

## 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
- sign 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 is not signed by both the student and the supervisor, it may result in:
  - a delay in a grade being issued for the extended essay
  - criterion E (engagement) being compromised—the examiner may not be able to apply criterion E due to missing or lacking information

- the essay being referred as a possible case of academic misconduct as a result of not being authenticated
- 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 OCC, 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.	