# Generic Extended Essay Feedback Form

**A: research question**

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| **Descriptor** | **Achievement level** | **Comments** |
| The research question is not stated in the introduction or does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in an extended essay in the subject in which it is registered. | 0 |  |
| The research question is stated in the introduction but is not clearly expressed or is too broad in scope to be treated effectively within the word limit. | 1 |  |
| The research question is clearly stated in the introduction and sharply focused, making effective treatment possible within the word limit. | 2 |  |

**B: introduction**

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| **Descriptor** | **Achievement Level** | **Comments** |
| Little or no attempt is made to set the research question into context. There is little or no attempt to explain the significance of the topic. | 0 |  |
| Some attempt is made to set the research question into context. There is some attempt to explain the significance of the topic and why it is worthy of investigation. | 1 |  |
| The context of the research question is clearly demonstrated. The introduction clearly explains the significance of the topic and why it is worthy of investigation. | 2 |  |

**C: investigation**

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| **Descriptor** | **Achievement Level** | **Comments** |
| There is little or no evidence that sources have been consulted or data gathered, and little or no evidence of planning in the investigation. | 0 |  |
| A range of inappropriate sources has been consulted, or inappropriate data has been gathered, and there is little evidence that the investigation has been planned. | 1 |  |
| A limited range of appropriate sources has been consulted, or data has been gathered, and some relevant material has been selected. There is evidence of some planning in the investigation. | 2 |  |
| A sufficient range of appropriate sources has been consulted, or data has been gathered, and relevant material has been selected. The investigation has been satisfactorily planned. | 3 |  |
| An imaginative range of appropriate sources has been consulted, or data has been gathered, and relevant material has been carefully selected. The investigation has been well planned. | 4 |  |

**D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied**

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| **Descriptor** | **Achievement Level** | **Comments** |
| The essay demonstrates no real knowledge or understanding of the topic studied. | 0 |  |
| The essay demonstrates some knowledge but little understanding of the topic studied. The essay shows little awareness of an academic context for the investigation. | 1 |  |
| The essay demonstrates an adequate knowledge and some understanding of the topic studied. The essay shows some awareness of an academic context for the investigation. | 2 |  |
| The essay demonstrates a good knowledge and understanding of the topic studied. Where appropriate, the essay successfully outlines an academic context for the investigation. | 3 |  |
| The essay demonstrates a very good knowledge and understanding of the topic studied. Where appropriate, the essay clearly and precisely locates the investigation in an academic context. | 4 |  |

**E: reasoned argument**

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| **Descriptor** | **Achievement Level** | **Comments** |
| There is no attempt to develop a reasoned argument in relation to the research question. | 0 |  |
| There is a limited or superficial attempt to present ideas in a logical and coherent manner, and to develop a reasoned argument in relation to the research question. | 1 |  |
| There is some attempt to present ideas in a logical and coherent manner, and to develop a reasoned argument in relation to the research question, but this is only partially successful. | 2 |  |
| Ideas are presented in a logical and coherent manner, and a reasoned argument is developed in relation to the research question, but with some weaknesses. | 3 |  |
| Ideas are presented clearly and in a logical and coherent manner. The essay succeeds in developing a reasoned and convincing argument in relation to the research question. | 4 |  |

**F: application of analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to the subject**

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| **Descriptor** | **Achievement Level** | **Comments** |
| The essay shows no application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills. | 0 |  |
| The essay shows little application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills. | 1 |  |
| The essay shows some application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills, which may be only partially effective. | 2 |  |
| The essay shows sound application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills. | 3 |  |
| The essay shows effective and sophisticated application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills. | 4 |  |

**G: use of language appropriate to the subject**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Descriptor** | **Achievement Level** | **Comments** |
| The language used is inaccurate and unclear. There is no effective use of terminology appropriate to the subject. | 0 |  |
| The language used sometimes communicates clearly but does not do so consistently. The use of terminology appropriate to the subject is only partly accurate. | 1 |  |
| The language used for the most part communicates clearly. The use of terminology appropriate to the subject is usually accurate. | 2 |  |
| The language used communicates clearly. The use of terminology appropriate to the subject is accurate, although there may be occasional lapses. | 3 |  |
| The language used communicates clearly and precisely. Terminology appropriate to the subject is used accurately, with skill and understanding. | 4 |  |

**H: conclusion**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Descriptor** | **Achievement Level** | **Comments** |
| Little or no attempt is made to provide a conclusion that is relevant to the research question. | 0 |  |
| A conclusion is attempted that is relevant to the research question but may not be entirely consistent with the evidence presented in the essay. | 1 |  |
| An effective conclusion is clearly stated; it is relevant to the research question and consistent with the evidence presented in the essay. It should include unresolved questions where appropriate to the subject concerned. | 2 |  |

**I: formal presentation**

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| **Descriptor** | **Achievement Level** | **Comments** |
| The formal presentation is unacceptable, or the essay exceeds 4,000 words. | 0 |  |
| The formal presentation is poor. | 1 |  |
| The formal presentation is satisfactory. | 2 |  |
| The formal presentation is good. | 3 |  |
| The formal presentation is excellent. | 4 |  |

**J: abstract**

The requirements for the abstract are for it to state clearly the research question that was investigated, how the investigation was undertaken and the conclusion(s) of the essay.

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| **Descriptor** | **Achievement Level** | **Comments** |
| The abstract exceeds 300 words or one or more of the required elements of an abstract (listed above) is missing. | 0 |  |
| The abstract contains the elements listed above but they are not all clearly stated. | 1 |  |
| The abstract clearly states all the elements listed above. | 2 |  |

**K: holistic judgment**

(Objective 1)

The purpose of this criterion is to assess the qualities that distinguish an essay from the average, such as intellectual initiative, depth of understanding and insight. While these qualities will be clearly present in the best work, less successful essays may also show some evidence of them and should be rewarded under this criterion.

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| **Descriptor** | **Achievement Level** | **Comments** |
| The essay shows no evidence of such qualities. | 0 |  |
| The essay shows little evidence of such qualities. | 1 |  |
| The essay shows some evidence of such qualities. | 2 |  |
| The essay shows clear evidence of such qualities. | 3 |  |
| The essay shows considerable evidence of such qualities. | 4 |  |

# Extended Essay Study Plan

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| **Student: Subject:** |

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| **Title / Question:** |

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| **Relevant syllabus theories** |

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| **Methodology – include details of sources you intend to use.** |
| **Primary research plan (what data do you want to collect/ how will you go about collecting it?/ sample characteristics, how will your questions help you answer your EE title question?)**  **N/A if not applicable** |
| **Secondary research (What secondary sources have you identified? How do they help you answer your research question?)** |

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| --- |
| **Supervisor signature: Date:** |

# Requirements for a geography extended essay

## Overview

An extended essay in geography provides students with an opportunity to apply a range of skills to produce an independent and in-depth geographical study. The nature of an extended essay in geography is characterized by a spatial emphasis and the application of geographical theory and methodology.

The *Geography* guide (published 2009) states on page 14 that “almost all areas of the syllabus lend themselves to deeper analysis and investigation in an extended essay”.

## A geography extended essay requires:

• a research question that is not too broad to be satisfactorily answered within the word limit

• a narrow area of research in depth

• a spatial component**\***

• a local scale

• data collected in the field is not required for extended essays, the research questions can be more broadly based than those used for fieldwork and can rely on information derived from sources other than direct fieldwork.

### Secondary data

An extended essay that relies on secondary (published) data only is acceptable, but there must be a degree of originality in how the data is analysed that must go beyond simply referring to or describing the secondary data and should include the candidate’s own ideas and show initiative.

### Fieldwork

An essay that analyses secondary material in an innovative way is equally valid to one based on fieldwork and is often better. If students base their extended essay on fieldwork they run the risk of producing long fieldwork reports as opposed to discursive essays which become self penalizing and as a result may not achieve high marks.

**\****Note: a temporal element is acceptable where, for example, the topic involves changes in climate over a stated period*.

## Approaching the essay in relation to the criteria

**The *Extended Essay* guide (2007) is essential reading.**

All subjects are assessed using the same criteria but they are applied specifically to geography as follows.

### Criterion A – research question

Make sure the research question is geographical and allows for an investigative approach. Make sure the research question is clearly stated (bold type), preferably at the start of the introduction and is not over-complex. Make sure the research question can be answered with currently available data/information and does not focus entirely on speculation about what might happen in the future. Keep the area of study small and the topic tightly focused.

### Criterion B – introduction

In geography essays the introduction should place the research question clearly in its academic and locational context. Maps are therefore essential at this point. The introduction is a good place to outline the aims of the study and to introduce hypotheses if relevant. State clearly why the topic is of geographical significance and include only relevant geographical theory. Do not answer the research question in the introduction.

### Criterion C – investigation

Plan the investigation carefully. Make sure that there is enough information/data, especially with regard to the number of respondents in a questionnaire. Show evidence of raw data collection where relevant. Select only relevant information. Make sure the essay is not based on only one secondary source such as a published report or a text. Make sure the data allows for depth of analysis. Appropriate data may be quantitative or qualitative.

### Criterion D – knowledge and understanding of the topic studied

Testing geographical theories in the real world forms the basis of a good geography essay, demonstrates a good understanding of the topic and provides an excellent academic context for the investigation. Outline relevant theory or theories clearly and succinctly making sure that theoretical explanations are not over long.

### Criterion E –- reasoned argument

The data should be used to present evidence that answers the research question and/or helps to support or reject hypotheses. A descriptive/narrative approach must therefore be avoided. In the instance of an issue or problem approach, the argument should be balanced and avoid bias. It is important that statements are backed up with evidence and are not just opinion. The reader must be convinced of the validity of the findings.

### Criterion F – analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to the subject

Analytical skills might include the use of maps, diagrams, photographs, charts, tables, and statistical methods. Place these at appropriate points in the text and not at the end of the essay. Make sure all such material is referred to/explained in the text. Avoid the sole use of overly simple analytical methods, such as % pie charts. These alone show lack of depth of analysis. Wherever statistical methods are used, check the significance of the results. Show awareness of the value and validity of the information and the limitations of the methods used to analyse it.

### Criterion G –use of language appropriate to the subject

The geographical terminology should be used accurately throughout the essay and remain appropriate to the topic so that ideas can be communicated clearly and with precision.

### Criterion H – conclusion

The concluding statements should be consistent with the evidence presented in the essay. Where relevant hypotheses should be accepted or rejected with reasons given. Hypotheses may be modified and new avenues of investigation suggested. Unresolved questions that have come to light should be stated. This is an appropriate place to evaluate the information and the methodology. Emotive statements should be avoided. No new information should be introduced.

### Criterion I – formal presentation

Make sure the essay has a title page, a contents page, a bibliography that is consistently laid out and numbered pages. All sources must be referenced including downloaded graphics from the Internet and published data. Make sure graphical material appears at relevant points in the essay and not in the appendices. Large tables should be placed in an appendix and referred to in the text. The essay should avoid adopting the format of a fieldwork report, with more emphasis on developing an argument appropriate to the research question.

### Criterion J – abstract

The abstract should not be an introduction to the topic but a brief summary of the essay. The research question must be stated. The scope should include the types of data collected and the methods used to analyze it. The findings should be summarized to reflect the conclusion of the essay.

### Criterion K – holistic judgement

Intellectual initiative is judged on the candidate’s ability to formulate a challenging research question and to use inventive analytical methods to produce an essay that shows originality. Depth of understanding and insight are shown by the ability to reflect, overcome problems and modify ideas. The supervisor’s comment is an important element in assessing these qualities and should never be omitted.

## Selecting topics and titles

Almost all areas of the syllabus lend themselves to deeper analysis and investigation in an extended essay. Many topics offer a wide range of opportunities for extended essays, although care may be needed to ensure that the research question is not too broad to be satisfactorily answered within the word limit. Also, it is important to note that there is a requirement to focus on a narrow area of research in depth, and that an extended essay must have a spatial component. The global nature of the topics in the core theme means that they are not always suitable for extended essays. However, it should be possible to investigate the underlying concepts in extended essays, provided the area of research is at a local scale. As data collection in the field is not required for extended essays, the research questions can be more broadly based than those used for fieldwork and can rely on information derived from sources other than direct fieldwork.

### Suggestions of good titles

* A study of vandalism and distance decay: to what extent can graffiti and vandalism be correlated to crime rates with distance from a CBD?
* To what extent do selected eco‐lodges in Ethiopia fulfill Martha Honey’s criteria for eco‐tourism?
* What effect has Globalization had on music genres in selected areas of an MEDC and LEDC?
* The relationship between literacy/income and child labour in India. Do patterns of literacy relate to levels of absolute poverty in selected Indian states/regions?
* Does air quality, along a 10 km transect from one of London’s busiest roundabouts, improve with distance?
* What effects have congestion charges levied on traffic entering central London had on traffic levels?
* To what extent does the level of arsenic poisoning decrease with distance from selected river channels and irrigated areas in Bangladesh?
* Does female reproductive health decline between Addis Ababa (urban) and Harar (rural), in Ethiopia?
* Do selected rural villages in Kenya exhibit land use (farming) patterns which reflect Von Thunen’s model of land use?
* How does Lake Vatten influence the local temperature (micro‐climate) during the autumn?
* What is the ecological value of Menagesha state forest and to what extent is it managed sustainably?
* Does the juxtaposition of low and high class socio‐economic areas change with altitude and distance from the
* CBD in an LEDC?
* Does the quality of the entertainment industry (bar and club culture) change in response to the urban social area in Addis Ababa?
* To what extent does the incidence of female infanticide increase with distance from major urban areas?

Examples of poor or inappropriate titles**, with a brief explanation**

* What are the social and economic implications of NAFTA on the US, Canada and Mexico? *Too broad – socioeconomic emphasis*
* What are the causes and consequences of ENSO? *Too broad ‐ descriptive*
* To what extent does Global warming affect the Earth? *Too broad – very difficult to answer*
* The impact of Globalization on the retailing of honey. Hypothesis ‐ “The clearness and cost of honey will not affect the price.” *Non‐geographical hypothesis*
* Does the warm current passing along the coast of Virginia and the Netherlands affect the climate of these two areas in a similar fashion? *Inaccurate*
* What are the perceived threats and potential consequences of a Mega‐Tsunami? *Hypothetical*
* A study of cardiovascular disease. *No spatial element*
* What was the influence of the Pacific Ocean on the Second World War? *Non‐geographical*
* To what extent was the Nile more important several thousand years ago? *Impossible to assess accurately – historical emphasis*
* Do we still live in a patriarchal society? *Anthropology*
* How does the American way of life affect teenagers in Munich? *Sociology*
* What evidence is there to support the existence of Pangaea and the possibility of its reformation in years to come as “Pangaea Ultima” and what effect will this gradual movement of the plates have on the inhabitants of the Earth? What is in store for our planet in the future? *To many questions ‐ hypothetical*
* Before you have finished your breakfast this morning you will have relied on half the World. Do my eating habits have an impact on the LEDW? How can I change them? What does it cost to change? How does this affect my family? *Too many questions – most lack geographical emphasis*

## Extracts from the IB Geography Examiner’s Report

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

Accepting that this could be purely a function of the particular sample I saw, the essays submitted this session were, in general, of a more mediocre standard than the past few years, with fewer really outstanding essays. It continues to be a concern that some essays submitted have only tangential relevance to the subject.

### Candidate performance against each criterion

There was a wide range of achievement evident for all criteria. It remains surprising that so many candidates fail to write an adequate abstract, or do not state their research question (singular) near the start of their essay.

**A: research question**

Some research questions were unclear or so broad that they were impossible to answer satisfactorily within the word limit.

**B: introduction**

Introductions were generally sound; the better ones made explicit reference to relevant geographical theory (relevant also to criterion D).

**C: investigation**

Investigative techniques were fairly good, though the data assembled by many candidates was sometimes insufficient in quantity or quality to draw the conclusions they tried to make.

**D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied**

The major weakness in knowledge and understanding was in relating results to existing geographic theory and in explaining anomalies using reasons other than poor methods of data collection.

**E: reasoned argument**

Most essays demonstrated some attempt to present ideas in a logical sequence.

**F: application of analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to the subject**

The weakest essays were overly descriptive and were compilations of information which did not necessarily have any clear relevance to the student’s chosen research question.

**G: use of language appropriate to the subject and**

**H: conclusion**

Most candidates used appropriate geographic terminology and most attempted a conclusion.

**I: formal presentation**

Formal presentation was usually satisfactory, but it remains a concern that some candidates do not provide a complete bibliography. Others failed to provide clear attribution to original source for all the illustrations or maps included in the text, even if the sources used were listed in a bibliography.

**J: abstract**

The quality of abstracts was disappointing, with many essays failing to score full marks.

**K: holistic judgment**

Many students had clearly gained considerable personal satisfaction in the process of writing their essay, even if this was not directly correlated with their level of achievement.

## Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Supervisors should be advised to dissuade students not studying IB geography from submitting an extended essay in the subject. Such essays are rarely successful.

Candidates should be advised to focus on a single, clearly-worded research question. Weaknesses in the formulation of the research question inevitably make it difficult for the candidate’s essay to stay focused and on track. Candidates and supervisors should be reminded that having a clear spatial element in their essay (going beyond mere location on a map) is absolutely essential.

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