Recognition of the IB's New Mathematics Courses by the German Ministries of Education

Date: May 2019

Background

The German Conference of State Educational Ministries (*Kultusministerkonferenz, KMK*) determines how the International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB Diploma) is recognised for the entry of students to universities in Germany. Each time there is a significant change in the courses offered by the International Baccalaureate organisation (IB), the *KMK* convenes meetings with the IB to decide how the changes will be included in the recognition agreement.

Following intense collaboration with leading universities regarding mathematics education, the IB devised a new set of mathematics courses that will be part of the IB Diploma beginning with first examinations in May 2021. These courses ("Mathematics: Analysis and approaches" and "Mathematics: Applications and interpretation") represent a significant change in the mathematics component of the Diploma, and therefore a new evaluation was initiated by the KMK. After deliberations with representatives of the IB, the German KMK and the Association of German International Schools (AGIS), a decision concerning the recognition of these mathematics courses was published in March 2019.

Summary of Recognition

The KMK decided that all four possible mathematics courses (Math: Analysis and approaches SL and HL, and Math: Applications and interpretation SL and HL) in the IB Diploma can be recognised for entry to German universities. However, the way in which they are recognised is different.

Analysis and Approaches versus Applications and Interpretation

The KMK agreement does not distinguish between the course "Mathematics: Analysis and approaches" and the course "Mathematics: Applications and interpretation". For the purpose of obtaining government recognition to use one's IB Diploma to gain access to German universities, it does not matter which of these two courses a student chooses.

Higher Level versus Standard Level Mathematics

It does make a difference whether a student takes Higher Level (HL) or Standard Level (SL) mathematics.

Higher Level Mathematics

Students who take either of the two mathematics courses at Higher Level (HL) qualify (assuming that they fulfill all other requirements for recognition) for the *allgemeine Hochschulzugangsqualifikation*. This level of recognition means that students will qualify to apply to study all subjects at German universities, unless the individual universities impose additional requirements.

Standard Level Mathematics

Students who take either of the two mathematics courses at Standard Level (SL) qualify (assuming that they fulfill all other requirements for recognition) for the *fachgebundene Hochschulzugangs-qualifikation.* This level of recognition means that students will qualify to apply to study all subjects at German universities **except subjects in the fields of mathematics, natural sciences, technology and engineering**. However, students with the *fachgebundene Hochschulzugangsqualifikation* WILL still qualify to study medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, and veterinary medicine.

University-specific Requirements

The law in Germany allows individual universities to impose additional prerequisites for entry to their programmes. Therefore, it is recommended that students always check with their desired university directly to ensure that the combination of courses they wish to take will be accepted by that university.

To view the official agreement of the German Educational Ministries, visit their website: https://www.kmk.org/