

Top SPM achievers! What's Next?

**“My child is neither labelled as gifted nor talented. How can I get him accepted into the best universities?”**

In a statement by the Guardian UK,<sup>1</sup> almost a third of all applicants will miss out on a position at a university this year due to the unprecedented and increasing demand. So what is in store for the best STPM achievers? Will they be lost in the throng of applications that universities receive every year? And what about top universities like Harvard? What will be the fate of our best Malaysian students?

Most STPM students now go to top local universities and perhaps some go overseas. Students with good A-level results go mainly to overseas universities and some fortunate ones manage to compete for the top universities.

Unfortunately, those are the selected few. Their chances of getting into top universities will increase if the student has a International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma. Even the best educational institutions in the world, such as Harvard, prefer the IB diploma: “IB is well known to us for excellent preparation. Success in an IB programme correlates well with success at Harvard. We are always pleased to see the credentials of the IB Diploma on the transcript.”<sup>2</sup> as the Director of Admissions for Harvard University Marilyn McGrath Lewis says.

Is this the way for you? IB Diploma being an academically rigorous course, it is not for the faint hearted. Covering a wide range of subjects and requiring students to stretch their minds beyond what most are used to, mean that time management, strong work ethics and discipline are crucial and essential. Yet, the IB Diploma is an inclusive programme - not an exclusive one, aiming to develop all who participate. To those who aspire to be the best they can be; there can be no better choice.

The IB Diploma is a comprehensive 2-year rigorous academic programme. A wide range of modules, including Pure Sciences, Maths and Business Studies, have been designed to meet the interests and requirements of different students. Besides its challenging content the IBDP includes core modules such as Creativity, Action and Service CAS, the Extended Essay and the Theory of Knowledge TOK. Together these offer IBDP students, experiences and skills they will not find in any other programme.

Do you want to be a serious university candidate? According to Universities & Colleges Admissions Service UCAS statistics, students with the IB Diploma make up less than 0.2% of the total population of applicants. When considered that they make up such a small proportion of applicants, it becomes easy to see that top universities prefer the IB Diploma when considering that 10% of their cohorts are IB Diploma holders.<sup>3</sup>

With programme fees ranging from RM 60k to RM 120K, it hardly feels like a programme for the masses. Is it the right of only the wealthy to receive the best that education has to offer? Can we justify a two-tier education system, divided along the lines of wealth? We simply must not and should not deny those with brilliant minds the right to flourish, and unlock their vast potential.

The IB Diploma Programme takes 2 years to complete. With the vast array of skill sets developed students are exceptionally well placed to take on the world. The question however, is: "What did the learner miss out on during their previous 11 years of life?"

The IB programme educates children from the age of 4 to 18 in three stages: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Diploma Programme (DP). Believing that education is a holistic endeavour, the IB has crafted a careful development pathway that equips learners from a young age with the skills preferred by universities. Fairview International School is the only school in Malaysia to offer a complete IB education.

Fairview International School (KL), established in 1978, has over the years consistently provided affordable yet quality education to local and expatriate students from the age of 4. After many years of successful Cambridge IGCSE O-level examinations, Fairview has reached out to the finest that education has to offer, becoming the first world school in Malaysia with all three programmes.

For the January 2011 intake, Fairview is offering scholarships to deserving, top SPM achievers for the Fairview IB Diploma Programme. Thus Fairview enables their brilliant minds to flourish and unlock their fullest potential. Fairview believes that every child has a right to the best opportunities & practices in education and must be taught to think critically and creatively.

Since Fairview IB Diploma January 2011 cohort has limited scholarships, are you willing to take the challenge? Given the IB Diploma scholarship, will you dare to act?

Equal opportunities in Education lead to equal opportunities in Life.

## References

- 1) Shepherd, Jessica. "Clearing 2010: 28% of Students Still Seeking University Places." *Guardian* 23 Aug. 2010, Education sec. Print.
- 2) "In Their Own Words : Quotes About The IB." *International Baccalaureate*. (2008): Print.
- 3) "A review of research relating to the IB Diploma Programme." (2008): Print.