

## IB Diploma Programme course outlines: the Extended Essay

The extended essay is an in-depth study of a focused topic chosen from the list of approved Diploma Programme subjects—normally one of the student's six chosen subjects for the IB diploma. It is intended to promote high-level research and writing skills, intellectual discovery and creativity. It provides students with an opportunity to engage in personal research in a topic of their own choice, under the guidance of a supervisor (a teacher in 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 recommended that completion of the written essay is followed by a short, concluding interview, or *viva voce*, with the supervisor.

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

The extended essay is:

- compulsory for all Diploma Programme students
- 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
- a piece of independent research/investigation on a topic chosen by the student in cooperation with a supervisor in the school
- chosen from the list of approved Diploma Programme subjects, published in the *Vade Mecum*
- presented as a formal piece of scholarship containing no more than 4,000 words
- the result of approximately 40 hours of work by the student
- concluded with a short interview, or *viva voce*, with the supervising teacher (recommended).

In the Diploma Programme, the extended essay is the prime example of a piece of work where the student has the opportunity to show knowledge, understanding and enthusiasm about a topic of his or her choice. In those countries where it is the norm for interviews to be required prior to acceptance for employment or for a place at university, the extended essay has often proved to be a valuable stimulus for discussion.

### Aims

The aims of the extended essay are to provide students with the opportunity to:

- pursue independent research on a focused topic
- develop research and communication skills
- develop the skills of creative and critical thinking
- engage in a systematic process of research appropriate to the subject
- experience the excitement of intellectual discovery.

### The Codrington School:

- ensures that extended essays conform to the IBO regulations
- ensures that students determine the subject for their extended essay from the approved extended essay list (in the *Vade Mecum*) before choosing the topic
- ensures that each student has an appropriately qualified supervisor, who is a teacher within the school
- provides supervisors and students with the general and subject-specific information, and guidelines for the extended essay
- provides supervisors with recent extended essay subject reports
- ensures that supervisors and students are familiar with the IBO document *Academic honesty*

- explains to students the importance of the extended essay in the overall context of the Diploma Programme through workshop sessions
- explains to students that they will be expected to spend approximately 40 hours on their extended essay and keeps records of meetings with supervisors.
- sets internal deadlines for the stages of producing the extended essay over the two years of the course, including provision for a concluding interview (*viva voce*) Students begin their extended essay in the latter half of the first year, with completion to final draft stage in Term 1 of the second year. There is time allocated for final revision before submission to the IB appointed examiner in early March of the second year (DP2).
- ensures that students have been taught the necessary research skills which build on the personal project experience
- provides appropriate training for supervisors.

## Assessment

The method of assessment used by the IBO is criterion-related. That is to say, the method of assessment judges each student in relation to identified assessment criteria and not in relation to the work of other students.

All extended essays are externally assessed by examiners appointed by the IBO, and are marked on a scale from 0 to 36. This maximum score is made up of the total criterion levels available for each essay. The total score obtained on the scale 0 to 36 is used to determine in which of the following bands the extended essay is placed. This band, in conjunction with the band for theory of knowledge, determines the number of diploma points awarded for these two requirements.

The band descriptors are:

- 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.

The extended essay contributes to the overall diploma score through the award of points in conjunction with theory of knowledge. A maximum of three points are awarded according to a student's combined performance in both the extended essay and theory of knowledge.

Both the extended essay and theory of knowledge are measured against published assessment criteria. According to the quality of the work, and based on the application of these assessment criteria, a student's performance in each of the extended essay and theory of knowledge will fall into one of the five bands described previously.

A student who, for example, writes a **good** extended essay and whose performance in theory of knowledge is judged to be **satisfactory** will be awarded 1 point, while a student who writes a **mediocre** extended essay and whose performance in theory of knowledge is judged to be **excellent** will be awarded 2 points.

A student who fails to submit an extended essay will be awarded N for the extended essay, will score no points, and will not be awarded a diploma.

Performance in both the extended essay and theory of knowledge of an **elementary** standard is a failing condition for the award of the diploma.