# **International Baccalaureate Science Courses and Graduation Requirements**

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This document is to be used by school counselors and other school leaders in determining the use of International Baccalaureate (IB) science courses to meet standard and advanced diploma requirements. The intent is to clarify language currently in the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) and to answer questions concerning IB coursework. If you have any questions concerning IB courses and graduation requirements, please contact the Virginia Department of Education.

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**Do International Baccalaureate (IB) science courses count towards science laboratory coursework required for graduation?**

Yes, per the Standards of Accreditation ([8VAC20-131-51](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/)) students who complete courses required for an International Baccalaureate Diploma shall be deemed to have completed the requirements for graduation; provided they have earned the standard and verified units of credit for the Standard Diploma or the Advanced Studies Diploma.

**May students that are not enrolled in the IB Diploma Program be allowed to use IB coursework as science laboratory credit to fulfill graduation requirements?**

Students taking International Baccalaureate designated coursework but are not pursuing an International Baccalaureate Diploma must still meet laboratory science requirements for the Standard Diploma and the Advanced Studies Diploma. This includes both the requirements in terms of number of laboratory science courses required as well as discipline requirements (see question below concerning assigned IB science course discipline designation).

**How do I determine the science discipline assigned to IB courses (for students not pursuing an IB Diploma)?**

All Board of Education (BOE) approved science courses fall into one of four disciplines: earth  [sciences, biology, chemistry, or physics. Since IB coursework is not reflected in the Board of Education Approved Courses to Satisfy Graduation Requirements for the Standard, Advanced Studies, and Modified Standard Diplomas in Virginia Public Schools](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/approved-courses.docx) document, schools should reference the [National SCED code database](https://nces.ed.gov/scedfinder/Home/Browse) to determine discipline assigned to IB science courses. IB Environmental Systems and Societies would follow the same Virginia discipline guidelines as Advanced Placement Environmental Science and the Environmental Science course (since the content of this course reflects two different disciplines it can count towards the biology or Earth science discipline).

The clarified language is not intended to negatively impact the diploma type of students who are currently enrolled in non-IB diploma science coursework. Academic course planning for current freshman (2020-21) onward needs to reflect the clarified language above in order to align with Virginia code [8VAC20-131-51](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter131/section51/).