

IB was by far the best decision I've ever made. It changed my life for the better and the program at Kelvin was so amazing.

To start, teachers and staff in IB were so incredibly helpful compared to teachers I've had in the past. Mrs. Decelles, IB Coordinator, seemed to be on top of absolutely everything and was there for anything every day with a solution. Most of my best friends, greatest memories and biggest demonstrations of adversity happened in that program.

Into my first year of university, I've already transferred IB credits for almost a quarter of my degree and have saved thousands of hours and dollars. As well, for 4 other university courses, 2 stats and 2 Maths, I have found the single credit of SL IB Math has covered a large proportion.

In terms of preparation, there's no doubt IB has made me a better critical thinker, time organizer and more ambitious. IB was the best decision I ever made and want to thank the program at Kelvin for giving me this opportunity.

*Evan O.*

IB was a wonderful experience for me. This program established a sense of community I did not get from the regular program. Even though it was difficult, and I complained profusely during those three years, IB challenged me in the best way. I strengthened my skills on all academic fronts, this put me ahead when it came to university. By taking the IB program, I was able to get my university credits in high school, allowing me to skip first-year university entirely, saving me hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars. Overall, my favorite part of my IB experience is all the amazing memories I made; working on IA's with friends, biology lab mishaps, amazing conversations with the teachers, so many wonderful things I would have missed if I had not taken on this challenge.

*Jhamela A.*

The IB Programme taught me many useful skills that I otherwise would not have had going into university. Although it is a rigorous program with a heavy course load, and you are held to a high standard, ultimately, I found this to pay off my first year at university, especially once I realized how many other students did not know how to do things that I can now do effortlessly because of IB, such as writing a lab report, writing essays, or having time management skills. Because of the IB Programme, I was also able to transfer several credits over to university, which allowed me to bypass the writing and humanities requirements. The ability to transfer credits also allowed me to fast-track my first year, as I did not have to take as many general first year courses and was able to take the more specialized second year courses, which ultimately allowed me to decide what degree I wanted to do much faster. The highlight of my IB experience was definitely the endless support that we get from the amazing teachers in this program. They are incredibly knowledgeable, approachable, and just overall made the experience worth it. The skills that you learn in the IB Programme truly shape you into a better learner and student for the rest of your life.

*Anonymous*

I took the partial IB programme at Kelvin, taking only IB Biology and English, but found taking even just two classes to be very beneficial. It certainly was a higher workload than my friends who weren't in the IB programme, but I felt much more prepared once I came to university. I found that I have a lot easier time analyzing and understanding works in my first-year English class compared to my peers, since there is a lot less specific help and direction from professors. I have had no problem with the amount of reading and felt that in some ways, my English course in high school was harder. I will say that the English department at Kelvin, especially, does a great job of getting the most out of every work that they can. We studied a variety of different things, from novels, to plays, to poetry, and at times would only spend a week or so on each work. However, I feel that I got good understanding of each work before we moved on.

I have found the IB staff to be extremely helpful with anything you need, whether it is a question about credit transfer, improving your grade, or just some academic or life advice. They have been some of my favourite teachers that I have had Kelvin because they care about each student individually. The programme is very organized, I remember being surprised when I first joined at how Mrs. Decelles (the IB Coordinator) kept track of everything, and seemed to have the answers to any questions we had, sent in an email, before we even had a chance to ask them! This was especially helpful during the pandemic. Since I joined a year late, I had a little bit of catching up to do in Biology and staff were extremely helpful in giving me all the materials I needed and helping me along the way in the transition from doing Biology in French to English.

One of my favourite experiences in high school was Shakespeare in the Snow, where we studied The Merchant of Venice for three days at Camp Cedarwood for our English class. It was a great time of bonding for everyone and allowed us to have a lot of fun and get a better understanding of the play. Most people give me a look when I tell them that studying Shakespeare for a week straight was so much fun, but it honestly was a great way to connect with our peers and our teachers, and we were very lucky to be able to go right before the pandemic began.

*Martina B.*

As a program itself, IB is obviously well developed and Kelvin High School definitely executes it well too. Even the teachers, you can tell that they all have a passion for teaching and building relations with the students. Quite a few teachers surprised me with how close they were to their students, whether it be interactions in the hallways or just praises by my peers. It was to the point where I felt like I had missed out by not having them until senior year.

For me, the difficulty of the program lied in the time management. The courses themselves, at least the ones I took, didn't have particularly difficult material but the amount of work along with the pace is what really got to me. Honestly, the program is a mental game, if school is your number one priority and you can keep it that way, you will have no problem.

Regarding the program and its relations to universities, the ability to transfer courses makes the first year so much nicer however, it's a good idea to take a refresher in the summer before year 2 to make sure you didn't forget the courses you transferred before entering the next level of it.

One thing I wish teachers would do more is push the significance of transfer credits as well as help with researching different post-secondary options as high school is just one big runway to university for many people and especially IB students. Have a goal, keep school a priority, and research your future early. Trust the teachers to do the rest for you through their teaching, they make genuine connections with their students and are super sweet people. :)

*Dooho K.*

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme was the greatest yet most rewarding challenge I have ever undertaken. The academic rigour of the programme and the broad scope of its curriculum pushed me to become more articulate, more inquisitive, more organized, and more capable of managing my time. The IB programme prepared me for university so well that my first year has been a step down in difficulty, if anything. I was able to transfer 36 credit-hours of course credit to the University of Manitoba, saving me much time and thousands of dollars, on top of the additional entrance awards they provide based on IB course results.

Though it is offered in countless schools across the world, there is something special about taking the IB programme at Kelvin. Every one of my teachers was so passionate about the subject they taught, and so willing and capable of imparting that passion onto their students. Each of them was a mentor to me in their own way, and I will forever be grateful for not only the knowledge, but the life lessons and invaluable skills they taught me. My IB teachers always encouraged me to think critically about big ideas, to speak my mind with careful consideration, and to challenge the limits of my understanding, knowledge, and ability. In a world increasingly fraught with discord and divisive rhetoric, those experiences have made me a more thoughtful, patient, conscientious, and considerate individual. This was a time of substantial personal growth for me, and I will undoubtedly carry the valuable lessons I learned in the IB programme with me for the rest of my life.

Of course, Kelvin's IB programme would not be possible without the tireless work of Mrs. Decelles, the IB coordinator, who was there to support the students in the programme and answer our questions from day one. I know I speak for all my colleagues when I say how incredibly valuable it was to have such a helpful and organized coordinator in charge of the programme throughout our studies. It even became a running joke that Mrs. Decelles would read and respond to our emails in less time than it took to write them.

Equally vital to the IB experience at Kelvin are the students it brings together from across the city. My closest friends are those with whom I laboured through the most challenging parts of the programme and celebrated the accomplishments along the way. There is nothing more motivating than being surrounded by others who are equally as invested in learning and self-improvement. I often found myself inspired by how my peers in the IB programme were continually pushing themselves to greater personal achievements, and selflessly contributing to

stronger communities at school and beyond. As is written on a plaque in the Kelvin hallways: “through sheer excellence, [Kelvin] students will raise their school to new heights, the likes of which have yet to be seen anywhere else.”

The IB programme is by no means easy, but if you are someone who is motivated by challenge, and willing to make sacrifices for the sake of your learning, you will come out of the programme not only more knowledgeable, but as a fundamentally better person. I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to my teachers and colleagues in the IB programme, as I could not possibly imagine a better high school experience than the one I had thanks to them at Kelvin.

*Gabriel Y.*