

May 2015 extended essay reports

ITGS

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

The ITGS extended essays covered a wide range of the research topics. Popular areas for research included business, health or education. Those that attempted to address some aspect of using IT in education tended to be less successful due to inadequate secondary research or poor primary research techniques.

Some examples of sharply focused research questions include:

To what extent is the use of the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) reliable and secure for voting in India?

How can iPad apps help Autistic children in learning in Primary School?

Many candidates lost marks due to inadequate research or by not adhering closely to requirements of specific criteria. These include Criterion I: formal presentation and Criterion J: abstract.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: research question

The success of an ITGS extended essay is dependent upon formulating a concise and sharply focused research question. The research question should be stated as a question with the intent that the research, development and conclusion are sharply focused on this question.

At the onset of the secondary research a 'working' research question may be used to guide the research. It must be reviewed periodically and adjustments may be needed. Most ITGS extended essays do not have a well-considered research question.

The ITGS Triangle is apparent, either explicitly or implicitly, in the research question. The research question needs to be supported by adequate secondary research and primary investigations and research based on findings from the secondary research.

Criterion B: introduction

The context of the research question should be clearly set in an academic context that demonstrates the importance of the topic. Appropriate evidence included statistics or other cited material. Only a limited number of candidates indicated what the worth of the investigation would be.

Some candidates include the scope of the investigation in the introduction which helps keep them focused on the research question in the body of the extended essay.

Criterion C: investigation

The Table of Contents headings and subheadings are good indicators of the extent to which the extended essay has been planned.

Whenever primary data is collected, the methodology must be clearly stated within the extended essay and data collected must be included in the appendices in an appropriate format (i.e. summary of raw data from surveys, transcript from interviews).

Generally, surveys are not well planned and poorly conducted. In most cases, there are a number of shortcomings including the methodology is not explained within the paper, the results are not summarized in an appropriate format, and citations in the body of the paper are incomplete and difficult to follow.

The major shortcomings in interview transcripts are that the person's name, position of the person and date are not included at the start of the transcript. Questions used in interviews and surveys often do not relate closely to the secondary research that has been done.

Criterion D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied

The extended essay must show knowledge beyond what is regarded as common knowledge and provide evidence from academic sources. Frequent annotations from examiners include 'no evidence provided' or 'speculative comment'. The candidate's own personal opinions should not be included within the extended essay.

Research should include specific examples to demonstrate that the topic is well understood.

Criterion E: reasoned argument

The research question guides the development of the paper from the background of the research question (not the history) to the conclusion. The background specifically addresses those aspects that are needed in order to understand the underpinning concepts for the specific research question. This includes IT systems along with relevant diagrams, screenshots or photographs and how they relate to the research question.

The argument must include sound and logical argument focused on answering the research question in the conclusion. Candidates must base their arguments on the wealth of information that they have collected from their research.

A major shortcoming in ITGS extended essays is that the details of how primary investigations and research were conducted. Often there is no description of the details of an interview before information is cited. The methodology used in conducting a survey or investigation is missing.

Criterion F: application of analytical and evaluative skills

Analytical and evaluative skills may be demonstrated through:

- Comparisons of information collected from secondary research
- Analysing data collected from primary investigations and research
- Comparisons of information from secondary research with information/data gathered from primary investigations and research.

Usually this is the weakest aspect of extended essays.

Criterion G: use of language appropriate to the subject:

Candidates need to communicate clearly and precisely using ITGS terminology. This includes both IT terminology and terminology relating to social and ethical considerations. The terminology used in the paper needs to be specific to the research question and go beyond what is regarded as common knowledge. Often the explanation of the underpinning IT system is inadequate.

Criterion H: conclusion

The extended essays must focus on 'answering' the research question in the conclusion based on the evidence presented. The conclusion is not merely a summary or restating of the information presented in the extended essay.

This should be one of the strongest sections of the paper. However, this is often one of the weakest because the candidates seem to have 'run out of steam' by the time they reach this point.

Criterion I: formal presentation

Using a formal presentation style should be a straightforward task. Candidates include entries in the bibliography that are not cited within the body of the extended essay and vice versa. In some instances incorrect graphs were used to represent data from surveys and illustrative material is not properly cited. Information relating to the interviews was incomplete in the appendix. Often interviews and surveys were not listed in the bibliography.

Criterion J: abstract

Many candidates do not realize that the abstract is essentially the entire extended essay compressed within 300 words. No new information should appear in the abstract. It needs to

include the research question, the scope of how the investigation was conducted and the conclusion.

Criterion K: holistic judgment

Marks for holistic judgement depend upon the candidate demonstrating intellectual initiative, depth of understanding and insight. Usually these are achieved through the extent and nature of the secondary research and primary investigation and research that was undertaken. Again the research question must be carefully formulated so that appropriate research is possible.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

ITGS students need to be carefully guided step-by-step through the processes required for the research for the extended essay.

Students need to be taught how to formally:

- Conduct secondary research and record information
- Conduct investigations, surveys and interviews and accurately present the data collected
- Analyse and evaluate information and data from secondary research and primary investigations and research
- Write a formal paper including bibliography, citations, table of contents, abstract and appendices.

There are a number of online services and applications that can be used to support the extended essay:

- Bookmarking relevant resources
- Note-taking
- Citing resources
- Creating bibliography entries
- Providing guidance on how to correctly conduct primary research such as interviews and surveys.