



International Homeschool of Sciences and Technology

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2024 School Profile

Summary

IHST follows a traditional high school curriculum with the added following unique characteristics:

- Advanced curriculum in Social Sciences and Technology, particularly history, politics, math, and computer science. In addition to a broad set of available AP classes, our curriculum also includes college-level courses.
- Languages. In addition to standard high school English courses, our students learn three other languages.
- Cultural immersion. In addition to languages, it is important that the student gains a world perspective and learns about other cultures and points of view.

History

Both of our students were traditionally schooled until high school. At the public elementary and middle schools, there was enough flexibility, school resources, and advanced projects to keep our students interested, and the GT program filled in the gaps in the standard curriculum.

However, in high school, our students quickly realized that the curriculum was less academically demanding, and the school was more interested in promoting fields that did not interest our students. The courses were too basic for them, and any advanced courses were only offered in their senior years. Hence, they decided to take their education into their own hands and finish high school as homeschoolers.

As a first-generation immigrant family, our students will be the first ones in the family to attend college in the US. Naturally, we were apprehensive about taking such a big risk, particularly when they both had a perfect GPA in high school and a great school ranking. However, their desire to learn was stronger than our arguments.

Philosophy

Our educational philosophy can be summarized in the following five points:

- Student-driven. Beyond the standard high school courses, the curriculum is customized to suit our students' specific academic interests, ensuring a mix of breadth and depth.
- Full responsibility. Most courses are online and self-paced. Our students are responsible for planning their days, weeks, and months so they can finish the material before the AP exam dates.

- Real-world experience. We encourage students to apply their knowledge to real-world challenges and think critically about practical solutions.
- Giving back. We recognize the importance of giving back to the community. We support and encourage our students to help less privileged students, particularly in academic areas.
- Classroom and social experience. We were concerned about social and classroom skills. We made it a priority for our students to continue socializing and attending high school functions. We sought out options for them to still have classroom experience, whether through advanced artificial intelligence courses, language courses, or Model United Nations debates and competitions.

Curriculum

The main purpose of IHST is to provide a more rigorous and expansive curriculum than what is available in our local public school district. The most advanced courses at IHST revolve around politics, history, and computer science.

Our students choose from a wide range of college-level courses offered through platforms such as edX (from Stanford, UT Austin, and Harvard), Coursera, and Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth. Most courses are taken on a fast-paced, accelerated schedule. This brings the student an additional academic, intellectual, and time-management challenge.

Most importantly, it allows the student to explore a wider range of classes and topics, have the time to give back to the community, and participate in research projects and other extracurricular activities.

Advanced Placement and Honors Courses

- AP. We are aware that for a course to be labeled as "AP," it has to follow a College Board-approved curriculum and have a qualified instructor. All of the courses labeled *AP <Course>* meet this requirement.
 - For Courses labeled "<Course> with AP exam," students completed similar coursework and preparation for the AP exam.
- Honors. Courses labeled as honors represent those that exceed the typical high school curriculum or align with college-level coursework.

Languages and Cultural Immersion

The 'International' part in our name reflects our focus on languages and cultural immersion. In addition to the standard English curriculum, students also learn three other languages:

- Spanish
- Portuguese
- German

With the flexibility provided by a homeschool, language instruction also took place in

- Lisbon, Portugal (4 weeks)
- Mainz, Germany (4 weeks)
- Florianopolis, Brazil (5 weeks)

Although only the language portion is reflected on the official transcript, understanding history, cultures, and points of view was also a core part of the experience. These immersive experiences enriched students' understanding of global cultures, fostering deeper cross-cultural empathy.

Educational Partners

Most course curricula, lectures, and grading came from third-party institutions or courses. They included:

AP and Core High School courses

- Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth
- Power HomeSchool

Computer Science, History, and Advanced Math courses

- Coursera: Universitet Leiden
- edX: Universidad Carlos III Madrid
- edX: HarvardX
- edX: Georgia Tech GTx
- InspiritAI

Language courses

- Saudade - Instituto de Língua e Cultura Portuguesa (Lisbon, Portugal)
- Evolanguage Sprachschule (Mainz, Germany)
- Instruction from Dad (Fluent in Spanish and Portuguese) and Mom (fluent in Spanish and German)

Tutors

We also engaged tutors on a limited basis through the Wyzant platform to help cover specific topics or questions.

For more details, please refer to the Course Descriptions.

Grading, Credits, and Weighting

Grading. As a home school, we understand prospective colleges will have questions about how grades are assigned.

- For grades where we used an online curriculum, including all our AP courses, the grades reported in the transcript are awarded by the online providers.
- In addition, to demonstrate knowledge and mastery, we require our students to take all available AP exams for any AP-level courses they took. These AP exams are taken at and proctored by the local high school in conjunction with their local students, according to the guidelines and rules set by the College Board.
- For other cases, including courses or seminars where the course provider did not assign a grade, please see course descriptions.
- We round all grades to the nearest natural number.

Credits. Credits are awarded according to the time a typical high school student would take to complete the course, regardless of how much time our student spends on that course. For example, AP Calculus BC typically awards 1 credit for coursework that lasts the entire school year. We awarded 1 credit for the same course even when it took our student 6 months to complete it.

Weighting. As a homeschool, we do not see a need to calculate a weighted GPA. However, to provide a better idea of academic rigor, the level for each course is indicated in the transcript.

Graduation Requirements

To graduate, an IHST student must complete 40 credits and meet the following criteria:

- 6 Math credits
- 4 Computer Science credits
- 4 Natural Sciences credits
- 6 Social Sciences credits
- 4 English credits
- 6 Foreign Languages credits
- 100 hours of community service

