May 2015 extended essay reports

Turkish A

Overall grade boundaries

Grade:	E	D	C	B	A
Mark range:	0-7	8-15	16-22	23-28	29-36

The range and suitability of the work submitted

A small number of essays were very good in every aspect. Poor essays were uncritical repetitions of secondary sources and gave the impression that they were citing from academic literary essays/MA thesis or PhD dissertations.

In their endorsements, the supervisors were generally satisfied with the performance of the candidates, even with those works which did not meet the EE criteria.

The schools have to ensure that all candidates have a copy of the assessment criteria. Supervisors should make sure that they themselves understand the purpose and the scope of the elements of an extended essay. Supervisors should be able to help the candidates to focus and determine the research question and how to present and organize the information.

Some essays were not focused on literature but mainly on psychology, or sociology.

Naturally there were several essays of outstanding quality. These were a pleasure to read.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: research question

Some candidates found it difficult to phrase their research questions properly, and some had difficulty in choosing a research question: the questions were either too broad or the answers were obvious and therefore not suitable for 4000 word investigation.

Criterion B: introduction

Many candidates did not have a clear idea of what is meant by "introduction". Some either failed to give their research questions or talk about how they intend to answer their questions; some candidates gave a lot of unnecessary information apparently taken from secondary sources and/or did not tell the reader why this research question is worthy of investigation. An introduction is either confused with 'abstract' or not separated from the rest of the extended essay. Good candidates made frequent references back to their research question, therefore emphasizing that they truly were staying on track and developing a convincing argument.

Criterion C: investigation

The majority of the candidates have problems using secondary sources. Many candidates gave a list of resources without referring to them in the body of their essays, and some gave quotations from sources without offering any analysis.

Criterion D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied

Most of the candidates showed knowledge and some understanding of the work(s) they used.

Criterion E: reasoned argument

Lack of original thought and analysis is worrying. A handful of good candidates presented a logical and balanced argument, showing intellectual sophistication and understanding while engaging in reasoned reflection on the outcomes of their analysis.

Criterion F: application of analytical and evaluative skills

Many of the EEs lacked analysis of the texts and the evidence to support their research question. These essays contained little evidence of the candidate's ability to evaluate the textual and secondary source evidence. Candidates repeated secondary sources and relied heavily on repeating what they read without checking its feasibility. Unfortunately the candidates memorize a lot of factual data (date of birth of an author, etc.) as well as secondary judgments and simply repeat them. It is worrying that the supervisors do not object to this and advise against it.

Criterion G: use of language appropriate to the subject:

The majority of the candidates used acceptable language and registers. Some candidates used literary terms and concepts without understanding what they really meant.

Criterion H: conclusion

Many candidates have not mastered how to write a conclusion. They are unaware of the contents of a conclusion despite the fact that this is all outlined in the EE guide.

Criterion I: formal presentation

Most frequent mistakes made by the candidates were (as in the past years).

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a)   general lack of planning;

b)   incorrect use of footnotes, references, and quotations;

c)   incorrect formatting of the Bibliography.

Criterion J: abstract

Very few candidates understand what an 'abstract' is and know how to write one. Candidates confused 'abstract' and 'introduction' and 'acknowledgments'.

Criterion K: holistic judgement

Candidates got higher scores here if they had an original idea/ research question, or made a genuine effort for analysis.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Supervisors have to read, understand and discuss the EE Guide and its requirements.

Supervisors should go through the sections of the Guide with the candidates carefully, making sure that they all understand what is required.

Candidates should be helped to practice writing research questions, abstracts, making outlines throughout their IB years before they embark on writing EEs.

Further comments

Some supervisors praised candidates whose work was poor.

Comments written by supervisors on the cover for each essay must be more specific and concrete. Supervisors who add contextual/background information about the student's commitment to the process of writing the essay greatly assist the examiner in reaching a judgement on the holistic criterion K. Some supervisors include in the supervisor's report some of the questions they asked during the viva voce together with the candidates' responses. This is very helpful to the external examiner, particularly when it comes to awarding marks for criterion K.

Supervisors should encourage the candidates to choose the subject they would like to present their essay in before they choose the research area and the research question. This may stop EEs veering into sociology or political science subjects.

It has been noticed that some IB coordinators do not make annual reports available to the teachers. It is very important that the teachers have access to the annual reports and discuss them.

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For the most part, candidates who had access to the subject guide, and who paid close attention to the criteria, performed well. The guide for Extended Essays provides clear information, instructions and guidelines as to the requirements and it is obvious where candidates took the information on board because they matched the criteria descriptors more closely.

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