

## Final reflection session (*viva voce*)

The *viva voce* is a short interview between the student and the supervisor, and is the mandatory conclusion to the extended essay process. Students who do not attend the *viva voce* will be disadvantaged under criterion E (engagement) as the *Reflections on planning and progress form* will be incomplete.

The *viva voce* is conducted once the student has uploaded the final version of their extended essay to the IB for assessment. At this point in the process no further changes can be made to the essay. The *viva voce* is a celebration of the completion of the essay and a reflection on what the student has learned from the process.

The *viva voce* is:

- an opportunity to ask the student a variety of open-ended questions to elicit holistic evidence of the student's learning experience.
- an opportunity for the supervisor to confirm the authenticity of the student's ideas and sources
- an opportunity to reflect on successes and difficulties encountered in the research process
- an aid to the supervisor's comments on the *Reflections on planning and progress form*.

The *viva voce* should last 20–30 minutes. This is included in the recommended amount of time a supervisor should spend with the student.

In conducting the *viva voce* and writing their comments on the *Reflections on planning and progress form*, supervisors should bear in mind the following.

- The form is an assessed part of the extended essay. The form must include: comments made by the supervisor that are reflective of the discussions undertaken with the student during their supervision/ reflection sessions; the student's comments; and the supervisor's overall impression of the student's engagement with the research process.
- An incomplete form resulting from supervisors not holding reflection sessions, or students not attending them, could lead to criterion E (engagement) being compromised.
- In assessing criterion E (engagement), examiners will take into account any information given on the form about unusual intellectual inventiveness. This is especially the case if the student is able to demonstrate what has been learned as a result of this process or the skills developed.
- Examiners want to know that students understand any material (which must be properly referenced) that they have included in their essays. If the way the material is used in context in the essay does not clearly establish this, the supervisor can check the student's understanding in the *viva voce* and comment on this on the *Reflections on planning and progress form*.
- If there appear to be major shortcomings in citations or referencing, the supervisor should investigate thoroughly. No essay should be authenticated if the supervisor believes the student may be guilty of plagiarism or some other form of academic misconduct.

- The comment made by the supervisor should not attempt to do the examiner’s job. It should refer to things, largely process-related, that may not be obvious in the essay itself.
- Unless there are particular problems, the *viva voce* should begin and end positively. Completion of a major piece of work such as the extended essay is a great achievement for students.

## Tip

Following this final session, the student is required to complete the last student comment section of the *Reflections on planning and progress form*, sign and date it and submit it to their supervisor, who must then add their own comments, sign and date the form. The supervisor must then upload the form into the e-coursework system, confirm the authenticity of both the form and essay, and submit them to the IB for assessment as one portfolio. Please refer to the section “Protocols for completing and submitting the *Reflections on planning and progress form*” for more information.

Failure to complete or sign the *Reflections on planning and progress form* may result in:

- a delay in a grade being issued for the extended essay
- criterion E being compromised; in other words, the examiner may not be able to apply criterion E due to missing or lacking information
- the essay being referred as a possible case of academic misconduct as a result of not being authenticated.