



**SCHOOL OF THE NATIONS**  
聯合國學校



**SON IBDP Extended Essay  
Supervisor's Handbook  
(2023-2025)**

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## I. 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.

## II. 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 Coordinators 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.

## III. To fulfil the above responsibilities supervisors should:

1. Be qualified in the subject and area of inquiry of the extended essay. They should 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 understood 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. Be familiar with Turnitin.com as well as the SON student EE handbook that is published each school year.
7. Read recent extended essays in the subject.
8. Read recent examiner reports and subject reports to gain insight into common student errors.
9. 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.
10. Conduct a short, concluding interview (*Viva Voce*) with the student before completing the supervisor's feedback on ManageBac.

#### IV. The Extended Essay Requirements

1. It is a research paper.
2. Maximum number of words is 4,000 or 4,800 Chinese characters.
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 can be found on MyIB.

#### V. The importance of Completion of the Extended Essay

The completion of tasks outlined for Form 5 is required in order to be promoted to Form 6.

1. Students who do not have a comprehensive draft of at least 3,500 words by the date set will not be allowed to progress to Form 6 regardless of their other marks.
2. Any student guilty of plagiarism on all or part of their work on the EE will not advance to Form 6.
3. Two of the formal personal reflections must also be completed during the Form 5 year in order to advance to Form 6.

## VI. Minimum Standards for the Extended Essay of Students on the Non-Diploma (Course) Track

### Inclusive students

1. Inclusive students will be assigned to inclusive teachers only, who will work in collaboration with the subject teachers.
2. The essay should be research-based, with proper in-text citations (at least three sources).
3. There should be some evidence of critical thinking.
4. The length of the essay should be between 1,000 to 2,000 words, according to the capabilities of each student.
5. Deadlines are flexible and can be set by the supervisor. However, the final essay should be submitted to the EE Coordinators by April 1st of the second DP year.

### Non-inclusive students

1. Non-inclusive students who are on the non-diploma (course) track will be assigned to subject teachers.
2. The essay should be research-based, with proper in-text citations (at least three sources).
3. There should be evidence of critical thinking.
4. The minimum length of the essay should be 2,000 words.
5. Deadlines are flexible and can be set by the supervisor. However, the final essay should be submitted to the EE Coordinators by April 1st of the second DP year (Form 6).

## VII. External Assessment Overview (IB)

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"> <li>• Topic</li> <li>• Research question</li> <li>• Methodology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Context</li> <li>• Subject-specific terminology and concepts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Analysis</li> <li>• Discussion and evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure</li> <li>• Layout</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process</li> <li>• Research focus</li> </ul>
Marks	Marks	Marks	Marks	Marks
6	6	12	4	6

Total marks available: 34

Figure 1 - External Assessment Overview

## VIII. The Best-fit Approach and Markbands

The IB uses assessment criteria 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.

Please see details of the criteria and markbands from the Extended Essay guide on MyIB.

## IX. Grade Descriptors

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.

## X. The Diploma Points Matrix

The bonus points awarded for the Extended Essay will be made in conjunction with the Theory of Knowledge Assessment. A total of 3 bonus points may be earned for these central components. The combination of points will be awarded according to the matrix which follows:

### The diploma points matrix

May 2015 onwards

		Theory of knowledge					
		Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D	Grade E	No grade N
Extended essay	Grade A	3	3	2	2	Failing condition	Failing condition
	Grade B	3	2	2	1	Failing condition	Failing condition
	Grade C	2	2	1	0	Failing condition	Failing condition
	Grade D	2	1	0	0	Failing condition	Failing condition
	Grade E	Failing condition	Failing condition	Failing condition	Failing condition	Failing condition	Failing condition
	No grade N	Failing condition	Failing condition	Failing condition	Failing condition	Failing condition	Failing condition

**Changes from *The diploma points matrix (May 2010 - November 2014)*:**

- B + C combination now results in 2 additional points (previously 1 point).
- A + E combination now results in zero points and a failing condition (previously 1 point).

Figure 2 - The diploma points matrix

## XI. Internal Assessment (SON)

1. In addition to the score a student receives at the end of the IB program, school marks will be recorded on SON report cards during Form 5 and during a portion of Form 6. The



Extended Essay grades for Form 5 students (terms 1, 2 and 3) and for Form 6 (terms 1 and 2) include the following elements:

- a. Attending and fully participating in the required plenary sessions. These sessions will be part of homeroom activities, and will include an additional class period every three weeks as shown in the schedule. During Form 6 year, sessions will likely include two required Saturday morning sessions.
  - b. Submitting required documents by the due dates given.
  - c. Taking initiative in meeting with staff (supervisor and/or coordinators). Taking initiative also includes posting ideas, resources, and information in the informal reflection space on ManageBac as required.
  - d. Demonstrated effort in producing work on the EE that is reflective of the student's ability.
2. All of these requirements must be met and evident in order for the student to get an "A" for their SON EE term mark. The EE Coordinators, in consultation with the student's supervisor and the IBDP Coordinator, will award the EE grades.
  3. At the end of each term, the EE Coordinators will contact supervisors by email, and ask for feedback pertaining items **c** and **d** of the above requirements. Supervisors are expected to provide the information promptly.

## XII. The Extended Essay Timeline – Class of 2025

Table 1 - The Extended Essay Timeline for the Class of 2025

Form 5	SEPTEMBER 2023	✓ Student/Parent contract
	OCTOBER 2023	✓ Subject and proposed supervisor choice ✓ Topic and initial research question
	NOVEMBER 2023	✓ First FORMAL REFLECTION on ManageBac
	DECEMBER 2023	✓ Annotated bibliography
	JANUARY 2024	✓ Topic Outline
	MARCH 2024	✓ Partial rough draft (2,000 words)
	MAY 2024	✓ Comprehensive draft (at least 3500 words including ALL aspects of the required paper)

	JUNE 2024	✓ Second FORMAL REFLECTION on ManageBac
SUMMER HOLIDAY		✓ Students work on revisions and improvements so that they can finalize their EE in the FIRST term of Form 6.
Form 6	OCT-NOV 2024	✓ Final plenary sessions with students to get peer feedback, review citations and check for plagiarism.
	DECEMBER 2024	✓ Final meeting with the supervisor. ✓ Note: This is the LAST CHANCE for the supervisor to meet with the candidate and to read changes made to their <u>completed draft</u> and provide feedback to the student.
	JANUARY 2025	✓ The Final Paper needs to be submitted on ManageBac.
	FEBRUARY 2025	✓ The Viva Voce with the supervisor. ✓ Third and final FORMAL REFLECTION on ManageBac. ✓ Supervisors must submit all paperwork and copies of the final Extended Essays to the EE Coordinators.

### XIII. Choice of Subject and Topic

1. The subject selection for the Extended Essay must come from the list of available subjects listed in EE Student's Guide.
2. Students must provide a first, second and third subject choice that they have sufficient background knowledge, skill, and sufficient interest in to ensure their motivation.
3. Subjects that are not part of the student's diploma program course of study may be permitted, but caution is advised unless the student has a high level of personal interest and requisite background knowledge in that particular subject.
4. Approval of a student's selection of a subject area remains with the EE and IBDP Coordinators.
5. Once the subject is chosen and approved, a topic within that subject must be selected. The topic of the extended essay is the particular area of study within the chosen subject and students should be encouraged to choose a topic they have a high level of personal interest in.
6. 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.
7. Before the final decision is made about the choice of topic, the relevant subject guidelines should be carefully considered.

## XIV. Assigning a Supervisor

1. The EE coordinators will try to provide students with their first, second or third choice of subject and supervisor.
2. Once the EE coordinators receive the Subject/Supervisor Choice Form from the students, they will tabulate and collate their requests and inform supervisors.
3. SON policy establishes a maximum of three students per supervisor. If a teacher receives more than three requests, he/she will choose the students to be supervised.
4. The subject teacher has the right to deny supervision if he/she feels that the student's skills or maturity in that area is not sufficient to sustain this project.
5. If a student cannot be allocated to neither first, second or third choices, the EE Coordinators will discuss an alternative choice, which should be agreed upon by both student and supervisor.

## XV. Resources

1. Supervisors should find and study the EE Guide in their subject. All guides can be found on the school's "IB Teachers" drive, in the "IBDP Extended Essay" folder.
2. The above-mentioned folder also contains samples of marked EEs for reference.
3. Supervisors should have access to the official IB website for additional guidance and should also have been given access to the school's ManageBac system.

## XVI. 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 4000 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. 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?

## XVII. 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 must be done using in-text (NOT at the bottom of the page or on a Footnote page.)

- e. The bibliography.
  - f. 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.
  - a. If the essay is written in Chinese, the upper limit is 4,800 Chinese characters (1 word = 1.2 Chinese characters.)
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.

## XVIII. The Writing Process

1. The student is ultimately responsible for the quality of the work.
2. Students are required to produce an annotated bibliography and an outline of their paper as an assistance to them.
3. Researcher's Reflection Space (available on ManageBac): Student reflection in the extended essay is critical. Effective reflection highlights the engagement of the student in an intellectual and personal process and how this has changed the student as a learner and affected the completion of that individual's essay. The IB considers this to be a central component of a successful research process as it:
  - a. supports student learning, thinking and critical analysis throughout the research process;
  - b. helps to stimulate discussions between the student and supervisor;
  - c. aids the reflection process.

## XIX. 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.

## XX. The Reflection Sessions

Students should reflect on conceptual understandings, decision-making, engagement with data, the research process, time management, methodology, successes and challenges, and the appropriateness of sources.

There are three formal reflection sessions with the supervisors, which must be recorded on the Reflections on Planning and Progress Form (RPPF).

### The initial reflection session

1. This initial reflection session should be a dialogue between the student and the supervisor based on the student's initial explorations.
2. Topics of discussion that should arise during this session include:
  - a. an agreement on a research question
  - b. a review of the requirements and assessment criteria for the subject
  - c. a review of ethical and legal implications, if applicable
  - d. a dialogue about possible approaches and any potential problems that might arise
  - e. a discussion of strategies for developing the student's ideas for the essay and expanding the research so that the essay starts to take form

### The interim reflection session

1. This session happens after the student submits the comprehensive draft.
2. The student must demonstrate the progress they have made in their research, be able to discuss any challenges they have encountered, offer their own potential solutions, and seek advice as necessary.
3. During this session, the supervisor might discuss:
  - a. the student's comprehensive draft to ensure that they understand the academic writing requirements, including referencing formats
  - b. whether an appropriate range of sources has been accessed and how the student is critically evaluating the origin of those sources
  - c. what the student now needs to do to produce the full draft of their essay, and ways and means of breaking down the task into manageable steps.

### The Viva Voce (final reflection session)

1. The Viva Voce is conducted once the student has submitted the final version of their extended essay. At this point in the process, no further changes can be made to the essay.
2. The Viva Voce is:
  - a. a reflection on what the student has learned from the process
  - b. an opportunity for the supervisor to confirm the authenticity of the student's ideas and sources
  - c. an opportunity to reflect on successes and difficulties encountered in the research process
3. After the Viva Voce, the supervisor should comment on the overall impression of the student's engagement with the research process. This comment must be entered on the RPPF (Research Planning and Progress Form) on ManageBac.

## XXI. 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 the supervisor 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. When giving feedback on a draft, the supervisor should not:
  - a. Correct spelling and punctuation.
  - b. Correct experimental work or mathematics.
  - c. Re-write any of the essay.
  - d. Indicate where whole sections of the essay would be better placed.
  - e. Proofread the essay for errors.
  - f. Correct bibliographies or citations.
5. 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 Coordinators and/or the DP Coordinator if you feel this would be helpful. This grade is NOT shared with the student.
6. 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 Coordinators when requested near the end of each term.

## XXII. 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 Coordinators in case of problems.
5. Supervisors are not responsible for tracking students down, or for obtaining the paperwork required. Students should come prepared with everything they need. The Extended Essay Coordinators will provide supervisors 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.

### XXIII. Consulting with Outside Sources

A student may consult 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.**

The external mentor must be provided with a letter outlining the nature of the extended essay and clear instructions about the level of guidance that is permitted. This letter must be electronically signed by the external mentor, and must be inserted in the appendix of the essay as part of the authentication of the essay.

### XXIV. 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. **Please be aware that the school only uses these two styles.**
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.

### XXV. Academic Integrity

The Extended Essay, like any other piece of work produced by the students, must fully comply with the SON Academic Integrity Policy and with the IB Academic Integrity Policy. In particular, since the EE is an independent and self-directed piece of research, careful guidance, supervision, and controls from the EE Supervisor are of critical importance. Therefore:

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?

– END –

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