What is the extended essay?

The extended essay is a required component of the International Baccalaureate® (IB) Diploma Programme (DP). It is an independent, self-directed piece of research, finishing with a 4,000-word paper.

What is the significance of the extended essay?

The extended essay provides:

- Practical preparation for undergraduate research
- An opportunity for students to investigate a topic of special interest to them, which is also related to one of the student's six DP subjects.

Through the research process for the extended essay, students develop skills in:

- Formulating an appropriate research question
- Engaging in a personal exploration of the topic
- Communicating ideas
- Developing an argument.

Participation in this process develops the capacity to analyze, synthesize and evaluate knowledge.

How is study of the extended essay structured?

Students are supported throughout the process of researching and writing the extended essay, with advice and guidance from a supervisor who is usually a teacher at the school.

The IB recommends that students follow the completion of the written essay with a short, concluding interview with their supervisor. This is known as *viva voce*.

The extended essay and interview can be a valuable stimulus for discussion in countries where interviews are required prior to acceptance for employment or for a place at university.

How is the extended essay assessed?

All extended essays are externally assessed by examiners appointed by the IB. The total marks available are 34. However, when your supervisor marks your essay in order to arrive at a predicted grade, the grading will be based on the **qualitative** grade descriptors for the EE, not a translation of a number score into a letter grade.

Students are evaluated on five criterion:

- Criterion A – focus and method.
- Criterion B – knowledge and understanding.
- Criterion C – critical thinking.
- Criterion D – presentation.
- Criterion E – engagement.
Student: **Required action**

- Choose a subject from the available extended essay list. See Diploma Programme coordinator or extended essay coordinator for details.
- Ensure that the starting point for your essay is a subject that is available, or in the case of the world studies extended essay, an issue of global, contemporary significance within one of the six world studies themes.
- Observe the regulations with regard to the extended essay, including the IB’s ethical guidelines.
- Read and understand the subject-specific requirements for the subject in which you intend to complete your extended essay, including the interpretation of the assessment criteria.
- Meet all internal deadlines set by your school in relation to the extended essay.
- Understand concepts related to academic honesty, including plagiarism and collusion, for example, and ensure that you have acknowledged all sources of information and ideas in a consistent manner. This also includes understanding the implications of the General regulations: Diploma Programme should there be a breach of these.
- Attend three mandatory reflection sessions with your supervisor, the last of which is the *viva voce*.
- Record your reflections on the *Reflections on planning and progress form* for submission as part of the assessment of criterion E (engagement).

**Key features of the EE**

- The EE is compulsory for all students taking the Diploma and is an option for course students.
- A student must achieve a D grade or higher to be awarded the Diploma.
- The EE is externally assessed. Together with the grade for theory of knowledge, it contributes up to three points to the total score for the diploma.
- The EE process helps prepare students for university and other pathways beyond the Diploma Programme.
- Students must choose a subject for their essay from the list of Diploma Programme subjects in the Diploma Programme *Assessment procedures* for the session in question.
- The EE is a piece of independent research on a topic chosen by the student in consultation with a supervisor in the school.
- It is presented as a **formal piece of sustained academic writing** (4,000 words maximum) accompanied by a **reflection form** (500 words maximum).
- It is the result of approximately 40 hours of work by the student.
- Students are supported by a supervision process recommended to last three to five hours in total, which includes three mandatory reflection sessions.
- The third and final mandatory reflection session is the *viva voce*, which is a concluding interview with the supervising teacher after the essay is completed.