

# **Korah Collegiate & Vocational School Extended Essay Student Handbook**



**Class of 2026**

**To be used in conjunction with the IB Diploma Programme Extended Essay Guide from May 2018**

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## Aims of the Extended Essay

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The aims of the extended essay are for students to:

- engage in independent research with intellectual initiative and rigour
- develop research, thinking, self-management and communication skills
- reflect on what has been learned throughout the research and writing process

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## Basic Questions and Answers

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### **What is the Extended Essay?**

The extended essay, including the world studies extended essay, offers the opportunity for IB students to investigate a topic of special interest, in the form of a 4,000-word (maximum) piece of independent research. Students select an area of research from Diploma Programme subjects, or in the case of the interdisciplinary world studies essay from two subjects and become acquainted with the independent research and writing skills expected at a college or university. 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 or subjects chosen. It is intended to promote high-level research and writing skills, intellectual discovery, and creativity. As an authentic learning experience, the extended essay provides students with an opportunity to engage in personal research on a topic of choice, under the guidance of a supervisor. The EE 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 entire process is overseen by a supervisor chosen by the student, the Extended Essay Coordinator (Fabiana Italia), and the IB Coordinator (Kathryn Johnstone).

### **Do I have to write the Extended Essay to receive the full diploma?**

Yes. In addition to the EE, you must complete the TOK course requirements, as well as the CAS requirements to receive a full IB diploma.

### **Does my supervisor have to be a teacher at Korah?**

Yes. Your EE supervisor must currently teach Korah. However, he/she need not be an IB instructor. Your chosen supervisor should have an extensive background in the subject chosen for your essay.

### What are all the things that go into an Extended Essay?

The *Extended Essay Guide* states that the following are required to be in your Extended Essay: contents page, introduction, body, conclusion, references and bibliography, and appendices (if needed)

### Are there any example essays that I can look at?

In addition to basic internet searches, there are also sample essays in the CAS/IB room. These essays have been scored by examiners. There are many examples here to get your brain going and to perhaps see what pitfalls to avoid. You can also find samples in our Korah Edsby Extended Essay group library.

### How is the Extended Essay graded?

Generally, your Extended Essay will fall into one of the following “band descriptors”:

- A Work of an **excellent** standard
- B Work of a **good** standard
- C Work of a **satisfactory** standard
- D Work of a **mediocre** standard
- E Work of an **elementary** standard

### How does the Extended Essay help in achieving an IB diploma?

Combined with both assessments from Theory of Knowledge (the formal exhibition and the essay), you can receive up to three points toward your IB diploma total. Remember that you must acquire 24 points or more from your 6 courses plus EE/TOK to receive an IB diploma. See the following chart.

### ToK/Extended Essay Point Matrix

| ToK/EE | A                 | B | C | D | E                 |
|--------|-------------------|---|---|---|-------------------|
| A      | 3                 | 3 | 2 | 2 | Failing condition |
| B      | 3                 | 2 | 2 | 1 |                   |
| C      | 2                 | 2 | 1 | 0 |                   |
| D      | 2                 | 1 | 0 | 0 |                   |
| E      | Failing condition |   |   |   |                   |

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## **IB Extended Essay Support & Timelines**

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Below are the timelines required for submission of your extended essay as a requirement of your IB Diploma. Timelines and expectations within subject areas vary and are in **ADDITION** to these dates.

### **Dates for 2025**

#### **THE STRUCTURE and PLANNING**

|   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Introduction</b> to the EE Process, Timelines, Subject Interests & Edsby EE Group  | <b>January 24, 2025</b>  |
| <b>Extended Essay Pitch</b> - students prepare two EE pitches which must be in two different disciplines Complete and submit the EE Proposal Assignment. You must let Ms. Italia know which subject is your first choice and second choice. There are a limited number of mentors and students that each mentor can work with | <b>February 27, 2025</b> |
| <b>Allocation of Mentors</b>  | <b>March 2025</b>        |

#### **THE RESEARCH & DRAFTING**

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| <b>Academic Research Session</b>   | <b>February 24, 2025</b> |
| <b>Chicago Session</b>   | <b>February 12, 2025</b> |
| <b>MLA Session</b>   | <b>March 2025</b>        |
| <b>Algoma U Wishart Library</b> - student will visit AU's Wishart Library to begin gathering resources               | <b>Late March 2025</b>   |
| <b>EE Reading Session</b> - students will read through an EE in their selected discipline with a Subject Area Expert | <b>April 2, 2025</b>     |
| Students meet with mentor at least once to confirm Focus/Research Question for Science candidates                    | <b>by April 4, 2025</b>  |
| <b>APA Session</b>   | <b>April 2025</b>        |

**Reading & Research**

Students are expected to work on EE research, and reading

**April – May 2025**

**Research/Writing Periods**

**March – May 2025**

**Initial Reflection Interview** - Look at the **First Official Meeting Infograph** in Edsby for more information as well as videos (**MANDATORY**)

**March 31 - April 4, 2025**

**Initial Reflections** Are Due in ManageBac

**by April 14, 2025**

**Individual Interviews** with Ms. Italia to ensure students have met timelines, are on track, and know the format of research paper.

**April 14 - 17, 2025**

**Mentor Check-in** (to be arranged between mentor and candidate)

**April 28 – May 2, 2025**

**THE WRITING & EDITING**

**Research Question/Thesis** – students will formulate a Preliminary RQ and thesis and submit it to Ms. Italia

**April 22, 2025**

**Extended Essay Outline** – students will submit an outline to Ms. Italia

**May 5, 2025**

**Rough Draft Copy Due** - students hand in rough draft to ensure that they are on track with the writing of their essay. A copy will be given to Ms. Italia  
**[use EE Rough Draft Copy Form]**

**June 9, 2025**

Detailed outline for summer work discussed with mentor

**June 2025**

Students correspond with Mentor  
 Each student and mentor set up a weekly/bi-weekly/ monthly schedule for correspondence

**July – August 2025**

**Individual Interviews** with Ms. Italia to ensure students have met timelines, are on track, and know the format of a research paper.

**September 15 – 19, 2025**

Interim Reflection Interview – students arrange interview time with mentor. Look at the **Interim Meeting Infograph** in Edsby for more information **September 22 - 26, 2025**

### **THE FEEDBACK**

**Students can receive feedback on only one complete draft.**

**Pen-To-Paper Draft Essay due**; ideally this is pen to paper copy (mentor will confirm if this is the case). A copy will be given to Ms. Italia [**use EE Pen-To-Paper Draft Form**] **September 30, 2025**

**Submit Interim Reflection to ManageBac** **by October 3, 2025**

### **THE FINAL**

**Final Copy Due** - students hand in hard & electronic copies to Ms. Italia. **See EE Checklist & submit with final copy** **October 30, 2025**

**Viva Voce Interview** – students arrange interview with Mentor. Look at the **Viva Voce Meeting Infograph** in Edsby for more information. **November 17 - 21, 2025**

Submit Final Reflections after the Viva Voce **by December 2, 2025**

**NOTE:** In order to support you in planning, researching and writing the Extended Essay, some of the process work (researching and writing) will be introduced/taught in your English class and assessed as part of the course work for **CHA3UB/CHI4UB**.

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## Getting Started

### The Extended Essay Mentor

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Each student will be assigned a mentor teacher (See Pitch); this mentor will work with you in refining the topic of the essay, suggesting sources for research, and guiding you during the months spent researching and writing. Mentors will help direct you to sources, and provide general guidance, criticism, and feedback. Ask questions of your mentor. Seek advice!

Teachers will rarely supervise more than three candidates, so selection will be made as soon as the student decides upon the subject area of his/her paper.

As soon as you have chosen your subject, and been assigned a mentor, make an appointment to meet with your mentor and work out a calendar of when the two of you can meet. A formal meeting structure will be vital for you, as it will keep you on task as much as possible.

#### Choosing a Subject

Deciding what to write about is extremely important to your extended essay. Make sure it is something that you have a strong interest in. Your chosen subject must come from a subject within the IB curriculum and it is recommended you be enrolled in the IB course at the HL to select the subject. At Korah we allow the following subjects:

- World Studies
- Biology (database only – no lab)
- Chemistry (database only – no lab)
- English Language and Literature (Category 1 or 2)\*
- History
- Computer Science
- Music

\* **Language and Literature (English A)** categories 1 & 2:

- Category 1: Studies of a literary work or works originally written in the language in which the essay is presented (English)
- Category 2: Studies of a literary work or works originally written in the language of the essay (English) compared with one or more literary works originally written in another language. (The work originally written in another language may be studied in translation.)

## Choosing a Topic

The topic of the extended essay is the particular area of study within the chosen subject. As long as the subject is approved, there is no limit to the topic that is chosen. You should choose a topic that is both interesting and challenging to you. The topic chosen should be limited in scope and sufficiently narrow to allow you to examine an issue or problem in depth. It should present you with opportunity to collect or generate information and/or data for analysis and evaluation. You are not expected to make a contribution to knowledge within a subject, meaning that you don't necessarily need to invent a new way of critiquing literature or discover a new element or anything. Instead, you will need to contribute to the conversation of that particular topic. (See *Pitch*)

## Developing a Research Question

All students, regardless of the subject chosen, **must** frame their research question as a question. A hypothesis or statement of intent is not acceptable. The reason for this is that a question helps students to retain focus throughout the essay.

A research question is a **clear and focused question** centered on a research topic. Research questions usually emerge when questions are asked about a particular issue that a student is interested in or curious about.

A research question helps to focus the research, providing a path through which students will undertake the research and writing process. A clear and well-focused research question, which has a specific aim, will allow a student to work towards developing a reasoned argument within the scope of the task, rather than the kind of "all about" essay that an unfocused research question can lead to.

Sometimes students may need to revise their research question; therefore, a research question should always be considered provisional until they have enough research data to make a reasoned argument.

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## The Extended Essay at a Glance

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### Key Features of the Extended Essay

- The extended essay is compulsory for all students taking the Diploma Programme.
- 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.
- 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.

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## Roles and Responsibilities

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### Student Requirements

It is **required** that students:

- choose a topic that fits into one of the subjects on the approved extended essay list
- observe the regulations relating to the extended essay
- meet deadlines
- acknowledge all sources of information and ideas in an approved academic manner.

It is **strongly recommended** that students:

- start work early
- think very carefully about the research question for their essay
- plan how, when and where they will find material for their essay
- plan a schedule for both researching and writing the essay, including extra time for delays and unforeseen problems
- record sources as their research progresses (rather than trying to reconstruct a list at the end)
- have a clear structure for the essay itself before beginning to write
- check and proofread the final version carefully
- make sure that all basic requirements are met (for example, all students should get full marks for the abstract).

**Supervisors are NOT required to:**

- **write the essay for the student**
- **correct the essay**
- **mark the essay for writing**
- **know how to solve all problems**
- **understand how to derive all equations**
- **turn a bad essay into a good one**

**Responsibility Summary Chart:**

| <b>Responsibility</b>   | <b>Coordinator</b> | <b>Mentor</b> | <b>Student</b> |
|---|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Read EE Handbook plus section on your subject                             |                    | x             | x              |
| Read Assessment criteria  |                    | x             | x              |
| Read Examiner Reports for subject   |                    | x             | x              |
| Read Outstanding Essays for subject                                       |                    | x             | x              |
| Train students in topic selection & research question                     | x                  |               |                |
| Advise students in topic selection & research question                    |                    | x             |                |
| Advise students in developing outline (research plan)                     |                    | x             |                |
| Discuss/advise students concerning outline & argument                     |                    | x             |                |
| Advise students on research resources                                     |                    | x             |                |
| Train students on citing sources  | x                  |               |                |
| Train students on avoiding plagiarism                                     | x                  |               |                |
| Train students on writing abstract, intro & conclusion                    | x                  |               |                |
| Train students on formal presentation                                     | x                  |               |                |
| Read students' first drafts, write comments & review w/ students          |                    | x             |                |
| Conduct <i>Viva Voce</i> interview  |                    | x             |                |
| Fill out final commentary on the reflection on planning and progress form |                    | x             |                |

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## The Extended Essay Pitch

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Once you have spent some time thinking about what subjects/topics you would like to complete your EE in, you need to prepare **two** (2) pitches in two distinct areas of study (for example, English and World Studies ideas – you cannot pitch two ideas in the same subject) that will be shared with Subject Mentors.

When you submit your pitch ideas, you must let Ms. Italia know what subject your first choice is and which is your second choice.

**Your pitches will not be shared with mentors until this information is submitted.**

After the pitches have been submitted, mentors in each area of study will confer to determine if you have been a) accepted into their area of study and b) which mentor will work with you.

If you are unsuccessful in the area of first choice, subject area teachers in second subject area will be notified immediately and they will decide if the pitch was accepted in their area of study and determine which mentor will work with you.

In the **highly** unlikely event that you are unsuccessful in both subject areas, an individual meeting with Ms. Italia will be scheduled for later in the month to discuss what went wrong in the initial pitch and to reschedule another pitch attempt.

Mentors will work with approximately 1 – 3 students, so you may not be selected in your first-choice subject. It is advisable that you submit a thorough pitch idea to ensure your idea is selected.

**Please see the attached Pitch documents for further information.**

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## Extended Essay Work Sessions

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After Extended Essay topics and mentors have been assigned, you will be provided with the opportunity to attend a series of supervised work sessions in the Learning Commons during the semester. You should be using these sessions for research, writing, or editing of the EE prior to the submission of your first rough draft at the end of Year One.

**Please see the attached document for EE Sessions Dates.**

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## The Research Process

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1. Choose an available Diploma Programme subject for the extended essay for your appropriate session.
2. Read the following materials: the assessment criteria, relevant subject-specific chapter of the *Extended Essay Guide*, the IB's ethical guidelines, and other associated policies where relevant.
3. Choose a topic and undertake some background reading on it.
4. Formulate a preliminary research question. Try to incorporate an IB command term in the research question if possible.
5. Draw up an outline plan for the research and writing process. This should include a timeline (more specific than the school's).
6. Begin to identify how and where gathered research materials will be acquired.
7. Identify which system of academic referencing will be used, ensuring that this meets the minimum requirements for the IB.
8. Set deadlines that are realistic and take into consideration the school's own internal deadlines.
9. Plan a structure for the essay. This may change as the research develops, but it is important to have a sense of direction from the start.
10. Undertake some preparatory reading in light of the proposed research question. If the evidence needed cannot be obtained in time, the research question should be changed. Do not simply wait for evidence that might turn up. If need be, go back to earlier steps in the process and begin again.
11. Carry out the research. The material should be assembled in a logical order, linked to the structure of the essay and clearly focused on the research question posed. Only then will students know if they have enough evidence for each stage of the argument so that they can proceed to the next. Students should be prepared for things to go wrong. If that happens, the research plan needs to be revised.

### Five Steps to Developing a Research Question

1. **Choose a subject and topic that is of interest.** Deciding on a subject and topic that is of interest and in which the student is personally invested is important if their motivation is to be sustained throughout the process. The student should be able to identify, in a broad sense, what it is that they are interested in and why.
2. **Carry out preliminary reading.** After deciding on a topic of interest students should undertake some general reading around the issue. Questions they must consider at this stage are:
  - What has already been written about this topic?
  - Is there a range of different sources available?
  - Is there a range of views or perspectives on the topic?
  - What interesting questions have started to emerge from this reading?

1. **Consider the emerging questions.** The student should now begin posing open-ended questions about their general topic. These questions will usually be framed using the terms “how,” “why,” or “to what extent.”
2. **Evaluate the question.** Once possible research questions have been posed they should be evaluated. This evaluation should be based on whether the research question is clear, focused, and arguable.

**Clear:** Will the reader understand the nature of my research? Will it direct the research being done?

**Focused:** Will the research question be specific enough to allow for exploration within the scope of the task (that is, the number of words and time available)?

**Arguable:** Does the research question allow for analysis, evaluation, and the development of a reasoned argument?

1. **Consider research outcomes.** Once a provisional research question has been decided upon students should start thinking about the direction their research might take. This could be in terms of:
  - suggesting possible outcomes of the research
  - outlining the kind of argument they might make and how the research might support this
  - considering options if the research available is not sufficient to support a sustained argument.

### Sample Research Questions

| Unclear, unfocused and unarguable research questions      | Clear, focused, narrow research questions lending themselves to in-depth research   |
|---|---|
| What was the impact of Ho Chi Minh’s allegiance to Lenin? | To what extent was nationalism the guiding factor in Ho Chi Minh’s adoption of Leninism in 1920?  |
| What is the history of Chinese theatre?                   | How does the legacy of Mei Lan Fang contribute to modern Jingju?  |
| How important is chlorophyll to plant life?               | What is the effect of different concentrations of kinetin on leaves aging and the biosynthesis of chlorophyll?  |
| How can the US government’s spending policy be reformed?  | To what extent did the rising COE prices affect the demand for new and used cars by the consumer population and hence affect the revenue generated by the Singaporean economy for the period 2012–16? |

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## Structuring the Extended Essay

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The structure of the essay is very important. It helps students to organize the argument, making the best use of the evidence collected.

There are six required elements of the final work to be submitted. More details about each element are given in the “Presentation” section. 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

### Title Page

The title page should include **only** the following information:

- the title of the essay
- the research question
- the subject for which the essay is registered (if it is a language essay also state which category it falls into; if a world studies essay also state the theme and the two subjects utilized)
- word count.

**An important note:** The name of the student or the school should **NOT** appear on the title page or on any page headers. This is because the work is assessed anonymously.

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.

| Title   | Research Question   |
|---|---|
| Negative externalities of consumption: Australian policy on cigarette packaging   | How effective has the Australian policy of plain cigarette packaging been in reducing the negative externalities associated with the consumption of cigarettes in X?  |
| Commodification and the body—an ethnographic study of social representations about the human body with relation to organ donation | To what extent can we interpret the negative attitude from laymen towards organ donation as an act of resistance towards the demands of the hegemonic medical model? The case of organ donation in Argentina. |
| An exploration of evil as a motivating force in drama   | How effectively does Christopher Marlowe present his view of evil in <i>Dr Faustus</i> ?  |
| The feasibility of wireless networking in a city-wide context   | To what extent is wireless networking a feasible alternative to cabled networking within a whole-city context?  |

### 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.

### Body of the Essay (research, analysis, discussion, and evaluation)

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 of the subject 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.

### **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.

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## Reflection in the Extended Essay

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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).

### **Reflections on Planning and Progress Form (RPPF)**

The Reflections on planning and progress form enables examiners to gain an insight into students' thinking processes while researching and writing the EE. The examiners are looking to see how students' thinking and skills have developed during this time.

The assessment criterion E (engagement) will be applied in the assessment of students' reflections. Representing 18% of the total grade, this is an extremely important part of the overall EE assessment.

It is important to stress with students that examiners want to gain an insight into their thinking processes throughout their experience with the EE. **Criterion E 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, after considering the student's RPPF.**

### **Protocols for Completing and Submitting the Reflections on Planning and Progress Form**

Completing the Reflections on planning and progress form (RPPF) is a requirement for the submission of the extended essay. It plays an important role in the assessment of the final essay and of the student's engagement with the process of independent research. The following is offered as guidance for the completion and submission of the form.

#### **The Steps**

1. Initial reflection session takes place.
2. Student is given a fixed time period to complete their first reflection comment. This time period should be short in order to authentically reflect the discussion that has taken place.
3. Supervisor date stamps and signs to authenticate the student comment on Managebac.
4. Interim reflection session takes place.
5. Student is given a fixed time period to complete their second reflection comment. This time period should be short in order to authentically reflect the discussion that has taken place.
6. Supervisor date stamps and signs to authenticate the student comment on Managebac.
7. Student submits to the supervisor the final, completed version of their extended essay, ready for submission to the IB. Once this is done, the essay is no longer available to the student and no changes are permitted. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that no changes are made after that point.
8. The supervisor reads the essay and then arranges for the final reflection session, the *viva voce*, to take place.
9. The *viva voce* takes place.
10. Students complete their RPPF by adding their final summative comments, sign and date the form on Managebac.
11. The supervisor adds their summative comment; coordinator uploads the form on behalf of the student into the e-coursework system.
12. The extended essay coordinator then uploads both the mandatory items--the extended essay and the RPPF--to the IB for assessment for one portfolio.

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## Reflection Sessions

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### Preparation for the First Reflection Session

As preparation for their first reflection session, students should do the following.

1. Think about subjects and areas of particular personal interest and do some initial background reading into a subject and topic of their choice.
2. Using this as a starting point, explore a variety of possible research topics.
3. Read the subject-specific section of the *Extended essay guide* for the subject they are interested in, paying particular attention to the nature of the subject and the treatment of the topic.
4. Undertake further background reading and begin to gather information around their area of interest. This exploration should give rise to a variety of topics and questions that students can consider for further research. At this stage it is important that students consider the availability of reliable and valid sources for the topic under consideration. All of this should be recorded in their Researcher's reflection space.
5. Begin developing a research proposal which might include a MindMap® of ideas, an annotated article or preliminary bibliography. Additionally, students must already be thinking in terms of the following questions.
  - Is my topic appropriate for the subject I am considering?
  - Why am I interested in this area and why is it important?
  - What possible questions have emerged from my initial reading?
  - Are there any ethical issues that I need to consider?
  - What possible methods or approaches might be used for research in this area and why?

It is recommended at this point that the student-supervisor relationship is formalized and the student can consider himself or herself prepared for the first formal reflection session.

### 1) First Formal Reflection Session

This initial reflection session should be a dialogue between the student and the supervisor based on the student's initial explorations. It is recommended that the student sends their supervisor an outline of their research proposal ahead of the meeting in order to give the supervisor the opportunity to review their work. This will ensure that the reflection session is focused and productive.

Topics of discussion that should arise during this session include:

- a review of the requirements and assessment criteria for the subject
- a review of ethical and legal implications, if applicable
- a dialogue about possible approaches and any potential problems that might arise
- 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

- probing and challenging questions that will help the student focus their thinking; this should lead to the development of the student's working research question
- an outline of the next steps that the student should undertake in order to refine their question; this should take the form of a research and writing timeline.

**Following this first session, the student is required to complete the first student comment section of the Reflections on planning and progress form on Managebac; their supervisor must then sign and date the form.**

### **Preparation for the Interim Reflection Session**

Between the first and second reflection session, students can engage in informal conversations with other people, such as subject teachers, the extended essay coordinator, the librarian or their supervisor. They must also ensure that they are progressing with their research plan.

In preparation for the interim reflection session, students should have:

- attempted to refine a focused and appropriate research question
- significantly deepened their research and recorded pertinent evidence, information or data in the Researcher's reflection space
- reviewed and consolidated the methodologies they are using
- formulated arguments based on the evidence that they have collected
- added to the working bibliography for their research.

### **2) Interim Formal Reflection Session**

This session is a continuation of the dialogue between supervisor and student in which the student must demonstrate the progress they have made in their research. They must also be able to discuss any challenges they have encountered, offer their own potential solutions and seek advice as necessary.

During this session the supervisor might discuss:

- a completed piece of sustained writing from the student in order to ensure that they understand the academic writing requirements, including referencing formats
- whether an appropriate range of sources has been accessed and how the student is critically evaluating the origin of those sources
- what the student now has to do in order to produce the full draft of their essay, and ways and means of breaking down the task into manageable steps.

By the end of the interim reflection session both student and supervisor should feel satisfied that there is:

- a clear and refined research question
- a viable argument on which to base the essay
- a sufficient range of appropriate sources
- a clear vision for the final steps in the writing process.

Between the interim session and the completion of the extended essay, students should continue to see their supervisor as appropriate to their needs, although the third and final reflection session should not take place until after the extended essay has been completed and uploaded for submission.

**Following this interim session, the student is required to complete the second student comment section of the Reflections on planning and progress form on Managebac; their supervisor must then sign and date the form**

### **3) The *viva voce* (concluding interview)**

The *viva voce* is a short interview between the student and the supervisor, and is the mandatory conclusion to the extended essay process. Students who do not attend the *viva voce* will be disadvantaged under criterion E (engagement) as the Reflections on planning and progress form will be incomplete.

The *viva voce* is conducted once the student has uploaded the final version of their extended essay to the IB for assessment. At this point in the process no further changes can be made to the essay. The *viva voce* is a celebration of the completion of the essay and a reflection on what the student has learned from the process.

The *viva voce* is:

- an opportunity to ask the student a variety of open-ended questions to elicit holistic evidence of the student's learning experience.
- an opportunity for the supervisor to confirm the authenticity of the student's ideas and sources
- an opportunity to reflect on successes and difficulties encountered in the research process
- an aid to the supervisor's comments on the *Reflections on planning and progress form*.

The *viva voce* should last 20–30 minutes. This is included in the recommended amount of time a supervisor should spend with the student.

**Remember, a blank or unsubmitted RPPF will score a 0 for criterion E.**

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## Reflections on planning and progress form (RPPF)

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Reflections are assessed in Criterion E Engagement and consist of three entries to your ManageBac EE Page Planning and Progress. The total word count for all three reflections must be  $\leq 500$  words.

1. Initial reflections (about 100 words)
2. Interim reflections (about 100-150 words)
3. Final reflections (about 250-300 words)

After your discussions with your supervisor, you will need to complete all your reflections within 500 words and have your supervisor confirm in ManageBac. Your reflections will be locked after each entry so be sure to **draft your ideas and check your word count for each reflection before you upload to ManageBac.**

Check out the videos and Infographs on Edsby to help you prepare for your discussions and write your reflections.

**Candidate:** *This RPPF form is to be completed by the candidate during the course and completion of their EE. This document records reflections on your planning and progress, and the nature of your discussions with your supervisor. You must undertake three formal reflection sessions with your supervisor: The first formal reflection session should focus on your initial ideas and how you plan to undertake your research; the interim reflection session is once a significant amount of your research has been completed, and the final session will be in the form of a viva voce once you have completed and handed in your EE. This document acts as a record in supporting the authenticity of your work. The completion of this form is a mandatory requirement of the EE for assessment. The RPPF must be submitted together with the completed EE for assessment under Criterion E.*

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## Assessment grade descriptors for the EE

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Your supervisor is not expected to mark your essay or arrive at a number to translate into a grade. Their predicted grade for your essay will be based on the **qualitative** grade descriptors listed below. IB's senior examiners will use these to grade extended essays beginning in May 2018.

### 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.**