



CAS

Essential Guide for Parents and Students

The Nature of the CAS (Creativity, Action and Service) Program

The Lincoln Community School recognizes the importance of life outside the world of scholarship and the CAS program, as a counterbalance to academic self-absorption, plays a vital role in this part of each student's education. The program offers opportunities for students to experience real tasks with real consequences and encourages reflection on that process.

At LCS we believe that the creative, physical and social development of human beings can be shaped by their experiences. Participation the CAS program encourages caring attitudes and a sense of social responsibility and gives students a venue to take on leadership roles, work cooperatively with others, and share their special energies and talents.

Contained within this document are guidelines and recommendations to make your participation in the CAS program one of the highlights of your life in secondary school, like it has been for so many other students before you. Read this document, take what is said to heart, and enjoy your time here at LCS while you expand your horizons.

The Potential Outcomes of the CAS Program

When students participate in the CAS program with an open heart and an open mind, they reach beyond their books and their familiar world to make a positive impact in the local, national and international communities.

It is through the CAS programs that the benefits of balanced education really come alive!

The Eight Learning Outcomes

As a result of their CAS experiences, students should develop holistically. Throughout grades 9-12 students will reflect and provide evidence of achieving eight learning outcomes:

- 1) increased their awareness of their own strengths and areas for growth

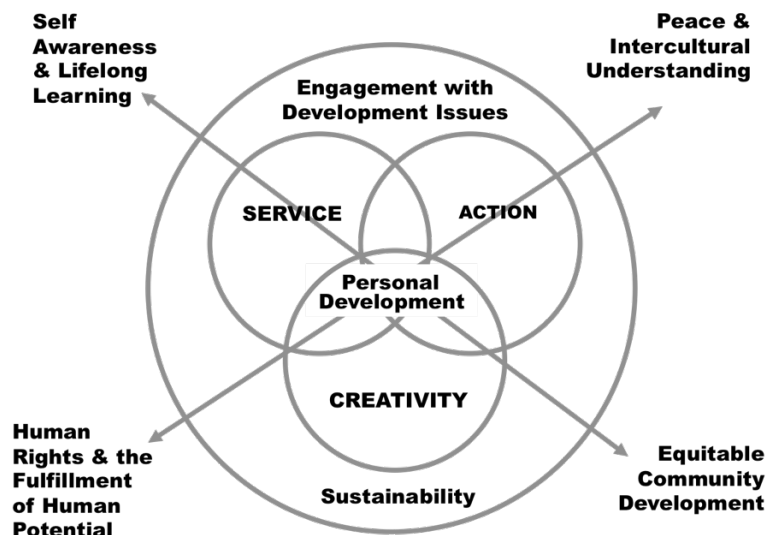


Figure 1: The potential outcome of educating the whole person

They are able to see themselves as individuals with various skills and abilities, some more developed than others, and understand that they can make choices about how they wish to move forward.

2) undertaken new challenges

A new challenge may be an unfamiliar activity, or an extension to an existing one.

3) planned and initiated activities

Planning and initiation will often be in collaboration with others. It can be shown in activities that are part of larger projects, for example, ongoing school activities in the local community, as well as in small student-led activities.

4) worked collaboratively with others

Collaboration can be shown in many different activities, such as team sports, playing music in a band, or helping in a kindergarten. At least one project, involving collaboration and the integration of at least two of creativity, action and service, is required.

5) shown perseverance and commitment in their activities

At a minimum, this implies attending regularly and accepting a share of the responsibility for dealing with problems that arise in the course of activities.

6) engaged with issues of global importance

Students may be involved in international projects but there are many global issues that can be acted upon locally or nationally (for example, environmental concerns, caring for the elderly).

7) considered the ethical implications of their actions

Ethical decisions arise in almost any CAS activity (for example, on the sports field, in musical composition, in relationships with others involved in service activities). Evidence of thinking about ethical issues can be shown in various ways, including journal entries and conversations with CAS advisers.

8) developed new skills

As with new challenges, new skills may be shown in activities that the student has not previously undertaken, or in increased expertise in an established area.

Guidelines for Success – Plan, Participate and Reflect

Plan

At the beginning of every quarter, create or review your existing plan. Be sure to create a plan that balances creative, action and service activities. Use the hourly requirements for your grade as a guideline for achieving a balance.

Plan activities that allow you to follow your passions and express your special talents. You also need to plan activities that expand your horizons and get you “out of the box”. Try something new!

All students should plan on going on at least one CAS Wednesday trip per quarter. It is highly recommended that students in grades 11 and 12 choose a “Primary Service Commitment” and commit themselves to one organization over a sustained period of time. This helps you as develop as a human being, it makes you a more effective and dynamic member an organization, and it will help your application to stand out when applying to colleges.

Participate

Participating is an active experience. Students need act responsibly and make positive contributions to the activity. Realize that the more you become involved in what you are doing, the better it will be for yourself and the people around you.

During service activities you could find yourself immediately “out of the box”. Take a moment to assess the situation and then be fearless – jump into the situation and try to make a positive impact.

Reflect

How did things go? What would you improve? Students will use ManageBac, an online program, to submit written journal entries, photos, links to YouTube videos, files and more. It is recommended that students reflect on their experiences throughout the year – not just at the end of the quarter.

Linking CAS to Your After School Activities

The Lincoln Community School has a rich tradition of providing students with opportunities to extend themselves beyond the walls of the classrooms. LCS offers year-round activities in the areas of creativity, action and service, therefore it is possible for students to fulfill all of their CAS requirements via our after-school activities program. The school offers activities in the creative and action areas such as guitar, piano, plays and performances, soccer, basketball, swimming and volleyball. LCS also offers opportunities for students to engage in service:

- “Service Wednesday” – virtually every Wednesday students are bussed to various organizations around Accra including an orphanage, a school for the mentally disabled, a daycare center for children of young mothers living on the street and an organization dedicated to protecting vulnerable children.
- Weekend Trips – LCS sponsors numerous weekend trips including Habitat for Humanity.

There are three activities modules per school year, please consult the CAS Coordinator for the latest offerings.

Students are also welcome to engage in activities sponsored outside of school. In order to receive recognition for participation, students must make sure that the activity is led by a responsible person and that their hours are properly logged.

Note: the following activities are generally not recognized by the CAS program as a CAS activity:

- Activities sponsored by your family
- Working for businesses
- Any activity where you receive money

CAS Requirements

Successful Completion of CAS Requirements - What it takes!

All students in the secondary school are required to spend time and effort participating in CAS and After-School activities. To ensure student participation the school has adopted minimum hourly requirements for each grade level.

Reflecting on the Eight Learning Outcomes – Grades 9 - 12

For grades 9 – 12, all eight outcomes (as stated above) must be present for a student to complete their LCS CAS requirement. Some may be demonstrated many times, in a variety of activities,

but completion requires only that there is some evidence for every outcome. Students will use an online program called ManageBac to reflect on the learning outcomes. This is a requirement. This focus on learning outcomes emphasizes that it is the quality of a CAS activity (its contribution to the student’s development) that is of most importance.

Reflecting on Community and Service – Grades 6 - 8

Grades 6 – 8 will reflect on their involvement in community and service using the ManageBac program. Reflections will be based on teacher guidelines.

Hourly Requirements

Use this chart as a guideline for hourly requirements.

Grade	Creativity	Action	Service	Total	Required by
11 & 12	50	50	50	150	LCS & IBO
10	15	15	15	45	LCS
9	15	15	15	45	LCS
8	*	*	*	40	LCS
7	*	*	*	30	LCS
6	*	*	*	30	LCS

Figure 2: Minimum hourly requirements for each grade level

Fulfilling CAS Requirements:

- Grades 11-12
 - Successful completion is a graduation requirement by LCS and the IBO
- Grades 9-10
 - CAS participation influences admission into the IB Diploma program in 11th grade
 - The LCS requirement for service must be completed to receive an MYP Certificate
- Grades 6 – 8
 - Grades will be reflected in their report card where the units involve community and service

Recommendations

Following are recommendations that will make your CAS experience more fulfilling, more meaningful, less stressful and help you stand out in the college application process.

Grade 11 and 12 Recommendations:

- Try to perform service with one organization over a sustained period time. Service Wednesday trips area a great way to accomplish this!
- Take a leadership position in an activity or service organization.
- Balance creativity, action and service over the two years – be mindful of opportunities like school plays/performances, varsity teams and service trips. However, don’t take on too much at once as this could have a negative impact on your academics.
- Reach out to those in need outside of the LCS community.
- Continue to do the things you feel passionate about.
- Use the ManageBac program to reflect upon your experiences at least twice per month.
- Complete 2/3 of your 11th and 12th grade hourly requirements in 11th grade – this will lower your stress level in 12th grade.

- Twelfth graders should plan on finishing their hourly requirements before the end of March. This will allow them time to focus on IB exams.

Grade 9 and 10 Recommendations:

- Balance a variety of creativity, action and service over the year.
- Experience a variety of activities.
- Take a leadership position in something you feel passionate about.
- Participate in one or more Service Wednesday trips per quarter.
- Participate in at least one HFH trip per year.
- Participate in one other weekend service trip per year.
- Use the ManageBac program to reflect upon your experiences at least twice per month.

Grade 6 through 8 Recommendations:

- Balance a variety of creativity, action and service over the year
- Participate regularly in grade-level service projects
- Go on at least one CAS Wednesday trip per quarter
- Experience a weekend service trip

CAS Do's and Don'ts

Do this!

- Follow your passions
- Serve those less fortunate
- Work in groups
- Work cooperatively
- Bring new ideas into an activity
- Use the hourly requirements as a guideline to help you
 - Use your talents
 - Get out of the box
- Learn about yourself and your world through your journal and reflections

Avoid this!

- Babysitting (only appropriate for grades 6-8)
- Working for a business
- Working for your family
- Activities without supervision (or supervised by friends or family)
- Fundraising with no clearly defined goal
- Hour counting
- Reflecting in ManageBac only at the end of the quarter.

CAS FAQs

Can I start my own activity?

Yes, all you have to do is complete a CAS Proposal form and get it approved by the CAS Coordinator. Submit proposals before the start of the Activities Module.

Can students supervise an activity?

Not alone. All activities must have adult supervision. This could be an LCS faculty member, a parent or another responsible adult.

Can a student leader sign off on CAS recognition and reflections?

Not alone. They can sign the forms, but the adult supervisor must also sign off and approve.

What are the guidelines for using ManageBac?

Students need to provide evidence of achieving the eight Learning Outcomes. Here are some important guidelines, but you need to use your common sense. If you do something a lot, you need to provide a lot of evidence. If you do something only once, you only need a little evidence.

1. Use a combination of journal entries, photos, websites, files and YouTube videos – your evidence should be varied
2. Every activity must have one or more journal entries – depending on how many times you did the activity
3. As you add your evidence, check off ONLY the Learning Outcomes that the evidence fulfills
4. Add evidence when things are fresh on your mind, so that the memories do not fade
5. You need to be using ManageBac twice a month or more to know that you are on track

If the point of CAS is to help students follow their passions, express special talents and serve those in need, why are there hourly requirements?

The hourly requirements only serve as a guideline to help keep students experimenting, active and on track. The fact is that most IB students exceed the requirements without much effort. Please don't get hung up on hours!

Why are some types of service better than others?

Transformational experiences happen when students move out of their comfort zones and truly work with those who are less fortunate and/or try to make a positive impact on the environment. The goal of service is to foster a culture of empathy and personal responsibility for making this world a better place. Therefore, you cannot compare the experience of serving in an orphanage, for example, to serving on a prom committee. Though everyone loves a good prom, I am hoping that you can see the difference!

So what types of service activities would you avoid?

Good question. If you are in grade 9 and above, you should avoid babysitting and do something a bit more meaningful. All students should avoid working for businesses (CAS is not about providing free labor!) Though I would encourage all students to work with their families in "family activities", you should be forewarned that most family activities are not necessarily CAS activities. See the CAS Coordinator if you have specific questions. Also be sure that your activities always have responsible supervision – this could be a teacher, an LCS parent or a professional.

Has anyone ever been denied CAS recognition for an activity?

Yes. Therefore I would recommend that any non LCS-sponsored activity is preapproved before you get involved. If in doubt, talk to the CAS Coordinator.

If I do more than the hourly requirements in this year, will they count for next year?

Not in grades 6 – 10. However, in grade 11, you are allowed to complete up to 2/3 of your combined 11th and 12th grade requirements. The reasoning behind this is to allow 12th graders need to finish their CAS requirements by the end of March so they can focus on their IB exams.

Do colleges and universities look at a student's CAS record?

Yes. Colleges look at the whole student. Your CAS experience can help you stand out from other applicants – especially since you are graduating from a school in Africa. This is why I would recommend that students get involved in a worthwhile service organization like Street Girls Aid, Osu Children's Home, New Horizon Special School and the AIDS Education Group. If you work hard in one of these organizations, you will have a real "African" experience which will be good for you as a person and look great on a college application.