

Psychology extended essay

Grade boundaries

For grade boundary information, please refer to the **Grade boundaries for Diploma programme coordinators** document available on the PRC.

Extended essay

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was a good range of topics this session, although most of the essays focused on abnormal behaviour or the effects of social media.

There were several low performing essays because many students had questions that were much too broad. In addition, several students had questions that could not be investigated by a review of literature.

Student performance against each criterion

Criterion A: focus and method

There were several essays that attempted to address questions that were highly focused – including limited age ranges or specific demographics. The research used, however, did not focus on those criteria. There were also many students who were overly reliant on non-academic sources.

Criterion B: knowledge and understanding

Knowledge and understanding were generally good. Stronger EEs defined terminology, unpacked the research and used a range of appropriate psychological terminology effectively.

Criterion C: critical thinking

Critical thinking remains problematic for many students. Some students take a very formulaic approach to evaluation which leads to a superficial evaluation of the research. This typically includes identifying limitations in generalization and ethics – both of which rarely serve to address the question of extent.

Criterion D: presentation

Overall, presentation is good. The two most common problems were that references were not alphabetized and a lack of appropriate paragraphing, making the essays difficult to read.

Criterion E: engagement

Stronger RPPFs discussed personal development, links to CAS, TOK or other aspects of the DP program, or implications/areas of uncertainty in their process. Weaker reflections either documented meetings with the supervisor or discussed the findings of the research.

Recommendations for the supervision of future students

- Students need more guidance on the citation of sources. Several essays have citations with no listing in the references or vice versa.
- Research must be described, analysed, and evaluated. Evaluation must be an integral part of the essay and should not be relegated to the end of the essay.

- The importance of a clearly worded, focused question cannot be overstated. Every study that is used to build the essay's argument must be explicitly linked back to the question.
- The key to strong reflections is the explanation of strategies used for the research process and evaluation of that process. Discussing one's feelings about the research process is not highly relevant and should be avoided.