

Supporting the extended essay

Administrative requirements of the extended essay

The following sections outline the administrative requirements of the extended essay for:

- the school
- the Diploma Programme and/or extended essay coordinator
- the supervisor
- the student.

	Required action
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the Diploma Programme and/or extended essay coordinator understands who can and cannot be a supervisor. • Provide organizational structures that allow for three mandatory reflection sessions with the supervisor.

	Required action
Diploma Programme/ extended essay coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that extended essays conform to the regulations outlined in the Diploma Programme <i>Assessment procedures</i>. • Ensure that students select the subject for their extended essays from the list of available subjects for the May or November session in question (in the Diploma Programme <i>Assessment procedures</i>) before choosing a topic. • Ensure that each student has an appropriately qualified supervisor, who is a member of staff within the school. • Introduce, explain and support the reflection process. • Provide supervisors and students with the general and subject-specific information and guidelines for the extended essay contained in this guide and the accompanying teacher support material. • Ensure that the <i>Reflections on planning and progress form</i> (RPPF) is completed and signed by the student and supervisor and submitted to the IB with the essay for assessment under criterion E by the deadline stated in the Diploma Programme <i>Assessment procedures</i>. • Provide exemplars of extended essays to supervisors and students.

	Required action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that supervisors and students are familiar with the IB documents Academic honesty in the IB educational context and Effective citing and referencing. • Explain to students the importance of the extended essay in the overall context of the Diploma Programme, including the requirement to achieve a D grade or higher in order to be awarded the Diploma. • Explain to students that they will be expected to spend up to 40 hours on their extended essay.

	Required action
Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake three mandatory reflection sessions with the student. > • Ensure that students complete the <i>Reflections on planning and progress form</i>, and initial and date the form after each entry by the student. • Provide a supervisory comment, which is used to contextualize the student's reflections.

	Required action
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <i>viva voce</i>. • Record your reflections on the <i>Reflections on planning and progress form</i> for submission as part of the assessment of criterion E (engagement).

Pedagogical support for the extended essay

The following sections provide recommendations for how schools, Diploma Programme/extended essay coordinators and supervisors should support the extended essay research and writing process. The guidance is a reflection of what the IB would consider to be good practice in the implementation and organization of the extended essay.

Recommendations are made in relation to:

- the school
- the Diploma Programme/extended essay coordinator
- the supervisor
- the student



The school

Before the supervisor and student meet for their one-to-one sessions, there is much that a school can do to prepare students and supervisors for the research and writing process and this preparation is **strongly recommended**. The following suggestions are not meant to be exhaustive:

- Provide training sessions for supervisors run by the extended essay or Diploma Programme coordinator and/or experienced supervisors.
- Facilitate special sessions for students on how to approach research for the extended essay, including use of the internet. The librarian may be best placed to do this with students.
- Support the development of courses on citing and referencing. Supervisors and students must be familiar with the IB documents on this.
- Provide or recommend study skills sessions for students on note-taking and structuring essays.
- Provide or recommend guidance on research methodologies relevant and appropriate to the subject (for example, questionnaire design and interview techniques).
- Support the outline of key milestones, such as internal deadlines.

The advantage of the above approach is that it avoids duplication of effort on the part of the supervisors and it does not have to be covered in the three to five hours recommended for the one-to-one meetings between the supervisor and the student.

Quick glance: role of the school

Do: 	Do not: 
encourage teachers to assume the role of supervisor for a subject in which they have an appropriate background	unnecessarily remove the range of choice a student has in terms of subjects available
provide training for staff on the role of the supervisor so that the role is undertaken effectively and consistently regardless of supervisor	overlook the time commitment of the role of a supervisor; this varies depending on the number of students a supervisor is allocated

highlight the importance within the school community of internal deadlines	overlook the training of supervisors; it is an official role with which potential supervisors should be familiarized and given the opportunity to raise questions and concerns in the correct training forum
facilitate classes on referencing, research methodologies and the concept of ethical practice in research.	rely on the 3–5 hours of individual student supervision time to address key skills.

Diploma Programme/extended essay coordinator

The Diploma Programme/extended essay coordinator plays an important role in implementing and managing the extended essay research and writing process. As a pedagogical leader the coordinator will set the tone for how the extended essay is undertaken and how students and supervisors engage with the process.

The following suggestions are not meant to be exhaustive:

- Ensure that students are taught the necessary research skills, including those related to academic honesty and technology literacy, which refers to the ability to access and use technology responsibly. This includes accessing and using electronically based sources.
- Support the introduction and use of the Researcher’s reflection space as an integral part of the extended essay process.
- Limit the number of students allocated to each supervisor to ensure the appropriate level of supervision can be provided for each student.
- Provide appropriate training and ongoing support for supervisors.

Quick glance: the role of the Diploma Programme/extended essay coordinator

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Do:	Do not:
ensure a sufficient number of supervisors are available per examination session	allocate too many students to each supervisor
develop training programmes for supervisors to encourage more staff members to take on this valuable role	discourage students from taking certain subjects without reason
highlight the importance of the Researcher’s reflection space	rely on supervisors to ensure that students have all the necessary key skills, such as referencing or research methodologies.
ensure that policies such as the academic honesty policy are fully embedded into the preparation of students for the extended essay	
make programme resource centre resources available to supervisors, such as extended essay exemplars and subject reports	

monitor the correct completion of the *Reflections on planning and progress form*.

The supervisor

The supervisor–student working relationship is probably the most important one in the extended essay process. The supervisor must be a suitably qualified member of staff at the school in which the student is registered.

The supervisor plays an important role in helping students to plan and undertake their research for the extended essay. The relationship should be an active two-way process with the supervisor primarily there to support and guide the student, during the supervision and reflection sessions, at the planning stage, and when the student is carrying out and writing up their research. This is done through the supervision process, including the three mandatory reflection sessions and the completion of the *Reflections on planning and progress form*.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that students are familiar with the requirements of the extended essay. Supervisors and students must discuss:

- the nature of the extended essay
- their chosen subject, topic and research question
- the most appropriate research methods to be used given the subject for which the student is submitting their essay
- the formal requirements for the completion of the task.

Students should be encouraged to initiate discussions with their supervisor to obtain advice and information and the role of the supervisor should be explained to them so that there is a shared understanding of expectations and responsibilities. Supervisors must ensure that they understand the important role they play in supporting students in this process. However, if a student could not have completed the work without substantial support from their supervisor, this should be reported to the Diploma Programme/extended essay coordinator, who in turn must record the details on the appropriate form. Additionally, if the student has received substantial support from a teacher but has not declared this, then this too must be recorded in the summative comment made by the supervisor on the *Reflections on planning and progress form*. If academic misconduct is suspected, supervisors must report this to the Diploma Programme/extended essay coordinator initially.

Supervisors are **required** to:

- undertake three mandatory reflection sessions with each student they are supervising
- initial and date each reflection summarized on the *Reflections on planning and progress form* and provide comments at the end of the process. If the form and essay are submitted via the eCoursework system, then it is deemed signed and authenticated. An RPPF that is blank, unsubmitted, or written in a language other than that of the essay, will be awarded a 0 for criterion E.
- provide students with advice and guidance in the skills of undertaking research

- encourage and support students throughout the research and writing of the extended essay
- discuss the choice of topic with each student and, in particular, help to formulate a well-focused research question which is suitable to the subject of registration and ensure that the chosen research question satisfies appropriate legal and ethical standards with regard to health and safety, confidentiality, human rights, animal welfare and environmental issues
- is familiar with the regulations governing the extended essay and the assessment criteria, and gives copies of these to students
- monitor the progress of the extended essay to offer guidance and to ensure that the essay is the student's own work (this may include presenting a section of the essay for supervisor comment)
- read and comment on one draft only of the extended essay (but do **not** edit the draft); this should take place after the interim reflection session, but before the final reflection session, the *viva voce*
- ensure that the final version of the essay is handed in before the final reflection session (*viva voce*) takes place, and that no changes are made to it subsequently
- read the final version and, in conjunction with the *viva voce*, confirm its authenticity.

The student may work with or consult external experts in a particular area of specialism but it remains the responsibility of the supervisor within the school to complete all the requirements described above. See the section on the role of external mentors.



Supervisors are **strongly** recommended to:

- read recent extended essay reports for the subject
- spend between three and five hours with each student, including the time spent on the three mandatory reflection sessions
- encourage the development of a Researcher's reflection space for students
- set a clear schedule for the reflection sessions
- ensure that the chosen research question is appropriate for the subject
- advise students on:
 - access to appropriate resources (such as people, a library, a laboratory)
 - research methods
 - how to cite and reference.

The following resources might be helpful in supporting the supervision and reflection process:

Pedagogical support for the EE

Quick glance: the role of the supervisor

Do: 	Do not: 
ensure you feel prepared to undertake the role of the supervisor	overlook the role or give it insufficient time

help students to arrive at a focused research question which is feasible within the scope of the task, time available, and the student's ability	use the reflections or check-in sessions to address key skills such as research methodology and referencing; instead, speak to your Diploma Programme/extended essay coordinator about more effective cohort-wide provision.
emphasize the importance of the reflection sessions as supported by a detailed Researcher's reflection space	
ensure that students are given copies of relevant publications available on the programme resource centre, such as policies, exemplars and subject reports	
ensure you are fully familiar with both the assessment requirements of the subject you are supervising as detailed in the relevant chapter of the <i>Extended essay guide</i> , as well as the generic requirements	
monitor the progress of the students and encourage them to develop skills relevant to their research and writing	
comment fully on one draft of the extended essay within the parameters permitted	
ensure adequate availability to students for check-in and reflection sessions.	

The student

As the extended essay is an important component of the Diploma Programme, and a substantial piece of work, students need to ensure that they understand the expectations of the task and manage their time and workload effectively. The following suggestions are given as guidance to help with the process.

Students are **strongly** recommended to:

- develop a Researcher's reflection space as a planning tool
- use the Researcher's reflection space to prepare for reflection sessions
- share excerpts from the Researcher's reflection space with the supervisor during the reflection sessions
- choose a subject, followed by a topic, and then think carefully about the research question for their essay
- plan how, when and where they will find material and sources for their essay before deciding on the final topic and research question
- plan a schedule for both the researching and writing of their extended essay, including extra time for delays and unforeseen problems
- record sources as their research progresses using their Researcher's reflection space rather than trying to reconstruct a list at the end
- make the most of their supervision and reflection sessions by arriving prepared to discuss their work
- have a clear structure for the essay before beginning to write
- check and proofread the final version of their extended essay

- make sure that the version they submit for assessment is the final version with all sources correctly and consistently referenced
- ensure that all requirements are met.

Quick glance: the role of the student

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Do:	Do not:
choose a subject and then topic that interests you and allows you to develop and demonstrate your understanding, creativity and/or originality	choose a topic or research question that you have seen in exemplars and that have been done too many times before
develop a Researcher's reflection space that will facilitate planning and preparation for reflection sessions	overlook the importance of planning and how this can contribute to success in your extended essay
make the most of your supervisor's availability to guide you in the process	try to construct a list of references at the end of the process—be aware of the implications of poor/inadequate referencing.
prepare for reflection sessions appropriately	
meet all internal deadlines	
maintain a reference list as you work	
familiarize yourself with relevant policies.	

The role of the librarian

Overview of the librarian's role

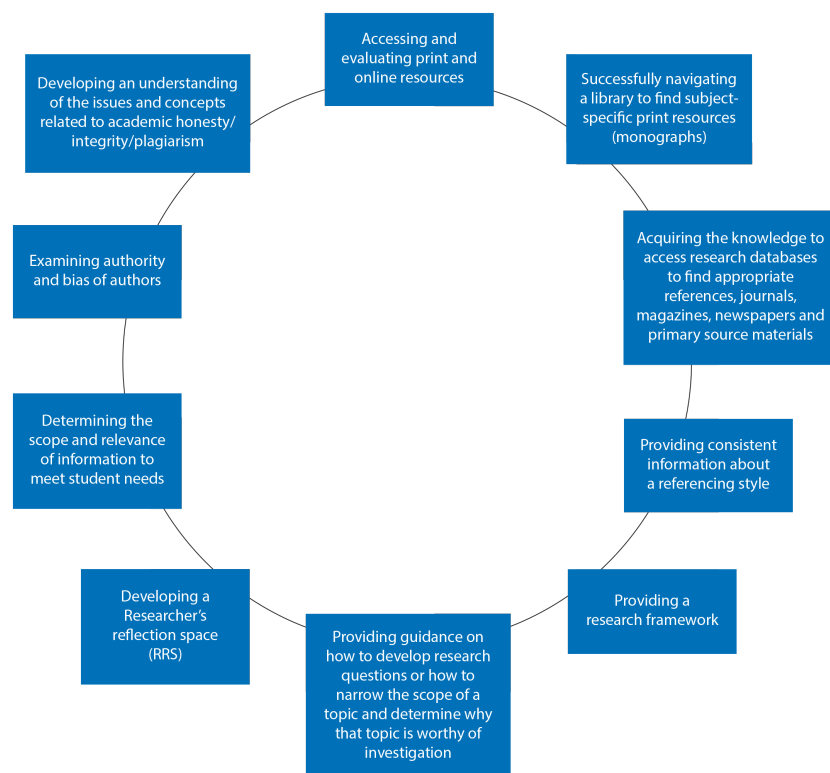
Librarians are uniquely positioned to play an important and effective role in the extended essay process. As interdisciplinary educators they are able to work across subject areas to help students become lifelong learners through inquiring, gaining and creating new knowledge, and pursuing personal interests. With the necessary educational background and training they are able to support students in the development of information literacy and research skills. Students are often overwhelmed at the amount of unfiltered information available to them, so they need to develop the skills to be able to raise questions and evaluate the authenticity, validity and reliability of sources. Utilising the knowledge and skills of a school librarian will help students to navigate and plan their extended essay more effectively and to become independent researchers.

In order to prepare students to be successful in the extended essay process, librarians can help to lay the foundations for the development of research skills. Ideally, some of these skills will have already been developed several years before the extended essay process, thus giving students a chance to demonstrate their learning. However, in situations where the concept of research is new to students, librarians have an invaluable role to play. The school librarian can provide leadership and expertise in the selection, acquisition, evaluation, and organization of information resources and technologies in all formats, as well as expertise in the ethical use of information. These are all important concepts and practices students need to understand.

Support for the extended essay

One of the best resources any school has to support the extended essay is the school library and librarian. In order to support the extended essay, a school may decide that the librarian is best placed to provide training in some of the fundamental research and information literacy skills. Working closely with Diploma Programme/extended essay coordinator and supervisors, librarians can provide important and additional support in the development of these skills.

These skills can include:





Some schools might consider using the school librarian as the extended essay coordinator as the extended essay process and the concept of an investigation may be well suited to a school librarian’s educational background. The librarian can help with the creation of an internal extended essay timeline in conjunction with Diploma Programme teachers and the Diploma Programme coordinator. This timeline should take into account all the major internal and external IB assessments, along with other major tests and school requirements. Schools should determine how their librarian might best support the Diploma Programme/extended essay coordinator and supervisors in guiding students through the extended essay process.

The librarian can also create partnerships with local public and university libraries to allow Diploma Programme students access to resources outside of the school for the extended essay process. The school librarian can work with the Diploma Programme/extended essay coordinator or head of school to come up with creative solutions to help students with their first major independent research project.

If the librarian is to play a role in the extended essay process it is advisable that they be formally trained in the [extended essay at a Category 3 workshop](#). A working knowledge of the general and subject-specific guidelines must be understood so that they can provide the support that students may need. The librarian may also choose to utilize a course management system to set up a structure for the school in order to facilitate the successful implementation of the extended essay. A system such as this will be of benefit to both supervisors and students who will need access to the guidelines along with instructions on how to access all the resources needed for the extended essay.

Librarians are permitted to act as supervisors for the extended essay if they are appropriately qualified.

Quick glance: the role of the librarian

Do: 	Do not: 
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• oversee the scheduling of the extended essay process• offer lessons and workshops in information literacy and research skills• build partnerships with public and university libraries• act as a supervisor for extended essay students, if appropriately qualified• support students in terms of accessing adequate print and online sources• help train students and teachers on using the extended essay guidelines and information• provide guidance to students on how to format a formal essay using word processing software• support and provide guidance to students on how to develop the Researcher's reflection space• provide training and support on the concept of academic honesty, including an introduction to how to cite correctly and consistently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• comment on any part of the essay if they are not the supervisor• propose or revise research questions• undertake searches for information on behalf of students beyond guiding them on how to use search systems• provide a pre-formatted template for the extended essay• correct bibliographies or citations.

Important note on the role of external mentors

Ideally, students should carry out the research for the essay solely under the direction of a school supervisor and within the school. However, in circumstances where the school deems it appropriate, students may undertake their research at an institute or university under the guidance of an external mentor. This must be with the agreement of the school, and the external mentor must be provided with [a letter](#) outlining the nature of the extended essay and clear instructions about the level of guidance that is permitted. Schools are responsible for ensuring that these external mentors are aware of the limits of their role in providing this service. It is important to note that if this is the case the student **must** be allocated a supervisor within the school and undertake his or her reflection sessions with this person. Only a supervisor within the school is permitted to complete the reflection process for the extended essay with the student and provide both signature and comments on the [Reflections on planning and progress form](#) (RPPF). The nature of these comments may be informed by the external mentor but must **not** be provided by them. For further clarification please see the accompanying teacher support material.

The letter, which must be electronically signed by the external mentor, must be inserted in the appendix of the essay as part of the document file rather than as a separate document. If a student has had an external mentor, this signed letter is an important part of the authentication of the essay.

As the extended essay is an independent task and a formal assessment component, students must not receive assistance with any aspect of the research, writing or proofreading of the extended essay beyond that which is permitted through their supervisor. If a supervisor suspects that the extended essay submitted for assessment by a student could not have been completed without assistance they are required to bring this to the attention of the Diploma Programme/extended essay coordinator, who in turn must inform the IB. This may then be investigated as a possible case of academic misconduct.

Role of external mentor when there is no internal member of staff who can engage with the target language.

When an external mentor is utilized because there is no internal member of staff who can engage with the target language he/she is able to comment on one full draft and conduct the reflection sessions as per the usual rules for a supervisor. Once completed these need to be uploaded and have authenticity attested to by an internal member of staff, who should be working with the external supervisor. As the reflections need to be conducted in the language of registration, then the external mentor in this situation would also need to be responsible for the comments on the RPPF after the candidate has entered theirs.

Researcher's reflection space

Student reflection in the extended essay is critical. Effective reflection highlights the engagement of the student in an intellectual and personal process and how this has changed the student as a learner and affected the completion of that individual's essay. For those students who have completed the Middle Years Programme, the researcher's reflection space (RRS) can be compared to the process journal. The IB considers this to be a central component of a successful research process as it:

- supports student learning, thinking and critical analysis throughout the research process
- helps to stimulate discussions between the student and supervisor
- aids the reflection process.

The nature of the RRS

Use of the RRS is strongly recommended as it will allow the student to more clearly articulate and understand their decision-making process. It supports learning, thinking, critical analysis and evaluation, and contributes not only to the development of a successful extended essay but also to skills and competencies for pathways beyond the Diploma Programme.

The RRS is a personal learning environment that can be either a physical or virtual support tool. It is a space in which students are able to record reflections on what they are reading, writing and thinking. The use of the RRS will help students to prepare for their reflection sessions with their supervisors and inform the discussions that take place. In preparing for their reflection sessions students could use their RRS to:

- record their reflections
- respond to artefacts, such as photos, newspaper clippings, twitter feeds, blogs, and so on
- respond to prompts and questions that may arise in the students' subject areas, TOK classes or other aspects of the Diploma Programme
- create MindMaps[®];
- record emerging questions.

The idea of the RRS is not new and many students already keep research journals in the planning, researching and writing phases of their work on the extended essay. Encouraging students to develop a RRS will provide benefits in terms of the management of their workload and focus on their extended essay.

The role of the RRS

Created by students to support their engagement in the planning and decision-making process, the RRS helps to develop critical and evaluative thinking skills. It is also a planning tool that helps to scaffold the development of approaches to learning skills and conceptual understandings that occur throughout the research process. Additionally, the RRS tracks the evolution of thought as it relates to the development of an argument. It helps the student to personally connect to the topic and may motivate them in

meaningful ways to successfully complete the extended essay. Finally, supervisors will be able to more effectively authenticate the student voice in that the RRS links directly to elements that will eventually be found in the essay itself. The RRS is intended to make the entire supervision process more meaningful.

Insights and information recorded in the RRS are expected to form the basis for and find direct expression in the essay, reflection sessions and *Reflections on planning and progress form*. Students are expected to share excerpts from the RRS in discussions with their supervisor. Using these reflections as a point of reference in their supervision sessions, students will be able to:

- demonstrate their planning
- discuss what they are learning
- evaluate their progress.

The student–supervisor relationship

Students can use the RRS to prepare for their reflection sessions with their supervisors.

Reflection session	Description
The first reflection session	Students are encouraged to include in their RRS examples of initial topic exploration, possible sources and methods, preliminary research questions and their personal reactions to the issues. In attending their first reflection session with their supervisor, students can use notes made in the RRS as the basis for discussion as well as to demonstrate the progress students have made in the research process.
The interim reflection session	As their RRS develops, students can demonstrate the progress of their thinking, the development of their argument and raise any questions they may have with their supervisor. At this stage the RRS may include reactions to readings, progress in the timeline for completion of the extended essay, a possible outline of arguments, challenges encountered and the strategies used to overcome them.
The final reflection session— <i>viva voce</i>	During the <i>viva voce</i> , which takes place at the completion of the extended essay process, the RRS can form the basis for discussion about the process of completing the essay. Students can show what they have learned about the topic, the research process followed, their own learning, as well as outlining new questions they have uncovered. Most importantly, during the <i>viva voce</i> the RRS may help to highlight the personal significance of the work to the student and ultimately contribute to the supervisor's report.