



*Lexington High School
Extended Essay Guide
For
Students
(Updated November 2017)*



Dear IB Extended Essay Supervisor:

Thank you for generously volunteering to be an IB Extended Essay supervisor. Our IB Candidates are fortunate to have your subject area expertise to assist them as they travel through the process of creating their Extended Essay (EE) requirement.

The EE introduces students to independent, scholarly research. The essay is based on a topic of the student's choice, chosen from one of the six IB subject areas. The EE is written outside of the classroom on a student's own time. Lexington High School students begin the EE process in their junior year and submit their essays at the end of the first semester of their senior year. Each EE student will proactively obtain a LHS teacher to mentor and guide him/her during the months spent researching and writing. The EE is excellent preparation for assignments students can expect in the next stages of their academic career.

This guide provides a basic overview of the supervisor's role in the EE process. It is adapted from the International Baccalaureate Organization's *Extended Essay Guide*, which can be found on the Google Drive, as well as from EE materials from other IB schools experienced in EE coordination. This guide should be used in conjunction with the Extended Essay Student Handbook and the IBO's *Extended Essay Guide*, which contains subject-specific information. The EE Student Handbook will be distributed to all EE students and a digital version also will be available in the IB Teacher Support Materials folder on the Google Drive.

If you choose to supervise an EE candidate, I will meet with you to review the subject-specific requirements for the EE. At any time, feel free to contact me if you need clarification or if you have concerns relating to the Extended Essay.

I thank you for once again using your talents and gifts to benefit the students of Lexington High School.

Sincerely,

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The Extended essay is an in-depth study of a focused topic chosen from the list of approved Diploma Programme subjects—normally one of the student’s six chosen subjects for the IB diploma. It is intended to promote high-level research and writing skills, intellectual discovery and creativity. It provides students with an opportunity to engage in personal research in a topic of their own choice, under the guidance of a supervisor (a teacher in the school). This leads to a major piece of formally presented, structured writing, in which ideas and findings are communicated in a reasoned and coherent manner, appropriate to the subject chosen.

The same piece of work **cannot** be submitted to meet the requirements of both an internal assessment and the extended essay

The extended essay is assessed against common criteria, interpreted in ways appropriate to each subject.

The extended essay is:

- Compulsory for all students taking the Diploma Programme and is an option for course students.
- Required to receive a D grade or higher to be awarded the Diploma.
- Externally assessed and, in combination with the grade for theory of knowledge, contributes up to three points to the total score for the IB Diploma.
- A process that helps prepare students for success at university and in other pathways beyond the Diploma Programme.
- Selected from the list of available Diploma Programme subjects published in the Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme for the session in question.
- A piece of independent research on a topic chosen by the student in consultation with a supervisor in the school.
- Presented as a formal piece of sustained academic writing containing no more than 4,000 words accompanied by a reflection form of no more than 500 words.
- The result of approximately 40 hours of work by the student.
- Supported by a supervision process recommended to be 3–5 hours, which includes three mandatory reflection sessions.
- Concluded with the third and final mandatory reflection session (also called the viva voce, a concluding interview with the supervising teacher.)

In the Diploma Programme, the Extended Essay is the prime example of a piece of work where the student has the opportunity to show knowledge, understanding, and enthusiasm about a topic of his or her choice. Whatever the subject, the Extended Essay student should strive to find relevant information from a diverse range of sources.

Assessment Objectives

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

- Answer a research question with intellectual initiative and insight
- Gather and interpret material from sources appropriate to the research question
- Structure a reasoned argument in response to the research question on the basis of the material gathered
- Present your extended essay in a format appropriate to the selected IB subject, acknowledging sources in one of the established academic ways
- Use the terminology and language appropriate to the selected IB subject with skill and understanding
- Apply analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to the selected IB subject, with an understanding of the implications and the context of their research.

Student Responsibilities

Before starting work on the extended essay, you will:

- Select a question for the EE in a subject that is part of the Diploma Programme
- Spend time working out the research question (imagine the finished essay)
- Work out a structure for the essay.

During the research process, and while writing the essay, you will:

- Start work early and stick to deadlines
- Maintain a good working relationship with your supervisor
- Construct an argument that relates to the research question
- Use a library and consult librarians for advice
- Record sources as you go along (rather than trying to reconstruct a list at the end)
- Choose a new topic and a research question that **can** be answered if there is a problem with the original topic
- Use the appropriate language for the subject
- Let your interest and enthusiasm show.

After completing the essay, you will:

- Check and proofread the final version carefully.

Students **should not** work with a research question that is too broad or too vague, too narrow, too difficult, or inappropriate. A good research question is one that asks something worth asking and that is answerable within 40 hours/4,000 words. It should be clear what would count as evidence in relation to the question, and it must be possible to acquire such evidence in the course of the investigation. If you do not know what evidence is needed, or cannot collect such evidence, it will not be possible to answer the research question.

In addition, you **should not**:

- Forget to analyze the research question
- Ignore the assessment criteria

- Collect material that is irrelevant to the research question
- Use the Internet uncritically
- Plagiarize
- Merely describe or report (evidence must be **used** to support the argument)
- Repeat the introduction in the conclusion
- Cite sources that are not used.

One further piece of advice is as follows: the more background you have in the subject, the better the chance you have of writing a good extended essay.

Researching the EE

When researching the Extended Essay, you should do the following:

- Choose the approved Diploma Programme subject for the Extended Essay.
- Read the assessment criteria and the relevant subject guidance.
- Choose a topic.
- Formulate a well-focused research question.
- Plan the investigation and writing process.
- Identify how and where you will gather material.
- Identify which system of academic referencing you will use, appropriate to the subject of the essay.
- Set deadlines for yourself that will allow you to meet the school's requirements.
- Plan a structure (outline headings) for the essay. This may change as the investigation develops, but it is useful to have a sense of direction.
- Undertake some preparatory reading.
- If you discover that it will not be possible to obtain the evidence needed in the time available, the research question should be changed. This should be done sooner rather than later: you should not lose time waiting and hoping that something will turn up. If this happens go back to stage 3, 2, or 1, and choose a new research question that can be answered.
- Carry out the investigation.
- The material gathered should be assembled in a logical order, linked to the structure of the essay. Only then will you know whether you have enough evidence for each stage of the argument so that they can proceed to the next.
- You should be prepared for things to go wrong. Sometimes you will discover something later in the investigation that undermines what you thought had been established earlier on. If that happens, the investigation plan needs to be revised.

Writing the Extended Essay

The structure of the essay is very important. This is what helps students to organize the argument, making best use of the evidence gathered.

There are six required elements of the final work to be submitted. Please note that the order in which these elements are presented here is not necessarily the order in which they should be written.

Six required elements of the extended essay:

1. Title page
2. Contents page
3. Introduction
4. Body of the Essay
5. Conclusion
6. References and bibliography

You need to use the chosen system of academic referencing as soon as you start writing. That way, you are less likely to forget to include a citation. It is also easier than trying to add references at a later stage. Most modern word processing software is helpful with this. Some students draft the introduction first. If you do that, you must be prepared to revise it once the essay is complete.

The main task is writing the body of the essay, which should be presented in the form of a reasoned argument. The form of this varies with the subject of the essay, but, as the argument develops, it should be clear to the reader what relevant evidence has been discovered, where/how it has been discovered and how it supports the argument. In some subjects, for example, the sciences, sub-headings within the main body of the essay will help the reader to understand the argument (and will also help the student to keep on track). In structuring their extended essay, students must take into consideration the expected conventions in which their extended essay is registered.

Once the main body of the essay is complete, it is possible to finalize the introduction (which tells the reader what to expect) and the conclusion (which says what has been achieved, including notes of any limitations and any questions that have not been resolved).

Any information that is important to the argument **must not** be included in appendices or footnotes/endnotes. The examiner **will not** read notes or appendices, so an essay that is not complete in itself will be compromised across the assessment criteria.

The remaining stages in writing the essay take time but are not difficult. You need to check that you have cited sources for all material that is not your own, and that the citations are complete and consistent with the chosen referencing system. The bibliography should list only the sources used in the essay. The whole essay needs to be proofread carefully (computer spelling

and grammar checkers are useful but will not do everything). Pages must be numbered and the contents page must be completed.

Formal presentation of the Extended Essay

The extended essay should be written in a clear, correct and formal academic style, appropriate to the subject from which the topic is drawn. Given that the Extended Essay is a formally written research paper, it should strive to maintain a professional academic look.

To help achieve this, the following formatting **is required**:

- The use of 12-point, readable font
- Double spacing
- Page numbering
- No candidate or school name on the title page or page headers.

Submitting the extended essay in the required format will help set the tone of the essay and will aid readability for on-screen assessment by examiners.

The length of the extended essay

The upper limit is 4,000 words for all extended essays. This upper limit includes the introduction, the body, the conclusion and any quotations, but does **not** include:

- The contents page
- Maps, charts, diagrams, annotated illustrations
- Tables
- Equations, formulas and calculations
- Citations/references (whether parenthetical, or numbered, footnotes or endnotes)
- The bibliography
- The Reflections on planning and progress form

Essays containing more than 4,000 words are subject to penalties and examiners are not required to read material in excess of the word limit.

Title

The title of your essay should be a clear, focused summative statement of your research, which gives the reader an indication of your research topic. It should not be phrased as a research question.

Contents page

A contents page must be provided at the beginning of the extended essay and all pages should be numbered. Please note that an index page is not required and if included will be treated as if it is not present.

Introduction

The introduction should tell the reader what to expect in the essay. The introduction should make clear to the reader the focus of the essay, the scope of the research, in particular an indication of the sources to be used and an insight into the line of argument to be taken.

While students should have a sense of the direction and key focus of their essay, it is sometimes advisable to finalize the introduction once the body of the essay is complete.

Conclusion

The conclusion says what has been achieved, including notes of any limitations and any questions that have not been resolved. While students might draw conclusions throughout the essay based on their findings, it is important that there is a final, summative conclusion at the end. This conclusion(s) must relate to the research question posed.

References and bibliography

Students should use their chosen style of academic referencing as soon as they start writing. That way they are less likely to include a citation. It is also easier than trying to add references at a later stage.

Writing the essay takes time, but if students have used their Researcher's reflection space and reflection sessions in a meaningful way they should be well prepared to develop their arguments.

Referencing

A reference is a way of indicating to the reader, in an orderly form, where information has been obtained. A reference provides all the information needed to find the source material. References must be cited because they acknowledge the sources used, and enable the reader to consult the work and verify the data that has been presented.

References must be given whenever someone else's work is quoted or summarized. References can come from many different sources, including books, magazines, journals, newspapers, emails, Internet sites and interviews.

There are a number of different documentation styles available for use when writing research papers; most are appropriate in some academic disciplines but not others. The supervisor or school librarian should help the student decide on a style for the particular subject of the essay. It is important to remember that, whatever style is chosen, it must be applied consistently and in line with the IB's minimum requirements. When choosing the style, the student needs to have a clear understanding of how it is to be used before embarking on the research task. The style should be applied in both the final draft of the essay and in the initial research stages of taking notes. This is good practice, not only for producing a high-quality final product, but also for reducing the opportunities and temptation to plagiarize.

The IB's minimum requirements include:

- Name of author
- Date of publication
- Title of source
- Page numbers (print sources only)
- Date of access (electronic sources only)
- URL

Any reference to interviews should state the name of the interviewer, the name of the interviewee, the date and the place of the interview.

Referencing online materials

References to online materials should include the title of the extract used as well as the website address, the date it was accessed, and, if possible, the author. With regard to electronic sources, the requirement of the IB for date stamping supersedes the requirements of the chosen referencing system. In other words, all electronic sources must be date stamped by including the date the student accessed the resource (for example, accessed 12 March 2016). Caution should be exercised with information found on websites that do not give references or that cannot be cross-checked against other sources. The more important a particular point is to the essay, the more the quality of its source needs to be evaluated.

Accessing sources: technology literacy – using electronic sources

Using the Internet as a resource for finding information is more and more commonplace, and it is a tremendous resource. However, it must be used critically and with care. One important thing to be aware of is that unlike resources found in a library in printed form, those found on the Internet may not have been through a review or editing process.

Reflection in the extended essay

Student reflection in the extended essay is a critical evaluation of the decision-making process. It demonstrates the evolution and discovery of conceptual understandings as they relate to the research question and sources. Reflection demonstrates the rationale for decisions made and the skills and understandings developed, as well as the authenticity and intellectual initiative of the student voice. Effective reflection highlights the journey the student has taken to engage in an intellectual and personal process as well as how it has changed him or her as a learner and affected the final essay.

As a part of the extended essay, students will be expected to show evidence of intellectual growth, critical and personal development, intellectual initiative and creativity. This should be facilitated by the use of the Researcher's reflection space. The most successful students will be able to show an appreciation that learning is complex and that they are able to consider their actions and ideas in response to challenges that they may experience during the research process.

The depth of reflection will demonstrate that the student has constructively engaged with the learning process. Such engagement provides evidence that the student has grown as a learner as a result of his or her experience. More importantly, it demonstrates the skills that have been learned.

These skills may include:

- critical thinking
- decision-making
- general research
- planning
- referencing and citations
- specific research methodology
- time management.

Reflection must be documented on the Reflections on planning and progress form and is explicitly assessed under assessment criterion E (engagement).

Getting Started and Important Dates to Remember (EE Timeline Class of 2019)

1. Choose an available Diploma Programme subject for the extended essay.
2. Read the following materials:
 - a. The assessment criteria
 - b. The relevant subject-specific chapter of the Extended essay guide
3. Set up Researcher's Reflection Space (RRS)
4. Identify which system of academic referencing they will use, ensuring that this meets the minimum requirements for the IB.
 - a. IB's ethical guidelines
 - i. Citations
 - ii. Other policies
5. Online Encyclopedias and other similar websites including Wikipedia
6. Choose a topic and undertake some background reading on it.
7. Formulate a preliminary research question. Try to incorporate an IB command term in the research question if possible
<https://www.uww.edu/Documents/colleges/coeps/academics/18%20Command%20Terms%20from%20the%20International%20Baccalaureate%20January%202015-16%20workshop.pdf>
8. **Due Date – Feb 28, 2018**
 - a. Student contract due to Janet Boltjes, signed by both student and parent, by 8:30 am.
 - b. Proposed Subject and Topic Form to Janet Boltjes by 8:30 am.
 - i. Include EE subject

- ii. Include specific topic area or initial research question
 - iii. Included rationale for choosing this topic area
 - iv. Include a personal timeline proposal for the research and writing process.
Take into consideration LHS's internal EE guidelines
- 9. Online Search Strategies
 - a. Advance Google Searches
 - b. Other search engines
- 10. Evaluation of Internet sites
 - a. Authority
 - b. Audience
 - c. Reliability and Credibility
 - d. Accuracy
 - e. Objectivity
 - f. Currency
- 11. Online Databases
- 12. Using Social Media to search for information
- 13. Plan a structure for the essay. This may change as the research develops but it is useful to have a sense of direction from the start.
- 14. Undertake some preparatory reading in light of the proposed research question.
- 15. Due Date – March 29, 2018**
 - a. Select Supervisor
 - b. Initial Research including Researcher's Reflection Space (RRS)
 - i. 5-10 Sources
 - ii. Correctly referenced in chosen citation style
 - iii. Each source with one or two notes which include:
 - 1. Summary of key points, bullet points of themes, ideas, research, etc.
 - 2. Quotes as appropriate, page numbers, new references, paths of investigation, etc.
 - 3. Headings, with:
 - a. Any information that has be extracted from the source that relates to the EE topic/question
 - b. Highlighting of possible paragraph topic sentences / thesis statements for inclusion in the paper
- 16. Due Date April 9-12, 2018** – Schedule appointment with supervisor and meet for the first time
- 17. Due Date April 19, 2018**
 - a. Research Readiness Form to Janet Boltjes, signed by both student and supervisor by 3:30 pm
 - b. First reflection due to Janet Boltjes via email by 3:30 pm
- 18. April 19 – May 2018**– meet with supervisors at least 2 more times (10-20 minute sessions)
- 19. Due Date – May 30, 2018** - 5 pages of writing emailed to Supervisor and Janet Boltjes by 3:30 pm

20. June – August, 2018 – Write rough draft
21. **Due Date – August 30, 2018** – First 10 pages due
22. **Due Date – September 10-14, 2018** – Second reflection session with supervisors
23. **Due Date – September 17, 2018** – Interim reflection due
24. **Due Date – October 22, 2018** – Complete draft due
25. **Due Date – October 29 – Nov 2, 2018** – Mandatory draft (revision) conference with Supervisor
26. **Due Date – December 3, 2018** – Final Copy due
27. **Due Date – December 3-7, 2018** – Final Reflection Session with Supervisor (Viva Voce)
28. **Due Date – December 10, 2018** – Final Reflection due to Janet Boltjes
29. **Due Date – January 17, 2019** – Supervisor’s Report

An important component of choosing a topic is selecting a supervisor. When approaching someone to be your supervisor for the EE please be considerate of the teacher’s time. No teacher should be supervising more than five students, and even this number is on the high end. Many of you will need to approach a teacher whose class you might not have taken yet. Depending on your subject/topic it might be beneficial to choose someone who is not teaching a designated IB class.

Choose a Topic – the narrower the better. A subject is a broad field of study. History and Mathematics, for example, are subjects. A topic is a specific element contained within a subject. A topic can be both wide and narrow. In the case of the EE the narrower the topic the easier it will be to generate a focused research question. In a broad sense the Cold War is a topic within history. But for planning purposes this is too broad. An example of a narrow topic is Truman informing Stalin at the Potsdam Conference that the United States possessed a powerful new weapon.

The supervision process

In order for students to be successful in the completion of the extended essay, the process needs to be structured and must incorporate a supervision process of 3–5 recommended hours to include three formal reflection sessions between the student and the supervisor as well as supervision sessions called check-in sessions.

The recording of reflections on the Reflections on Planning and Progress form is mandatory and must be submitted with the completed extended essay for assessment under criterion E (engagement). To prepare for these sessions and ensure that they are meaningful and purposeful, the student needs to undertake a number of preparatory steps, which are outlined in the guide.

Assessment of the extended essay

Markbands

Markbands are a comprehensive statement of expected performance against which responses are judged. They represent a single holistic criterion divided into level descriptors. Each level descriptor corresponds to a range of marks to differentiate student performance. A best-fit approach is used to ascertain which particular mark to use from the possible range for each level descriptor.

Overview of the Assessment Criteria for the Extended Essay

Criterion A: Focus and Method	Criterion B: Knowledge and Understanding	Criterion C: Critical Thinking	Criterion D: Presentation	Criterion E: Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic• Research question• Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Context• Subject-specific terminology and concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research• Analysis• Discussion and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structure• Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Process• Research focus
Marks	Marks	Marks	Marks	Marks
6	6	12	4	6

Total Marks Available: 34

Best-fit approach and Markbands

Assessment criteria must be used in conjunction with the relevant specific subject interpretations as these interpretations articulate how the generic assessment criteria are understood and applied to each subject. Levels of performance are described using multiple indicators per level. In many cases the indicators occur together throughout the essay, but not always. Also, not all indicators are always present. This means that a student can demonstrate performances that fit into different levels. To accommodate this, the IB assessment models use markbands and advise examiners and teachers to use **a best-fit approach** in deciding the appropriate mark for a particular criterion. From various assessment trials we know that introducing markbands and using the best-fit model is not always self-evident, and guidance is needed to help with their application. While the extended essay is an externally assessed component of the DP, supervisors are required to submit a predicated grade and understanding the way in which the criteria are applied by examiners will assist with the guidance given to students. The aim is to find the descriptor that conveys most accurately the level attained by

the student's work, using the best-fit approach. A best-fit approach means that compensation will be made when a piece of work matches different aspects of a markband at different levels. The mark awarded will be one that most fairly reflects the balance of achievement against the markband. It is not necessary for every indicator of a level descriptor to be met for that mark to be rewarded. (For example, if student work matches two of the three requirements within a markband but one is seriously lacking, the student should be awarded for the strands that have been met well, but the mark awarded should be at the lower end of the markband to compensate for what is lacking in one strand. If the level of student work spans multiple markbands, compensation depends on the performance in the higher order skills of evaluation (AO3), discussion (AO3) and analysis (AO2))

- When assessing a student's work, examiners will read the level descriptors from the bottom up until they reach a descriptor that most appropriately describes the level of the work being assessed.
- If a piece of work seems to fall between two descriptors, both descriptors will be read again and the one that more appropriately describes the student's work will be chosen. In relation to criterion C, examiners will bear in mind the higher order skills being assessed.
- There are a number of marks available within a level; examiners will award the upper marks if the student's work demonstrates the qualities described to a greater extent. Examiners will award the lower marks if the student's work demonstrates the qualities described to a lesser extent.
- The highest-level descriptors do not imply faultless performance and should be achievable by a student. Examiners will not hesitate to use the extremes if they are appropriate descriptions of the work being assessed.