

Further guidance for developing MYP service as action

Reference excerpt—*MYP: From principles into practice* (2014)

Service and action in IB programmes

The service as action continuum could be summarized by the following diagram.

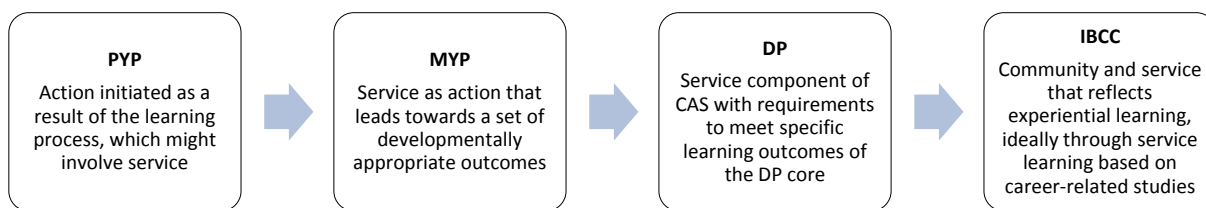


Figure 4 from *MYP: From principles into practice* (May 2014: 23).

Fulfillment of the school's expectations for participation in community service is a requirement of the IB MYP certificate.

Reference excerpt: *Programme standards and practices* (2014)

MYP requirements for service

The curriculum provides sufficient opportunities for students to meet the learning outcomes for service in every year of the programme (C2.5.a).

The school has a system for the qualitative monitoring of student involvement in service according to the school's learning expectations for service (C4.5.a).

Glossary

Commonly used terms

Action is learning by doing and experiencing, and is a key component in constructivist models of education, including the kind of teaching and learning common to all IB programmes. Through responsible action, tightly connected with sustained inquiry and critical reflection, young people and adults can develop the kinds of attributes described by the learner profile that are essential for success in future academic pursuits and life beyond the classroom.

Service, as a subset or particular kind of action, has always been a shared value of the IB community. IB learners strive to be caring members of the community who demonstrate a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

Service as action: With appropriate guidance and support, MYP students should, through their engagement with service as one of the significant forms of action, meet the learning outcomes to develop the skills and attributes of an IB learner. IB World Schools value service with others as an important way to engage in principled action across a range of overlapping local and global communities.

Service learning is a structured approach to integrate service into the curriculum. Students apply subject matter to develop plans and partnerships that meet the needs of others. The process includes the key components of inquiry, action and reflection. Experiencing a service-learning approach within an academic class becomes a critical and essential process for students. Having this experience, particularly when the service-learning process is made explicit, provides a reliable model for students to use for taking more independent initiative with an idea for service. Guided or classroom learning that leads to action addressing a community need is most meaningful when it allows students to incorporate their own interests, skills and talents.

Community and service: Previously this was an area of interaction. In the 2014 MYP model, community and service is replaced by the terms “Service ▪ Action”.

Community service: Students serve the community by understanding and acting with mutual responsibility to meet their own needs and the needs of others. The IB MYP certificate requires that students meet the school’s expectations for participating in community service.

Service activities or **service experiences** are opportunities for students to engage in action. Service activities may be designed as a single learning event, a series of related learning experiences, or an extended project. They can be planned by teachers, students, external organizations and agencies, alone or in collaboration with other individuals and groups. An example of an MYP service activity that has been structured using a service-learning model is the MYP community project (required for schools in which MYP year 3 or year 4 is the final year of the programme).

Leadership for service as action: The IB does not require schools to appoint teachers to lead service. However, the school’s organizational structure must support students’ involvement in service as action and its qualitative monitoring. In practice, individual teachers or committees often oversee the development of school-based service activities, promote service as action in curriculum development, and administer the school’s system for monitoring students’ participation in community service to ensure that they have met the school’s expectations.

The **community project** focuses on community and service, encouraging students to explore their right and responsibility to implement service as action in the community. The project gives students an opportunity to develop awareness of needs in various communities and address those needs through service learning. All students in schools that end the programme in MYP year 3 or year 4 *must* complete a community project. Schools offering the programme including years 3, 4 and 5 *may* choose to offer students the opportunity to engage in the community project. Completing a community project does not in itself fulfill the requirements for MYP service.

Frequently asked questions

How many hours of community service must MYP students complete each year?

The MYP requires school expectations for community service to be expressed qualitatively, not quantitatively. The IB does not set specific requirements regarding the number of hours students must devote to community service. In practice, schools often help students to develop a healthy balance of activities and responsibilities by suggesting flexible, developmentally appropriate guidelines for reasonable participation in service as action.

Do schools need to develop their own learning expectations using the learning outcomes for each year of the programme?

No. There are seven learning outcomes for service (MYP: From principles into practice (May 2014: 24)). With appropriate guidance and support, MYP students should, through their engagement with service as action:

- become more aware of their own strengths and areas for growth
- undertake challenges that develop new skills
- discuss, evaluate and plan student-initiated activities
- persevere in action
- work collaboratively with others
- develop international-mindedness through global engagement, multilingualism and intercultural understanding
- consider the ethical implications of their actions.

These learning outcomes identify the substance of students' self-reflection on service as action. Through their participation in service, students can become more confident, self-regulated learners. All MYP student learning outcomes for service are closely associated with IB learner profile attributes and approaches to learning (ATL) skills.

Do all students have to meet all seven learning outcomes for service for each year in which they participate in the programme?

No. The learning outcomes for service are aims for MYP students that they can achieve through involvement in service throughout the programme. The seven outcomes are developmental, reflecting what students may expect to experience and learn over time. The outcomes describe broadly how students can change and grow through service with and for others; they are not intended to be met by every student in every service activity, or documented in every year of the programme. Longer, more complex service-learning projects offer opportunities to address more learning outcomes.

What are some good practices for schools implementing a system for the qualitative monitoring of student involvement in service?

Effective systems for monitoring involvement in service:

- focus on opportunities for students to demonstrate that they are meeting specific learning outcomes for service
- develop a manageable record-keeping process, which can include school-based or externally developed digital platforms
- prompt meaningful student reflection on their growth over time
- promote students' development of self-management ATL skills

- provide students with meaningful feedback about the quality of their reflection, their understanding of service, and their development as caring, responsible members of local and global communities.

At certain points in the academic year, systems might include the collection, review and recording of student work products from MYP units, event reports, activity logs, journals, portfolios or structured reflections.

What other documentation should schools develop as evidence that they have met the relevant MYP standards and practices?

Evidence of having met standards and practices for MYP service can be found in a variety of existing documents, including:

- unit plans (for example, **learning experiences** that incorporate opportunities for individual or collective service learning; **reflection before, during and after teaching** that the unit sparked planned or spontaneous action)
- subject-group overviews (for example, an additional column might note possible community-service activities associated with specific units over the course of the programme)
- planning notes, project overviews and communications with students and parents that explain events, organizations and opportunities for service with and for others
- instructions for digital platforms that monitor programme participation and model student entries used to demonstrate expectations
- matrices that show alignment between MYP service as action and local requirements for community involvement or service.

How should schools determine their expectations for service?

Since MYP schools exist in a broad range of local and national contexts, what schools expect in terms of student participation in service can vary significantly. Opportunities to participate in service can be limited by personal and school circumstances, and service expectations must never compromise concern for students' health, safety and well-being. School expectations should be clearly defined, carefully communicated and fairly administered.

In general, schools set expectations for the students in the area of service that are developmental, gradually releasing responsibility and increasing expectations over the five years of the programme. Some schools organize entirely school-based opportunities for service in the early years of the programme. Ongoing collaboration with teachers, students, parents/guardians and the wider community is a good way to establish meaningful and reasonable expectations. In programmes ending in MYP year 3 or year 4, all students are expected to complete the community project.

Can schools have “stand-alone” service programmes (opportunities, activities, campaigns and/or events) that are not connected explicitly to the curriculum?

Yes. Not every service activity has to be associated with a specific MYP unit. Both stand-alone and curriculum-based approaches to service can be valuable, providing meaningful opportunities for student engagement and participation in service. Extra-curricular or co-curricular activities—including individual and family community-service activities—can also provide opportunities for students to demonstrate learning outcomes for service. However, the MYP encourages schools to explore the many ways that service can be incorporated into the curriculum, particularly in the “action” aspect of the unit-planning process. Interdisciplinary units can offer especially powerful opportunities to explore service as action.

Does every unit have to provide school-based opportunities for service as action?

No. Every MYP unit offers an opportunity to reflect on its potential to inspire student-initiated action, which can include opportunities for individual, small-group, classroom, school-wide and community-focused service. In some cases, MYP units can also be planned using a service-learning model that effectively integrates content, classroom activities and community-oriented action. However, teaching and learning is more effective when service and action grow as an authentic response to students' engagement in MYP subject groups rather than as a required component of each unit.