

Valuing interdisciplinary learning



the IB DP
World Studies
Extended Essay



The International Baccalaureate

The International Baccalaureate (IB) offers four high quality, challenging educational programmes to students aged 3 to 19.



Primary Years Programme



Middle Years Programme



Diploma Programme



Career-related Programme

Cross-disciplinary approaches are valued



— Inherently transdisciplinary



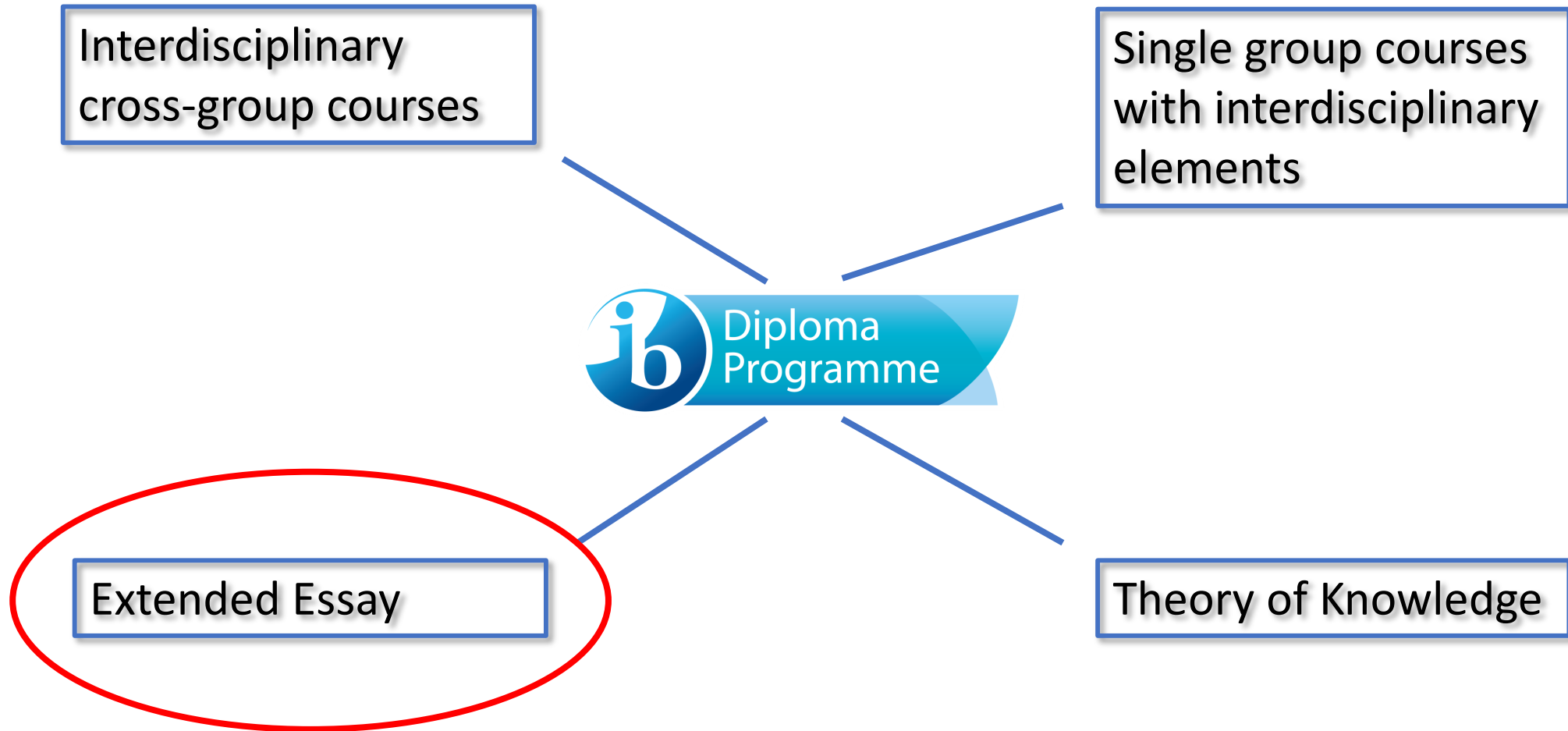
— Interdisciplinary component



— Disciplinary with cross-disciplinary elements

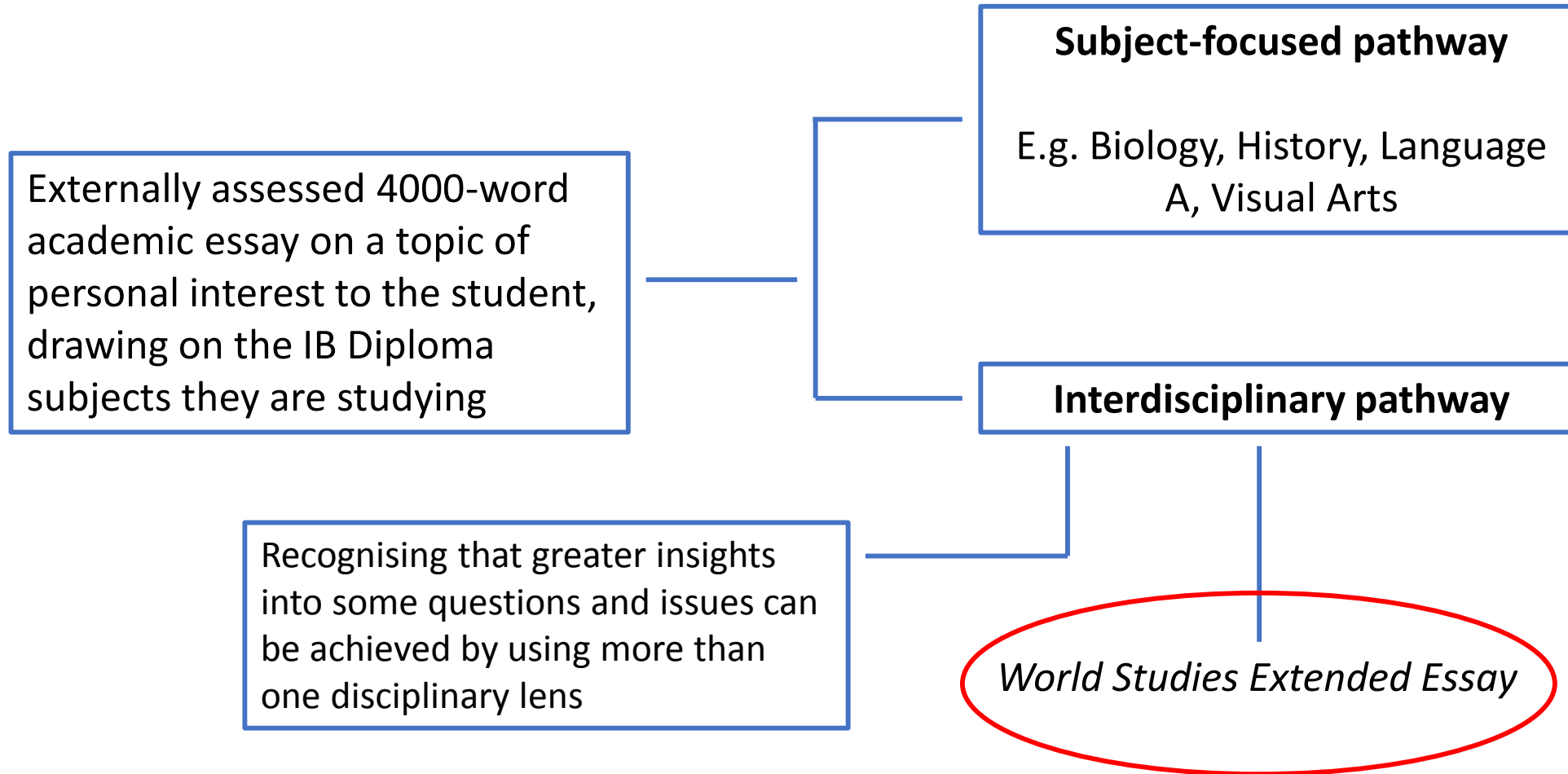


Interdisciplinary learning in the Diploma Programme



Currently considering ways to incorporate further interdisciplinary learning opportunities

Extended Essay (EE)



World Studies Extended Essay (WSEE)

An interdisciplinary study of an issue of contemporary global significance



Interdisciplinary in this context refers to research that draws on the perspectives, knowledge, concepts, methods, or theories of two Diploma Programme subjects

Global consciousness

Elements		
Global sensitivity	Global understanding	Global self
a sensitivity to local phenomena and experiences as expressions of developments on the planet	the capacity to think in flexible and informed ways about issues of global significance	a developing perception of self as a global actor and member of humanity, capable of making a positive contribution to the world.

WSEE requirements

Students are required to:

- identify an issue of global importance
- identify a local manifestation of the issue of global importance
- develop a clear rationale for taking an interdisciplinary approach and use the conceptual framework and vocabulary of two Diploma Programme subjects



Form an achievable, focused research question, with the guidance of their EE supervisor

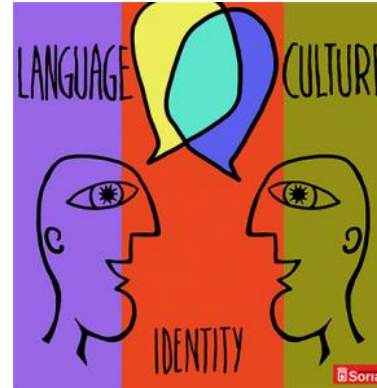


The research and writing is owned and driven by the student

To match one of these 'areas of study'



Conflict, peace & security



Culture, language & identity



Environmental and/or economic sustainability



Equality & inequality



Health & development



Science, technology & society

Examples

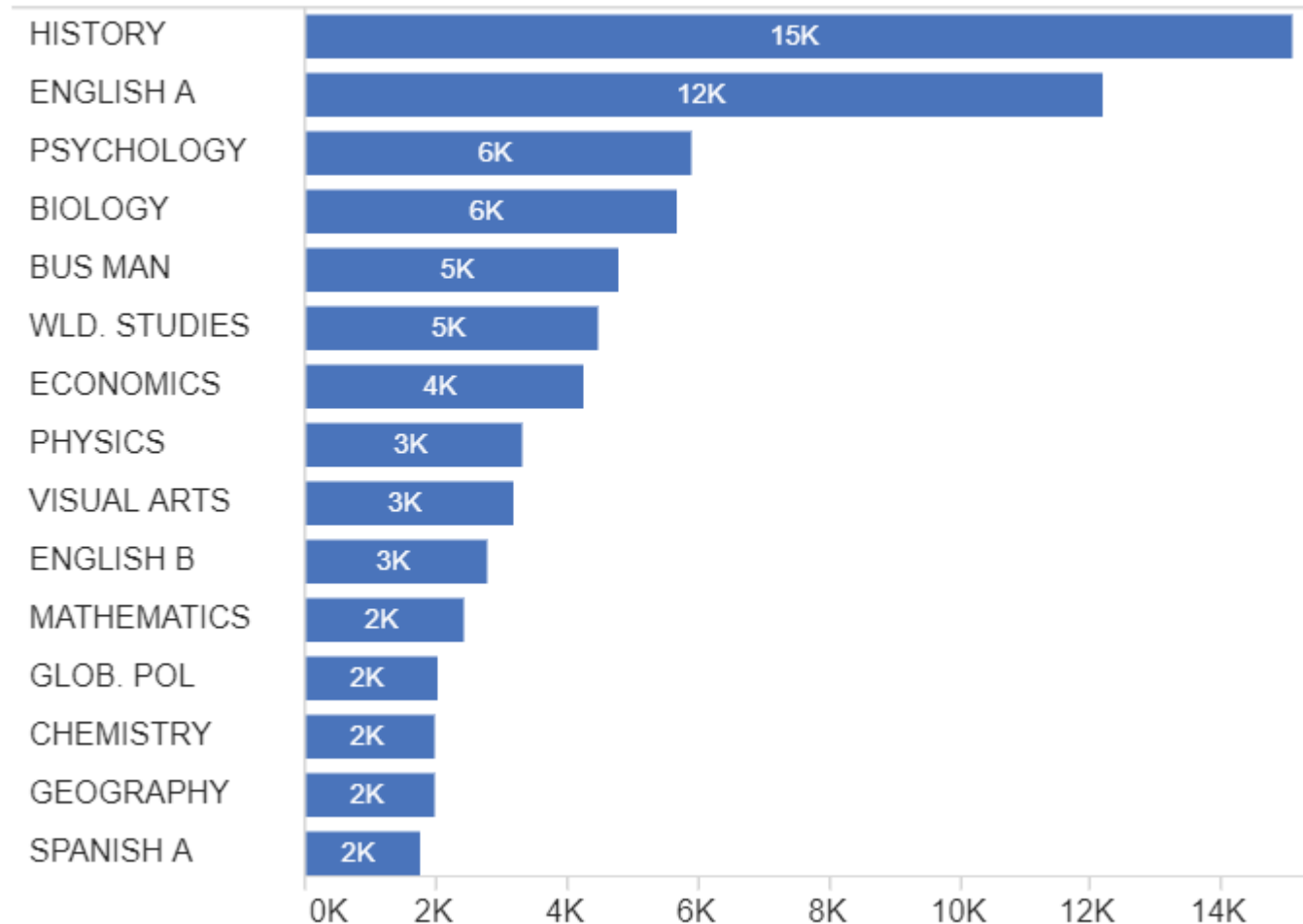
Area of study	Research question	Approach
Culture, language and identity	To what extent has the Norwegianization of Sami culture changed the significance of "joik" as an expression of Sami identity through the modernization of their music?	By investigating this topic on a local scale and linking it to broader patterns of global indigenous assimilation, the essay examines the consequences of the Norwegianization of the Sami people. Framed within an interdisciplinary approach, referring to social and cultural anthropology and global politics , the essay applies key concepts of both DP subjects and draws from secondary sources and ethnographic interviews as primary data.
Health and development	To what extent do geographical factors play a role in the distribution of multiple sclerosis cases in Canada and Iran?	The essay challenges the suggested theory that MS is associated with high latitudes by looking at recent studies in Iran. Genetic factors and vitamin deficiency (biology), migration and environment (geography) are evaluated to enhance understanding

Examples

DP subjects combined	Research question
Biology and geography	How effective is beehive fencing in the Sagalla Community (Southern Kenya), in resolving the human-elephant conflict.
Biology and philosophy	To what extent do our present conceptions of personhood and being human shift due to CRISPR allowing accessible germline modification?
Geography and economics	To what extent do the ideas in Jeffrey Sachs' poverty trap explain the high levels of poverty and low levels of living in Dharavi, India?
Environmental systems and societies and global politics	How significant is the problem of wildlife trafficking in China and how effective are local and international efforts in suppressing the trade?

Rise of interdisciplinary EEs

Number of Candidates by Subject and Level



*A World Studies
Extended Essay is now
the 5th most popular
choice for IB Diploma
students
(May 2020
examination session)*

Benefits and challenges (ID EE)

Benefits	Challenges	Tools to assist
<p>Introduction to interdisciplinary research at an academic level</p> <p>Opportunity for students to research topics better suited to an interdisciplinary approach</p> <p>Good preparation for potential interdisciplinary experiences at university, college</p>	<p>Supervisor</p> <p>Students' understanding of an interdisciplinary approach</p> <p>Assessment</p> <p>Constraints of the WSEE model</p>	<p>→ Professional development for EE supervisors – workshops, interactive, targeted online PD.</p> <p>→ Support material available on the EE website</p> <p>→ Carefully selected, well trained team of examiners</p> <p>→ Developing an enhanced, more open interdisciplinary pathway for the EE</p>

Next steps for the Extended Essay

Note: The IB is looking at ways to further develop interdisciplinary opportunities for Diploma students

Enhanced, more open
interdisciplinary pathway for
Extended Essay
students
(currently being developed)

Recognising that ‘integration’ is a characteristic that develops and emerges as the research and writing of the extended essay progresses.

Replacing the WSEE (‘contemporary global issue/local manifestation’ constraint) with a more open brief, allowing a greater range of ideas and more flexible DP subject combinations.

Five **frameworks** that are intended to help students to position and shape their ideas for interdisciplinary extended essay topics – not used to register EEs.

Why choose an interdisciplinary pathway?

More starting points than with the WSEE

Responding to a question of personal interest in a more insightful way than would be possible through a single subject

Integrating concepts or methods to gain a deeper understanding of an issue or problem

Investigating a complex issue of global concern which is better addressed using two DP subjects

Applying an insight, theory or method from one DP subject to the content of another, to seek new perspectives and understandings

Exploring interesting questions at the edges of DP subjects.

Reframing
of the WSEE

How is an interdisciplinary EE assessed?

All essays, interdisciplinary or subject-focused, are assessed externally, applying five criteria.

Total marks: 34

Criterion A: Focus and method	This criterion assesses the explanation of the focus of the research (this includes the topic and the research question), how the research will be undertaken, and how the focus is maintained throughout the essay.	6 mks
Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding	This criterion assesses the extent to which the research relates to the subject area/discipline used to explore the research question, or in the case of the world studies extended essay, the issue addressed and the two disciplinary perspectives applied, and additionally the way in which this knowledge and understanding is demonstrated through the use of appropriate terminology and concepts.	6 mks
Criterion C: Critical thinking	This criterion assesses the extent to which critical-thinking skills have been used to analyse and evaluate the research undertaken.	12 mks
Criterion D: Presentation	This criterion assesses the extent to which the presentation follows the standard format expected for academic writing and the extent to which this aids effective communication.	4 mks
Criterion E: Engagement	This criterion assesses the student's engagement with their research focus and the research process. It is based solely on the candidate's reflections as detailed on the 500 word reflection form, with the supervisory comments and extended essay itself as context.	6 mks

Thank you for your time!

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions:

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