

# The extended essay at a glance

The extended essay is an in-depth study of a focused topic chosen from the list of available Diploma Programme subjects for the session in question. This is normally one of the student's six chosen subjects for those taking the IB diploma, or a subject that a course student has a background in. It is intended to promote academic research and writing skills, providing students with an opportunity to engage in personal research in a topic of their own choice, under the guidance of a supervisor (an appropriately qualified member of staff within 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. It is mandatory that all students undertake three reflection sessions with their supervisor, which includes a short, concluding interview, or *viva voce*, with their supervisor following the completion of the extended essay. An assessment of this reflection process is made under criterion E (Engagement) using the [Reflections on planning and progress form](#).

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

## Key features of the extended essay

- The extended essay is compulsory for all students taking the Diploma Programme and is an option for course students.
- A student must achieve a D grade or higher to be awarded the Diploma.
- The extended essay is 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.
- The extended essay process helps prepare students for success at university and in other pathways beyond the Diploma Programme.
- When choosing a subject for the extended essay, students must consult the list of available Diploma Programme subjects published in the [Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme](#) for the session in question.
- The extended essay 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 containing no more than 4,000 words accompanied by a reflection form of no more than 500 words.
- It is the result of approximately 40 hours of work by the student.
- Students are supported by a supervision process recommended to be 3–5 hours, 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.