

May 2018 extended essay reports

Visual Arts

Overall grade boundaries

Grade:	E	D	C	B	A
Mark range:	0-6	7-13	14-20	21-26	27-34

The range and suitability of the work submitted

In general, topics were appropriate, and of a considerable range. However, many essays developed arguments not clearly focused on the Visual Arts, but in other aspects that, though related, should not be central. For example, there were essays on gender issues, historical facts, mental diseases, influences on an artist other than those that are artistic.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: focus and method

Some essays did not include the title of the essay. When they did, many essays provided a title that was more or less the same as the RQ. Methods and primary/secondary sources were mostly appropriate. Some introductions have stated sources that were not consulted and methods that were not applied.

The main weakness in this criterion were:

- Not providing appropriate reasons for selecting a topic for investigation. When students did, most of the time, these were very personal or of a trivial nature.
- Not justifying the choice of sources and/or methods.

Criterion B: knowledge and understanding

There have been a number of essays that have focused the discussion on aspects that did not provide an opportunity to demonstrate subject-specific knowledge. For example, an essay discussing the symbolism of elements in artwork, or discussing the content as a depiction of contemporary affairs or personal circumstances of the artist without focussing on the art itself. Even though content and symbolism, as well as the context, are relevant to the discipline as they deal with the intention and expression of the artist; the primary emphasis should be on

evaluating how artists have conveyed their ideas formally and technically, using subject-specific vocabulary. This vocabulary/concepts may vary as it is not the same to analyse, for example, a painting, a performance or a temple.

Criterion C: critical thinking

Some research questions led to descriptive or narrative essays. In these cases, images were usually not analysed, scoring low in the first strand of this criterion. It is crucial that the research question is framed in a way that leads to argumentation/evaluation and that the candidate frequently refers to the RQ throughout the essay. Sometimes RQs are adequately focused, but the candidate seems to forget about it as they advance in the discussion. Very few essays have provided an evaluation of the research regarding strengths and weaknesses of sources and methods.

Criterion D: presentation

Fewer essays this session have been submitted without any images. However, many essays are still omitting an accurate label or a table of figures with the required information. Many essays had figure numbers next to each image without providing a table of figures. Some bibliographies have included both text and image sources together making difficult to distinguish how/where the source has been applied. Use of Wikipedia has decreased. Use of appendices has diminished. A couple of essays still include an Abstract and with no clear indication of whether the Abstract was included in the total word count. Surprising to see that still, some essays include candidate name, code and school name on the title page. A few essays are not respecting the use of double spacing. Some essays are making inappropriate use of footnotes.

Criterion E: engagement

Many students wrote superficial comments on the importance of time management and improvement of their research abilities. Most of the reflections were descriptions and narrations of what had the student had done. Many students wrote more than 500 words on this form, and anything beyond the 500-word point is not considered for assessment, and so is a self-penalising approach.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

- Ensure that students are aware of the seriousness of not attributing sources correctly. • Recommend to students that they write the EE in a subject that they are already studying
- Encourage students to take the time to frame a RQ that leads to an argumentative and evaluative discussion. Explain to candidates the difference between a more general title and a more focused RQ, which is outlined on the EE website
- The main argument should address the RQ throughout the essay and in the final conclusion
- The explanation of how and why methods and sources were selected for writing the essay should be clearly stated in the introduction

- Images should be formally analysed
- Image information should be complete and placed underneath each image, or briefly captioned and accompanied by a table of images after the bibliography
- Supervisors must be familiar with the criteria. It is evident through supervisors' and candidates' comments that this is not always the case
- Assist students with the formal aspects of visual language, especially with students not taking this subject as part of their Diploma
- Consult the Effective citing and referencing document
- Supervisors should develop strategies to foster evaluative reflections
- Encourage students to use the introduction to cover part of criterion A: Focus, Scope, Sources to be used, and outline the argument. Revisit the introduction once the essay is complete.