



## **SON IBDP Extended Essay Supervisor's Handbook**

Updated: January 2021

### **The role of an extended essay supervisor:**

The role of an Extended Essay Supervisor is the same as the supervisor described in all documents published by the IBO regarding the Extended Essay. This role is similar to that of a mentor who provides appropriate guidance to the student regarding their extended essays.

### **The extended essay supervisor has these principal responsibilities:**

1. To discuss the choice of topic with the student and, in particular, help them to formulate a well-focused research question that satisfies appropriate legal and ethical standards (including health and safety, confidentiality, human rights, animal welfare, and environmental issues) as well as ensuring that the research conforms to the regulations as outlined in the Extended Essay Guide relating to essays written in the subject area
2. To maintain contact with the EE Coordinator after being assigned to a student/students as the EE supervisor
3. To encourage and support the candidate throughout the research and writing of the extended essay, including advice and guidance on the following specific aspects of the EE:
  - a. Finding a suitable focus
  - b. Formulating a precise research question
  - c. Finding appropriate resources
  - d. Gathering and analyzing information/evidence/data
  - e. Documenting sources
4. To advise students on how to keep the essay compliant to the assessment criteria
  - a. To provide the candidate with advice and guidance regarding the skills necessary to undertake the research of the question and topic chosen for the extended essay
5. To ensure that the extended essay is the candidate's own work
6. To read and comment on ONE full and complete draft of the extended essay (but does not edit the paper). Reads final draft to confirm authenticity and provide a predicted grade
7. To complete the supervisor's feedback on ManageBac upon submission of the extended essay, including a predicted grade for the student's essay

### **To fulfill the above responsibilities supervisors should:**

1. Be qualified in the subject and area of inquiry of the extended essay. They should have done research in the subject, be familiar with research methods in the academic subject area, and be familiar with cornerstone works, quality sources, and bibliographic protocols of the field of study
2. Have read the extended essay guide, especially the regulations and sections pertaining to essays in the subject they are supervising



3. Have read and understand the assessment criteria that will be used to evaluate the student's work
4. Be willing and able to dedicate up to 5 hours to each student throughout the process
5. Be involved enough in the steps of the student's writing process to be able to vouch for the fact that the work is that of the student
6. Read recent extended essays in the subject
7. Read recent examiner reports and subject reports to gain insight into common student errors
8. Be aware of the sources and resources available to students (in the school and through other libraries and sources) e.g. appropriate databases, lab equipment, software
9. Conduct a short, concluding interview (viva voce) with the student before completing the supervisor's feedback on ManageBac

### **Things to be aware of:**

#### **The extended essay requirements:**

1. It is a research paper
2. Maximum number of words is 4,000
3. It is supposed to represent approximately 40 hours of work
4. It is meant to allow students to investigate a topic of special interest and practice independent research and writing skills
5. It is an analysis of a topic supported with relevant research
6. It does not have to be "new thinking" on a topic, but should not cover a topic for which the answer is well known in the literature
7. The essay is a requirement of IB Diploma Candidates
8. Points scored are in conjunction with TOK
9. All extended essays are externally assessed by examiners appointed by the IBO
10. The extended essays are based on criteria on a scale from 0 to 34. This maximum score is made up of the total criterion levels available for each essay. Assessment criteria are attached



### Grade descriptors (this information is taken from the IB Subject Guide for the Extended Essay)

The extended essay is externally assessed, and as such, supervisors are not expected to mark the essays or arrive at a number to translate into a grade. Predicted grades for the extended essay should be based on the qualitative grade descriptors for the extended essay. These descriptors are what will be used by senior examiners to set the boundaries. While boundaries are subject to change, it is the grade descriptors that remain consistent.

#### Grade A

Demonstrates effective research skills resulting in a well-focused and appropriate research question that can be explored within the scope of the chosen topic; effective engagement with relevant research areas, methods and sources; excellent knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the relevant discipline; the effective application of source material and correct use of subject-specific terminology and/or concepts further supporting this; consistent and relevant conclusions that are proficiently analysed; sustained reasoned argumentation supported effectively by evidence; critically evaluated research; excellent presentation of the essay, whereby coherence and consistency further supports the reading of the essay; and present and correctly applied structural and layout elements.

**Engagement with the process is conceptual and personal, key decision-making during the research process is documented, and personal reflections are evidenced, including those that are forward-thinking.**

#### Grade B

Demonstrates appropriate research skills resulting in a research question that can be explored within the scope of the chosen topic; reasonably effective engagement with relevant research areas, methods and sources; good knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the relevant discipline; a reasonably effective application of source material and use of subject-specific terminology and/or concepts; consistent conclusions that are accurately analysed; reasoned argumentation often supported by evidence; research that at times evidences critical evaluation; and a clear presentation of all structural and layout elements, which further supports the reading of the essay.

**Engagement with the process is generally evidenced by the reflections and key decision-making during the research process is documented.**



### Grade C

Demonstrates evidence of research undertaken, which has led to a research question that is not necessarily expressed in a way that can be explored within the scope of the chosen topic; partially effective engagement with mostly appropriate research areas, methods and sources—however, there are some discrepancies in those processes, although these do not interfere with the planning and approach; some knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the discipline, which is mostly relevant; the attempted application of source material and appropriate terminology and/or concepts; an attempted synthesis of research results with partially relevant analysis; conclusions partly supported by the evidence; discussion that is descriptive rather than analytical; attempted evaluation; satisfactory presentation of the essay, with weaknesses that do not hinder the reading of the essay; and some structural and layout elements that are missing or are incorrectly applied.

**Engagement with the process is evidenced but shows mostly factual information, with personal reflection mostly limited to procedural issues.**

### Grade D

Demonstrates a lack of research, resulting in unsatisfactory focus and a research question that is not answerable within the scope of the chosen topic; at times engagement with appropriate research, methods and sources, but discrepancies in those processes that occasionally interfere with the planning and approach; some relevant knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the discipline, which are at times irrelevant; the attempted application of source material, but with inaccuracies in the use of, or underuse of, terminology and/or concepts; irrelevant analysis and inconsistent conclusions as a result of a descriptive discussion; a lack of evaluation; presentation of the essay that at times is illogical and hinders the reading; and structural and layout elements that are missing.

**Engagement with the process is evidenced but is superficial, with personal reflections that are solely narrative and concerned with procedural elements.**

### Grade E (failing condition)

Demonstrates an unclear nature of the essay; a generally unsystematic approach and resulting unfocused research question; limited engagement with limited research and sources; generally limited and only partially accurate knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the relevant discipline; ineffective connections in the application of source material and inaccuracies in the terminology and/or concepts used; a summarizing of results of research with inconsistent analysis; an attempted outline of an argument, but one that is generally descriptive in nature; and a layout that generally lacks or incorrectly applies several layout and structural elements.

**Engagement with the process is limited, with limited factual or decision-making information and no personal reflection on the process.**



### **The relationship between student and supervisor-**

1. The relationship should be viewed as like the one that exists between a professor and a graduate student. The professor guides the student's research, but the work is done by the student
2. The relationship is like a conversation between two people in the same academic discipline; where you speak the same language
3. Students need to respect your time. They need to make and keep appointments with you and treat you with courtesy and respect at all times
4. Coaching them through the tough early times is key. You can contact the Extended Essay Coordinator in case of problems
5. You are not responsible for tracking students down, or for obtaining the paperwork required. Students should come prepared with everything they need. The Extended Essay Coordinator will provide you with a copy of everything that the student has – including the timeline, due dates, and forms
6. The role of the supervisor is as an advisor – the student is the one responsible for meeting deadlines in an organized and considerate manner
7. Supervision input is most crucial in the initial stages to get students started. Their level of independence should grow as the process continues
8. Advice from the supervisor is never prohibited; however, the expectation is that the process of research and writing will become increasingly independent as it proceeds

### **Consulting with outside sources:**

1. A student may consult or work with external sources (e.g. university professors, relatives etc.); however, it remains the responsibility of the supervisor within the school to complete all requirements above. This is especially important since the supervisor is the one who is required to ensure that the work is that of the student



### **Plagiarism:**

1. You should submit each student's final extended essay through Turnitin.com. By doing this, you will then be provided with an Originality Report that should be discussed by you and the student. It will highlight any sections that are not properly cited
2. In any case where malpractice or plagiarism is suspected in the final draft, the supervisor will write a report and present it to the Extended Essay & IB Coordinators
3. The supervisor must provide an explanation in the Supervisor's report where the number of hours spent with the student in discussing the extended essay is zero. One of the questions this leads to is: How was it possible to guarantee the authenticity of the essay?

### **Choice of topic/resources:**

1. Topics of the essays should fall clearly within a subject and not cross boundaries. This is so that appropriate IB evaluators can be lined up
2. Students should be encouraged to choose a topic they have a high level of personal interest in
3. The topic of the extended essay is the particular area of study within the chosen subject. Before the final decision is made about the choice of topic, the relevant subject guidelines should be carefully considered. You should find and study the EE Guide in your subject and should have access to the official IB EE website from MyIB for additional guidance. You should also have been given access to the school's ManageBac system

### **Choosing the Research Question (RQ):**

1. Students should do an adequate literature review on their topic before determining their initial research question. Note that the initial research question can and will evolve as the student continues their research
2. One of the things they will be required to do is to provide an annotated bibliography of the sources they are considering. They are also required to develop a topic outline
3. The RQ should be narrow enough that the topic can be adequately covered by 4,000 words, but broad enough to allow for a good analysis. This is where you will be invaluable to the student
4. The ultimate question chosen is the responsibility of the student. It is the student's research
5. The job of the supervisor includes judging the feasibility of the RQ offered by the student. Can the student find adequate quality resources/data to complete the essay? Is their approach viable?



### **Bibliography/Documentation:**

1. The Bibliography should list only those sources cited and used in the paper
2. The supervisor should help the student decide on whether to use MLA or APA format for their paper. Typically, papers in science and social science (business, psychology, maths) use the APA style and papers in languages, history and religion use the MLA style
3. The documentation style should be applied in both the final draft and in the initial stages of work on the EE
4. There must be consistency of method used when citing sources
5. Information and help with APA and MLA can be found in the SON Library or on many online sites such as the Online Writing Lab (OWL) operated by Purdue University
6. Essays that include references to unsubstantiated sites such as Wikipedia or Investopedia are seen as less effective than papers that use sources from peer-reviewed journals

### **Sections of the essay:**

1. The upper limit is 4,000 words and includes the introduction, the body, the conclusion and any quotations, but does not include:
  - a. The Title & Contents
  - b. Maps, charts, diagrams, annotated illustrations and tables
  - c. Equations, formulas, and calculations
  - d. Citations, references (in-text; e.g. (Brown, 2009) does not count
  - e. Endnotes
  - f. The bibliography
  - g. Appendices
2. Essays in excess of 4,000 words are subject to penalty and examiners are not required to read material in excess of the word limit
3. Appendices and endnotes are not an essential section of the EE and examiners are not required to read them
4. Unless considered essential, complete lists of raw data should not be included in the EE
5. Students should not constantly refer to material presented in an appendix, as this may disrupt the continuity of the essay



### **The Writing Process:**

1. The student is ultimately responsible for the quality of the work
2. Students are required to produce an outline of their paper as an assistance to them

### **The Draft:**

1. The supervisor will read and comment on a completed draft of the entire extended essay. The comprehensive draft is due toward the end of their Form 5 year. Supervisors should NOT edit student's work
2. Reading multiple drafts with further input from the supervisor is not allowed. The supervisor is permitted to answer questions and offer advice, but not to read more than one COMPLETE draft of the entire essay before the final version is submitted for authentication by the supervisor and assessment by IB
3. A student may also present a section of the essay for a supervisor's comment, if, for example things have been added or substantially altered from the draft the supervisor read
4. Students may want to make arrangements, with the permission of the supervisor, to record the comments made during the review of the draft, since it is not up to the supervisor to give their comments in writing to the student. Video or audio recording of the discussion is possible with permission of the supervisor

### **The Supervisor's Feedback:**

1. Supervisors are responsible for signing the necessary forms documenting that a student has completed each step of the EE process. It is the responsibility of the student to have and provide you with these forms and to submit them by the dates required
2. Supervisors should avoid dedicating too many hours to one student since too many hours can be seen as unfavourable on the final supervisor's comments
3. You must provide evidence that the work is the student's own
4. You will be required to provide a predicted grade for the student's EE. The grade is based on the stated criteria and grade descriptors. You may consult the EE Coordinator and/or the DP Coordinator if you feel this would be helpful. This grade is NOT shared with the student
5. Supervisors are also required to provide feedback so that internal marks on student report cards can be determined. These comments must be given to the EE Coordinator when requested near the end of each term





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### Official EE Criteria:

Link from MyIB:

[https://ibpublishing.ibo.org/extendedessay/apps/dpapp/guide.html?doc=d\\_0\\_ee\\_yyy\\_gui\\_1602\\_1\\_e&part=6&chapter=6&section=1](https://ibpublishing.ibo.org/extendedessay/apps/dpapp/guide.html?doc=d_0_ee_yyy_gui_1602_1_e&part=6&chapter=6&section=1)

## Appendix:

### The assessment criteria

#### Criterion A: Focus and method

This criterion focuses on the topic, the research question and the methodology. It assesses the explanation of the focus of the research (this includes the topic and the research question), how the research will be undertaken, and how the focus is maintained throughout the essay.

Level	Descriptor of strands and indicators
0	<b>The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below.</b>
1–2	<b>The topic is communicated unclearly and incompletely.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identification and explanation of the topic is limited; the purpose and focus of the research is unclear, or does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject for which it is registered.</li></ul> <b>The research question is stated but not clearly expressed or too broad.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The research question is too broad in scope to be treated effectively within the word limit and requirements of the task, or does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject for which it is registered.</li><li>• The intent of the research question is understood but has not been clearly expressed and/or the discussion of the essay is not focused on the research question.</li></ul> <b>Methodology of the research is limited.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The source(s) and/or method(s) to be used are limited in range given the topic and research question.</li><li>• There is limited evidence that their selection was informed.</li></ul>
3–4	<b>The topic is communicated.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identification and explanation of the research topic is communicated; the purpose and focus of the research is adequately clear, but only partially appropriate.</li></ul> <b>The research question is clearly stated but only partially focused.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The research question is clear but the discussion in the essay is only partially focused and connected to the research question.</li></ul> <b>Methodology of the research is mostly complete.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Source(s) and/or method(s) to be used are generally relevant and appropriate given the topic and research question.</li><li>• There is some evidence that their selection(s) was informed.</li></ul> <b>If the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject in which the essay is registered no more than four marks can be awarded for this criterion.</b>
5–6	<b>The topic is communicated accurately and effectively.</b>

Level	Descriptor of strands and indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification and explanation of the research topic is effectively communicated; the purpose and focus of the research is clear and appropriate.</li> </ul> <p><b>The research question is clearly stated and focused.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research question is clear and addresses an issue of research that is appropriately connected to the discussion in the essay.</li> </ul> <p><b>Methodology of the research is complete.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An appropriate range of relevant source(s) and/or method(s) has been selected in relation to the topic and research question.</li> <li>• There is evidence of effective and informed selection of sources and/or methods.</li> </ul>

## Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding

This criterion assesses the extent to which the research relates to the subject area/discipline used to explore the research question, or in the case of the world studies extended essay, the issue addressed and the two disciplinary perspectives applied, and additionally the way in which this knowledge and understanding is demonstrated through the use of appropriate terminology and concepts.

Level	Descriptor of strands and indicators
0	<b>The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below.</b>
1–2	<p><b>Knowledge and understanding is limited.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application of source material has limited relevance and is only partially appropriate to the research question.</li> <li>• Knowledge of the topic/discipline(s)/issue is anecdotal, unstructured and mostly descriptive with sources not effectively being used.</li> </ul> <p><b>Use of terminology and concepts is unclear and limited.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject-specific terminology and/or concepts are either missing or inaccurate, demonstrating limited knowledge and understanding.</li> </ul>
3–4	<p><b>Knowledge and understanding is good.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application of source material is mostly relevant and appropriate to the research question.</li> <li>• Knowledge of the topic/discipline(s)/issue is clear; there is an understanding of the sources used but their application is only partially effective.</li> </ul> <p><b>Use of terminology and concepts is adequate.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of subject-specific terminology and concepts is mostly accurate, demonstrating an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding.</li> </ul> <p><b>If the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject in which the essay is registered no more than four marks can be awarded for this criterion.</b></p>

Level	Descriptor of strands and indicators
5–6	<p><b>Knowledge and understanding is excellent.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application of source materials is clearly relevant and appropriate to the research question.</li> <li>• Knowledge of the topic/discipline(s)/issue is clear and coherent and sources are used effectively and with understanding.</li> </ul> <p><b>Use of terminology and concepts is good.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of subject-specific terminology and concepts is accurate and consistent, demonstrating effective knowledge and understanding.</li> </ul>

## Criterion C: Critical thinking

This criterion assesses the extent to which critical-thinking skills have been used to analyse and evaluate the research undertaken.

Level	Descriptor of strands and indicators
0	<b>The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below.</b>
1–3	<p><b>The research is limited.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research presented is limited and its application to support the argument is not clearly relevant to the research question.</li> </ul> <p><b>Analysis is limited.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is limited analysis.</li> <li>• Where there are conclusions to individual points of analysis these are limited and not consistent with the evidence.</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion/evaluation is limited.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An argument is outlined <b>but</b> this is limited, incomplete, descriptive or narrative in nature.</li> <li>• The construction of an argument is unclear and/or incoherent in structure hindering understanding.</li> <li>• Where there is a final conclusion, it is limited and not consistent with the arguments/evidence presented.</li> <li>• There is an attempt to evaluate the research, but this is superficial.</li> </ul> <p><b>If the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject in which the essay is registered no more than three marks can be awarded for this criterion.</b></p>
4–6	<p><b>The research is adequate.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some research presented is appropriate and its application to support the argument is partially relevant to the research question.</li> </ul> <p><b>Analysis is adequate.</b></p>

Level	Descriptor of strands and indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is analysis <b>but</b> this is only partially relevant to the research question; the inclusion of irrelevant research detracts from the quality of the argument.</li> <li>• Any conclusions to individual points of analysis are only partially supported by the evidence.</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion/evaluation is adequate.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An argument explains the research <b>but</b> the reasoning contains inconsistencies.</li> <li>• The argument may lack clarity and coherence but this does not significantly hinder understanding.</li> <li>• Where there is a final or summative conclusion, this is only partially consistent with the arguments/evidence presented.</li> <li>• The research has been evaluated but not critically.</li> </ul>
7–9	<p><b>The research is good.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of the research is appropriate and its application to support the argument is clearly relevant to the research question.</li> </ul> <p><b>Analysis is good.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research is analysed in a way that is clearly relevant to the research question; the inclusion of less relevant research rarely detracts from the quality of the overall analysis.</li> <li>• Conclusions to individual points of analysis are supported by the evidence but there are some minor inconsistencies.</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion/evaluation is good.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An effective reasoned argument is developed from the research, with a conclusion supported by the evidence presented.</li> <li>• This reasoned argument is clearly structured and coherent and supported by a final or summative conclusion; minor inconsistencies may hinder the strength of the overall argument.</li> <li>• The research has been evaluated, and this is partially critical.</li> </ul>
10–12	<p><b>The research is excellent.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research is appropriate to the research question and its application to support the argument is consistently relevant.</li> </ul> <p><b>Analysis is excellent.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research is analysed effectively and clearly focused on the research question; the inclusion of less relevant research does not significantly detract from the quality of the overall analysis.</li> <li>• Conclusions to individual points of analysis are effectively supported by the evidence.</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion/evaluation is excellent.</b></p>

Level	Descriptor of strands and indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An effective and focused reasoned argument is developed from the research with a conclusion reflective of the evidence presented.</li> <li>• This reasoned argument is well structured and coherent; any minor inconsistencies do not hinder the strength of the overall argument or the final or summative conclusion.</li> <li>• The research has been critically evaluated.</li> </ul>

## Criterion D: Presentation

This criterion assesses the extent to which the presentation follows the standard format expected for academic writing and the extent to which this aids effective communication.

Level	Descriptor of strands and indicators
0	<b>The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below.</b>
1–2	<p><b>Presentation is acceptable.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The structure of the essay is generally appropriate in terms of the expected conventions for the topic, argument and subject in which the essay is registered.</li> <li>• Some layout considerations may be missing or applied incorrectly.</li> <li>• Weaknesses in the structure and/or layout do not significantly impact the reading, understanding or evaluation of the extended essay.</li> </ul>
3–4	<p><b>Presentation is good.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The structure of the essay clearly is appropriate in terms of the expected conventions for the topic, the argument and subject in which the essay is registered.</li> <li>• Layout considerations are present and applied correctly.</li> <li>• The structure and layout support the reading, understanding and evaluation of the extended essay.</li> </ul>

## Criterion E: Engagement

This criterion assesses the student’s engagement with their research focus and the research process. It will be applied by the examiner at the end of the assessment of the essay, and is based solely on the candidate’s reflections as detailed on the [RPPF](#), with the supervisory comments and extended essay itself as context. Only the first 500 words are assessable.

Level	Descriptor of strands and indicators
0	<b>The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors, an RPPF has not been submitted, or the RPPF has been submitted in a language other than that of the essay.</b>
1–2	<b>Engagement is limited.</b>

Level	Descriptor of strands and indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflections on decision-making and planning are mostly descriptive.</li> <li>• These reflections communicate a limited degree of personal engagement with the research focus and/or research process.</li> </ul>
3–4	<p><b>Engagement is good.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflections on decision-making and planning are analytical and include reference to conceptual understanding and skill development.</li> <li>• These reflections communicate a moderate degree of personal engagement with the research focus and process of research, demonstrating some intellectual initiative.</li> </ul>
5–6	<p><b>Engagement is excellent.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflections on decision-making and planning are evaluative and include reference to the student’s capacity to consider actions and ideas in response to challenges experienced in the research process.</li> <li>• These reflections communicate a high degree of intellectual and personal engagement with the research focus and process of research, demonstrating authenticity, intellectual initiative and/or creative approach in the student voice.</li> </ul>