



# Student Extended Essay Guide

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme  
2026

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*“Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought.”*

Albert Szent-Györgyi, Hungarian scientist, 1893–1986

## 1 Purpose of this Guide

This guide is an aid for writing the Extended Essay, which is also accepted as Matura paper. Students are advised to read this guide to gain an overview of the process and the requirements. This guide does not claim to be able to provide answers to all questions that may be raised. For students and supervisors, the [IB Extended Essay website](#) provides a source of further and more in-depth information.

## 2 About the Extended Essay

### 2.1 What is the Extended Essay?

The extended essay (EE) is a mandatory in-depth study of a topic chosen from the list of approved Diploma Programme subjects, preferably one of the six DP subjects (cf. chapter 3). As part of the IB core, it promotes academic research and writing skills, intellectual curiosity and creativity. It provides students with an opportunity to pursue a topic of their personal interest under the guidance of a supervisor, i.e. a teacher at the school. The extended essay results in a formally presented piece of writing, followed by a short interview with the supervisor. It is a maximum of 4,000 words long and externally assessed. It is the result of approximately 40 hours of work.

Together with TOK, it contributes up to 3 bonus points to the IB diploma. Failing the EE is a failing condition for the IB diploma.

### 2.2 Why is the Extended Essay important?

As part of the student profile, the EE is a great opportunity to prepare for academic work at university, an invaluable personal experience, an investigation of the student's predilection in a subject enabling them to develop their analytical and evaluation skills, their creative thinking and reasoning.

### 3 Subjects and topics

Students can choose between the subject-focused pathway and the interdisciplinary pathway, cf. [EE website](#) > [Extended essay pathways](#) and [Generic guidance for the extended essay](#).

The EE is defined as a “piece of research”. This means that you must follow the rules for the Matura paper type “Theorieorientierte Arbeit”. You are not allowed to write a Matura paper of the type “Produktorientierte Arbeit” as an EE.

For the subject-focused pathway, students can choose from the following subjects:

Groups 1 and 2: German, English, or French

Groups 3 to 6: Biology; Business management; Chemistry; Computer science; Dance; Design technology; Digital society; Economics; Environmental systems and societies; Film; Geography; Global politics; History; Literature and performance; Mathematics; Music; Philosophy; Physics; Psychology; Social and cultural anthropology; Sports, exercise and health science; Theatre; Visual arts; World religions

For more detailed and important subject-specific information, cf. [EE website](#) > [Extended essay pathways](#) > [Subject-specific guidance](#).

For the interdisciplinary pathway, students can choose broad topic areas within the following five interdisciplinary frameworks, cf. [EE website](#) > [Extended essay pathways](#):

- Power, equality, justice
- Culture, identity, expression
- Movement, time, space
- Evidence, measurement, innovation
- Sustainability, development, change

### 4 Expectations and requirements for students and supervisors

Students writing an EE are expected to:

- choose a topic they are enthusiastic about
- work independently in order to produce an authentic piece of research
- acknowledge all sources and quotes in one citation style
- follow the rules and regulations for the EE
- meet all deadlines
- not spend more than the recommended 40 hours in total
- The EE must be written and presented in English. On request, a language of an IB subject can be chosen (e.g. German or French); applications for this must be submitted to the prorector responsible for the Matura paper.

For more information, cf. the [EE support material on the EE website](#).

Supervisors of EEs are required to:

- advise and guide students in the skills of undertaking research
- offer encouragement and support
- be familiar with EE regulations and assessment criteria and make them known to students
- read and comment on one completed draft without, however, editing it
- read the final version to confirm its authenticity
- submit a predicted grade to the IBO
- write a report for the school’s DP coordinator in case of suspected plagiarism

For a complete description of requirements, cf. the [EE support material on the EE website](#).

## 5 Deadlines 2026/2027

- Thursday, 5 March 2026 Information session
- Friday, 24 April 2026, 11 a.m. Registration due
- Wednesday, 27 May 2026, 11 a.m. Submission of the “Vereinbarung zur Maturaarbeit”
- Wednesday, 3 February 2027, 11 a.m. Latest closing date for the EE
- Tuesday, 16 March 2027 Presentation

## 6 Timeline 2026/2027

5 March (week 10)	<b>Information session</b> Introduction to the EE Start thinking about potential topics and discuss ideas with subject teachers.
24 April (week 17), 11 a.m.	<b>Registration due</b>
27 May (week 22), 11 a.m.	<b>Declaration of topic and supervisor due</b>
June	<b>Proposal due</b>
End of June	<b>Final proposal due</b> <b>First reflection session</b> with supervisor (to be documented in the reflection and progress form, RPF): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to research and databases, including library.</li> <li>How to cite and create bibliographies</li> </ul>
July to October	<b>Conduct experiments</b> (science EEs)
August to November	<b>Write the first draft of your extended essay</b>
Mid November (week 46)	<b>Submit your first draft to your supervisor</b>
End of November	<b>Interim reflection session</b> with supervisor (to be documented in the reflection and progress form, RPF)
<b>3 February</b> (week 5)	<b>Final extended essay due</b> You submit your Matura paper according to the requirements specified in the <i>Broschüre</i> (e.g. regarding the title page that looks different from the EE for the IB diploma). Concerning your EE, you send your coordinator the electronic version of the EE prior to the viva voce.
February	<b>Final reflection session – Viva voce</b> (concluding interview between student and supervisor). Write your 500-word reflection statement on your RPF and hand the form in to your supervisor. Your supervisor completes your RPF and hands it in.

## 7 Research, planning and writing

When elaborating your EE, you are advised to do the following:

1. Choose an approved subject (cf. chapter 2) for your EE. Make sure that you read the assessment criteria and the relevant subject guidance (cf. [IB Extended Essay website](#) or EE guide). It might be helpful to review past EEs for ideas and guidance. The IB provides samples, cf. [IB Extended Essay website](#) > [Extended essay assessed student work](#).
2. Choose a topic that is reasonably restricted and provides you with the opportunity to conduct an in-depth analysis or to cover a topic with an appropriate degree of intensity.
3. Work out a proposal of your EE. This piece of writing should contain:
  - a working title
  - a description of the chosen topic and how you have restricted it, as well as your motivations to choose this topic
  - a description about what you already know about the topic
  - resources you have already read (e.g. literature, books, internet sources) or you are going to read in order to obtain further insight into the topic (it is important to undertake preparatory reading at this very early state if you still want to change your EE topic)
  - aims of your research
  - well-focused research question(s) and/or hypotheses that you are going to test
  - a description of the methods that you are going to apply
  - a provisional structure (outline headings) for the essay
  - a schedule with deadlines
4. Carry out the investigation.
  - Pay attention that the material you gather will be assembled in a logical order, linked to the structure of your EE.
  - You might think about testing your method first and adjusting it if necessary before you start the data collection. If things do not work or go wrong, your plans need to be revised.
  - Make sure that you thoroughly document your investigation and/or results you get (e.g. protocol of your data collection).
5. Write your EE.
  - You might start writing the introduction or the material and method chapter. The discussion is written after you have compiled the results.
  - Be aware that you will re-read and reformulate your first written draft. This will allow your writing to become more profound.
6. Reflect on your EE. Reflection is an activity in which you recapture your experience and think about its impact on you as a learner. This includes how you envisage transferring the skills and lessons you have learned to other circumstances, including future studies, career or in general.
  - To assist you with this, there are three formal reflection sessions with your supervisor.
  - Your reflective thinking is recorded as a 500-word reflective statement that you write at the end of the EE process.
  - Keeping an ongoing record of your reflective thinking will support you in the writing of the reflective statement.

## 8 Formal requirements

### 8.1 For submitting the EE to the IBO

- All extended essays must be submitted with a title page as specified in the EE Guide:
  - The title page must include the student code. It must not include the candidate's name.
  - The title page must include the research question.
  - The title page must specify whether the EE follows subject-focused or an interdisciplinary approach. In the former case, it must state the DP subject the essay relates to. In the latter case, it must state the two DP subjects the essay relates to and the interdisciplinary framework it connects with.
  - The title page must be written in the same language as the extended essay. This includes all languages for extended essays in group 1 and group 2.
  - The title page must include the word count, which includes the introduction, the main body, the conclusion, quotations, and footnotes and/or endnotes that are not references. Not included are the contents page, maps, charts, diagrams, annotated illustrations, tables, equations, formulas and calculations, citations/references (whether parenthetical, numbered, footnotes or endnotes), the bibliography, the RPF, headers. If footnotes have been used for anything other than referencing, you must include the statement "the stated word count includes explanatory footnotes".
- The EE must not include any personal identifiers on any page (for example, candidate's name, candidate's session number, supervisor's name, school name).
- An abstract or summary is not required.
- The essay must be formatted using:
  - an appropriate font for academic work (for example Arial/Times New Roman)
  - font size 12
  - 1.5-line spacing
  - numbered pages (beginning with the first page after the contents page).
- The extended essay must be saved as a PDF. It must not exceed a file size of 10 MB. All diagrams, maps and tables must be digitally produced where possible to prevent excessive file sizes when included as part of the essay.
- It is not possible to upload media other than the essay itself, and accompanying images and external references will not be considered for assessment. Irrespective of the subject, the extended essay must be modelled on an academic journal/research paper that is self-contained, without the need to access external links or accompanying material.
- Appendices must be used sparingly. Examiners are not required to read appendices, so material essential to the essay must always be included in the body of the essay (including large images) and any material in the appendix should be minimal and selected with care.
- Length: max. 4,000 words  
Reflective statement on the RPF: max. 500 words
- If a student wishes to write a second, longer version of their EE for a Matura paper, they must submit a written application to their supervisor, justifying the substantial extension. This written application formalises the agreement between the student and their supervisor.
- Workload: The EE is the result of approximately 40 hours of work.

## 8.2 Extended Essay vs. Matura Paper

The extended essay is accepted as Matura paper. However, there are certain differences that are pointed out here:

	<b>Extended Essay</b>	<b>Matura Paper</b>
Word count	Maximum of 4,000 words	Requirement of 3,500 to 7,000 words  Due to the limitations of the IB, your paper must not exceed 4,000 words.
Title page	Only includes the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• student code</li> <li>• the research question</li> <li>• the subject for which the essay is registered (if it is a language essay also state which category it falls into)</li> <li>• word count</li> </ul>	Requirements according to the <i>Broschüre</i> on <a href="#">SharePoint</a> > <a href="#">Dokumente</a> > <a href="#">Dokumente für Schüler/-innen</a> > <a href="#">Maturaarbeit</a>
Abstract / Summary	Not required	Possibly required by the supervisor
Formatting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the use of 12-point, readable font</li> <li>• 1.5-line spacing</li> <li>• page numbering</li> <li>• no candidate, supervisor, or school name on the title page, page headers, appendices or acknowledgment pages</li> </ul>	Requirements according to the <i>Broschüre</i> on <a href="#">SharePoint</a> > <a href="#">Dokumente</a> > <a href="#">Dokumente für Schüler/-innen</a> > <a href="#">Maturaarbeit</a>
RPF (Reflections and progress form) / Work journal	A reflective statement ( <a href="#">RPF form</a> ): max. 500 words	Possibly required by the supervisor
Declaration of Original Work	Not required	Requirements according to the <i>Broschüre</i> on <a href="#">SharePoint</a> > <a href="#">Dokumente</a> > <a href="#">Dokumente für Schüler/-innen</a> > <a href="#">Maturaarbeit</a>

## 9 Checklist

The following general criteria checklist (adapted from Mavergames, 2016) provides you with the possibility to improve your scores for your work. Check the box (☑) of each item you have verified in your extended essay.

Item	Action	Check
1	Is the essay within 4,000 words? The word count does not include acknowledgments, contents page, maps, diagrams, tables, graphs and annotated illustrations, equations and formulas, in-text citations, foot- and endnotes, bibliography, and appendices.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Is the essay formatted in a clean, simple and consistent overall style: 2.5 cm margins, double-spaced, black and white, 12-point font, printed double-sided (paper only, no plastic covers or binders, not stapled)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Is there a contents page (table of contents)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Are all pages numbered?	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Are all diagrams, charts, graphs and images indexed and labelled and their sources reference where necessary?	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Are all necessary terms defined/explained?	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Is every reference in the text followed by an in-text citation?	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Are all your in-text citations formatted consistently and correctly (according to the citation style chosen)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Does your bibliography include all and only the works you have consulted?	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Are the sources in your bibliography cited consistently and correctly (according to the citation style chosen)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Does your appendix include only relevant supplementary information? (Note: The examiner is not required to read appendices.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	If you have an appendix, are your references to the appendix clearly cross-referenced and labelled?	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	Is your research question stated on the title page?	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Is your research question stated in the introduction?	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Is your research question re-stated in the conclusion?	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	Does your conclusion address any new questions that might have emerged?	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Are your introduction and conclusion titled?	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 10 Academic integrity

The school's academic integrity policy is compulsory, and any misconduct has its consequences. If the contents of the academic honesty policy are not familiar to you, please refer to the school's website.

Writing your EE demands that you correctly quote ideas or work of another author. If not, you plagiarize and might not pass your IB diploma.

You must ensure that you do not use material submitted for any other assessment component of your IB diploma as part of your EE submission. While resources can be shared between components, sometimes it is best to avoid this. Resources used for your internal assessment, for example, could be used as part of the EE, but no content can be duplicated at all. In order to prevent any cross-over, you would need to have a substantially different angle that you will investigate and there must be a complete shift in focus.

## 11 Assessment

Your EE is, on the one hand, assessed by your supervisor and, on the other hand, by an external examiner of the IBO.

### 11.1 Internal assessment by your supervisor

The internal assessment conducted by your supervisor is carried out based on the criteria and weights agreed on in the declaration for the Matura paper. The mark will count as 13<sup>th</sup> grade of your Matura certificate.

### 11.2 External assessment by the IBO

Your supervisor will be asked to provide a predicted grade (A to E, cf. fig. 1) for your work. However, an external examiner of the IBO will assess your extended essay using the following five assessment criteria:

- Criterion A: Framework for the essay (6 marks)
- Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding (6 marks)
- Criterion C: Analysis and line of argument (6 marks)
- Criterion D: Discussion and evaluation (8 marks)
- Criterion E: Reflection (4 marks)

Criteria A, B, C and D are applied to the EE. Criterion E is applied only to the reflective statement on the student's RPF.

Details about the assessment criteria can be found on the IBO's [EE website > Assessment](#)). Furthermore, you need to pay attention to the subject-specific criteria, which are covered on the same website (cf. [Subject-specific guidance](#) for an overview).

Together with the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) essay, the extended essay contributes up to three additional points to the overall diploma score. The diploma point matrix reveals the points granted for assessment grades obtained from the two essays (Fig. 1). Failing the EE means that the student fails the IB diploma.

		Theory of Knowledge					
Grades achieved		Excellent A	Good B	Satisfactory C	Mediocre D	Elementary E	Not submitted
Extended Essay	Excellent A	3	3	2	2	F	F
	Good B	3	2	2	1	F	F
	Satisfactory C	2	2	1	0	F	F
	Mediocre D	2	1	0	0	F	F
	Elementary E	F	F	F	F	F	F
	Not submitted	F	F	F	F	F	F

**Fig. 1.** The diploma points matrix (May 2015 onwards) according to the IBO. The number of points awarded is determined by a combination of the performance levels in both the EE and TOK. F: Failing condition.

## 12 Official documents

[IBO Extended essay \(first assessment 2027\) Website](#)

[Effective Citing and Referencing](#) (from the IBO)

[Reflection and progress form](#) (RPF) (from the IBO)

On [SharePoint](#) (Dokumente > Dokumente Schülerinnen und Schüler > IB-Klassen):

- Guidelines for the use of animals in IB World Schools (from the IBO)
- Ethical guidelines for extended essays research and fieldwork (from the IBO)
- KSBG Academic Integrity Policy

## 13 Resources

International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) (2025). Extended Essay (first assessment 2027). URL: <https://resources.ibo.org/dp/subject/Extended-essay-2027/?lang=en> (Accessed 28 January 2026).

International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) (2025). Extended Essay Guide. First exams 2027. IBO (UK) Ltd. Cardiff, Wales, UK. 120 pp.

International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) (2025). Extended Essay Support Material. First exams 2027. IBO (UK) Ltd. Cardiff, Wales, UK. 50 pp.