Richard Keys,

Arts Department

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Dear Grade 10 Parent/Guardian,

The grade 10 students will soon be making choices about courses in Grade 11 of the IB Diploma Programme, and which subjects to take. Some parents and students have asked about the suitability of Arts subjects in terms of university applications. Making decisions about which IB Diploma courses is an important step in a High School career and begins the students’ path to further education or the world of work. Consequently, I would like to share the following information with you.

Arts qualifications at grade 11 and 12 are welcomed by some of the best universities in the world, and certainly not only for courses related to the Arts. There are exceptions for courses like Medicine which require two sciences and therefore preclude arts choices in the IB diploma programme.

Last year I wrote to several UK Universities asking them about their current entry requirements and if an arts qualification were welcome and valid for applications.

The reply below from **Oxford University**:-

“Thank you for your email. I can confirm that all IB subjects are acceptable for admissions purposes, and none of our courses would reject candidates because they have taken an arts subject as part of their diploma. Providing any specific subject requirements for a candidate’s chosen degree course have been met, we will accept any combination of other subjects. Guidance on subject choice can be found here: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate_courses/courses/courses_and_entrance_requirements/table.html>”

And this from **Cambridge University:-**

“Art is an acceptable subject at both A-level and the Higher level IB provided that the subject the applicant is hoping to study here does not warrant specific subjects.  If an applicant decided to take art, then we would recommend that the other subjects taken were traditional academic ones.  Music is fine, and we would probably recommend that an applicant should contact one or two of the individual Colleges here if they are thinking of taking Theatre so that the College can confirm that their choice of Higher level subjects would be suitable for them to be able to make a competitive application for their chosen course here.”

Below a quote from the **Yale University** website,and the sentiments are echoed in other Ivy League Universities:-

“A Holistic Approach to Admissions

*The high school transcript is almost always the most important document in a student’s application. But it is hard to conceive of a situation in which the appearance (or absence) of any one particular class on a transcript would determine the applicant’s outcome. The admissions committee does not make its decisions based on a piecemeal review of an applicant’s recommendations, test scores, activities, or individual elements of a high school transcript. It considers each application as a comprehensive picture of that student.  
  
When the admissions committee looks at your transcript, it will not focus on whether you have taken any specific course. It will be far more interested to see that you have challenged yourself with difficult coursework, and have done well.”*

<http://admissions.yale.edu/advice-selecting-high-school-courses>

I hope this letter goes some way to addressing some of the queries about the suitability of Arts courses for University applications for non-arts related subjects. It is also important to note that if a student is considering pursuing a career path in the creative or cultural industries an Arts subject is strongly advised. Whatever your thinking about education post-High School it is a good idea to research the entry requirements of colleges, universities and specific courses you might be currently interested in using the following resources or similar :-

For UK Universities - <http://www.ucas.com/>

For US Universities - <http://www.uscollegesearch.org/>

Also for US applications - <http://www.collegeboard.org/>

Please feel free to contact me here at school should you wish to. [rkeys@abaoman.org](mailto:rkeys@abaoman.org)

Warmest Regards,

Richard Keys