

Admission Policy

*This policy document explains the admission of students to the Dutch national curricula at the start of the school (year 1), to the subsequent years and to the final year towards the diploma programmes of pre-university education (**vwo**), senior general secondary (**havo**) education and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (**IBDP**).*

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CROSS REFERENCES to: [Assessment Policy](#), [School Support Profile \(Inclusion & SEN policy\)](#)

REFERENCES: see Ch 11

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ALASCA
an Esprit School

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ALASCA (ALASCA) was founded in 2016 as an Esprit school offering pre-university education (**vwo & vwo+**) and senior general secondary (**havo**) education to the children in Amsterdam. Our school offers a curriculum based on the principles of liberal arts & sciences. Rooted in a strong focus on academic knowledge and skills, social awareness and an attitude of social consciousness and engagement, we aim to give our students the means, perspectives and skills needed to take on their future roles. As such, we are committed to helping them become the intellectuals, academics, artists and leaders of tomorrow. Recognizing the importance of each individual member of our school community, the admissions team, within reason, will do their best to provide the education programme that best meets the individual needs of the student.

1. Admission to the first year¹

In the last form of Primary Education children become informed, counseled and advised by their teacher as to which level and kind of Secondary Education would be best suitable for them. The children and their parents (legal guardians) make a list of schools ranked in order of preference, following a period of information days offered by all the secondary schools in Amsterdam. This list of (maximally 12) school preferences has to be provided together with the enrollment at the school of their choice. Finally, it is the “central system of selection and matching” of the Municipality of Amsterdam that will inform the parents (legal guardians) to which school the children have been admitted. Every secondary school offers an introduction afternoon to the group of new students in the months before the summer vacation starts.

2. Admission to the years 2 and 3

During the following years it may occur that students switch schools for various reasons, such as moving house or unfortunate events at a school. If a switching student opts to be admitted to ALASCA this is only possible if there are vacant places in years 2 and 3. These students will need to provide the school recommendation from their primary school (see 1.) to attend senior general secondary education (**havo**) or pre-university education (**vwo & vwo+**).

An introductory meeting is arranged with the deputy head and a day can be arranged for the child to follow lessons and feel what it can be like at ALASCA. After this optional orientation an intake interview is planned aimed to find out if the school’s philosophy indeed matches the prospective student’s learning needs and expectations. This may concern having the necessary skills to plan and organise learning independently and the aptitude to learn modules taught in English. If there is no doubt that the school would benefit the student’s learning, the student has adequate background to participate, and the school has space available the student will be admitted. A student will not be admitted if the requirement to support the student’s learning needs exceeds what the school has to offer (see *policy for inclusive education and special education needs*).

¹ The admission to secondary schools in Amsterdam is regulated centrally by OSVO see <http://www.voschoolkeuze020.nl/> and [Kernprocedure Overstap PO - VO](#)

3. Tracking into the pre-university (vwo) and senior general secondary (havo) education

At ALASCA, students can graduate with a diploma for havo (senior general secondary education), vwo (pre-university education) or the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). The school integrates the delivery of these academic levels as far as possible, to ensure that students can remain in one year group (cohort) while pursuing their academic challenges. Thus students are not placed in distinctly tracked groups unless their profile subjects require this.

All students follow the core curriculum during the first three years, in preparation for the senior years. In addition to the core, a variety of “elective” modules are to be followed each term from year 2 onwards. By the end of year 3, students choose *a track* (vwo (pre-university) or havo (senior general secondary education) and *curriculum* (“Societal and Cultural” studies or “Science and Technology”) to pursue. In year 4 the students officially enter the “Second Stage”², i.e. the legal term used for these senior school years. This fourth year operates as the *preparatory year* for the different tracks to external examination to attain a diploma of secondary education. Successfully completing year 4, students may opt to switch to the IB Diploma Programme offered in years 5 and 6 (see 5.2). The requirements for the Second Stage curricula are specified per subject³ and legally prescribed to the school.

The school team aims to provide accurate information about the nature and philosophy of our diploma programmes during year 3 and 4, enabling each student to make a personal and informed choice in the course of year 4.

3.1 Tracking in year 3

Halfway through the third school year, the mentor team of year 3 assesses the cognitive level at which each student has operated in the previous years as well as the experienced growth. Based on this assessment, the teacher team, presided by the principal, determines whether a student can continue in the vwo/havo or havo track in year 4. The vwo/havo group continues in a full three-year vwo exam programme, preparing them for admission to university. The havo students, on the other hand, follow a two-year track preparing them for admission to an institute for higher vocational education, i.e. universities of applied sciences. The mentor team presents its findings to the pedagogical leadership for review. In their assessment of each student’s level of thinking and working, the mentor team weighs the following factors:

- The results achieved so far: final assessments of the modules and the number of deficiency modules followed to date;
- Results of the orientation and assessment activities in year 3.

3.2 Re-assessment of tracking in year 4

Students of the vwo/havo track are reassessed with regards to their suitability for the track in which they are placed during the fourth year. If necessary, students can be admitted to the

² In Dutch: “*Tweede Fase*”

³ ref: <https://www.examenblad.nl/homepage/2019>

havo-track. This is determined by the mentor team of year 4 and presented to the school leadership for review. In their assessment of each student's level of thinking and working, the mentor team includes the following factors:

- Assessment results in year 4;
- Assessment of internal examination results thus far. These results include the completion of two mandatory internally assessed exam components: Social studies (maatschappijleer) and Cultural and Artistic Education (CKV);
- The wishes, ambitions and (demonstrated) motivation of the student.

4. Admission to year 4, the “Second Stage”

Having completed year 3, students are admitted to the Second Stage (Tweede Fase) of secondary education. However, the admission can only be granted when they have made sufficient progress in their studies and have completed the full curriculum. The mentor team of year 3 assesses the subject knowledge and academic skills of each student and presents their findings to the pedagogical leadership for review.

4.1 Admission criteria for students to enter year 4

The following criteria are used:

- The student has completed all content requirements of the First Stage curriculum (years 1, 2 & 3): all compulsory components of the curriculum have been completed and all compulsory options and deficiency components have been fulfilled with an assessment “foundation”, “advanced” “expert” or “excellence” level.
- The student has made a definite choice for either the Societal and Cultural studies-curriculum⁴ or the Sciences and Technology-curriculum⁵;
- The student has successfully participated in the orientation and assessment activities offered in year level 3.

Applicants coming from another school are required to provide the latest transcript from their previous school(s) in addition to the above criteria.

⁴ In Dutch: *Cultuur en Maatschappij profiel*; aside from the core subjects Dutch, English and Maths (A) the profile subjects History, Economics, Social Science, Arts have to be followed

⁵ In Dutch: *Natuur en Techniek/Natuur en Gezondheid profiel*: in addition to Dutch, English and Maths (B) this profile offers, Physics, Chemistry, Biology plus electives subjects.

5. Admission to year 5 of vwo/havo⁶

Year 4 constitutes the first year of the “second stage” and lays the foundation for the senior years of secondary education. In that respect, year 4 represents an important moment to judge students’ preparedness for the national (vwo / havo) and international (IB) diploma programmes (see the flow chart, chapter 8).

5.1 Admission process 5 vwo / 5 havo

During year 4, student progress is exclusively assessed formatively. Over the course of a school term, all subjects use a number of formative assessment techniques to evaluate student progress. The outcomes of these formative assessments are then compounded into a *descriptive term evaluation* per subject.

The only exceptions to this practice are the year 4 components of the assessment programmes⁷ of Social Studies, Cultural & Artistic Education and several subject-specific assessments. These assessments are summative, contributing to the final grade for the internal assessment⁸.

5.2 Admission criteria 5 vwo / 5 havo

At the end of the year the mentor team of year 4 holistically assesses each student’s prospects for the senior years. In their assessment of each student’s level of thinking and working, the mentor team includes the following factors:

- **Term evaluations** for all subjects in year 4 of student’s attained learning goals;
- **Results of the internal assessment programmes** of year 4;
- The wishes, ambitions and demonstrated **motivation** of the student;
- Any relevant **private circumstances** particular to a student’s well-being, i.e. access arrangements.

Altogether these factors lead to the advice to be admitted to vwo year 5, to the havo examinations in year 5, to repeat the year or to the advice to change school. The results of this year 5 admission meeting is then presented to the school management team for review.

5.3 Time frame of the admission process 5 vwo / 5 havo

- End of term 2 the mentor meets to discuss all students’ admissibility to year 5 vwo or havo.
- During term 4 specific additional assessment programmes are offered to students who are admitted to year 5 havo.

5.4 Admission to 6 vwo

During the school year 2020 - 2021, the educational committee “Second Stage and examinations” and the mentor team of year 5 together will determine the criteria and process to admit students to year 6, i.e. the final year of pre-university education (vwo).

⁶Vwo: Dutch pre-university education; havo: Dutch senior general secondary education.

⁷ In Dutch: Assessment programme: *Programma van Toetsing en Afsluiting* (a.k.a. PTA) see assessment policy

⁸ In Dutch: internal assessment: *school examen*

6. Admission to year 5, the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme

The IB Diploma Programme is a rigorous academic programme requiring academic ability combined with commitment and resilience to succeed. ALASCA offers its students the possibility to pursue the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) as a continuation of the Liberal Arts and Science education. All students enrolled for the Diploma Programme are required to meet the requirements of the core subjects and a choice of 6 school subject courses: 3 at a standard level and 3 at a higher level. No one can opt to follow a smaller selection of subjects.

6.1 Enrolment in the IB Diploma Programme

Enrolment in the IB Diploma Programme is open to the following categories of students:

- Students with a 4 vwo report card of their school providing admission to 5 vwo;
- Students with a 5 havo Diploma;
- Students - Dutch or expatriate - attending (international) schools abroad, who are proficient in Dutch and English *and* have an academic record sufficient to enter year 5 of pre-university education (vwo).

6.2 Admission Process IB (DP1)

A fourth-year ALASCA student interested in following the IB Diploma Programme has to submit an application motivation letter. To prepare this letter, the input of the tutor and relevant subject teachers on achieved level has to be taken into account by the applicant. The admissions team⁹ will determine the admissibility of each applicant utilising the admission criteria: the applicant's qualification for the DP, motivation and English proficiency.

Applicant students attending other schools can apply for the programme, by submitting an application motivation letter and an academic record of the previous two years of school, and by having an admission interview with the DP coordinator and career counsellor. The following needs to be made evident:

- Specific educational and support needs of the applicant;
- Appropriate subject choices (including languages, a check of Maths skills may be part of the intake);
- Proficiency in using English as a language of instruction (minimally at B2 level, determined by a test in case of doubt).
- If students are not proficient in Dutch as a language of instruction (minimally at B2 level), they must arrange¹⁰ for a Standard Level tutor for a Self Taught Language A.

⁹ The admissions team consists of the DP coordinator, careers counsellor and a language teacher. This group reviews all students' applications and conducts the interviews.

¹⁰ The applicant will be responsible for organisation and payment of a tutor, ALASCA will provide a language supervisor.

The admissions team will determine the admissibility of each applicant utilising the admission criteria: the applicant's motivation, English proficiency and qualification for the DP. If after this procedure the coordinator thinks that the DP is the right fit, the student can join DP1.

Other applicants will be considered, case by case following similar requirements.

6.3 Admission Criteria IB (DP1)

Applicant students can be admitted to DP year 1 when the following entry requirements are met:

1. **Assessment results**
 - Results of vwo year 4 sufficient to be admitted to vwo year 5 or a havo diploma with Maths;
 - Coming from a Middle Years Programme (MYP), a grade 4 or higher in subject areas aimed to follow at Standard Level, and a grade 5 or higher in subject areas aimed to follow at Higher Level.
2. **English language Proficiency**
 - Should be at least at B2 CFEC. (see Language Policy).
 - Evidence of this proficiency is provided by the student's achievement in English courses and modules taught in English during vwo year 4 / MYP;
 - Writing skills: essay type tasks
 - Speaking and listening skills
 - Reading skills: comprehension test and a list of books read in English
3. **Motivation** to follow the Diploma Programme. This should be made evident in the application letter by displaying:
 - A clear understanding of the opportunities and challenges of the Diploma Programme that ALASCA offers;
 - A reflection on the input from the tutor and relevant subject teachers on achieved level and work ethics (especially English and Math);
 - A general idea of the benefits of having an IB diploma;
 - Eagerness to learn in English and further develop their English language skills;
 - Eagerness to learn about the subjects offered

6.4 Time frame: deadlines for admission to the IB (DP1)

January

A limit is set to the amount of students that can be placed in the IB programme.

March

March 1st: The registration form for admission to the Diploma Programme must be submitted to the IB coordinator of ALASCA, together with a letter of motivation.

Interviews with applicant students from other schools / expatriates will be scheduled.

Mid-April

Admission of students will ultimately be announced, in time to follow necessary modules needed to prepare students for the Diploma Programme.

May

The first installment payment (250 euros) of the parental contribution has to be made.

Start of academic year

The final installment payment of the parental contribution has to be made.

In case of a Supervised Self Study Language, the internal supervisor has to have an agreement with the external tutor, approved by the career counsellor.

Okt (2nd deadline)

Okt 1st: registration closes for final external applications, provided the limit of students is not met.

Withdrawal of an application after because of doubts by the applicant is possible (other than rejection by not meeting the application criteria), but not without consequences for the student's performance in the 4 vwo track. This should be discussed with the careers counsellor.

6.5 Admission to the second year of the Diploma Programme for external applicants (DP2)

In exceptional cases, external applicant students meeting all requirements for promotion to the second year of the Diploma Programme may be granted admission. In addition, the school, students and parents need to be able to facilitate a smooth transition. All official documents from the first year of the Diploma programme (internal assessments, Extended Essays, CAS etc.) need to be indicated if they require to be transferred to ALASCA for later IB submission. These documents then need to come with authenticity statements of the previous school. We cannot accommodate DP subjects which are not offered at ALASCA. All requests must be discussed with the Diploma Programme coordinator.

6.6 Criteria to be admitted to the IB Diploma Programme (DP 2)

To qualify for promotion from DP1 to DP2, the students must attain an overall score of 24 points for their 6 subjects and a minimum of D in Theory of Knowledge. This means the average mark for the 6 subjects must be at least 4,0. Students must have a minimum of 12 points for 3-4 higher level subjects and a minimum of 9 points for 3 Standard Level subjects. A grade 1 for a Higher or Standard level subject is a failing condition, as is more than one grade 2.

When the overall result suffers from just one failing condition in a chosen subject, the student will be allowed to re-sit the assessment in the subject for which a failing grade was achieved. The student may indicate that he/she has a preference for the (failing) subject to re-sit, but the teachers will decide during the report meeting which subject the student is allowed to re-sit. Re-sits are taken within one week of the report meeting.

At the end of the academic year, the student must have met two conditions:

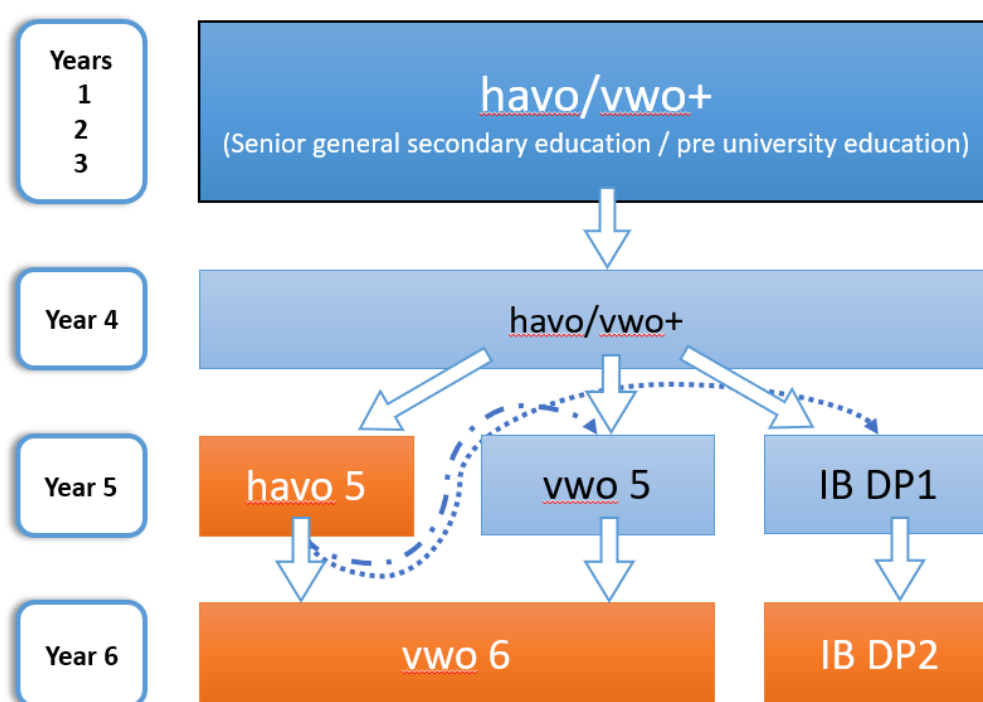
- The necessary CAS requirements.
- For the Extended Essay the necessary deadlines must have been met and sufficient progress must have been shown.

Should one or more conditions not be met, the student will not be eligible to follow lessons in DP2 until the outstanding CAS and Extended Essay work has been sufficiently completed before the start of the new academic year. This means the student is officially promoted, but needs to hand in work before being allowed to follow lessons.

7. Admission of Senior General Secondary Education (havo) graduates to Pre-university Education (vwo) or IB DP1

After graduating from the senior general secondary education (havo 5), a student may opt to follow the pre university (vwo) track. Havo graduates may also opt for admission to the IB Diploma Programme (see 5.2 Admission Criteria DP1).

8. Flow chart of school careers at ALASCA



Key havo: Senior general secondary education;
vwo: pre-university education; vwo+ refers to vwo offering extra learning challenges
IB DP: International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

9. Learner Support Arrangements¹¹

Learning support encompasses any service provided to a student that requires an adjustment to the delivery of instruction, evaluation and assessment to meet the needs of the individual

¹¹ Also see the *School Support Profile*, i.e. the school policy on Inclusion and Special Educational Needs (SEN)

student. It may entail offering alternate educational options, providing an increased level of staff support, and behaviour management strategies.

At ALASCA each teacher is a mentor of 15 to 18 students of one year level. Mentors will determine whether special support is needed for a learner, if it has not yet become known during the admission of a student. The mentor or coordinator consults all teachers concerned at an early stage in a candidate's study of the Diploma Programme. Subsequently, appropriate learner support will be discussed on an individual basis within the Student Support Team¹² (SST) and outlined in the Individual Education Plan of that student.

Some students require specific access arrangements in assessment conditions to demonstrate his or her level of attainment: assessment access requirements. Students with such requirements can be accommodated for instance by allowing extra time, a laptop or a separate room to take an examination. The school will plan these facilities based on the IB criteria (IBO, 2017) and teachers' observations of the candidate in the classroom during classwork and tests. The arrangements requested for a candidate must not give that candidate an advantage in any assessment component and must be his or her usual way of working during his or her course of study. The student with assessment access requirements must be familiar with any assistive equipment, including a computer and any software authorized for use in an examination.

Reasonable adjustments can be made to the assessment process for in-class testing of students with Internal Assessment Arrangements for the Diploma Programme following the guidelines in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). The conditions are as follows: the learning outcomes/objectives may not be changed and the student should not be placed at an unfair advantage or disadvantage.

In most cases, for assignments requiring completion outside of scheduled lessons, no extra time will be allocated (e.g. essays). However, if it is considered necessary, the IB coordinator must be consulted.

The teacher will use his or her professional judgement to determine the best course of action and request arrangements for particular students through the Student Support Team. In case of doubt, the IB Coordinator may be consulted. As for assessment access arrangements for the External examinations (in May): the DP coordinator will request adjustments from IBO at least 6 months prior to the examination sessions. All requests for inclusive assessment arrangements submitted by a coordinator must be in accordance with the head of school.

10. Links to other Policies

The admission policy is closely linked to the *Assessment Policy*. When it comes to the admission of students to the different examination tracks in the Second Stage of education, the assessment plays an important role. There is also a link with the *School Support Profile*, i.e. the school policy on Inclusion and Special Educational Needs (SEN) and the *Language Policy*. In the admission process to the school and/or to the different tracks any required support arrangements will be recorded and taken into account by the leadership, the teaching staff and the Student Support Team. This is equally true for any support with regards to

¹² The Student Support Team (SST) consists of the mentor, the care coordinator and the SEN teacher

language. Both policies are developed to ensure inclusive education so that all students receive the fairest chance possible to learn and to perform.

11. References

International Baccalaureate Organization (2017). *Candidates with assessment access requirements*. Geneva, IBO.