIS is one of a select number of schools offering the three International Baccalaureate Programmes. These academic programmes are outlined in the following pages together with the IB learner Profile, which describes the characteristics that support students in becoming successful, lifelong learners.

Peter M.J. Murphy  
Director

# IB PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME

## GRADES ELC – 5 CURRICULUM

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### INTRODUCTION

The International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP) is designed for students between the ages of 3 and 12 years. It is an international, transdisciplinary programme which focuses on the total growth of the developing child, touching hearts as well as minds and encompassing social, physical, emotional and cultural needs in addition to academic welfare.

### IB PYP

At the heart of the IB PYP philosophy is a commitment to structured inquiry as the leading vehicle for learning. Six transdisciplinary themes provide the framework for the exploration of knowledge. Students explore subject areas through these themes, often in ways that transcend conventional subject boundaries. In the process, they develop an understanding of important concepts, acquire essential skills and knowledge, develop particular attitudes and learn to take socially responsible action.

### FIVE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

The curriculum framework consists of five essential elements: **concepts, knowledge, skills, attitudes and action**. Through these elements students are given the opportunity to:

- gain knowledge that is relevant and of global significance
- develop an understanding of concepts, which allows them to make connections throughout their learning
- acquire transdisciplinary and disciplinary skills
- develop attitudes that will lead to international-mindedness
- take action as a consequence of their learning

### CONCEPTS

There is a commitment to a concept-driven curriculum as a means of supporting inquiry. Students gradually work towards a deepening of their conceptual understanding as they approach those concepts from a range of perspectives.

A concept-driven curriculum helps the learner to construct meaning through improved critical thinking and the transfer of knowledge.

### KNOWLEDGE

The importance of the traditional subject areas is acknowledged: language, mathematics, science, social studies, personal, social and physical education, and the arts are specified as components of the IB PYP curriculum model.

Subject knowledge is integrated using the six transdisciplinary themes of the curriculum model, which include:

- who we are
- where we are in place and time
- how we express ourselves
- how the world works
- how we organize ourselves
- sharing the planet

### SKILLS

The search for understanding is central to the beliefs and practices of the IB PYP. The construction and meaning of understanding is complemented by the students acquiring and applying a range of skills. These skills are best developed in the context of authentic situations through the units of inquiry.

Throughout the programme, students acquire and apply a set of transdisciplinary skills: social skills, communication skills, thinking skills, research skills and self-management skills.

### ATTITUDES

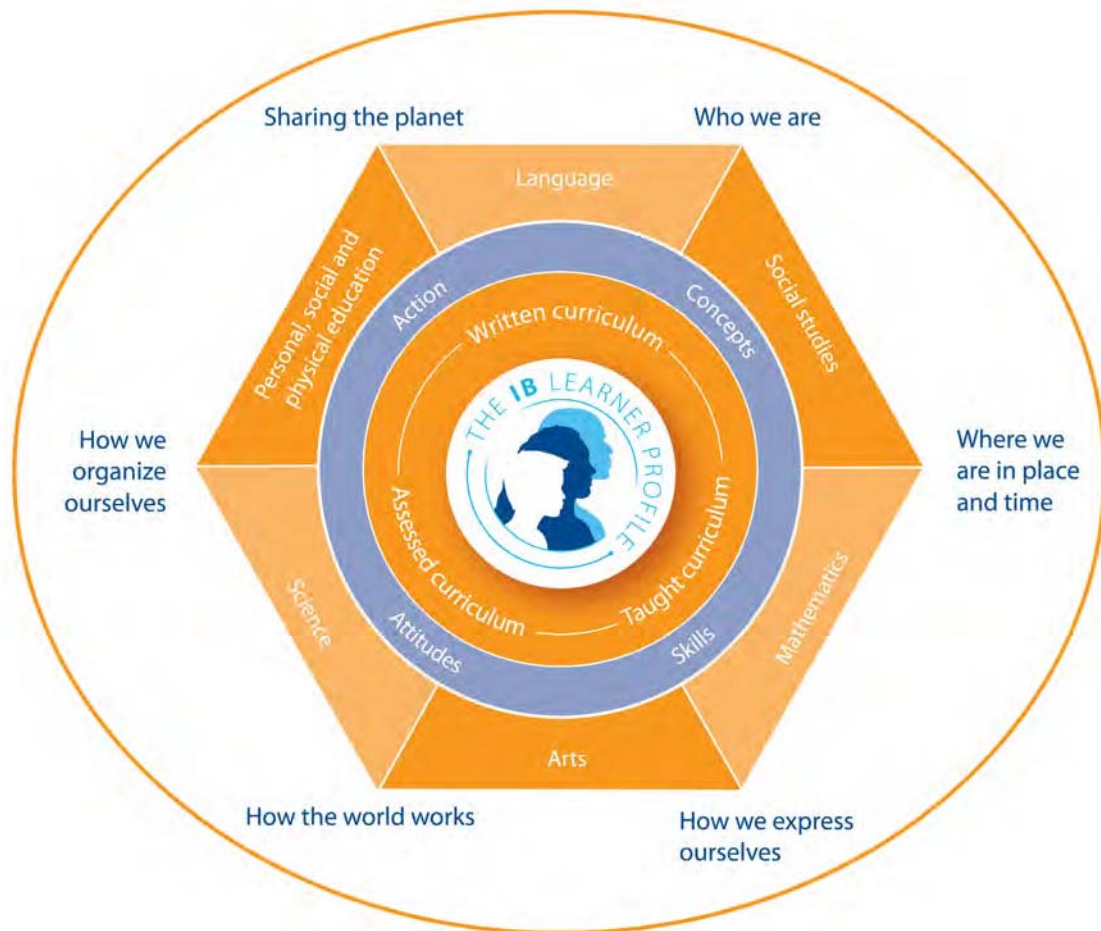
In the IB PYP there is a focus on the development of personal attitudes towards people, the environment and learning as well as attitudes that contribute to the well-being of the individual and the group. These attitudes are reflected in the IB Learner Profile and include: commitment, creativity, curiosity, empathy, independence, integrity, and tolerance.

### ACTION

Education must extend beyond the intellectual to include not only socially responsible attitudes but also thoughtful and appropriate action. An explicit expectation is that successful inquiry will lead to responsible action, initiated by the student as a result of the learning process. This action will extend the student's learning, or it may have a wider social impact and will look different within each age range.

Our students are encouraged to reflect, make informed choices and take action that will help their peers and the wider community.

## IB PYP CURRICULUM MODEL



### ASSESSMENT

There are two types of assessment in the IB PYP, each of which has a specific function.

**Formative** assessment is interwoven with daily learning and helps teachers and students find out what the students already know in order to plan the next stage of learning. Formative assessment and learning activities are directly linked; neither can function effectively or purposefully without the other.

**Summative** assessment occurs at the end of the teaching and learning process and provides students with opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned. It aims to give teachers and students a clear insight into students' understanding.

### EXHIBITION

Students aged 10 to 12 who are in their final year of the programme are expected to carry out an extended, collaborative inquiry project, known as 'the exhibition'.

With the guidance of their teachers students are given considerable flexibility in their choice of the real-life issues or problems to be explored and investigated in the exhibition.

The exhibition represents a significant event in the life of both the school and student, synthesizing the essential elements of the programme and sharing them with the whole school community. It is an opportunity for students to exhibit the attributes of the student profile that have been developing throughout their engagement with the programme. It is a culminating experience marking the transition from the IB PYP to the IB Middle Years Programme.



# IB MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAMME

## GRADES 6 – 10 CURRICULUM

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### INTRODUCTION

VIS follows the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IB MYP) for students in Grades 6 – 10.

The IB MYP, for students aged 11 to 16, provides a framework of academic challenge that encourages students to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and the real world, and become critical and reflective thinkers.

### IB MYP

The IB MYP is designed to provide students with the values and opportunities that will enable them to develop sound judgment. The IB MYP is guided by three **fundamental concepts**:

- **holistic learning** - representing the notion that all knowledge is interrelated and that the curriculum should cater to the development of the whole person, the attributes of which are described by the IB learner profile
- **intercultural awareness** - representing the notion that school communities should encourage and promote international-mindedness by engaging with and exploring other cultures, a key feature of international education as reflected in the attributes of the IB learner profile
- **communication** - representing the notion that schools should encourage open and effective communication, important skills that contribute to international understanding as exemplified by the attributes of the IB learner profile.

The programme:

- encourages a **positive attitude to learning** by challenging students to solve problems, show creativity and resourcefulness and participate actively in their communities
- reflects **real life** by providing a framework that allows students to see the connections among the subjects themselves, and between the subjects and real issues
- emphasizes, through the **learner profile**, the development of the whole student—physically, intellectually, emotionally and ethically.

### CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

The IB MYP consists of eight subject groups integrated through five areas of interaction that provide a framework for learning within and across the subjects.

The curriculum includes the following subjects:

**Arts:** Drama, Music, Visual Arts

**Humanities:** Geography, History

**Language A:** English/German/Mother Tongue

**Language B:** English/German/French/Spanish

**Mathematics**

**Physical Education**

**Sciences:** General Science (Grades 6 – 8), Biology, Chemistry, Physics

**Technology:** Computer Technology, Computer Aided Design, Design Technology, Food Technology

### AREAS OF INTERACTION

#### Approaches to learning (ATL)

Through ATL students develop the tools to enable them to take responsibility for their own learning and to develop an awareness of how they learn best, of thought processes and of learning strategies.

#### Community and service

This component requires students to take an active part in the communities in which they live, thereby encouraging responsible citizenship.

#### Human ingenuity

Students explore in multiple ways the processes and products of human creativity, thus learning to appreciate and develop in themselves the human capacity to influence, transform, enjoy and improve the quality of life.

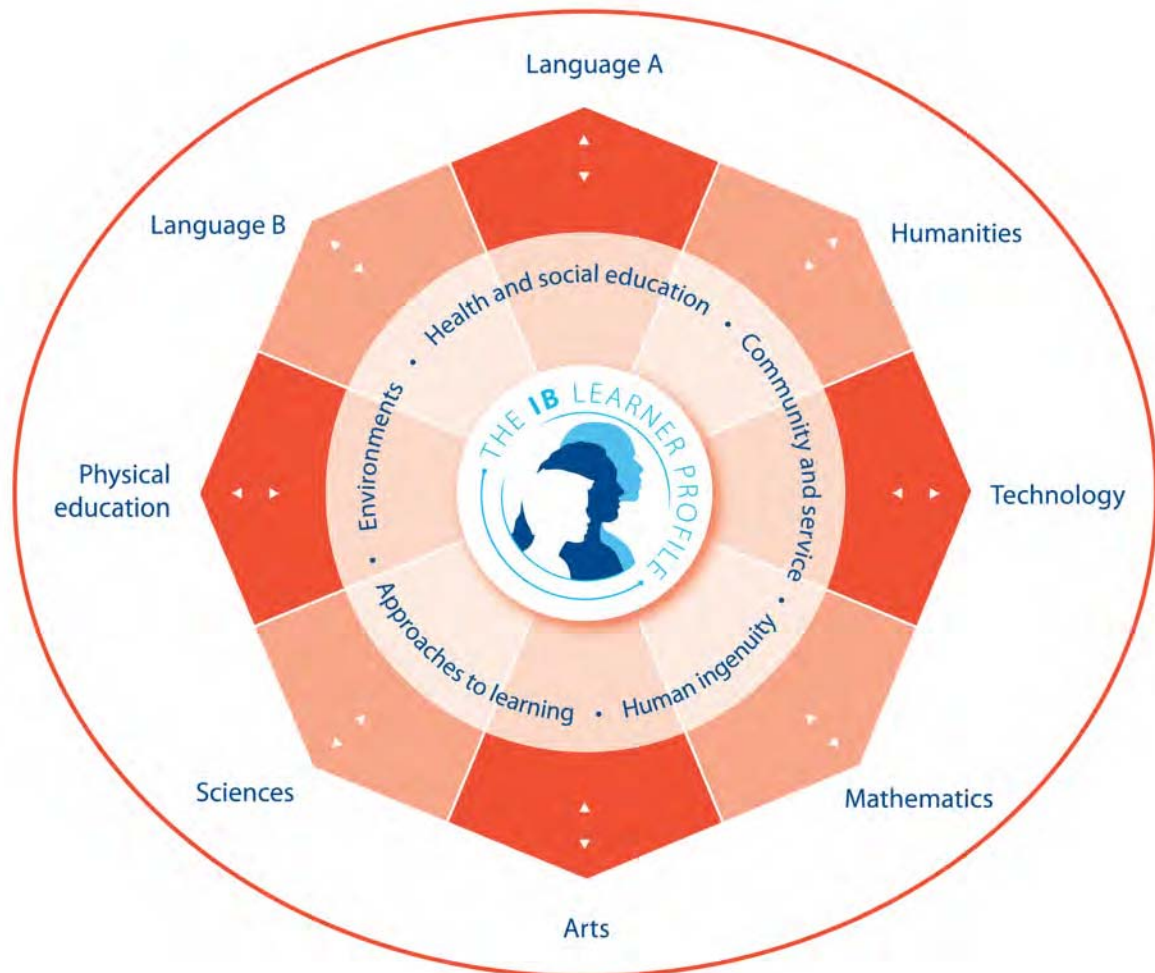
#### Environments

This area aims to develop students' awareness of their interdependence with the environment so that they understand and accept their responsibilities.

#### Health and social education

This area deals with physical, social and emotional health and intelligence — key aspects of development leading to complete and healthy lives.

## IB MYP CURRICULUM MODEL



### ASSESSMENT

The MYP offers a criterion-related model of assessment. This means that students' results are determined by performance against set standards, not by each student's position in the overall rank order.

Assessment tasks allow students to demonstrate achievement according to the required objectives within each subject group. These may include: open-ended, problem-solving activities and investigations, organised debates, hands-on experimentation, analysis and reflection.

### ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

#### MOTHER TONGUE

In ESL the aim is to develop students' language skills in all areas: speaking, writing, reading and listening. Students are withdrawn from some subjects to participate in additional English language programmes.

In Mother Tongue the aim is to build on the literacy skills which students already have. This will develop their cognitive abilities, which can be transferred to their emerging English skills, in addition to adding to their self-esteem and their identity.

# IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

## GRADES 11 - 12 CURRICULUM

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### INTRODUCTION

In Grades 11 and 12 the school follows the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. This is a rigorous pre-university course of studies, leading to external examinations that meet the needs of highly motivated secondary school class students between the ages of 16 and 19 years. It is designed to promote international understanding and facilitate the mobility of students to a wide variety of institutions by offering a rigorous, holistic approach to learning.

VIS offers the following qualifications:

- Full IB Diploma (with or without Matura Equivalence)
- VIS Academic Diploma and VIS General Diploma (with or without Matura Equivalence)

### COURSES OF STUDY

Students in Grades 11 & 12 can follow either the IB Full Diploma course or the Certificate course. Please note that 'Certificate' stands for the successful completion of one single subject within the IB DP.

VIS is able to offer a variety of courses and levels with more than 65 different options.

### IB FULL DIPLOMA COURSE

This is accepted for University entrance in most countries of the world. It consists of three High Level (HL) subjects (which are suitable for Advanced Placement in some countries) and three standard level (SL) subjects. Students must gain a minimum of 24 points from a maximum 45 points.

The diploma also requires completion of a research essay of 4.000 words, a Theory of Knowledge course and CAS (Creativity, Action and Service) requirements.

### IB CERTIFICATE COURSE

This is an alternative programme of pre-university courses chosen from IB subjects allowing greater flexibility, which may lead to a VIS Academic or General Diploma and possibly to Austrian Matura equivalence. Five, six or seven subjects may be chosen. While CAS (see above) is mandatory, there is no requirement to study three of the subjects at High Level, or to complete an Extended Essay. All students follow the Theory of Knowledge course but Certificate students are assessed internally and the result does not appear on their IB Certificates.

### THE VIENNA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL ACADEMIC DIPLOMA

The VIS Academic Diploma is awarded to students who achieve a minimum of 20 points from their five best IB subjects, which must include an Individuals and Societies subject, a Language, and Mathematics or Science (Higher Level subjects are given a +1 point weighting). The General Diploma requires a minimum of 15 points. Successful completion of the CAS component is required of all students.

### AUSTRIAN MATURA

This is accepted by Austrian Universities. Students qualify for Matura equivalence based upon their final externally marked IB certificate Grades and internal Grades (3 HL and 3 SL, no Grade below 3 and a minimum of 24 points).

In addition, students in Grades 9 and 10 must successfully complete:

- all subjects taught in the VIS curriculum (including 3 separate sciences) receiving Grade 3 or above in each on their end of year school reports
- a third language taught as part of the VIS curriculum for at least four years up to and including Grade 10 with level two objectives being reached (or take external exams or as IB Certificate in the third language)

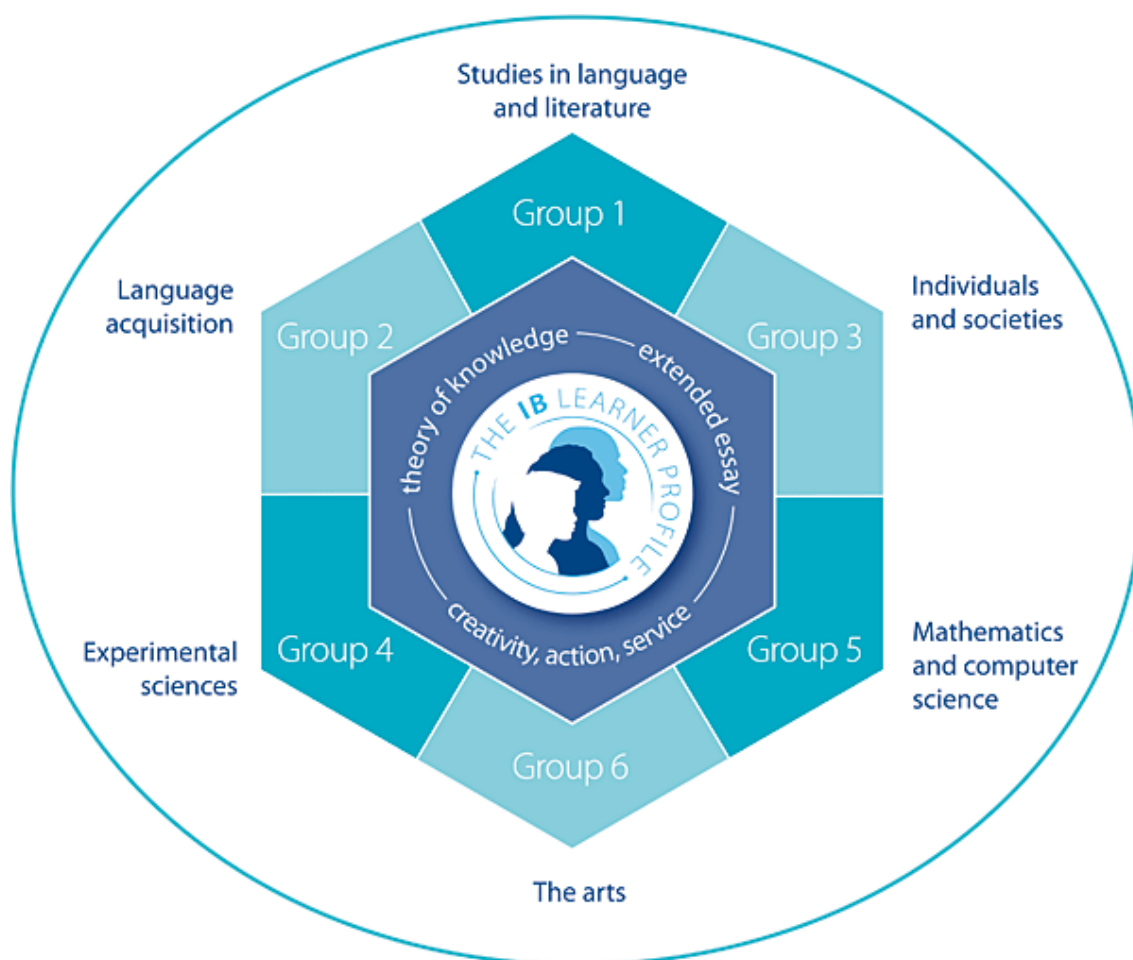
In Grades 11 and 12 students must study

- Austrian History and Austrian Geography unless Geography and History are studied at IB level
- German, English, Mathematics and one Experimental Science from the IB DP programme

### OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- The interdisciplinary *Theory of Knowledge* (TOK) course is designed to develop a coherent approach to learning, which transcends and unifies the academic areas.
- The *Extended Essay* of some 4000 words offers the opportunity to investigate a topic of special interest and acquaints students with the independent research and writing skills expected at university.
- Participation in the school's *Creativity, Action, Service* (CAS) programme encourages students to be involved in sports, artistic pursuits and community service work. 150 hours of CAS service are required.

## IB DP CURRICULUM MODEL



SUBJECTS AVAILABLE AT VIS					
Group 1 (Lang A)	Group 2 (Lang B/ Ab Initio)	Group 3 (Individuals & Societies)	Group 4 (Sciences)	Group 5 (Mathematics)	Group 6 (Arts)
English A: Literature (SL/HL)  English A: Language and Literature (SL/HL)  German A: Literature (SL/HL)  German A: Language and Literature (SL/HL)  Mother Tongue (HL/SL) (most languages available)	Language B (SL) English, French, German, Spanish  Language B (HL) English, French, German, Spanish  Language ab initio (SL) German  Mother Tongue (HL/SL) (most languages available)	Economics HL Economics SL  Environmental Systems and Societies SL  Geography HL/SL  History HL/SL  ITGS HL/SL  Psychology HL/SL	Biology HL /SL  Chemistry HL/SL  Design Technology HL/SL  Environmental Systems and Societies SL  Physics HL/SL	Computer Science HL/SL  Maths HL/SL  Maths Studies SL  Further Maths HL	Film HL/SL  Music HL/SL  Theatre HL/SL  Visual Arts HL/SL  <b>OR</b> one other subject from Groups 1-5





## The International Baccalaureate Learner Profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

IB learners strive to be:

<b>Inquirers</b>	They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.
<b>Knowledgeable</b>	They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.
<b>Thinkers</b>	They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.
<b>Communicators</b>	They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.
<b>Principled</b>	They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.
<b>Open-minded</b>	They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.
<b>Caring</b>	They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.
<b>Risk-takers</b>	They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.
<b>Balanced</b>	They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.
<b>Reflective</b>	They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

# Universities and Colleges

attended by VIS graduates

## *United States of America*

Babson College  
Boston University  
Bryn Mawr College  
Carnegie-Mellon University  
Chicago School of Art and Design  
Cornell University  
Drexel University  
Duke University  
Elon College  
George Washington University  
Georgetown University  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Harvard University  
Marquette University  
Marymount Manhattan College  
Michigan State University  
M.I.T.  
Northeastern University  
Northwestern University  
Oregon University  
Parson's School of Design  
Pennsylvania State University  
Princeton University  
Purdue University  
Rice University  
Ringling College of Art and Design  
Rutgers State University  
Sarah Lawrence College  
Savannah College of Art & Design  
St. John's College  
Stanford University  
The American University  
Tufts University  
Tulane University  
U. of Massachusetts at Amherst  
University of California  
University of California Berkely  
University of Florida  
University of Maryland  
University of Michigan  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Virginia  
Virginia Tech  
Webster University  
Yale University

## *United Kingdom*

Aberdeen University  
Aberystwyth University  
Anglia Ruskin University  
Aston University  
Bath University  
Birmingham University  
Bournemouth University  
Brighton University  
Bristol University  
Brunel University  
Cambridge University  
Cardiff University  
City University  
De Montfort University  
Dundee University  
Durham University  
Edinburgh University  
Exeter University  
Glasgow University  
Herriot Watt University  
Hull Univeristy  
Imperial College London  
Kent University  
Kings College London  
Lancaster University  
Leeds University  
Leicester University  
London School of Economics  
Loughborough University  
Manchester University  
Newcastle University  
Nottingham University  
Oxford Brookes University  
Oxford University  
Reading University  
Royal Holloway University  
SOAS University of London  
Southampton University  
St. Andrews University  
Surrey University  
Sussex University  
University College London  
University of the Arts London  
University of the Creative Arts  
University of the West of England  
Warwick University  
York University

## *Canada*

Acadia University  
Dalhousie University  
McGill University  
McMaster University  
Memorial University  
Queen's University  
Simon Fraser University  
University of Alberta  
University of British Columbia  
University of Montreal  
University of Ottawa  
University of Toronto  
University of Western Ontario

## *Other Universities include...*

American University of Paris  
Australian National University  
Balamund University  
Bocconi University Milan  
Charles University Prague  
Ecole Hoteliere  
Enschede University  
Erasmus University Rotterdam  
ETH Zurich  
Franklin College  
Groningen University  
Les Roches  
Melbourne University  
Modul University Vienna  
Orebro University  
Pecs University  
Simmelweis University  
Swiss Business School  
Technical University Delft  
Eindhoven  
Technical University Vienna  
University College Cork  
University College Dublin  
University of Applied Arts Graz  
University of Leuven  
University of Music & Performing Arts  
University of Porto  
US International University  
Nairobi  
Vienna Arts School  
Vienna University of Economics  
Webster University Vienna