

Religious, Moral And Philosophical Studies — Higher

Guidance Notes for Candidates on the Extended Essay

The Extended Essay at Higher will be conducted under supervision, written up under examination conditions (with a two hour time allocation) and be externally assessed. It will be approximately 1,500-2,000 words in length. You must choose an issue from within the Units of the RMPS Course. The issue must be from a Unit you have studied. **You will be penalised if you do not address an issue from within the Units of the RMPS Course.**

Introduction

Your Extended Essay at Higher will help you to develop the skills of working with complex sources. It will also exercise the skills involved in structuring a more sustained presentation of the conclusions of your study than is required in response to exam questions.

What Will I Be Required To Do For My Extended Essay?

In your Extended Essay at Higher you will be required to undertake a variety of tasks over a set period of time. Throughout the planning stage you will be closely supervised by your teacher/lecturer.

The tasks you will undertake will include:

- ◆ choosing an issue you wish to study in some depth
- ◆ identifying and retrieving information
- ◆ structuring and submitting an essay plan of no more than 250 words
- ◆ writing up an essay of approximately 1,500-2,000 words under controlled conditions in no more than two hours

Some Advice for Candidates Tackling an Extended Essay

Before you begin **you must be sure what your exact intentions are** for example:

Are you intending to?

- ♦ give information
- ♦ interpret sources of information
- ♦ examine and discuss the issues involved
- ♦ argue opposing cases
- ♦ express your own opinion on the issues
- ♦ justify your opinion on the basis of the information gained

Successful analysis and evaluation of any topic is ensured if you:

- ♦ are clear about the main aims of your study
- ♦ set the context from which they arise
- ♦ examine the assumptions that are made
- ♦ explain the terms that are used
- ♦ consider all the arguments involved
- ♦ weigh up the consistencies/contradictions

An orderly presentation of conclusions will result if you:

- ♦ follow the structure and progression outlined above
- ♦ return to the main aims of your study
- ♦ express your conclusions using all the evidence provided in your analysis

An excellent/good Extended Essay will tackle all the above points by referring to the appropriate primary and secondary sources.

How Will My Extended Essay Be Marked?

A total of 35 marks will be available for the Extended Essay. **Your Plan, of no more than 250 words, must be submitted along with your Extended Essay**, but the mark allocation will be based solely on the quality of the Extended Essay. You should note that you will be penalised if you exceed 250 word limit for the Plan. The allocation of marks to each aspect of the Essay is given below, along with an indication of the features involved.

(i) *Identification and retrieval of information* (10 marks)

appropriateness and clarity of stated aim

identification of a wide variety of primary and secondary sources

quality of selection of relevant information from sources

(ii) *Analysis and evaluation* (15 marks)

effective analysis, interpretation and evaluation of information

attention paid to context and/or authorship of information researched

quality of discussion, consistency and/or contradiction within and between sources

(iii) *Orderly presentation of essay* (10 marks)

clarity and coherence in development of essay

overall structure and progression

quality of conclusions

appropriateness of conclusions in relation to aims of Extended Essay

You may wish to check your progress by consulting the Checklist on Page 5 of these notes or by making a draft of your Extended Essay and asking your teacher/lecturer to cross mark with you.

Assessment And The Corresponding Qualities Required

The following notes indicate the qualities that should be demonstrated in order to attain marks at various points in the range available.

An Excellent Extended Essay

In this category an Extended Essay has an appropriate and clearly stated aim which is valid in terms of the syllabus. It has been thoroughly researched and a range of relevant information from both primary and secondary sources has been identified. The material researched has been well understood and a number of varying aspects of the area of study have been evaluated and analysed. The overall structure and progression of the Extended Essay is excellent, a valid conclusion is reached and in all respects the work is first class.

A Good Extended Essay

In this category an Extended Essay has an appropriate and clearly stated aim relevant to the syllabus. It has been well researched and a wide range of relevant information from both primary and secondary sources has been identified. However, analysis of the information is incomplete and, although a valid conclusion to the Essay is presented, evaluation of some aspects of the study may be lacking. The overall structure and progression of the Extended Essay is of a good standard, a valid conclusion is reached and in general it is a commendable piece of work.

A Satisfactory Extended Essay

In this category an Extended Essay has a clearly stated aim relevant to the syllabus. It has been reasonably well researched with reference to both primary and secondary sources, but the material gathered, although relevant, may be presented in a descriptive manner indicating that it has not been fully interpreted and analysed. A conclusion to the Essay is presented but evaluation of certain aspects of the area of study may lack depth and contain weaknesses in research and/or analysis.

A Poor Extended Essay

In this category an Essay lacks a clearly stated aim relevant to the syllabus, has been inadequately researched and shows significant gaps in the retrieval of information. It is weak on analytical skills and gives little evidence of evaluation. The overall structure and progression of the Essay is poor and the conclusions are weak.

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Checklist

Tick box only when you are sure you have completed each aspect. Prefix every aspect with 'I have...'

Identification And Retrieval Of Information

10 marks

- ◆ clearly stated the aims of my study
- ◆ identified a wide variety of primary and secondary sources
- ◆ selected and identified relevant information

Analysis And Evaluation

15 marks

- ◆ provided an effective analysis and evaluation of information
- ◆ paid attention to the context/authorship of sources
- ◆ discussed consistencies/contradictions that arose

Orderly Presentation Of Essay

10 marks

- ◆ been clear and coherent in the development of my essay
- ◆ demonstrated an overall structure and progress
- ◆ reached conclusions which are appropriate to my original aims