Key differences between High School Diploma and Abitur

Does where I plan to study determine which degree I should take?
- Yes. But, it is important to know: both Abi and Diploma can be acknowledged and utilized in different places.
- The Abi is recognized by America as a foreign credential. It is important to know that America does NOT look only at your NC (11th and 12th grade combination grade) grade but also your GPA which, accumulates from the 9th grade through 12th (50% NC and 50% GPA). Canada and Australia also do it this way.
- The Diploma is recognized by Germany (as long as certain qualifications are met).
- There is no longer the advantage of getting the Diploma in 12 years, since the Abi can also be achieved in 12 years.

If I'm better at exams, should I take the Abi no matter where I want to go afterwards?
- Not necessarily; depends on where you want to go and how you want to use the classes you took as credit. The most important question to ask yourself is: WHAT LANGUAGE DO YOU WANT TO TEST IN?

Is it possible to go to German university with an American High School diploma plus AP classes, rather than the Abi? Can this help set a student’s application apart from „the masses“? When is it advisable for a student planning on studying in Germany to go for the high school diploma?
- YES!! Certain schools in Germany take a certain quota of international/foreign students; so, you may increase your chances of getting into a school if you apply as an “American”/foreigner.
- It is possible to start on the Diploma track in 8th grade; the latest recommended grade to switch is 11th grade (when you can begin taking APs). Technically you can switch in 12th grade, but you will only have one year to accomplish any APs you hope to have with your Diploma. The APs classes that you take depend on what you want to study (see attached list of requirements for more information).

If the Abi GPA only includes 11-12, does an Abi transcript to US schools also only include the two years?
- No. They also look at your GPA (since 9th grade).

At which German universities are diploma students accepted and for what studies?
- Not all german universities accept the diploma, but 400 universities in Germany do. You can find the list of which universities can be applied to with the Diploma through UNI Assist: http://www.uni-assist.de/uni-assist-members.html
- Depending on what field you want to study in, you have to choose certain APs. Humanities fields VS Math/Science/Medicine fields.

What is the minimum/maximum successfully passed APs requirements for colleges in the US? and for european universities?
- Germany: grade 3 or higher on APs.
- In the US there is no minimum. They recommend doing 6 APs in 2 years. The US looks at the class grade you get in your AP course; contrarily, Europe looks at your AP test result instead of the class grade.
AP courses can only be taught by qualified teachers, these so far are American ones. How can we ensure course availability in as many subjects as possible in the future?

- There is no way to ensure course availability. Availability is based on the student demand of courses; a high demand for a class will therefore lead to course availability.

From which point on do my grades and grade point average (GPA) count?

- Your transcripts begin from 9th grade on.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the timing of declaring Diploma track and what do the respective specific course options in the Diploma Program look like if one declared Diploma in a. 9th grade b. 10th grade c. 11th grade?

- The key difference is the Sciences. Diploma means you take a year of each science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics). The Abitur mixes each of these sciences in 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade. In the Abi program, 9-10 mixes all three of the sciences. In 11th and 12th grade there is a mix of two of the three. Under the Diploma, Biology is taught in 9th grade, Chemistry is taught in 10th; 11th and 12th grade provides a choice between Physics, AP Physics, AP Biology, AP Chemistry, or AP Environmental Science. It is important to pick your track accordingly and time it; otherwise, these science classes could get mixed up, meaning, you will not get enough of a certain science if you switch somewhere in the middle, or you will get too much of one.

Myth or truth?: You can drop French beginning 9th grade if you declare diploma track

- True.
- Also, if you are only beginning to learn the German language, you do not need to take French.

Would AP Psychology perhaps also be a viable offering for 10th grade? Why is AP Music kind of hidden and handled as an activity rather than an official class?

- AP Psychology is not offered in 10th grade. 9th and 10th grade grades do not get weighted and therefore this AP would not be counted as an AP.
- AP Music, taught by Lori Cook, is not guaranteed to be offered every year because of student demand.

German universities consider scholastic achievement for the Abitur starting in 11th grade, and extracurriculars play a minimal role. But for US colleges, the official transcript and GPA begins in 9th grade, regardless of the student’s choice of Abi/diploma. U.S. college applications consider many outside factors outside grades such as sports and other activities, What do UK colleges consider in the application process?

- 80% of your application to the UK must be focused on your intended major. In the US, it is possible to declare your major even after you begin your studies; in the UK it is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT to know your intended major. The other 20% is everything else. They firstly look at your AP exams, then your SAT/ACT grades and GPA. Your minimum GPA must be
Do only APs in your areas of focus (LK Fächer) count when applying to German or European universities?

- **APs:** NO! There are basic requirements for all subjects: 16 units of English, second language studies, mathematics, and science. Without these basic requirements it does not matter how many APs you take or how good you do. These requirements are almost always completed at the Kennedy School because of what the school requires. After this, you must base your choice of APs on what field you want to study in (Humanities vs Math/Science).

- **Abi:** Your LK subjects are not the only grades looked at. Your NC will be looked at which includes your grades from 11th and 12th grade and also your 5 test results (2 being in your LK subjects).

If my German is good but not brilliant, could it still make sense for me to go for the Abitur?

- It depends on how important it is to have the Abitur. Since there are just as many options available with the High School Diploma ask yourself what the advantage would be of having the Diploma. If you do decide to pursue the Abi, it would prove extremely beneficial to be in at least D2 by 11th grade.

When is it better for a student to take the Abitur even if he or she knows they want to study in the U.S.?

- There are advantages of having APs in America because it may be possible to exempt yourself from certain courses and thereby shorten your time of study and SAVE MONEY! There are no real advantages of having the Abi in America instead of the Diploma.

- In the US, your Abi is looked upon as a foreign credential. With the Abi, It is possible to take Clep tests (College Level Preparatory Examination Program) and save yourself up to a year of college. These tests are taken in addition to your studies instead of during High School like AP courses. Although you may possibly save yourself a year of college, there are some drawbacks; if you are not able to take these tests until later in your college studies, you may exempt yourself from courses you already took in your first year. See College Board for more information.

Applying as a foreigner to a german university, is it true that AP German is sufficient enough to prove my german language skills?

- True. All grades of 3 and above on the AP German exam prove you have sufficient language skills. Everyone should take the AP German exam. With AP German you will exempt yourself from the DaF examination (Deutsch als Fremdsprache).

Do you apply directly to the university?

- No. You MUST apply through UNI Assist if you are applying as a foreigner. You must hand in all your documentation to UNI Assist by July 15th. They will notify you if any further documents are needed and they will deliver your applications to the universities you are applying to.

I heard the Diploma is easier than the Abi. Is this true?

- NO. There are key differences that distinguish the Abi from the Diploma; the difficulty depends on what the student picks within the track. The minimum requirement for the Diploma is 28 hours of classes. There is no requirement to take advanced classes. The Abi requires the focus of 2
subjects called Leistungskurse (Honors), but no more. It also requires a minimum of 33 hours of classes. You also must take 5 final 12th grade exams in total. Under the Diploma you can take either no advanced class or as many as you want. These distinguishing characteristics have advantages and disadvantages each way and cover different levels of difficulty.

Do I have to take APs in order to study in Germany with my Diploma?
- No. If you get a 1300 on your SAT or a 28 on your ACT you do not technically need any APs. It is recommended to try all the different possible ways in order to ensure success and acceptance.

Qualifications necessary for entrance to a German University for High School Diploma Students

The following are guidelines given as to how a high school diploma should be compiled:

The high school diploma must be awarded after visiting an American high school between the grades 9-12 and having gained a total of 16 academic units (credits). John F. Kennedy School students need 26 credits in order to graduate.

- 4 credits in English the minimum grade of C
  - English IV or Honors or AP English
- 2 credits in a second language
- 3 credits in social studies
- 5 credits in combined mathematics and sciences the minimum grade of C
  - 2 or 3 credits of mathematics e.g. Algebra II or III, Trigonometry or Precalculus
  - 2 or 3 credits of science e.g. Biology, Chemistry or Physics
- 2 credits in any academic subject

The GED is not accepted.

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A John F. Kennedy School student with a high school diploma may apply for entry to the German university system with the following additional qualifications:

1. Advanced Placement exams in
   - Mathematics (AP Calculus AB or BC)
1 natural science subject e.g. (AP Biology or AP Chemistry or the two half AP Physics C)

1 language exam (AP French, AP Spanish, AP Latin, AP German, AP English Literature, AP English Language & Composition)

1 further subject equivalent to a 12th or 13th class e.g. AP European History, AP American History, AP Computer Science or two half AP Macroeconomics and Microeconomics

With these qualifications you could be considered for entrance to study mathematical subjects, medicine, natural sciences, pharmaceutics and technology.

2. Advanced Placement exams in

   English (AP English Literature oder AP English Language and Composition)

   1 further foreign language (AP French, AP Spanish, AP Latin or AP German)

   1 mathematical or natural science subject e.g. (AP Calculus AB or BC, AP Biology, AP Chemistry or two half AP Physics C)

   1 further subject equivalent to a 12th or 13th class e.g. AP European History, AP American History, AP Computer Science or two half AP Macroeconomics and Microeconomics

With these qualifications you could be considered for entrance to the arts, humanities, study law, social studies and economics.

3. SAT exam with a combined score of 1300 or higher on the critical reading mathematics sections AND at least a 3.0 GPA.

4. ACT exam with a composite (average) score of 28 AND at least a 3.0 GPA.

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