



# Admissions Policy

**2024-2025**

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## **1. Introduction: our vision is to admission and selection.**

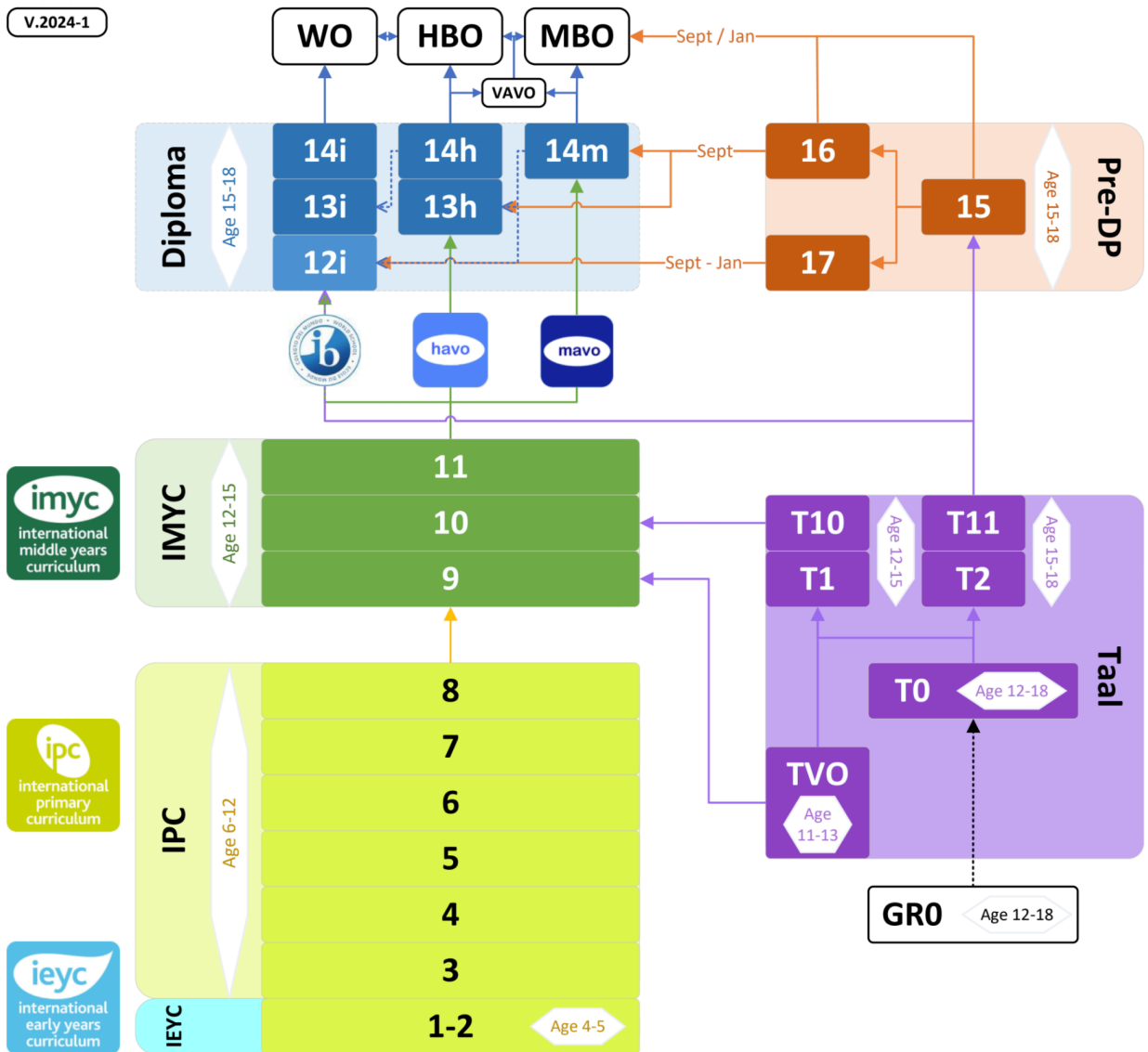
De Nieuwe Internationale School Esprit (DENISE) in Amsterdam offers high quality, widely accessible, modern, international education that raises awareness of the collective responsibility for the world we live in. We provide a broad international curriculum as well as an anchor for life in the Netherlands. DENISE is a school for all students with an international mindset. In every program DENISE offers, we place high value on intercultural competence and personal development. Through intercultural & personal goals, students learn to interact and cooperate with each other, to be respectful and open towards others, to solve problems together and to consider issues from multiple perspectives. Dutch language is a mandatory subject at DENISE. Priority is given to students who do not yet speak Dutch (nieuwkomersonderwijs). Many students come from places outside the Netherlands and begin to learn Dutch at DENISE. The study program will depend on the age and educational background of the student. In all cases, students must show a minimum academic level equivalent to mavo dp (vmbo-t) in the Dutch education system.

This DENISE admissions policy describes how students gain admission to the different programs available at DENISE. Admission and transfer criteria have been formulated for each program in this policy. The teachers and other supervisors of the student discuss whether the criteria have been met and formulate with advice. This is formally ratified by the principal of the school.

The parents/guardians are informed twice a year in primary school and three times a year in secondary school about the progress around knowledge development, learning attitude and learning advice about the next step in the learning process via report cards. In secondary parents see the ongoing process also through magister. If necessary or desirable, interim conversations with parents/guardians about learning progress occur. [This link](#) to our DENISE-website provides more information about the report card cycle in secondary education. It is also possible within DENISE to move to a subsequent class/program during the school year or (based on perspective) another program within our Esprit Schools or other schools.

## 2. The five DENISE educational programs: an explanation.

In order to remove language barriers for newcomers, we have categorized our education into five programs (see image) for children between age 4 and 18 (sometimes up to 19 or 20). In order to get a mavo (vmbo-t), havo or IB diploma, learning Dutch is required. In the Netherlands, it's not yet possible to take the final exam for mavo (vmbo-t), havo or vwo in English. Instead of vwo, International Baccalaureate (IB) is an option. This is an international diploma program at vwo level. At DENISE, the IB program is offered instead of vwo. With an IB diploma, the students will be admissible for universities in the Netherlands as well as abroad.



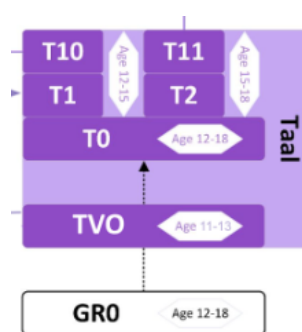
Schoolstructure DENISE - August 2024.

## 1. IPC primary / Grade 1-8 (age 4-12)

At DENISE there is a bilingual (Dutch-English) program for primary education. In grades 1 and 2, this program is based on the International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC). In grades 3 to 8, DENISE works with the International Primary Curriculum (IPC), compiled to the objectives for primary education in the Netherlands. In both primary education and the junior years of secondary education, every school year focuses on five Units of Big Ideas; all subjects are centered around the big issue. Students learn based on the 7 steps of the learning cycle used in the IMYC (reference for 7 steps). This includes the development of basic subject knowledge and skills that the students need to function in society (general development), the educational pathway to secondary education and, last but not least, preparation for the diploma program. Students develop an appropriate knowledge base and the necessary research skills that are needed to present the learning process. Furthermore, the program pays attention to personal development. This applies to all classes, and especially to mentor class. Every unit finishes with an 'Exit Point'. During the Exit Point, students are deemed to showcase their understanding of what they've learned, and show what the things they've learned. Planning and producing this activity offers the students the opportunity to share their learnings with fellow students, parents, and teachers in a creative way, and also gives them a chance to reflect on their own learning process. Collaboration in learning is an essential part of education at DENISE (see also our school guide).

## 2. Grade 0 and the Language Program – Language classes T0 to T11; (age 12-18)

In our joint grade 0, teachers from Mundus and DENISE work together and determine the best fitting education level. Students of age 12 and older who speak little to no Dutch will start off in this group. In grade 0, we'll collect as much educational information as possible about the student, through learning activities, conversations with the parents and student, tests, and observing the behavior of the student in class. After grade 0, the student will go to the Mundus College (vmbo-k, vmbo-basis en praktijkonderwijs) or DENISE mavo dp (vmbo-t), havo or vwo). The team of teachers for this group is made up of both DENISE and Mundus teachers.



To offer every student the best possible chances, we have developed a separate and intensive language program (see purple block). This Language Program is a program for students aged 12 and older, who don't know enough Dutch to receive education as part of one of the other programs. We work with three different levels:

- TVO (pilot class 2024-2025): only for the age of 11-13 for DENISE students who need extra support in language learning, see extra explanation below.
- T0: students who don't know any Dutch (ERK level 0-A1).
- T1,2,3: students who have beginner knowledge of Dutch (ERK level: A1-A2).
- T10: students who are almost ready to move on to a program in grade 9, 10 or 11 (ERK level A2-B1).
- T11: students who are almost ready to move on to a program in grade 12, 15, 16 or 17 (ERK level A2-B1).

The faster a student learns Dutch, the faster they can move on to the next level group. This means that there is always a lot of movement among the students within the school. This has advantages, but it also has disadvantages. One of the biggest advantages is that there is always a place for newcomers in Amsterdam, and plenty of chances to get started in Dutch education. The disadvantage is that all these movements can feel disruptive. It also creates a permanent pressure on the timetable, finding teachers and the capacity of colleagues for differentiation. It can also create pressure on group bonding, group cohesion and the social climate.

### **Extra explanation Taaltraject Voortgezet Onderwijs - TVO**



TVO is the abbreviation of Taaltraject Voortgezet Onderwijs of up to 20 students. This class is a new initiative and a pilot for 2024-2025. The TVO class is intended for young students aged 11-13 who have been in the Netherlands for a short time. Primary education has already been completed in the country of origin, and entry into a primary class in the Netherlands is no longer appropriate. TVO is a class for students who would benefit from a soft landing in secondary education, who can learn better in a predictable, low-stimulation class. Child characteristics may play a role in why a student benefits from starting in the TVO class, but it may also be that a child needs a little more time to "mature" and/or land at DENISE due to age or going through many changes. Many of our students experience massive changes quickly, such as a change in country, language, culture, and educational system. These changes affect a child's social-emotional development.

Our language classes are dedicated to helping students acquire sufficient Dutch and English language skills to progress to the IMYC program (see explanation in this policy document). This focus on language acquisition is complemented by our commitment to nurturing students' social-emotional development, ensuring they are well-rounded and prepared for the challenges of secondary education.

The faster a student acquires the Dutch language, the faster a flow to the next level group. The effect is that in DENISE there is a permanent flow of students within the school. This offers advantages but also disadvantages. The advantage is that there is always room for a newcomer in Amsterdam and plenty of opportunities to fit in well in the Dutch education system.

The disadvantage, however, is that the school, especially the language classes, are always in flux due to throughput, which means that the class schedule changes regularly, the teachers change and the composition of the groups. We find that young students, in particular, need help holding their own within language classes and can get stuck. From this, the need arose to create a language class with more focus on calm and safety so that they can make a soft landing into secondary education at DENISE.

Unlike our regular language classes, the students in the TVO have classes all day in the same classroom with the same teacher (alternating between two regular teachers), but on the secondary (VO) floor and with VO class times so that the students get used to the environment of VO. In addition to the two regular teachers, students are taught by subject teachers for

subjects such as English, handicrafts, sports & exercise, music and drama (1 of 2 lessons per week per subject).

Learning the Dutch language in the TVO class is central. Students are taught in Dutch and have some lessons in English to get a reasonable basis in both languages. When a student is ready to move to a regular language class or the IMYC program, this can happen at two fixed times during the year (December and March).

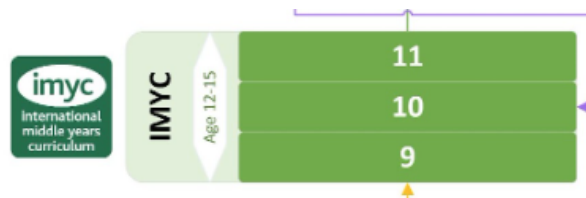
Our commitment to student development extends beyond academic skills. We place extra emphasis on school skills such as organizing school and homework, punctuality, and responsibility. In the social-emotional realm, we support students in areas such as cooperation, friendship, conflict resolution, and seeking help when needed, ensuring they are well-equipped for the challenges of secondary education.

The [in Dutch] begeleider passend onderwijs (BPO) and educational worker support the regular teachers/mentors in identifying any support needs and support in social-emotional development. The pedagogical worker is a familiar and trusted face in the school for the students later when they move on to the regular language class and the IMYC program. The goal is to prepare students for the regular language class and the IMYC program. Finally, a small-scale class provides an opportunity to gain insight into the student's support needs so that the student can move on to the next class with a warm transfer through action recommendations and, if necessary, (temporary) guidance.

### 3. IMYC secondary / Grade 9, 10, 11 (age 12-14)

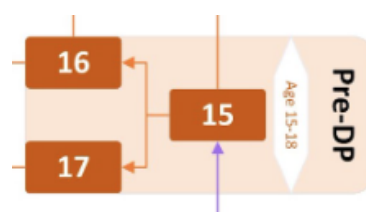
The International Primary Curriculum (IPC) and the International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC) form a challenging, interesting, internationally focused, concept-based curriculum, especially designed for the unique learning needs of students in primary and secondary education. The IPC and IMYC help

students give meaning to their learning process, by linking subject knowledge to a big issue, or a “Big Idea”. A Big Idea helps students understand connections to the world around them. In the junior years (grades 9, 10 and 11) there is a bilingual (Dutch-English) program for secondary education, based on the International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC), compiled to the objectives for the junior years of secondary education in the Netherlands. Also the IMYC program works with the learning cycle (see our school guide or info programma IPC).



### 4. Career Program (pre-DP) - Group 15, 16, 17 (age 15-18)

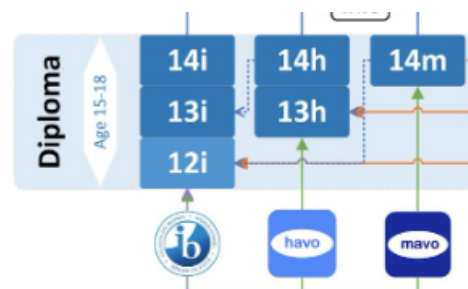
Grade 15, 16 and 17 prepare students aged 15 and older for the DENISE diploma program. These are students with a disrupted school career, for various reasons (usually because they've been abroad). Students for whom a diploma program is not an option (due to their age or a language/education deficit) will also follow this program, as a preparation for vocational education (mbo) or adult education (vavo).



## 5. Diploma Program - Grade 12, 13, 14; (age 15-18)

The Diploma Program has three separate curriculums in the diploma programs, in order to offer our students customized education upon the completion of the Middle Years Curriculum or Career Program. Since 2015, we offer a one-year mavo (vmbo-t) diploma program. Since 2019, we also offer a two-year havo diploma program. And then there's the IB Diploma Program. This program in English prepares students for post secondary education at

university/college level. DENISE works with a unique design of the exam program mavo (vmbo-t) and havo. For mavo dp (vmbo-t), we have a one-year program. For havo dp, our students take the exams for English, History and Math A or B early, in 4 havo. The examprogram Dutch (Nederlands) takes two years. In 5 havo, the student will take the exams for Dutch and their profile subjects. The school exam subjects PE, profile paper, mentor class and artistic development start in 4 and will be completed in 5 havo.



## 3. Admission to the International Primary Curriculum (IPC group 1-8)

Students in the age of 4-12 years are welcome at DENISE Primary. For 4-7 year olds the home language is not relevant for admission. Students in primary school will learn both English and Dutch while playing, learning and interacting with peers

From 8-12 years we expect students to be sufficient in English or Dutch. Students at the age of 4 (group 1) already living in Amsterdam will go through the Amsterdam lottery procedure. For this the location of residence in Amsterdam is not determinative for DENISE, it is although important to put DENISE at the top of the list (number 1 position).

For all other groups (2-8) there is a waiting list, students will be placed in registration date of applying and also we take the following in consideration:

- we take into account younger siblings (who are not yet in school) as much as possible;
- extraordinary personal situation can lead to priority;
- DENISE aims for a fair mix of backgrounds of students in the groups.

Upon registration of a student (through the form on the website or through Lotting and Matching) at DENISE, the admission team starts investigating the school's ability to provide appropriate education. The basis for this is the school's support profile (can the school meet a student's educational needs) and the current classroom situation (size and group dynamics).

The investigation consists of the following:

- Contact the attended preschool/childcare (in case of intake of 4-year-olds). The Internal supervisor (intern begeleider) makes an appointment with the pedagogical staff member to discuss the data, if possible in the presence of parents, as a warm transfer. The data of the toddler are scanned and stored as a file in ParnasSys.
- Contact with the school of origin (in the case of entry from another school or if information from the previous school gives reason to do so)
- Interview with student, parents and/or network partners (in the case of entry from another school or if information from the previous school gives reason to do so).



From the moment of registration, the investigation time is six weeks. This is sometimes extended by four weeks, bringing the total investigation time to ten weeks. The admission and the student learning support team submits a reasoned recommendation to the principal deciding whether to admit a child to the school. If the student is not admissible, the team leader informs the parents. Together with parents, a school is sought that can meet the student's specific educational and support needs within our Esprit Schools or other schools.

#### **4. Admission to the Language program (de T-groups)**

Background: Students of 12 years and older who do not speak any Dutch start in a newcomers group (Group 0). This group is taught in collaboration with the Mundus College and is located at Mundus. After an introductory period a student will be transferred to a language class at Mundus or DENISE. This depends on the level of the student, approaches to learning, capacity and the aim for further study.

Entry criteria: DENISE uses a Raven Test, math tests and observations to examine the academic skills and potential of the student. For DENISE the required minimum level is mavo dp (vmbo-t). In addition, also a TOA (language)-test is an option. Students assessed below B1 in all areas can be admitted to the language program and learn Dutch for up to one year (to B1). Language learning continues in the follow-up programs.

Further study: In language classes students complete a language portfolio and learn Dutch and English to the level required to continue in a regular (bilingual) group. Depending on their aim for further study, age and academic ability, students are placed in the IMYC, Diploma- or Career program.

#### **5. Admission to the Middle Years program (IMYC group 9/10/11)**

Background: The first year of the International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC) starts in group 9. DENISE offers the program bilingually in English and Dutch by subjects. An intake interview is always part of the admission to the IMYC. Entry criteria: to enter group 9, coming from a Dutch school (also DENISE group 8), students require a school recommendation at a mavo dp (vmbo-t) or higher level. These students gain admission via the annual secondary school central admission procedure in Amsterdam, [see Kernprocedure](#). The expected minimum level language requirements at DENISE are CEFR B1 in Dutch en A2 for English. We will check this during the intake process.

Students coming from outside the Netherlands who lack Dutch language will first have to follow the DENISE Language Program (see chapter 3). To enter Group 9, 10 or 11 the level of Dutch has to be CEFR B1 in Dutch and A2 for English. The school references must support the minimum academic level requirement. Further study: a student doesn't re-do a school year (zittenblijven) as this does not follow our vision on learning. After three years the student starts the DENISE diploma program. In exceptional situations IMYC-students can work in our pre-DP program (group 15) for one year towards a Dutch mavo dp (vmbo-t) or havo dp or the English International Baccalaureate (IB) in English with Dutch as the mandatory second language. It's also possible that (based on perspective) another program within our Esprit Schools is sought or in other (MBO)-schools.

## 6. Admission to the Pre-DP program (group 15/16/17)

Background: The DENISE pre-DP Program is in Dutch and prepares students directly for a diploma program or vocational/professional education (mbo). The program is individually based on the needs of the students with a minimum required level of mavo dp (vmbo-t). Entry criteria: For this program students must:

- overall 'on track' for ATLs (collaboration, academic integrity and self management)) in the last school report.
- be aged 15 years or older
- have attained a level of B1 in Dutch
- have attained a level of A2 in English

An intake interview is always part of the admission to the career program.

## 7. Admission to the Diploma Program (group 12/13/14)

### Admission to mavo (vmbo-t) - diploma program (group 14m)

The DENISE mavo (vmbo-t) diploma program offers the option to obtain a mavo (vmbo-t) diploma. For this program students must:

- have reached the age of 15/16
- obtain a recommendation for mavo dp (vmbo-t) diploma program (overall level 3 on DENISE report card group 11/15/16 in June)
- overall 'on track' for ATLs (collaboration, academic integrity and self management)) in the last school report.
- obtain level B1 in Dutch
- obtain level A2 in English
- submit a DENISE DP Learner Portfolio
- An intake portfolio assessment is always part of the admission process.
- We take age into account. Maybe vavo-(adult)-education is a better fit.

### Admission to havo - diploma program (group 13h and 14h)

The DENISE havo diploma program offers the option to obtain a havo diploma. For this program students must:

- be motivated to finish the program in a maximum of 2 years
- have reached the age of 15
- obtain a recommendation for havo diploma level (overall level 4 on DENISE report card group 11/15/16 in June) or have completed havo 3 at another school.
- overall 'on track' for ATLs (collaboration, academic integrity and self management)) in the last school report.
- obtain level 2F/B2 in Dutch
- obtain level B1 in English
- submit a DENISE DP Learner Portfolio
- An intake portfolio that shows the right qualifications and determination/motivation to finish the program in a maximum of 2 years.
- We take age into account. Maybe vavo-(adult)-education is a better fit.

## **Admission to have-diploma program (group 13h and 14h) from our mavo (vmbo-t) DP**

The DENISE have Diploma Program offers the option to obtain a have diploma after attaining a mavo dp (vmbo-t) diploma. For this program students must have done:

- 7 subjects. At all times. Having completed Mathematics is not required but is strongly recommended. This is in accordance with the national standard.
- Or 6 subjects. 6.4 average (Arabic, Turkish, Spanish and French do not count in the weighting, in case of mastery as mother tongue). Mathematics as an exam subject is mandatory and must be passed.
- No 7 subjects or 6.4 average then only by recommendation from the teacher's meeting. Plus a convincing intake. Mathematics as an exam subject is compulsory and must be passed.
- An intake portfolio assessment is always part of the admission process.
- We take age into account. Maybe vavo-(adult)-education is a better fit.

## **Admission within diploma program have (from group 13h to 14h)**

### ***Advancement Criteria***

A student is promoted to have-14 (5 have) when on the student's final report card:

- Has a 6 or higher for all subjects, or
- Has one 5 and the rest of the grades are 6 or higher, or
- Has one 4 (not for Dutch, English or mathematics), the rest of the grades are 6 or higher and has at least two compensation points (2 x grade 7.0 or 1 x grade 8.0), or
- Has two 5s (maximum one 5 in Dutch, English or mathematics), the rest of the grades are 6 or higher and has at least two compensation points (2 x grade 7.0 or 1 x grade 8.0), or
- Has one 4 and one 5 (the 4 not in Dutch, English or mathematics), the rest of the grades are 6 or higher and has at least three compensation points (3 x grade 7.0 or 1 x grade 8.0 and 1 x grade 7.0 or 1 x grade 9.0).

### ***Examinations***

All units must be completed before the first school examination period (June) begins, otherwise the student will not be eligible for promotion to have 5.

### ***Special cases***

A student is a special case if:

- The student has twice a 5 in the subjects Dutch, English and mathematics

### ***Physical Education (LO)***

To be admitted to the classes in have 5 the grade for LO must be "Satisfactory" or "Good". LO does not count in the compensation scheme, as this subject is completed with a grade of "Satisfactory" or "Good" on the final exam. No subject that counts towards the combined grade may have a grade lower than a 4 (this concerns social studies and CKV).

### ***Additional***

- Progress grades count only for transition in the respective grade.
- Transition grades are rounded as follows: 5.48 → 5 and 5.52 → 6.
- Doubling in two consecutive years of the same school type is not permitted.

## **Admission to the International Baccalaureate Orientation (12i) and the DP (13i, 14i)**

For information about the IB DP at DENISE, please refer to the [DENISE IB Diploma Handbook](#).

### **Entry**

A candidate is eligible to apply to the IB DP when they meet one of the following criteria:

- possesses a non-Dutch passport (parents move to The Netherlands for professional reasons);
- has attended secondary education outside of The Netherlands prior to joining DENISE;
- plans to continue education outside The Netherlands within two years (parents plan to leave the Netherlands for professional reasons);
- have successfully finished havo diploma program or 4 vwo overgangsbewijs (for group 13i in possession of proof of transition to 5 vwo or level 5).

### **Admission to 12i (IB DP Orientation)**

#### **For entry to 12i, pupils should meet the following criteria by June/July:**

- Obtain a recommendation for 12i (overall level 5 in DENISE report card) or 4 vwo equivalent or achieve a mavo dp (vmbo-t) diploma.
- Overall 'on track' for ATLs (collaboration, academic integrity and self management) in the last school report.
- English language proficiency at CEFR B2 or higher.
- Dutch language proficiency at CEFR A1 or higher.
- Complete the DENISE IB Orientation intake process.

In addition to the above criteria, external candidates are required to:

- provide copies of school reports from the previous school year.
- provide previous school's contact information.
- complete DENISE intake process

### **Admission to 13i (IB DP1)**

#### **For promotion to 13i from 12i, pupils should meet the following criteria by June/July:**

- English language proficiency at CEFR B2 or higher.
- Dutch language proficiency at CEFR A2 or higher.
- Complete an IB subject choice form with pupil and parent signature, approved by Career Counsellor. (See DENISE IB Diploma Handbook for details of subject choice.)
- Overall 'on track' for ATLs (collaboration, academic integrity and self-management) in 12i Report #3.
- Achieve at least 24 points for the six IB DP group subjects in 12i Report #3.

#### **For entry to 13i from 14h, pupils should meet the following criteria:**

- Achieve a havo diploma
- English language proficiency at CEFR B2 or higher.
- Overall 'on track' for ATLs (collaboration, academic integrity and self-management) in the last school report.
- Complete the DENISE IB Orientation intake process.
- Complete an IB subject choice form with pupil and parent signature, approved by Career Counsellor.

## Admission to 14i (IB DP2)

### For promotion to 14i from 13i, pupils should meet the following criteria by June/July:

- Be overall 'on track' for ATLs (collaboration, academic integrity and self-management) in 13i Report #3.
- Achieve at least 24 points in the six DP group subjects.
- Core subjects CAS, EE and TOK on track.
- 13i coursework and assessments completed.
- *The IB DP is an 18 month program, therefore DENISE does not accept new students in 14i.*

### Note

DENISE maintains a maximum number of 24 students per class. Because of the entry from abroad and the flow of DENISE students from the language program to other DENISE programs, there are very few spots for 'zij-instroom' students (students who already have a school in the Netherlands). The procedure of 'zij-instroom' is as follows:

- Parents/guardians express their interest in DENISE. They complete a form requesting more information about the student, educational history and any exceptional circumstances. In addition, parents send all recent reports and other essential documents from the past three years.
- Based on knowledge of Dutch, educational background and the reports, parents/guardians and students are invited for an orientation interview. In this conversation, more is explained about DENISE, and which program seems appropriate for the student is examined.
- Parents and the admission coordinator determine whether the application procedure is started after the orientation meeting. This depends on the spots in the desired educational program and whether the student's profile and educational background match DENISE.
- Students whose level has not been previously determined or is difficult to compare with the Dutch educational system first take a non-verbal intelligence test, a math/mathematics test and, for non-native pupils, a TOA Dutch test.
- Based on the test results, an intake interview, the student's support needs and place in the desired program, a student is placed or not.
- Students have a minimum score of 100 on the Raven test (non-verbal intelligence test) and score within the standards for the math test (this depends on their age).
- Students who wish to enter the IB (pre-)diploma program also follow the program's application procedure as described in this document.