TAURAGE "VERSMĖ" GYMNASIUM CAS HANDBOOK

2023-2025

CAS in the core of the Diploma Programme

THE CORE OF THE DIPLOMA PROGRAM

THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE (TOK)

This course encourages students to think about the nature of knowledge, to reflect on the process of learning in all their subjects, and to see and understand the connections between them.

THE EE – THE EXTENDED ESSAY

The extended essay, a substantial piece of academic writing of up to 4,000 words, enables students to investigate a topic of special interest that they have chosen themselves;

CAS – CREATIVITY, ACTIVITY, SERVICE

CAS involves students in a range of enjoyable and significant experiences, as well as a CAS project. CAS helps students to challenge themselves, grow and improve in many areas.

THE CORE OF THE DIPLOMA PROGRAM

These three elements of the Diploma Programme core were introduced as a way to **educate the whole person.** All three elements of the core should be grounded in three coherent aims:

1. Support, and be supported by, the academic disciplines.
2. Foster international-mindedness.
3. Develop self-awareness and a sense of identity.

CAS

CAS is organized around the three strands of creativity, activity and service defined as follows:

- **Creativity** — exploring and extending ideas leading to an original or interpretive product or performance
- **Activity** — physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle
- **Service** — collaborative and reciprocal engagement with the community in response to an authentic need

CAS

EXPECTATIONS

All CAS students are expected to maintain and complete **a CAS portfolio** as evidence of their engagement with CAS. The CAS portfolio is a collection of evidence that showcases CAS experiences and students' reflections; it is not formally assessed.

Completion of CAS is based on student achievement of the **seven CAS learning outcomes.** Through their CAS portfolio, students provide the school with evidence demonstrating achievement of each learning outcome.

Students engage in CAS experiences involving one or more of the three CAS strands. A CAS experience can be a single event or may be an extended series of events.

Further, students undertake a CAS project of at least one month's duration that challenges students to show initiative, demonstrate perseverance, and develop skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, and decision-making. The CAS project can address any single strand of CAS, or combine two or all three strands.

CAS STAGES

Students use the CAS stages as a framework for CAS experiences and the CAS project.

CAS EXPERIENCE OR PROJECT:

INVESTIGATION

PREPARATION

ACTION

REFLECTION

DEMONSTRATION
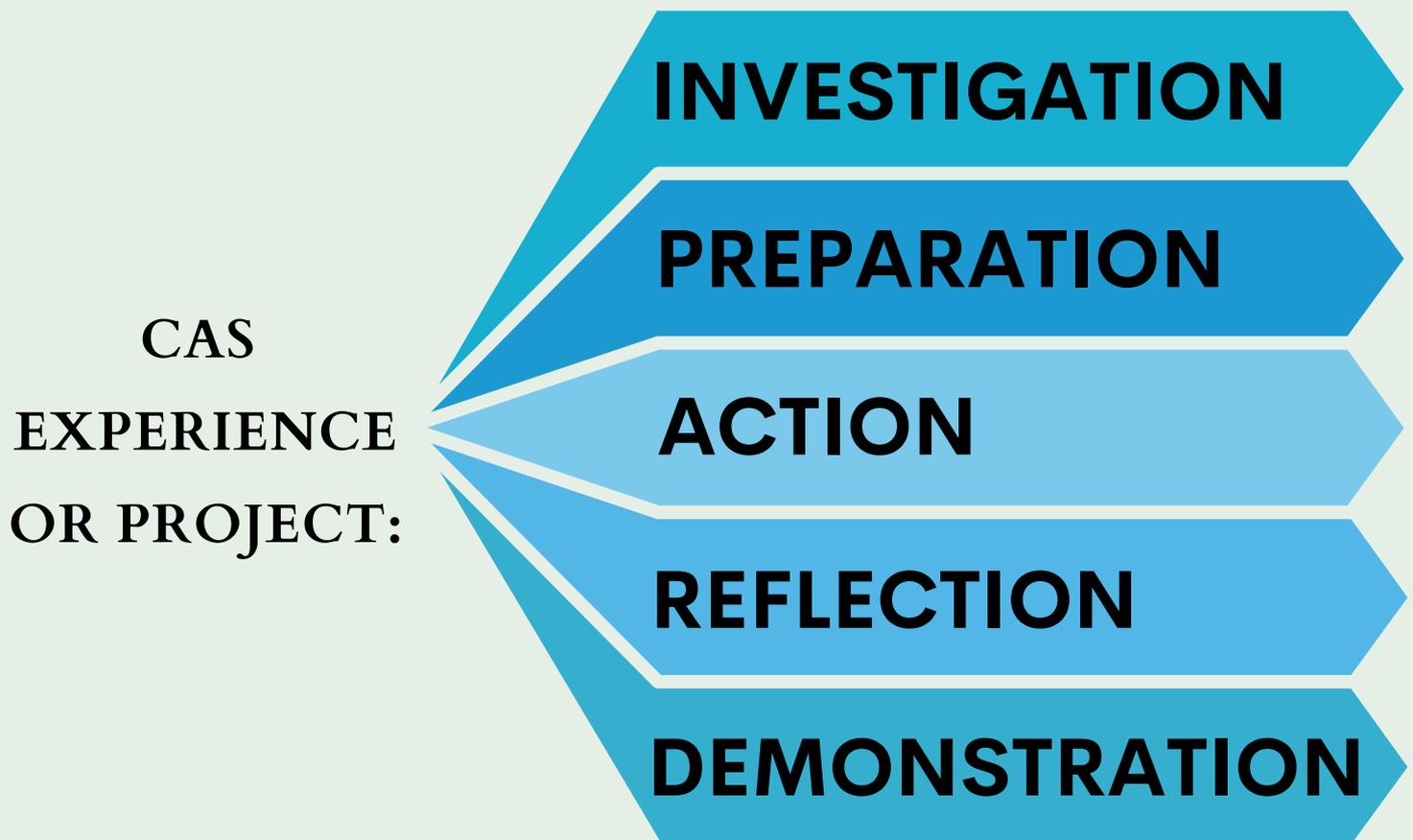
INTERVIEWS AND REFLECTION

CAS coordinator meets students in groups to discuss general CAS-related information, activities and expectations. Throughout the year students can consult CAS coordinator about their activities.

There are **three formal documented interviews** students must have with their CAS coordinator/adviser. The first interview is at the beginning of the CAS program, the second at the end of the first year, and the third interview is at the end of the CAS program.

CAS emphasizes **reflection** which is central to building a deep and rich experience in CAS. Reflection informs students' learning and growth by allowing students to explore ideas, skills, strengths, limitations and areas for further development and consider how they may use prior learning in new contexts.

WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF CAS?

The CAS program aims to develop students who:

1. enjoy and find significance in a range of CAS experiences
2. purposefully reflect upon their experiences
3. identify goals, develop strategies, and determine further actions for personal growth
4. explore new possibilities, embrace new challenges, and adapt to new roles
5. actively participate in planned, sustained, and collaborative CAS projects
6. understand they are members of local and global communities with responsibilities towards each other and the environment

7 LEARNING OUTCOMES

LEARNING OUTCOME	DESCRIPTOR
Identify own strengths and develop areas for growth.	Students are able to see themselves as individuals with various abilities and skills, of which some are move developed than others.
Demonstrate that challenges have been undertaken, developing new skills in the process.	A new challenge may be an unfamiliar experience or an extension of an existing one. The newly acquired or developed skills may be shown through new experiences or through increased expertise in an established area.
Demonstrate how to initiate and plan a CAS experience.	Students can articulate the stages from conceiving an idea to executing a plan for individual or collaborative CAS experiences. Students may show their knowledge and awareness by building on a previous experience or by launching a new idea or process.
Show commitment to, and perseverance in, CAS experiences.	Students demonstrate regular involvement and active engagement in CAS.
Demonstrate the skills and recognize the benefits of working collaboratively.	Students are able to identify, demonstrate and critically discuss the benefits and challenges of collaboration gained through CAS experiences.
Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance.	Students are able to identify, demonstrate and critically discuss the benefits and challenges of collaboration gained through CAS experiences.
Recognize and consider the ethics of choices and actions.	Students show awareness of the consequences of choices and actions in planning and carrying out CAS experiences.

CAS

samples

- CREATIVITY: a student group plans, designs and creates a mural.
- ACTIVITY: students organize and participate in a sports team including training sessions and matches against other teams.
- SERVICE: students set up and conduct tutoring for people in need.
- SERVICE and ACTIVITY: students plan and participate in the planting and maintenance of a garden with members of the local community.
- CREATIVITY, ACTIVITY and SERVICE: students rehearse and perform a dance production for a community retirement home.

IS IT CAS?

- enjoyable?

- personal interests, talents or skills growth?

- challenges?

- learning outcome adressed?

- which CAS strand does it fit?

- attributes of the learner profile development?

IF YOU ANSWERED YES, THEN THIS IS A CAS ACTICITY/PROJECT.

Student-to-student

Hello CAS blog!

Today I'm going to introduce you to probably the most important activity I'll do this school year. I'm helping another student get better at English! I've been doing this since October (we meet each other every single week), and I'm not planning to stop until I graduate. This activity involves mostly creativity and service.

The idea of helping other students came from my CAS coordinator, whom I immediately asked for the contact of a future student. I found out that the girl I'm going to teach English is from Ukraine, and she's having a hard time with English. I immediately began to fear that it would be difficult for me to talk to her since I do not speak Ukrainian, and she does not understand Lithuanian very well. However, after writing her a message, I realized that I would be working with someone who wants to learn.

When we first met, she told me that she struggled with reading and pronunciation. I decided to start with reading because she admitted that it was the most difficult for her. Because I wanted to find out her level of English, I chose the A2, B1, and B2 level tasks. I saw that even the A2 level tasks were challenging enough for the student, and I realized that we would have to work together a lot.

Every week, I send her assignments that we discuss in person. One day she sent me A2 reading assignments done perfectly correctly – I'm not going to lie, I was in tears. I never thought that teaching and student success could bring so much happiness. The language barrier also forced me to look creatively at the tasks and their interpretation – I don't want us to speak through an interpreter but rather to establish a real connection. I learned to explain even simple words by using various examples and depicting them differently. You still have to use a translator, but not very much (only for difficult-to-explain words).

Together, we have already moved on to B1 reading tasks, we are learning new words, and we are reading. I am very happy with my student's success, and I know that we will achieve even more by the end of the school year!

Learning outcomes I achieved:

1. Identify your strengths and develop areas for personal growth; 2. Demonstrate that challenges have been undertaken, developing new skills in the process; 3. Demonstrate how to initiate and plan a CAS experience; 4. Show commitment to and perseverance in CAS experiences; 7. Recognize and consider the ethics of choices and actions.

Volunteering in a summer camp

Hello CAS blog!

I would like to share my summer adventures with you. I had the opportunity to travel to Lithuania and explore Taurage, as well as other countries. Despite this, I made sure to still do my CAS activities. I participated in two activities that required a lot of commitment, but I gained valuable knowledge from them. Let me tell you about the first one – I volunteered at a children's summer camp in Taurai. Through this experience, I touched on all aspects of CAS and accomplished all of the learning outcomes.

As you see by now, I do a lot of my activities in Taurai since this is close to where I live. This year was the second time they did a summer camp for the village's children, and I decided to volunteer. The camp was five days long, and it would take ages for me to tell you all the fun things, but to make a long story short we learned first aid, watched movies, visited Klaipėda and the dolphinarium, learned about wind power and other renewable energy sources, played sports and much more.

By volunteering in this camp I understood some of my strengths, as I was great at communicating with children and letting them be as creative as possible. I have to be honest, it takes creativity to think of something that would stop them from fighting:D It is always a challenge working with little children, but I think all volunteers pulled through. I also helped out the organizers by suggesting some activities and working collaboratively.

I am delighted that not only did the children benefit from the camp, but I also learned about important topics that will be useful in my life. I look forward to the opportunity to volunteer at this camp next year.

Trivia

Hello, CAS Blog!

Welcome to November! Although I only completed 2 activities (plus LMS volunteering, but there it was just loads of paperwork:D), they all took quite some time. The first activity was trivia! Have not organized one in ages! And, of course, I touched on all aspects of CAS.

Like last year I helped "Taurų žiburys" – the village community. I did the trivia myself, and this time there were questions about famous love stories, ophthalmologists, and animated movies. Of course, a lot of creativity went into this: not only figuring out tours of this trivia but also the questions. It is quite challenging and takes a lot of time. I did the presentation myself too. We also had to gather the tables and chairs and set up the trivia, so we touched on the activity aspect. I am really happy to tell you that 12 teams showed up (about 75 people in total), thus the trivia and "Taurų žiburys" are all gaining popularity. I'm super proud of that, and I know that the community is proud too. I hope I will have the time to do this again!

Learning outcomes I achieved:

1. Identify your own strengths and develop areas for personal growth; 2. Demonstrate that challenges have been undertaken, developing new skills in the process; 3. Demonstrate how to initiate and plan a CAS experience; 4. Show commitment to and perseverance in CAS experiences; 5. Demonstrate the skills and recognize the benefits of working collaboratively; 6. Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance.

LMS teambuilding: "Juodos Avys" or "Black sheep"

As I have mentioned in my previous posts, I am volunteering at Tauragė District Student Self-Government Information Center. There I got the opportunity to take part in a team training held by "Black Sheep". At first, I wasn't very interested in it and was a bit lazy to go and do something like that on a Saturday. However, I heard some good feedback about "Black Sheep". This is why, in the end, I chose to take part in the training which turned out to be a really great activity for self-discovery.

The whole activity was divided into two parts – theoretical and practical. In the first part, we got to know the woman who was hosting the training and she got to know our team. Also, the volunteers got to know each other better by doing some tasks. In the second part, the host assigned us a task so that she could analyze our team's weaknesses and strengths by seeing how we approach the task. Personally, the task was unique and something I have never seen before. The host ordered us to pick 3 leaders and gave us masks to put on our eyes. Then we had to build a tent on a rope only using newspapers and tape. The three leaders could see everything but they did not have the ability to do something while the other volunteers did not see anything but had the ability to do whatever they want. The leaders had to give orders to others to successfully build a tent.

Outcomes:

After the team training I feel like I have finally seen a different side of myself and the team I am in. After the analysis of the tent building task in which the whole team needed creativity I got the information that I am a person who often takes a step back. When I cannot control something, I step back as it is hard for me to see something go wrong or not the way I want and not be able to change anything about it. I also got some tips on how should I behave in those situations.

Furthermore, I, once again, realized that team work is a powerful force. When united, humans can make changes, improve, complete challenging tasks.

In the end, I am really happy for making the choice to take part in the team training since I never imagined it would have that big positive effect on me and my ability to work collaboratively with others. It had a huge impact on my self-discovery journey.

Experience type: creativity.

CAS learning outcomes: identify own strengths and develop areas for growth (LO 1), demonstrate the skills and recognise the benefits of working collaboratively (LO 5), recognize and consider the ethics of choices and actions (LO 7).