

Extended Essay Fact Sheet **Prepared for IB Parent Group**

What is the Extended Essay?

The IB Extended Essay gives students the opportunity to create an academic, original research paper in a subject area in which they have a strong interest. The supervisory role is to guide, offer support and encouragement, answer questions, direct students to resources, and to give feedback concerning the content and structure of the essay. It is recommended that the supervisors keep their contact time within a range of 3-5 hours. This includes reading, reviewing, and time spent communicating electronically. Students should spend approximately 40 hours on their EE from start to finish composing an essay of up to 4,000 words. Both student and supervisor must keep in mind that the EE is a student creation. It should reflect the interests, ideas, and language of the student, not the supervisor.

The extended essay and the IB learner profile

The learning involved in researching and writing the extended essay is closely aligned with the development of many of the characteristics described in the IB learner profile. Students are, to a large extent, responsible for their own independent learning, through which they acquire and communicate in-depth knowledge and understanding. The research process necessarily involves intellectual risk-taking and extensive reflection; open-mindedness, balance and fairness are key prerequisites for a good extended essay.

Aims

The aims of the extended essay are to provide students with the opportunity to:

- pursue independent research on a focused topic
- develop research and communication skills
- develop the skills of creative and critical thinking
- engage in a systematic process of research appropriate to the subject
- experience the excitement of intellectual discovery.

Assessment objectives

In working on the extended essay, students are expected to:

1. plan and pursue a research project with intellectual initiative and insight
2. formulate a precise research question
3. gather and interpret material from sources appropriate to the research question
4. structure a reasoned argument in response to the research question on the basis of the material gathered
5. present their extended essay in a format appropriate to the subject, acknowledging sources in one of the established academic ways
6. use the terminology and language appropriate to the subject with skill and understanding
7. apply analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to the subject, with an understanding of the implications and the context of their research.

It is **required** that the school:

- ensures that extended essays conform to the regulations outlined in this guide
- ensures that students determine the subject for their extended essay from the approved extended essay list (in the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*) before choosing the topic
- ensures that each student has an appropriately qualified supervisor, who is a teacher within the school
- provides supervisors and students with the general and subject-specific information, and guidelines for the extended essay, contained in this guide
- provides supervisors with recent extended essay subject reports

- ensures that supervisors are familiar with the IB document *Academic honesty*
- explains to students the importance of the extended essay in the overall context of the Diploma Programme
- explains to students that they will be expected to spend approximately 40 hours on their extended essay.

It is **required** that the supervisor:

- provides the student with advice and guidance in the skills of undertaking research
- encourages and supports the student throughout the research and writing of the extended essay
- discusses the choice of topic with the student and, in particular, helps to formulate a well-focused research question
- ensures that the chosen research question satisfies appropriate legal and ethical standards with regard to health and safety, confidentiality, human rights, animal welfare and environmental issues
- is familiar with the regulations governing the extended essay and the assessment criteria, and gives copies of these to the student
- monitors the progress of the extended essay to offer guidance and to ensure that the essay is the student's own work (this may include presenting a section of the essay for supervisor comment)
- reads and comments on one completed draft only of the extended essay (but does **not** edit the draft)
- reads the final version to confirm its authenticity
- submits a predicted grade for the student's extended essay to IB Cardiff
- completes the supervisor's report (if the extended essay cover is not signed by both the student and the supervisor, the essay will not be accepted for assessment and may be returned to the school)
- provides an explanation in the report in cases where the number of hours spent with the student in discussing the extended essay is zero; in particular, it is necessary to describe how it has been possible to guarantee the authenticity of the essay in such circumstances
- writes a report and presents it to the school's Diploma Programme coordinator if malpractice, such as plagiarism, is suspected in the final draft.

It is **required** that students:

- choose a topic that fits into one of the subjects on the approved extended essay list (in the *Vade Mecum*)
- observe the regulations relating to the extended essay
- meet deadlines
- acknowledge all sources of information and ideas in an approved academic manner.

It is **strongly recommended** that students:

- start work early
- think very carefully about the research question for their essay
- plan how, when and where they will find material for their essay
- plan a schedule for both researching and writing the essay, including extra time for delays and unforeseen problems
- record sources as their research progresses (rather than trying to reconstruct a list at the end)
- have a clear structure for the essay itself before beginning to write
- check and proofread the final version carefully
- make sure that all basic requirements are met (for example, all students should get full marks for the abstract).