

Extended essay (EE)

These instructions must be read in conjunction with:

- the “Information for all examiners” section accessible from the menu
- the extended essay guide which can be found in the IBIS library: *library > subject guides* (examiners must use the most up-to-date guide each session; this is saved in the IBIS library)
- *Managing Sciences and Geography Extended Essays without lab work or fieldwork* available in the IBIS library
- [marking annotations](#)
- the EE examiner training site
- the latest EE subject reports (available for the majority of subjects) which can be found in the IBIS library
- any additional advice from the principal examiner, team leader or or assessment subject operations.

Important note

Examiners must refer to the examiner training materials each session, as they will include important clarifications in the light of issues encountered in the preceding session. Examiners should contact examiners@ibo.org for more information on this.

Important dates

Event	Date(s)
Schools upload deadline	15 March/15 September
Standardization meetings	1-20 March/1-20 September
Practice, qualification and/or live marking released to all examiners	20 March/20 September
Completion of practice responses (1 day)	21 March/21 September
Completion of qualification responses (3 days)	23 March/23 September
Completion of marking target	1 May/1 November

The IB will contact examiners when they can start the qualification process. There are times when qualification commences earlier than scheduled - when this occurs, the assessment operations analyst will let examining teams know. At times qualification may be available earlier for team leaders (TL) only – when this occurs, non-TL examiners will not be given feedback or support until the date indicated by the IB.

Support avenues

Moodle access for standardization or training (standardization team members only)	lyn.phillips@ibo.org
Marking (administrative, technical or procedural queries)	Assessment operations analyst (a contact name will be given prior to marking, welcoming examiners to the session)
Assessment queries	The team leader via the RM Assessor ³ messaging function
Examiner training queries	examiners@ibo.org

Clarification on essays based on secondary data in specific subjects

Secondary research investigations or essays using methods other than experimentation or fieldwork have always been permitted in our EE subjects but in some subjects particularly, students often exclusively select experimentation and fieldwork. This means that some examiners are not familiar with exclusively secondary research approaches. Over the coming sessions we will certainly see a significant shift in trends in subjects represented here, as a result of the current pandemic. Examiners should refer to the document entitled *Managing Sciences and Geography Extended Essays without lab work or fieldwork* available in the IBIS library.

Assessment criteria

These assessment criteria are available in the guide. Examiners are advised also to refer to the “unpacking the criteria” section, as well as the subject-specific guidance. Examiners must ensure they use the latest version as available in the IBIS library.

Best-fit approach

Information on applying the best-fit approach is available in the guide.

Marking positively

Examiners should mark positively, giving credit where appropriate for what students have written, rather than looking for omissions.

Examiners should allow for the fact that the organization of essays will vary and, therefore, should not look for a prescribed structure.

When assessing an essay, examiners should read the descriptors for each criterion carefully. Further clarification can be located within the guide in the “Interpreting the EE assessment criteria” section of the subject-specific guidance for each subject. It is important that the level achieved for each criterion is identified independently of other criteria unless otherwise stated. For instance, if the research question does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject in which it is registered, only criteria A, B and C are impacted by a formal cap. The full range of marks are otherwise available.

Comments on essays

Examiners are reminded that regardless of the quality of the work submitted, this is usually the product of a lot of time and effort on the part of the student. Examiners must ensure that any comments made are professional, constructive and appropriate, linking specifically to the assessment criteria and task demands. Examiners making inappropriate comments on student work will be unlikely to be given future marking targets.

Annotations and comments should largely focus on what is present, in keeping with the IB’s approach to positive marking.

Examiners should refer to [Making comments on assessment material](#).

English A essays: reject RIG

Examiners should note that for some EE options it is possible to reject a response based on a work of literature that is not readily available and is unfamiliar to an examiner. There is no other accepted use of this option. Misuse of this function is actively monitored and it must not be used to mark according to personal preference. Examiners must be able to mark all categories and approaches to essays presented in order to be an eligible marker for the component in question.

Language A essays: category selection

Examiners are reminded that student selection of the wrong category for a Language A EE must not be penalised. Provided the work presented fits into one of the permitted categories, it should be assessed as the category it best fits.

Language A: literature and Language A: language and literature M21 course changes and impact on the EE

For essays submitted from May 2021, song lyrics can and will continue to be considered literary texts belonging to the poetic literary form. An extended essay focusing on song lyrics will therefore be either a Category 1 essay if the texts are not in translation or a Category 2 essay if there is a comparison involved between a text written originally in the language of the essay and others written in another language. In the case of an essay studying music videos, however, the correct category would be Category 3, since music videos are multimodal and as such are non-literary.

The rule that students must not submit an EE based on the same text studied as part of their class is a supervisor-managed issue. Where a student does this, the supervisor must not upload this for assessment. As such, this is not a rule that examiners need to manage. If, however, the essay or reflections imply that the essay is a text studied as part of their Literature or Language and Literature course, the examiner should mark the work as normal without penalties and raise an exception that the EE is based on a text studied as part of the student's course.

Language B essays

Examiners must remember that students can blend categories, so should take time during standardization, practice and qualification to understand what is permissible.

It remains inappropriate (and would be subject to a reduction in the maximum mark available) for students to use any of the inappropriate artefacts listed in the language acquisition chapter, for example, in questions such as: "how does social media affect X culture?" or "how does unemployment affect X culture?" without any concrete and tangible cultural artefact as the focus of the investigation. Such essays are inappropriate; they will generally be descriptive, speculative essays.

Examiners are reminded that student selection of the wrong category for a Language B EE must not be penalised. Provided the work presented fits into one of the permitted categories, it should be assessed as the category it best fits.

An exceptional Language B EE report was produced after the May 2023 session which deals with the increasing rates of inappropriate research questions. This can be found in the IBIS library.

Further clarification of the individual criteria for all subjects

Criteria are to be applied distinctly and assessed individually (unless otherwise specified, for example, applying criterion E to the RPPF alone, the reduction of the maximum mark available in A and B to 4, and C to 3 where the topic or research question does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject in which it is registered). This means that a fundamental misunderstanding or error in an investigation would be penalized in knowledge and understanding, and limit depth of analysis and quality of argument but marks will be achievable up to the stated maximum. Some examples of essays that are inappropriate for the subject in which they are registered are given below:

- a group 1 or group 2 (category 3) essay that does not comply with the regulations on translated literary texts
- a group 2 (category 1 or 2) essay that does not focus on subjects directly related to the language and/or culture of the target language
- a history essay which focuses on events within the last ten years or counterfactual topics would be considered inappropriate due to lack of sufficient historical perspective
- a psychology essay that focuses entirely on experiments, surveys, observations and/or case studies
- a world studies essay that does not rely on two DP disciplines and is not of contemporary, global significance
- a global politics essay that is not contemporary

For the purposes of the EE, 'contemporary' is defined as having occurred during the student's lifetime. Any time limits related to subjects are applicable from the student's DP 1 year.

Criterion D and referencing irregularities

Please remember that referencing and bibliographies are assessed against criterion D based only on their visual layout (for example, consistent presentation of footnotes) and presence (for example, bibliography as a structural requirement).

If there is no attempt at an attribution of the words or works of another in the body of an essay, or if the minimum bibliographic requirements are not met (examiners are referred to the final page of the document entitled Effective citing and referencing available on IBIS > Library > IB information), examiners should mark the essay and then raise an exception for “Academic misconduct – b) referencing irregularities” in RM Assessor³. More information on exception types can be found [here](#).

Examiners are reminded that if the work of others is referenced in any way in the body of the essay and identifiable as the words of an external source, then there is no need to raise an exception for suspected misconduct. This applies even if the source does not appear in the reference list, works cited or bibliography. Exceptions should only be raised when there is no clear **attempt** at attribution, however brief or incomplete.

Referencing systems

The requirement is that any referencing system which is used be used consistently. Provided there is consistency, the system should be accepted even if it is not a formally recognised system.

Criterion E

Many examiners overlooked the penalties for the RPPF being written in a language other than that of the accompanying essay in previous sessions. Consistently overlooking these requirements will result in examiners not being considered for future targets.

Examiners are reminded that:

- if the RPPF is fully written in a language other than that of the essay, 0 must be awarded for criterion E. Schools are aware of this and have been reminded that it is their duty to check their submission and resubmit it if they notice the error before the issue of results. If part of the RPPF is written in another language, that section must not be considered for assessment
- if the RPPF is disconnected from the topic of the essay, examiners must mark it based on its merits without a penalty and raise an academic honesty exception citing “potential fabrication of reflections” for further investigation
- if the three reflections combined are longer than 500 words, examiners must apply criterion E to the first 500 words only. There is no explicit penalty and examiners should be prepared to still award higher marks if the work exemplifies the criterion requirements. For example, there is no reason why this higher markband requirement “*Reflections on decision-making and planning are evaluative and include reference to the student's capacity to consider actions and ideas in response to challenges experienced in the research process*” cannot be exemplified in an interim reflection
- the supervisor comment is contextual only and must not form part of the assessment which is applied to the three student reflections only.

Examiners should note that if, due to maladministration, the EE is missing and the RPPF is present, students should still have fair assessment of the RPPF, as criterion E is a stand-alone criterion.

Examiners should also note that the **student reflections alone** are assessed for criterion E, although the supervisory comment and the essay itself are vital contextual information. Academic honesty concerns have no bearing on examiners' marking; they are advised to assess work as usual.

Assessment of all documents forming part of a student's submission

All student submissions will comprise the essay itself and the RPPF, which is assessed solely by criterion E. Both files must be accessed, viewed and considered for assessment before the marked response can be submitted.

Mark entry

The use of “NR” (“no response”) in RM Assessor³ is not applicable for the EE. Examiners must avoid using NR and choose one of the available marks (for example, 1, 2, 3), or award a 0, as per the criteria wording if the requirements are not met.

Student reliance on external resources not submitted with the EE

Irrespective of the subject, the EE should be modelled on an academic journal or research paper which can exist and be understood on its own, without the need to access external links or accompanying material such as DVDs.

There is no requirement for the examiner to refer to any material that is not included in the EE itself when assessing an essay.

As with appendices, if information central to the argument is included in the external link, it is discounted from the assessment of the EE, which could affect different criteria, depending on the point that the student is trying to make with that information.

The word count

The maximum length of the essay is 4,000 words and of the three student reflections combined is 500 words. Examiners are instructed to stop reading after these limits and to base their assessment on just the permitted number of words. While there are no explicit penalties for exceeding the word count, it is a self-penalising approach, as what appears beyond the cut-off point cannot be considered for assessment (for example, this could include the conclusion of the essay or the higher markband requirements for engagement that are often included in the final reflection session).

The role of the team leader

Team leaders are responsible for:

- making sure they are familiar with the instructions and procedures
- welcoming their team, establishing themselves as a contact point for assessment-related queries and cascading pre-session notes and welcome emails from the principal examiner
- consulting with the principal examiner if they have any questions about the assessment
- providing support and guidance for the members of their team.
 - Feedback should be qualitative so that the examiners can qualitatively align with and understand the definitive standard.
 - Feedback must only be given after the full submission of a qualification set – not after each essay is marked. Examiner should not ask for or give feedback unless the IB or the RM system prompts it, as this compromises the quality assurance process.

Administrative queries must be directed to the assessment operations analyst.

Some important notes:

- Team members can discuss the application of criteria to specific responses with their team leaders up until and during the practice marking stage.
- Team leaders must not check examiners' qualification marking or advise that they wait for their team leader's review of their marking before they submit it to the IB; this undermines the quality assurance process. The practice period is the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification.
- Commenting on qualification scripts has been a ground for demotion from the TL position; the IB must prioritise the validity and reliability of the quality assurance process.
- Examiners are reminded that TLs and PEs will not engage in lengthy exchanges whereby examiners disagree with definitive marks awarded. This is deemed improper use of mentoring time, which should be used to help examiners understand discrepancies. The quality assurance process is clear that an examiner must adapt to the definitive standard, appreciating that the subjective nature of the EE criteria allows for an acceptable variation. The acceptable variation is defined and managed by the tolerance in place.

At risk marking

If examiners are asked to carry out re-marking of extended essays that are "at risk", then it is paramount that the marking standard remain as it was during the live marking period. Examiners should not consider the boundaries or grades; the work must simply be marked according to the criteria and markbands. **Marking** is different to **grading** and examiners should not be thinking of grades when marking.

Examiner reports

All examiners assigned to mark extended essays must produce an examiner report based on the overall performance of students whose EEs they have marked in the current examination session.

There is no separate payment to examiners for producing the report. It is included with the pro-rata payment for marking students' assessment material.

While marking, it is recommended that examiners make notes to assist them with the report, which is expected to be approximately 400 words in length.

Examiner reports should be submitted on IBIS: *My marking > Examiner reports > My examiner reports*. Examiner reports must be submitted on IBIS immediately after completion of the marking.

Extended essay subject reports or report updates

Examiners should review the [subject report](#) page of the instructions for further information. Examiners are reminded that full EE subject reports will be required for May 2027 based on eligibility of cohort size.