What's new in EE from 2016

There are a number of developments to the EE, including the world studies, which represent key features and need to be understood by coordinators, supervisors and students. They are grouped in terms of the following areas:

- implementation of the EE process, including supervision
- presentation and formatting of the EE
- assessment of the EE.

Implementation of the EE process, including supervision

Feature	Explanation
Reflection is a compulsory element of the EE	The inclusion of reflection recognizes that the process of completing the EE is important in terms of skills development. Reflection is an important aspect of the Diploma Programme core, with each element providing a different kind of reflection. In the EE, reflection focuses on students' progress during the research process. It is intended to help students with their planning and completion of the EE, as well as allowing them the opportunity to consider the effectiveness of their choices, to re-examine their ideas and decide whether changes are needed in order to complete the task. It also allows students to engage in a more summative reflection of their achievements and challenges while completing the EE. This will be an assessed aspect of the EE.
Three mandatory reflection sessions	In order to support students through the process of undertaking independent research they must be allocated an appropriate supervisor. It is recommended that students be given between three and five hours of supervision time and this time must include the three mandatory reflection sessions. [More information on the supervision process]
RPPF	This form allows examiners to gain an insight into students' thinking throughout the process of undertaking their research and writing. It will allow for the application of criterion E (engagement). This form must be completed by students after each of their mandatory reflection sessions. Supervisors must sign after each reflection is completed and at the end of the process once the *viva voce* has taken place. They then write their summative comment. The form is submitted along with the essay for external assessment.
Administrative responsibilities in relation to	Requirements: - Schools must provide organizational structures that allow for three mandatory supervision (reflection) sessions.

changes in the supervision process	• EE/DP coordinators must introduce, explain and support the reflection process and provide supervisors and students with the general and subject-specific information and guidelines for the EE. • EE/DP coordinators must ensure that the RPPF is completed and signed by the student and supervisor and submitted to the IB with the essay for assessment under criterion E. Schools are strongly recommended to: • ensure that students are taught the necessary research skills, including those related to academic honesty and technology literacy • support the introduction and use of the Researcher's reflection space (RRS) as an integral part of the EE process • limit the number of students one supervisor is allocated to ensure the appropriate level of supervision can be provided for each student • provide appropriate training and ongoing support for supervisors.
Role of external mentors	The conditions under which work can be undertaken outside the school with an external mentor have been clarified. [More details on the role of external mentors]
The RRS	The use of the RRS is strongly recommended as it will allow students to more clearly articulate and understand their decision-making process as it relates to the critical and evaluative elements of the essay. It supports learning, thinking, critical analysis and evaluation and contributes not only to the development of a successful EE but also to skills and competencies for pathways beyond the Diploma Programme. [Examples from student spaces]

Presentation and formatting of the EE

Feature	Explanation
No abstract	An abstract is not a formal requirement for an EE. While the EE models an academic research paper, it does not mirror it. Writing an abstract is a skill that students can develop at a later stage in their respective studies.
All research questions must be posed as a research question	This will enable students to maintain their focus more easily throughout the essay and to make a judgment as to whether they have responded to the research question.
Reference to external sources or supplementary information is not permitted and examiners will not access them	The EE is an entity in itself and any argument made must be in the body of the essay. Supplementary information provided in the form of CDs or DVDs or links to external sources such as YouTubeTM clips are not permitted and examiners will not refer to them in their assessment of the essay.
The use of footnotes, endnotes and appendices	These requirements are in place to ensure parity across subjects and to mitigate against students attempting to circumvent the word limit. [More information on the use of footnotes, endnotes and appendices]
Formatting of the EE	Students are required to submit their essay using a size 12 readable font and double-spaced. This is to promote the idea that the EE is an academic piece of work and as such should be formatted appropriately, including font choice. It is also to help facilitate the assessment of the EE on-screen.

Assessment of the EE

Feature	Explanation
Five assessment criteria	The number of criteria for the extended essay is five. Of the five criteria four are applied to the essay itself and one to the RPPF. [View the assessment criteria]
The "best-fit" approach in the assessment of EEs	The aim of the "best-fit approach" is to find the descriptor that conveys most accurately the level attained by the student's work. A best-fit approach means that compensation is made when a piece of work matches different aspects of a markband at different levels. The mark awarded is the one that most fairly reflects the balance of achievement against the markband. It is not necessary for every indicator of a level descriptor to be met for that mark to be awarded.