

New conversion table for IB Diploma Grades

Date 3rd May 2023

To parents, guardians, students, and alumni of the IB Diploma Programme

On 15 December 2022 the Norwegian *Directorate for Higher Education and Skills* (HK-dir) published a new conversion table for the IB Diploma. The conversion table is used to convert IB Diploma Points into the Norwegian grading system for the purpose of applications to Higher Education in Norway via *Samordna Opptak*. The new conversion table will be used for applications to the academic year 2025/26 and onwards.

Norwegian IB Schools (NIBS) is an association for IB schools in Norway and consists of teachers, programme coordinators and heads from IB schools throughout Norway. NIBS disagrees strongly with the new conversion table, which is unfair towards IB students and devaluates the IB Diploma compared to the Norwegian certificate of upper secondary education (vitnemål fra den videregående skolen). The new conversion table puts future IB DP students as well as current students and alumni not yet admitted to Higher Education at a disadvantage compared to their peers in the Education Programme for Specialization in General Studies.

Here you can see both the current and the new tables:

https://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/utenlandsk_utdanning/ib/poengberegning/

Most IB students in Norway are Norwegian citizens or permanent residents, and the vast majority of IB students who apply to Higher Education in Norway either come from Norwegian IB schools or are Norwegians living abroad. For this reason, NIBS' opinion is that IB students should have an equal opportunity to access Higher Education in Norway as students from the Education Programme for Specialization in General Studies.

Furthermore, they should be admitted based on a system which fairly considers their competency and skill compared to their peers.

While NIBS is supportive of a conversion table based on empirical data created using statistical methods, the process must be one which fairly compares IB students to their peers and is free of bias.

NIBS' position is that the new conversion table must be reconsidered.

With this letter NIBS would like to invite you to participate in public discourse to support IB students in Norway. You can do this by attending a meeting at Bergen Katedralskole on Wednesday 10th May at 6pm. If you would like to be sent copies of the documents sent by NIBS to HK-DIR please send an email to Gillian Boniface at Bergen Katedralskole (Gillian.mary.boniface@vlfk.no).

Overview of timeline

- NIBS was informed by HK-dir of the new conversion table shortly before the announcement in December 2022.
- To voice their concern, NIBS immediately wrote a letter to HK-dir, the *Ministry of Education and Research (KD)*, the *Minister of Education* and the *Minister of Research and Higher Education*. In this letter NIBS state their concern about the validity of the mathematical model employed to create the new conversion table, specifically that its basic assumptions may not be valid and that sampling bias which disfavours IB students may occur. NIBS is also dissatisfied that HK-dir has not involved either school owners or organizations representing IB schools in the process until after it was finalized. These concerns were supported by the *Director General of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO)* in a different letter to HK-dir.
- NIBS received a response from HK-dir on 21 December 2022, in which they defend the process behind the new conversion table in general terms. The letter does not address any of the specific issues raised by NIBS or the IBO. HK-dir also state that they do not consult with interested parties when creating new conversion tables.
- Failing to receive an adequate response from HK-dir, NIBS wrote another letter to the *Committee for Education and Science* at the *Storting*, as well as the *Ministry of Education and Research (KD)*, which was sent on 24 February 2023. This letter repeats the concerns regarding the new conversion table and highlights concerns regarding the survival of the IB Programme in Norway should it become less desirable for students. The letter was signed by all NIBS Board Members, as well as 31 Heads of schools in Norway, and was also shared with several organizations that promote student rights and education interests. Some of these organizations have also sent letters of concern.
- As of 13 April 2023, there has been no further response from either HK-dir, KD or the Committee for Education and Research.