

Music

These subject guidelines should be read in conjunction with the “Introduction”, “Outline” and “Details—all essays” sections of this guide.

Overview

An extended essay in music provides students with an opportunity to undertake in-depth research into a topic of genuine interest to them. The student is encouraged to develop and explore, in a disciplined and imaginative way, a research question appropriate to the subject.

The outcome of the research should be a coherent and structured piece of writing that effectively addresses a particular issue or research question and arrives at a particular, and preferably personal, conclusion.

Real music should be at the heart of an extended essay in music. This means that particular pieces of music, experienced via recordings, live performances or concerts, should be chosen as the core focus of the extended essay. Students should strive for a coherent verbal analysis and interpretation of **one or more pieces of music** in relation to the chosen research question.

Absolute reliance on textbooks and the internet is discouraged and no extended essay in music should be based exclusively on such sources. Textbooks should be consulted only insofar as they may stimulate original ideas, provide models of disciplined, structured and informed approaches, and encourage direct and personal involvement with the essay topic.

Choice of topic

The chosen topic may be inspired by one or several of the areas of interest listed here. (Please note, this is not an exhaustive list, but is intended for guidance only).

- Aspects of the Diploma Programme music course (for Diploma Programme music students)
- Local performances or concerts
- Musical cultures that students have encountered that are not their own
- Personal contact with composers and/or performers
- Direct involvement in actually making music
- Recordings
- Music on the internet, or downloaded from it
- Other music that has a particular interest, emotional appeal or other importance for the student

It is strongly recommended that students are encouraged to be as much involved as possible in activities such as those listed previously during the writing process, if they are relevant to the chosen topic. However, it is recognized that students who choose an extended essay in music may not be studying the Diploma Programme music course.

It is **essential** that the topic chosen is distinctively musical. It is quite acceptable, for example, for a student to explore a topical question relating to popular music, jazz or blues, but the primary focus of the essay must be more concerned with the music itself than with the lives of the performers, the nature of the instruments used or the lyrics. Supervisors should, therefore, strongly discourage students who are primarily interested in analysing text or lyrics, particularly of pop songs, from submitting extended essays in music.

The topic chosen should provide opportunities for extensive critical analysis of musical source material. Topics that are entirely dependent on summarizing general secondary sources (such as textbooks and encyclopedias), and

topics likely to lead to an essay that is essentially narrative or descriptive in nature, should be avoided. Restricting the scope of the essay will help to ensure a clear focus, and will also provide opportunities for demonstrating detailed musical understanding and critical analysis.

To achieve this goal, it is essential that the research question chosen can be effectively answered. Titles along the lines of “Clara Schumann”, for example, do not give much scope for effective analysis or argument—they are more likely to produce an account of her life and music. Topics such as “Computers and music” should be treated from both musical and critical perspectives, and should concentrate on musical, rather than technological, aspects. Redundant research questions such as the comparison of a play to an opera of the same title (which inevitably means that only half the essay is focused on music itself) should be avoided.

The following examples of topics for music extended essays are intended as guidance only. The pairings illustrate that focused topics (indicated by the first title) should be encouraged rather than broad topics (indicated by the second title).

- “The use of contrapuntal techniques in Bach's *Art of Fugue*” **is better than** “Bach's Fugues”.
- “Harmonic innovation in the bebop style of Dizzy Gillespie” **is better than** “The music of Dizzy Gillespie”.
- “The role of minimalist techniques in Balinese gamelan” **is better than** “Balinese gamelan”.
- “The influence of jazz in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*” **is better than** “Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*”.

Moreover, it may help if the student further defines the topic chosen for study in the form of a research question, followed by a statement of intent that indicates which broad process is going to be used in answering the question. In this way, the approach to the topic chosen may be even further clarified. Some examples of this could be as follows.

Title	Edgard Varèse and Frank Zappa
Research question	What is the influence of Edgard Varèse on the musical output of Frank Zappa?
Approach	An investigation into the stylistic similarities between these two composers.
Title	<i>Jesus Christ Superstar</i> and opera
Research question	Is <i>Jesus Christ Superstar</i> a modern classical opera?
Approach	An investigation into Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical language and structures in this work, with reference to other relevant music from operas of the Western classical tradition.
Title	The naming of Mozart's music
Research question	What evidence is there to support the title of Mozart's divertimento <i>Ein Musikalischer Spass</i> (<i>A Musical Joke</i>) K. 522 (1787)?
Approach	An investigation into Mozart's compositional techniques in this work.

However, it is important to bear in mind that, in the subject of music, a research “question” is sometimes not an accurate description of the task. Therefore, students should not force aesthetic or sociocultural issues into a question format when the articulation of a clear and probing inquiry into an idea is more appropriate. Examples of this could be as follows.

Title	Emotional tension in traditional music
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Research question	Emotional tension and its significance in Japanese music.
Approach	An investigation into the mechanisms used in traditional Japanese music to create emotional tension, with reference to comparable examples in Western music.

Note that this approach is looking for a commonality of expressive device between two cultures, allowing for a probing inquiry through comparison. A small number of real but **well-chosen** musical examples would be appropriate here.

Title	Musical continuity in Frederick Chopin's 24 piano Preludes Op. 28
Research question	An investigation into the presence and musical significance of a recurrent motif found throughout Frederick Chopin's 24 piano Preludes, Op. 28.
Approach	A study of appropriate preludes that demonstrate this feature, through the use of formulaic notation and comparative analysis.

Note that this approach, while still using comparative analysis, is more focused on the musical mechanics of a series of works by the same composer, allowing for an in-depth study within the word limit. In this case, the student would only be able to study five or six preludes, given the parameters of an extended essay.

Title	The music of Hildegard of Bingen—an explanation of its appeal and justification of its popularity
Research question	An investigation into the reasons for the popularity of the music of Hildegard of Bingen today.
Approach	A study of Hildegard of Bingen's musical style in comparison with other sacred music from her time, through analysis and comparison of musical examples, with particular reference to the aesthetic theory of musical expectation and inhibition.

This approach has its dangers, in the sense that it can be easy to make a supposition in a research question, without any evidence, and then try to prove the statement by subjective and superficial comment and analysis. However, at its best, this approach can allow investigation into other important areas of musical study and theory, while remaining focused on music itself.

Treatment of the topic

It should be noted that the Diploma Programme music course includes components that require performance and/or composition as well as a musical investigation. An extended essay in music has a different purpose, in that the focus should be clearly on a verbal response to a research question.

In order to promote personal involvement in the extended essay, the use of primary sources that are locally available should be encouraged wherever possible. However, it is appreciated that, in certain situations, students may not necessarily have access to primary musical sources. In such situations, in order not to restrict the topics that can be investigated, recordings of a high quality are considered acceptable sources. It is important that the topic and research question reflect a firm emphasis on music, and that they do not become directed towards another subject area.

Appropriate resources for music include books, textbooks, the internet, scores, interviews, recordings, and live performances or concerts of the music being studied. The inclusion of appropriate reference material, such as music

notation, audio tapes or other musical examples, with music extended essays is encouraged as long as the material is directly supportive of, and relevant to, the argument/evaluation.

Students are expected to evaluate critically the resources consulted during the process of writing the essay by asking themselves the following questions.

- Which sources are vital to the support of my ideas, opinions and assertions?
- Which sources do not contribute to the analysis?

Students must choose a research question that is suitable for effective treatment within the word limit and is not of a trivial nature. Research questions that do not allow a systematic investigation that demonstrates critical musical analysis and detailed understanding are unlikely to be suitable. In some instances, it may become clear at an early stage in the research that too few sources are available to permit such an investigation. In such cases, a change of focus should be made.

Many different approaches to the research question can be appropriate, for instance:

- use of primary sources (music and musicians) and secondary sources (material **about** music) in order to establish and appraise varying interpretations
- analysing sources (primary and secondary) in order to explore and explain particular aspects of musical techniques
- using primary source material for an analysis, with emphasis on a particular aspect of the music
- collecting and analysing orally transmitted and/or written music from live musicians and/or composers through recordings, possibly leading to a comparison of similar or different music.

Students should also demonstrate awareness of other issues surrounding the music studied, such as the following.

- Do I show an awareness of the value and limitations of the music I am studying through analysing its origin and purpose?
- Do I show a consistently good musical understanding in setting the research question into context and addressing it fully and effectively?

Relevant outcomes of this analysis should be integrated into the student's argument.

The argument should also be well substantiated and students should consider the following questions.

- With what evidence do I support my comments and conclusions?
- Is this evidence relevant and well founded, and not based simply on my preconceptions?

Frequent reference to the assessment criteria by both the supervisor and the student will help keep a sharper focus on the project.

Interpreting the assessment criteria

Please note: extended essays that do not focus on real music are likely to score 0 in criterion A, and are unlikely to score highly in criteria C, D, F and G.

Criterion A: research question

The research question can often be best defined in the form of a question. It may, however, also be presented as a statement or proposition for discussion. It must be:

- specific and sharply focused
- appropriate to the particular area of music being explored
- centred on music and not on peripheral issues such as biography or social discourses
- stated clearly early on in the essay.

Note that larger-scale musical works or groups of pieces may limit the possibility of effective treatment within the word limit.

Criterion B: introduction

The introduction should relate the research question to existing subject knowledge: the student's personal experience or particular opinion is rarely relevant here.

The introduction should not be seen as an opportunity for padding out an essay with a lengthy account of the context of the music.

Criterion C: investigation

The range of resources available will be influenced by various factors, but above all by the topic.

- Students should use primary sources (scores, recordings, performances, interviews) in the first instance, with secondary sources (textbooks and the comments of other musicians) as evidential support.
- The proper planning of an essay should involve interrogating source material in light of the research question, so that the views of other musicians are used to support the student's own argument, and not as a substitute for that argument. It may thus be helpful for a student to challenge a statement by a musician, in reference to the music being studied, instead of simply agreeing with it, where there is evidence to support such a challenge.
- If students make use of internet-based sources, they should do so critically and circumspectly in full awareness of their potential unreliability.

Criterion D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied

Students are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the music chosen, together with its historical, social and cultural, as well as academic, contexts. Wherever possible, this knowledge should be based at least partially on primary sources.

Criterion E: reasoned argument

Students should be aware of the need to give their essays the backbone of a developing argument. Personal views should not simply be stated but need to be supported by reasoned argument to persuade the reader of their validity. Straightforward descriptive or narrative accounts that lack analysis do not usually advance an argument and should be avoided.

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

Students should accurately and consistently analyse technical aspects of the music (melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, tone colour, and lyrics or text), demonstrating an understanding and a persuasive personal interpretation of the music.

Criterion G: use of language appropriate to the subject

Students are expected to make effective use of musical terminology and, where appropriate, notation. Notation may take a variety of forms, depending on the type of music studied.

Criterion H: conclusion

“Consistent” is the key word here: the conclusion should develop out of the argument and not introduce new or extraneous matter. It should not repeat the material of the introduction; rather, it should present a new synthesis in light of the discussion.

Criterion I: formal presentation

This criterion relates to the extent to which the essay conforms to academic standards about the way in which research papers should be presented. The presentation of essays that omit a bibliography or that do not give references for quotations is deemed unacceptable (level 0). Essays that omit one of the required elements—title page, table of contents, page numbers—are deemed no better than satisfactory (maximum level 2), while essays that omit two of them are deemed poor at best (maximum level 1).

In music, discographies should be included where appropriate; musical examples, and tables and charts, if relevant, should appear in the body of the essay, as close as possible to their first reference.

Criterion J: abstract

The abstract is judged on the clarity with which it presents an overview of the research and the essay, not on the quality of the research question itself, nor on the quality of the argument or the conclusions.

Criterion K: holistic judgment

Qualities that are rewarded under this criterion include the following.

- Intellectual initiative: Ways of demonstrating this in music essays include the choice of topic and research question, locating and using a wide range of sources, including some that may have been little used previously or generated for the study (for instance, transcripts of oral interviews).
- Insight and depth of understanding: These are most likely to be demonstrated as a consequence of detailed research, reflection that is thorough and well informed, and reasoned argument that consistently and effectively addresses the research question.
- Creativity: In music essays, this includes qualities such as comparison of musical features, inventive approaches to musical analysis and new approaches to popular topics.

Peace and conflict studies

These subject guidelines should be read in conjunction with the “Introduction”, “Outline” and “Details—all essays” sections of this guide.

Overview

An extended essay in peace and conflict studies provides students with an opportunity to undertake an in-depth study of a limited topic in this field. Essays should allow students to develop and show research, interpretative and presentational skills.

Students who are considering registering an extended essay in this subject (which is a school-based syllabus) are strongly advised to study carefully a copy of the syllabus, obtainable from IB Cardiff, before making a final decision. The syllabus gives a clear idea of the scope and content of the subject, and will help students to decide whether their choice of topic is appropriate.

Choice of topic

The choice of topic must ensure that the various assessment criteria can be satisfied. Students are advised to avoid topics that are too broad in scope to permit an in-depth study within the prescribed word limit. A limited topic, thoroughly researched and with a clear focus, is preferable to a broad topic that can only be examined superficially.

There are many areas of human interaction in which conflict and/or peace can be observed, but purely descriptive essays should be avoided. Topics drawn from more dynamic situations allow the process of change to be studied and the student to assess the viability of peace being achieved or maintained.

When choosing a topic, students should ensure that a variety of sources are available. Students may use journalistic or visual/pictorial material, or data collected from interviews, but their essays should not be based solely on such sources. In particular, students should realize that extended essays in this subject are expected to show knowledge and understanding of the different theories about the causes of peace and conflict (see assessment criterion D).

The following examples of peace and conflict studies extended essays are intended as guidance only. The pairings illustrate that focused topics (indicated by the first title) should be encouraged rather than broad topics (indicated by the second title).

- “The debate about the effects of television violence on pre-teenagers: social and legislative safeguards and their effectiveness” **is better than** “Violence on television”.
- “Maori non-violent struggles for their land” **is better than** “The political position of the Maori people”.
- “Racism in [X] and proposals for its reduction” **is better than** “A study of racism”.
- “Conscientious objection in Switzerland: a study of its history, the human rights issues, the effects acceptance would entail, and of its political support” **is better than** “The case for conscientious objection”.

Treatment of the topic

Peace and conflict studies involves differing interpretations of situations, events, causes and solutions. The better essays will examine a wide variety of opinions, assess their strong and weak points, and include an element of personal evaluation.

Many essays will involve topics of which students have direct experience, to which they have easy access via family or friends, or with which they have some political, philosophical or cultural affinity. This is not discouraged but, in such cases, care must be exercised to maintain the academic standards of essay writing, particularly with reference to sources, contentious issues and conclusions. Several successful essays of this type have been written within the framework of a school or local community. In these cases, students have had no difficulty in finding ample source material, much of it being primary source material.

Peace and conflict studies is an interdisciplinary subject, and essays should reflect this. For example, data may be drawn from statistics, geography, sociology, psychology, history, economics, politics and journalism. Such data must be integrated, and shown to be relevant to the scope of the peace and conflict studies syllabus.

Essays in this subject must obviously show an awareness and understanding of the differing roles, views and activities of all parties to the conflict being researched, and must also suggest and critically examine possible solutions to the conflict (criterion F). In responding to this criterion, as well as to criteria D and G, students should use every opportunity to show their awareness of theories about the causes of peace and conflict.

The assessment criteria should be used as a guide to the organization and structure of the essay. In the early part of the essay, the chosen topic and research question should be shown to have a firm place in some aspect of the

broad peace and conflict studies syllabus. Placing the topic and research question in context should be done briefly but clearly (criterion B).

One of the weakest elements of extended essays in this subject is the failure of many students to show that they have any knowledge and understanding of theories about the causes of peace and conflict, which should underpin any study of the subject. At least one of the books that deal with these theories ought to appear in the bibliography and students should show their awareness of such theories at appropriate points in their essays (criterion D).

Some examples of titles, research questions and approaches used in the past include the following.

Title	Violence in the American school system
Research question	An analysis of the causes of school violence and suggested solutions.
Approach	This is a good example of a topic of which the student had personal experience. General reading is undertaken to set the context. This is followed by interviews with fellow students and effective use of regulations of local education authorities and local press reports. A sound knowledge and understanding of theories about peace and conflict is applied in researching and organizing both parts of the essay.
Title	Conflict in Germany between German nationals and Turkish immigrants
Research question	An analysis of the causes of conflict between the two groups, and of possible solutions.
Approach	General reading of secondary sources/articles is undertaken to set the context. The argument about causes of violence is developed from interviews with German nationals and Turkish immigrants, by applying knowledge of theories about the causes of conflict, and by using examples of actual cases of conflict and tension. The essay concludes by suggesting possible ways of alleviating or removing conflict.
Title	Has the Kashmir conflict become a permanent vendetta between India and Pakistan or is a peaceful solution possible?
Research question	The question is built into the title, but is also stated in the early part of the essay and in the abstract.
Approach	General reading of secondary sources is undertaken to write a historical summary of the conflict and its causes since independence, with comments drawn from knowledge of the theories about the causes of conflict. This is followed by a discussion of possible paths to a peaceful compromise with a cautiously optimistic conclusion.

Interpreting the assessment criteria

Criterion A: research question

Although the aim of the essay can best be defined in the form of a question, it may also be presented as a statement or proposition for discussion. It must be appropriate to the subject in which the essay is submitted. In peace and conflict studies, this provides students with a wide range of topics. Even if the research question is built into the title itself in the form of a question, it must also be clearly stated in the early part of the essay and in the abstract.

Criterion B: introduction

Students should explain briefly the importance and the context of the topic, and, perhaps, the reason for choosing it. The introduction should relate the research question to existing subject knowledge: the student's personal experience or particular opinion is rarely relevant here.

Criterion C: investigation

Students should demonstrate that they have selected a range of sources on the basis of their relevance to the topic and the research question. They should also show that the investigation into sources and data has been planned and carefully selected.

Criterion D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied

Students are expected to illustrate their knowledge of the chosen topic by placing it within a context of peace and conflict in society. This knowledge should include an understanding of academic theories about the causes of peace and conflict.

Criterion E: reasoned argument

This, along with the previous criterion, goes to the heart of the essay. A reasoned argument will be logical, coherent, persuasive, well supported with evidence and always relevant to the research question.

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

Students are expected to apply peace and conflict analysis accurately and consistently, to demonstrate awareness and understanding of the differing roles, interpretations and actions of all conflicting parties, as well as a realistic examination of possible solutions to conflict situations.

Criterion G: use of language appropriate to the subject

The use of language must be effective and include relevant peace and conflict terminology.

Criterion H: conclusion

This should stem from, and be consistent with, the evidence presented in the research. No new material should be introduced apart from identifying new questions that may have arisen from the research.

Criterion I: formal presentation

This criterion relates to the extent to which the essay conforms to academic standards about the way in which research papers should be presented. The presentation of essays that omit a bibliography or that do not give references for quotations is deemed unacceptable (level 0). Essays that omit one of the required elements—title page, table of contents, page numbers—are deemed no better than satisfactory (maximum level 2), while essays that omit two of them are deemed poor at best (maximum level 1).

Appendices are not essential and examiners are not required to read them. It is important, therefore, for students to include all content of direct relevance to the argument in the body of the essay.

Criterion J: abstract

The abstract is judged on the clarity with which it presents an overview of the research question, the scope of the investigation and the conclusion, not on the quality of the research question itself, nor on the quality of the argument or the conclusions.

Criterion K: holistic judgment

The qualities that distinguish an essay from the average are rewarded under this criterion. These qualities include intellectual initiative, depth of understanding, insight, creativity and flair. When all these qualities are present, they will identify an essay of outstanding quality. Essays that demonstrate only one or two of them should also be rewarded.

Philosophy

These subject guidelines should be read in conjunction with the “Introduction”, “Outline” and “Details—all essays” sections of this guide.

Overview

An extended essay in philosophy provides students with an opportunity to undertake a philosophical investigation into a topic of special interest. The student is encouraged to engage in serious, personal thought, to develop and explore in a disciplined and imaginative way a specific philosophical question appropriate to the subject, and to arrive at a clear conclusion.

Choice of topic

The chosen topic may be stimulated, for example, by work done in class, by current events, by issues of contemporary debate, by discussion, by private reading and/or reflection, or by conceptual features of belief systems not previously encountered by the student.

A precisely circumscribed topic should be selected, so that it can be treated thoroughly. For example, it may be preferable to choose as a starting point a specific hypothesis rather than a general one, certain of the ideas of one philosopher rather than several, or a single text by a philosopher rather than the whole of his or her work.

A topic should be reconsidered or amended if it is interdisciplinary in nature and/or is not directly related to philosophy.

The following examples of titles for philosophy extended essays are intended as guidance only. The pairings illustrate that focused topics (indicated by the first title) should be encouraged rather than broad topics (indicated by the second title).

- “An analysis of John Rawls’ procedure of justifying principles of social justice” **is better than** “Philosophical views of social justice”.
- “The notion of freedom of speech in Spinoza’s *Theologico-Politico Treatise*” **is better than** “Ethics in the 17th century”.
- “Brahman: the ultimate reality of Sankara’s *Advaita Vedanta*” **is better than** “Philosophical implications of the Hindu scriptures”.
- “Change and continuity: a critical assessment of Herbert Marcuse’s views on art” **is better than** “Philosophical aspects of art and aesthetics”.
- “Doing *versus* being: language and reality in the Mimamsa school of Indian philosophy” **is better than** “Language and the nature of reality”.
- “An examination of the role played by reason in Anselm’s investigation of the concepts of predestination and free will” **is better than** “Anselm’s exploration of the mysteries of faith”.

A necessary condition for a sound philosophical treatment of the topic is a well-formulated research question. Previous experience shows that, in essays where the research question is well focused and stated clearly, the arguments seem to unfold of their own accord. Therefore, the focus of the investigation must be narrowed down as much as possible and stated in a concise and sharply defined research question. Students must choose a research question that can be treated effectively within the word limit and is philosophically relevant. The research question can be formulated as a question or as a statement. Some examples with good results in the past include the following.

Title	Do stem cells have moral status?
Research question	What criterion can be identified in order to ascribe a moral status to stem cells?
Approach	An explanation and justification of a criterion that allows a moral status to be ascribed to stem cells.
Title	Asian philosophy of critical thinking: divergent from or convergent to Western fundamental principles?
Research question	What is the nature of the critical thinking that is clearly visible in Indian historical texts such as the <i>Caraka</i> and the <i>Nyayasutra</i> ?
Approach	An exploration and justification of the notion of critical thinking that is found in the <i>Caraka</i> and the <i>Nyayasutra</i> .
Title	Art and politics in Hannah Arendt's <i>The Crisis in Culture</i>
Research question	In Hannah Arendt's essay <i>The Crisis in Culture</i> , art and politics are not opposed but complementary.
Approach	An investigation into the relation between art and politics in <i>The Crisis in Culture</i> .
Title	The roots of wisdom according to the <i>Tao Te Ching</i>
Research question	Does wisdom necessarily imply acting in accordance with the order of nature, according to the <i>Tao Te Ching</i> ?
Approach	An exploration of the idea of wisdom according to the <i>Tao Te Ching</i> .
Title	The scientific character of Freud's interpretation of dreams
Research question	Is Popper's falsifiability an adequate criterion to evaluate Freud's theory of dreams?
Approach	An examination of whether Popper's falsifiability is an adequate criterion to evaluate Freud's theory of dreams.

Topics that are mainly dependent on summarizing general secondary sources (such as textbooks and encyclopedias), those that are likely to lead to an essay that is essentially narrative or descriptive in nature, and general topics that are not well focused or are more appropriate to other subjects, should all be avoided.

Treatment of the topic

Clarity, coherence of ideas and attention to detail are necessary conditions for an effective treatment of a philosophical topic in an extended essay. A lucid understanding of the problem(s) should be demonstrated, and the proposed solution(s) should be logical and well structured. Counterclaims or objections should be envisaged, addressed and, if possible, rebutted.

While irrelevance must be avoided, the wider implications of the philosophical issues raised should be explored to an appropriate degree, and an awareness should be evident of the connections between such issues and more universal concerns of human life.

The treatment of the research question must aim towards its philosophical exploration and the construction of an argument, which presupposes a careful, critical analysis of themes and/or texts. This approach, which allows many different ways of philosophical reflection, is based on the emphasis of the Diploma Programme philosophy course

on **doing** philosophy. Within this context, the aim of a philosophical investigation is to encourage students to develop the ability to reason and argue, and to learn to take a personal and independent position on philosophical issues. This should result in the construction of a personal philosophical argument, which should be cogent, rational, and economical in expression, and should be supported by relevant and, if possible, original examples. It is strongly recommended that any student considering writing an extended essay in philosophy should first read the current *Philosophy guide* and understand its approach.

Interpreting the assessment criteria

Criterion A: research question

Although the aim of the essay can best be defined in the form of a question, it may also be presented as a statement or proposition for discussion that is clearly philosophical or open to sustained philosophical analysis and argument.

Criterion B: introduction

The introduction should relate the research question to existing subject knowledge: the student's personal experience or particular opinion is rarely relevant here. It should explain succinctly the philosophical significance of the topic, why it is worthy of a philosophical investigation and how the research question fits into a philosophical context (for example, a problem, discussion, tradition, or conception). The introduction should refer to the specific research question or to the argument that is going to be developed. Lengthy background information that is not relevant to the question should not be included.

Criterion C: investigation

When the research question has been established, the student should explore the topic, for example, by making a research plan. The proper planning of an essay should involve interrogating source material in light of the research question. In philosophy, research questions are explored through an examination of themes or texts. Accordingly, the range of sources that could be used is wide, including works of philosophers, dictionaries of philosophy, textbooks and encyclopedias. An appropriate and effective use of sources should take into account the following.

- Descriptive approaches are not adequate for this kind of philosophical investigation. The presentation of information about the issue under discussion should be concise, relevant and directly related to the point that the investigation is trying to make.
- When the research question refers to a source that is not directly philosophical (for example, literature, contemporary issues, cultural or local issues), the examination must be distinctively philosophical.
- If students make use of internet-based sources, they should do so critically and circumspectly in full awareness of their potential unreliability.
- Absolute reliance on textbooks is discouraged and no extended essay in philosophy should be based exclusively on textbooks. They should only be consulted insofar as they may stimulate ideas, provide guidance and encourage the development of a personal investigation.

Criterion D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied

The essay demonstrates the student's philosophical knowledge and understanding of the topic when it does the following.

- Identifies and exposes the basic philosophical issues immediately present in the research question
- Presents and discusses philosophical concepts, ideas, arguments, perspectives and positions that are directly relevant to the research question
- Is philosophically well informed and uses the information purposefully in order to broaden the scope of the exploration or to support the argument

- Shows philosophical insight into themes or philosophers' views
- Explores possible ways of understanding the issues or problems discussed
- Shows an awareness of philosophical implications arising from the research question, or the ideas or arguments examined

Criterion E: reasoned argument

Students should be aware of the need to give their essays the backbone of a developing argument: arguments should be focused and sustained. Straightforward descriptive or narrative accounts that lack analysis do not usually advance an argument and should be avoided.

The construction of an argument lies at the very core of a research essay in philosophy. Developing a reasoned argument in philosophy implies at least the following.

- The construction of an argument in a philosophical investigation plays the role of empirical research in empirical sciences, or logical proof in the formal ones.
- Developing a philosophical argument must be clearly distinguished from simply describing or narrating a series of theories or opinions.
- Some students who have not previously written at such length may need guidance about the relation between argument and structure.
- Students should be familiar with the basic features of reasoning necessary to construct personal philosophical arguments in a sound and purposeful way.

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

Analysis has always been at the heart of philosophical method but it has been understood and practised in many different ways. In one basic accepted sense, it consists of breaking something (an idea, a topic or a question) down into its components. Analysis might also be characterized as disclosing or working back to what is more fundamental by articulating relevant elements and structures, on the basis that more fundamental concepts have a broader explanatory power. In turn, evaluation in a philosophy extended essay should be the result of students developing their exploration and own line of reasoning concerning the research question. However, this must be carefully distinguished from the mere statement of opinions or beliefs that are not the result of the specific investigation. Analytical skills are shown by means of an in-depth and extensive critical philosophical treatment and discussion of themes, basic concepts and arguments; whereas evaluative skills are exhibited when ideas, arguments and perspectives are assessed from a consistently held and well-justified perspective with clear evidence and strong support.

The exploration of the research question implies the development of analytical and evaluative skills, which is usually carried out through an examination of themes and texts. The following statements suggest an approach that may enable students to research themes or texts in a consistent way. They are not the only directions that can be taken into account but they provide a starting point from which students can develop into independent researchers in philosophy. Students should adopt a similar approach when they examine a philosophical issue or when they investigate a philosophical argument presented in a text. In the case of themes, students should:

- identify the research question
- ask themselves what they think about the question asked or the hypothesis stated, taking into account their own and other perspectives
- present reasons that support their position
- put forward possible objections or counter-arguments that could be levelled against their position

- suggest strategies for overcoming these objections or counter-arguments
- illustrate their position and counter-positions with supporting examples and relevant cases
- offer a possible and consistent answer to the question asked or a relevant exploration of the hypothesis stated, evaluating strengths and weaknesses.

In the case of texts, students should adopt the same approach. Students should always be careful not to refer to the text or the author as an authority. In addition, students are expected to:

- identify the philosophical issue raised by the text
- identify the author's standpoint in the text
- state what they think about the author's standpoint
- develop and explore their own position on the author's standpoint by:
 - acknowledging alternative approaches to the text
 - considering how different approaches to the text enable them to progress their own thinking about the question posed.

Criterion G: use of language appropriate to the subject

An appropriate use of language in a philosophy extended essay implies at least both of the following.

- A well-informed knowledge of the terminology of basic philosophical concepts and of the specific fundamental concepts relevant to the themes, authors or texts at work in the investigation.
- A clear and effective communication of the exploration undertaken or a precise formulation of the argument presented.

Moreover, it could be useful to take into account the following.

- The analysis and use of philosophical language should be directly related to, and functional for, the specific investigation.
- Many expressions belonging to philosophical terminology (definition, concept, thought, experience, perception, world and so on) are also part of everyday language. A clarification of their use, for example, the definition of a philosophical context, should be provided when needed for the investigation.
- Many thought processes implied in philosophy research are directly related to the use of language. Descriptions of what activities such as "formulate", "examine" and "define" mean can be found in the "Glossary of command terms" section in the current *Philosophy guide*.

Criterion H: conclusion

"Consistent" is the key word here: the conclusion should develop out of the argument and not introduce new or extraneous matter. It should not repeat the material of the introduction; rather, it should present a new synthesis in light of the discussion. Students should reflect on the argument that they have presented and draw conclusions from it.

Criterion I: formal presentation

This criterion relates to the extent to which the essay conforms to academic standards about the way in which research papers should be presented. The presentation of essays that omit a bibliography or that do not give references for quotations is deemed unacceptable (level 0). Essays that omit one of the required elements—title page, table of contents, page numbers—are deemed no better than satisfactory (maximum level 2), while essays that omit two of them are deemed poor at best (maximum level 1).