GAC ORIENTATION HANDBOOK

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GAC Course Description

What is GAC?

The Global Assessment Certificate (GAC) program is the world's most recognized university preparation program for students who do not have English as their first language. It is a product of ACT Education Solutions, Limited (a wholly owned subsidiary of ACT).

The GAC is a university preparation program that provides students with the academic knowledge, skills, and confidence to enter and successfully complete a bachelor's degree at one of many selected universities. If you want to study at an international university, successful completion of the GAC is a pathway into a bachelor degree at one of many GAC Pathway Universities in the United States, Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, Vietnam, and other countries world-wide.

The following skills and competencies are addressed throughout the GAC program.

— Critical thinking and reasoning
— Communication
— Collaboration
— Independent study
— Creativity and innovation
— Cross-cultural understanding
— Research and academic integrity
— Computer literacy
— Career and learning self-reliance

All students who complete the GAC are eligible to take the ACT® test, a multiple choice test that covers four areas of study: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science. An optional writing test is also available. This test is used extensively by universities in the USA to determine university entry. The GAC is the only international university preparation program that includes the ACT test as part of its curriculum. The GAC curriculum includes units that help students prepare for the ACT test.

Where to Study the GAC with the Singapore International School System?

Singapore International School at Saigon South (HCMC)

No. 29, Road No. 3 Trung Son Residential Area, Hamlet 4, Binh Hung Ward, Binh Chanh District, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Tel: (84-08) 5431 7477 Fax: (84-08) 5431 7471

Singapore International School at Gamuda Gardens (Hanoi)

Gamuda Gardens 2 Road, Gamuda Gardens, Km 4.4 Phap Van, Hoang Mai District, Hanoi, Vietnam

Tel: (84-4) 6262024 Fax: (84-4) 3795 1037

Singapore International School at Danang

SIS Building, Vung Trung 3 Str., Phu My An New Urban Area, Ngu Hanh Son Dist., Danang City, Vietnam.

Tel: (+84) 511 384 0495   Fax: (+84) 511 3981 044

How Is the GAC Taught?

The GAC program is delivered over 3 levels, with 6 compulsory modules in each level. Students must also finish 120 hours of independent study in each level. The core program consists of English, Mathematics, Computing, Business, Mathematics, Science and Social Science supported by systematic study of learning skills for success at university. The following is a list of subjects in the GAC course.

What Does a GAC Graduate Possess?

— University admission requirements including an ACT score and a GAC grade point average (GPA)
— Necessary skills to undertake IELTS or TOEFL
— Essential, highly developed research and independent learning skills
— Proficiency in all English language skills
— Advanced IT skills
— A practical understanding of enquiry-based learning
— Essential skills to be successful at university

GAC Subjects

Level I:

Module	Name	Hours	Prerequisite
GAC001	Academic English I: Listening & Speaking Skills	45	NIL
GAC002	Academic English I: Reading & Writing Skills	45	NIL
GAC003	Study Skills for Independent Learning	45	NIL
GAC004	Mathematics I: Fundamentals	45	NIL
GAC005	Computing I: Introduction to Computing for Academic Studies	45	NIL
GAC006	Business, Science and Social Science I: Communication Skills	45	NIL
TOTAL HOURS	**Classroom Hours (5 x 45 minutes per week)**	**270**	
	Supervised Study	**45**	
	Independent/Home Study Hours	**120**	

Level II:

Module	Name	Hours	Prerequisite
GAC007	Academic English II: Listening & Speaking Skills	45	GAC001
GAC008	Academic English II: Reading & Writing Skills	45	GAC002
Students choose 4 of the following specialisation modules			
GAC010*	Mathematics II: Probability, Statistics & Finance	45	GAC004
GAC011	Computing II: Data Management	45	GAC005
GAC012	Business II: Business Studies	45	GAC006
GAC013*	Science II: Scientific Principles	45	GAC006
GAC027	Social Science II: Identity and Interaction in Society	45	GAC006
TOTAL HOURS	*Students choose either GAC010 or GAC013*		
	Classroom Hours (5 x 45 minutes per week)	**270**	
	Supervised Study	**45**	
	Independent/Home Study Hours	**120**	

Level III:

Module	Name	Hours	Prerequisite
GAC014	Academic English III: Listening & Speaking Skills	45	GAC007
GAC015	Academic English III: Reading & Speaking Skills	45	GAC008
Students choose 4 of the following specialisation modules			
GAC016*	Mathematics III: Calculus & Advanced Applications	45	GAC010
GAC017	Computing III: Digital Communication	45	GAC011
GAC022	Business III: International Business Studies	45	GAC012
GAC023*	Science III: General Science	45	GAC013
GAC028	Social Science III: Research Skills and Global Issues	45	GAC027
TOTAL HOURS	*Students study either GAC016 or GAC023 according to prerequisite*		
	Classroom Hours (5 x 45 minutes per week)	**270**	
	Supervised Study	**45**	
	Independent/Home Study Hours	**120**	

Course Materials

It is strongly recommended that each student has a laptop and appropriate software (Microsoft Suite including Word, Excel & Access and web page software). Laptops should be brought to school each day.

Students should receive these from the school when they commence studying the GAC:

- GAC Student Manuals

- Academic Writing Manual

- GAC Referencing Guide

- GAC Research Manual (from Level II)

- Class timetable

- Assessment timetable with due dates

Students are required to purchase the stationary pack for GAC which includes all the stationary required for the course.

Student Attendance

Students are required to attend all scheduled GAC classes and be punctual. To achieve satisfactory learning outcomes, students should attend no less than 90% of the classes. If they cannot attend classes or be on time, they should notify the teacher or the Head of Studies beforehand with proof in the form of a certified official document or a family request.

Student Participation

GAC promotes student-centered learning, which aims to increase students' autonomy and sense of responsibility in their own study. Students are expected to actively participate in class activities and contribute to class discussions, etc.

Students should be active learners. Instead of relying on rote learning, where they accept and memorize information without fully understanding, students are encouraged to think independently, read critically, and ask questions for clarification.

Students should prepare for classes by doing the set readings and preparing questions.

Students should hand in assessment tasks including essay/report plans, drafts and final drafts by the due date. Besides major assessment tasks, students should complete and submit all the designated independent study tasks.

GAC Assessment

The GAC has a broad range of assessment events including tests, written essays, practical exercises, oral presentations, group work, role plays, case studies and reports, all designed to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to undertake study at the higher education level.

The assessment process is a fundamental part of the GAC program and the methods of assessment have been designed to help students develop all-round skills and competencies, thus meet the learning outcomes stipulated in each module.

Grading

Grade Point Average (GPA)

The GPA is based on the average of the grade points obtained by a student in all modules weighted according to the hours of study involved for each module.

$$\text{GPA} = \text{sum} \left\{ \frac{Number\ of\ Contact\ Hours\ for\ each\ module}{Total\ Number\ of\ Hours} \times Grade\ Point \right\}$$

The result is rounded to 2 decimal places to match the grading key below.

Weighted Average (WA)

$$\text{WA} = \text{sum} \left\{ \frac{Number\ of\ Contact\ Hours\ for\ each\ module}{Total\ Number\ of\ Hours} \times \%\ Grade \right\}$$

Grading Key:

GRADE	POINTS	DESCRIPTION	% GUIDE
A	4.00	Very High Achievement	94 - 100
A-	3.60		90 - 93
B+	3.30		87 - 89
B	3.00	High Achievement	83 - 86
B-	2.60		80 - 82
C+	2.30		77- 79
C	2.00	Average Achievement	73 - 76
C-	1.60		70 - 72
D+	1.30		67 - 69
D	1.00		60 - 66
D-	0.60	Pass	55 - 59
F	0.00	Fail	< 54

Very High Achievement: an excellent standard of work that demonstrates a thorough knowledge and understanding of the requirements for the module.

High Achievement: A high standard of work that demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the requirements for the module.

Average Achievement: A good standard of work that demonstrates a sound knowledge and understanding of the requirements for the module.

Pass: An acceptable standard of work that demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the requirements for the module.

Fail: a poor standard of work that demonstrates sufficient knowledge and understanding of the requirements for the module.

Example Calculation:

LEVEL I					

CODE	MODULE	HOURS	GRADE	%	GRADE POINT
GAC 001	Academic English I: Listening and Speaking Skills	40	B	84	3.0
GAC 002	Academic English I: Reading and Writing Skills	40	B+	87	3.3
GAC 003	Study Skills for Independent Learning	40	A-	91	3.6
GAC 004	Mathematics: Fundamentals	40	A	95	4.0
GAC 005	Computing I: Introduction to Computing for Academic Study	40	B-	81	2.6
GAC 006	Business, Science & Social Science I: Communication Skills	40	C+	77	2.3
	Total Level I Hours:	240		WA= 86	GPA= 3.0

Composite Grade Point Average

GAC assessments are ongoing and the grade of each assessment contributes to the final grade for the module. The Composite Grade Point Average (CGPA) is calculated from the total of all the module grades across the 3 levels.

Rules of Progression

In order for students to progress through each level of the GAC and to be issued with a GAC Certificate and an Academic Transcript, he/she must pass **every assessment** in **every module** in all levels with a score of 55% or higher.

If a student fails an assessment event, he/she will have **at most two opportunities** to retake a test or examination using an alternative version or resubmit their assignment after receiving feedback. The highest mark a student can receive for submission of a supplementary assessment is **a pass mark of 55%**.

If a student fails up to two modules, he/she may be allowed to continue to the next level and repeat the two failed modules; however, if a student fails more than two modules, he/she will need to repeat the level.

Summary of Assessment Policies

All GAC classwork and assessment events produced by a student are the Intellectual Property of AES. Therefore, if a student is found to have copied any part of another student's work or have provided their work to another student to copy, BOTH students will be equally penalised.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offence. Students must be made aware that AES has a zero tolerance policy to any plagiarism. There is <u>no</u> acceptable minimal level of plagiarism that will go unpenalised and the student is liable to fail the assessment, and therefore the module, if plagiarism is detected. If it is detected a second time, the student is at risk of failing the entire program.

Plagiarism is the practice of taking somebody's work or ideas and passing it off as your own original work. Any student who is found to be plagiarising by submitting or presenting work as if it were their own will be penalised.

Most commonly, plagiarism exists when:

— parts of the work are taken from a source without reference to the original author
— the whole work, such as an essay, is copied from another source (this also includes copying from a source in another language and translating it)

A student who submits or presents work in one module, which has also been submitted in another module (even though it may be completely original work of that student) without the knowledge and prior agreement of the teacher will also be penalized.

While it is recognised that scholarly work should involve reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual integrity requires such references be explicitly and clearly cited as shown in the *GAC Referencing Guide.*

GAC Guidelines for Dealing with Plagiarism for Students

Should plagiarism be identified in the final submission, the following steps will be followed.
If plagiarism is detected in an assignment or Assessment Event, you will be asked to resubmit. The maximum mark possible for resubmission is 55%.

For the second offence a student should be given a 'Fail' for that particular assessment event. The student will be counselled by the Head of Studies about the serious nature of plagiarism and the importance of referencing in academic work.

Whether a third opportunity is given to the student to resubmit will be determined on a case by case basis. It may be decided that the student should repeat the module.

Further breaches require more serious action which may include suspension or exclusion from the GAC. This decision must be made by the Head of Studies and Principal in liaison with the representatives of GAC.

Using source materials
You are expected to research and use source materials in your essays. You should be aware that when you paraphrase source materials using your own words, and/or use direct or indirect quotations, you MUST acknowledge the sources according to the instructions in the *GAC Referencing Guide*. If you do not

acknowledge your sources, then your work is plagiarised. You must also include a reference list, with authors listed alphabetically, at the end of the assignment as also shown in the *GAC Referencing Guide*.

Identification of plagiarism in assignments/assessments
Teachers will undertake Internet research to identify and verify plagiarism as it occurs in their students' work.

How much source material can be used?
As a general rule, no more than 10% of the assignment/assessment event should be quotations from a source document. Any assignment containing more than 10% quotation will be returned to you. You may or may not be able to resubmit, depending on the circumstances.
It is most important that if you include quotations, you comment on them and make their relevance to the essay explicit.

Cheating

The students must understand that cheating in exams is a very serious academic offence and any form of cheating is totally unacceptable in a western academic institution. If you are caught cheating in any assessment, class based, written or presented orally, or are found to have purchased, attempted to purchase or posted any AES materials on line, you will be expelled from the GAC and prohibited from taking the ACT test on campus.

Cheating in tests or examinations includes, but is not limited to:

- substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test
- the purchase or use of someone else's work to submit as their own
- dishonest or attempted dishonest conduct, such as speaking to other candidates or communicating with them
- bringing into the examination room any textbook, notebook, memorandum, other written material or mechanical or electronic device not authorised in the examination requirements
- writing an examination or part of it, or consulting any person or materials outside the confines of the examination room without permission to do so, or
- leaving answer papers exposed to view, or persistently attempting to read another student's examination paper.
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Other academic misconduct relating to examinations includes, but is not limited to

- tampering or attempts to tamper with examination scripts, class work, marks or class records
- failure to abide by the directions of any teacher or supervisor regarding the individuality of work handed in
- acquisition, attempted acquisition, possession or distribution of examination materials or information in any way, or
- impersonation of another student in an examination or other class assignment.

Test Material Security Warning

All test papers, test questions and documents pertaining to GAC assessments are considered confidential. Students should not release any GAC materials or any of their own or others completed GAC assessments to any person other than their facilitators and group members (if applicable). Students agree in writing not to put them on the Internet or share them in chat rooms when they sign the *Student Consent Form* (see Appendix

Extension of Deadlines

All requests for an extension for the submission of an assessment event for a period longer than one week must be applied for using the form – *Request for Extension of Assessment Event* (see Appendix). Your teacher may approve the extension for a period of up to seven days, but the Head of Studies must approve requests beyond one week. Extensions beyond a two-week period will not normally be granted.

Requests for extensions should be made before the due date of the assessment event. Deadlines must be strictly adhered to and assessments must be submitted by the due date. Otherwise the assessment will be subject to a **10% penalty** for each day it is late.

Applications for Deferred Tests/Exam

Students may apply for a deferred test or examination on the basis of medical or other exceptional circumstances by completing the form – *Application for Deferred Test/Examination* (see Appendix). Applications on the basis of non-medical reasons need to be documented. An application for a deferred test/exam must be submitted within seven days of the date of the assessment event. The Head of Studies will consider the application and make a decision.

Certification

Program Completion

In order to graduate from the program, students must successfully complete the ten core modules plus a minimum of eight specialisation modules across four subject areas in Levels II and III. Students must achieve a mark of 55%, in each assessment event, in every module, in order to receive a passing grade for the GAC.

Exit Requirements

Students must be at least 17 years of age and have completed at least 12 years of schooling in order to be eligible to graduate from the GAC program. Students must be found to be competent in the 10 compulsory core modules and eight specialisation modules in four subject areas. Students must successfully complete all assessment events with a pass of 55% or above. If a student fails any assessment event, they will be reassessed, and if necessary, repeat the module in order to demonstrate competence in all learning outcomes.

If students do not satisfactorily complete the required number of modules, they are issued with a Statement of Attainment which identifies all modules undertaken and the score achieved.

Upon successfully meeting the exit requirements, students will receive a full GAC transcript and GAC Certificate.

GAC Pathway Universities

Approximately 100 "Pathway" institutions participate in the GAC program, including universities in Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Singapore, Thailand, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Vietnam. Currently, more than 3,000 students are completing their GAC program.

Selected Pathway Universities in the United States offer GAC graduates up to one year of credit. This allows you to complete your university studies faster, saving you a significant amount in tuition fees and living expenses.
http://www.actinternationalservices.com/en/aesl/pathway.html

A folder of reference letters for applying to many universities is available in your classroom.

Appendix

Level Dates

Assessment Event Schedule

Request for Extension of Assessment Event

Application for Deferred Test/Examination

Summary of GAC Assessment Policy for Students

GAC Guidelines for Dealing with Plagiarism for Students

Sample Statement of Attainment

Sample Transcript

Sample Certificate

Assessment Checklist Level 1

Assessment Checklist Level 2

Assessment Checklist Level 3

Student Consent Form