The internal assessment in economics

Purpose of internal assessment

Internal assessment is an integral part of the course and is compulsory for both SL and HL students. It enables students to demonstrate the application of their skills and knowledge, and to pursue their personal interests, without the time limitations and other constraints that are associated with written examinations. The internal assessment requirements at SL and at HL are the same.

Guidance and authenticity

The portfolio submitted for internal assessment must be the student's own work. However, it is not the intention that students should decide on the appropriate articles and then be left to work on the internally assessed component without any further support from the teacher. The teacher should play an important role during both the planning stage and the period when the student is working on the internally assessed work. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that students are familiar with:

– the requirements of the type of work to be internally assessed—the nature of the sources of the articles, and the formal requirements of the portfolio—and the IB's academic honesty policy
– internal deadlines
– the nature of teacher support
– the assessment criteria; students must understand that the work submitted for assessment must address these criteria effectively.

Teachers and students must discuss the internally assessed work. Students should be encouraged to initiate discussions with the teacher to obtain advice and information, and students must not be penalized for seeking guidance. However, if a student could not have completed the work without substantial support from the teacher, this should be recorded on the appropriate form from the Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme.

It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that all students understand the basic meaning and significance of concepts that relate to academic honesty, especially authenticity and intellectual property. Teachers must ensure that all student work for assessment is prepared according to the requirements and must explain clearly to students that internally assessed work must be entirely their own.

As part of the learning process, teachers can give advice to students on a first draft of the internally assessed work. This advice should be in terms of the way the work could be improved, but this first draft must not be heavily annotated or edited by the teacher. The next version handed to the teacher after the first draft must be the final one.

All work submitted to the IB for moderation or assessment must be authenticated by a teacher, and must not include any known instances of suspected or confirmed malpractice. Each student must sign the coversheet for internal assessment to confirm that the work is his or her authentic work and constitutes the final version of the work. Once a student has officially submitted the final version of the work to a teacher (or the coordinator) for internal assessment, together with the signed coversheet, it cannot be retracted.

Authenticity may be checked by discussion with the student on the content of the work and scrutiny of one or more of the following:
•   the student's initial choice of articles
•   the first draft of the written work
•   the references cited
•   the style of writing compared with work known to be that of the student.

The requirement for teachers and students to sign the coversheet for internal assessment applies to the work of all students, not just the sample work that will be submitted to an examiner for the purpose of moderation. If the teacher and student sign a coversheet, but there is a comment to the effect that the work may not be authentic, the student will not be eligible for a mark in that component and no grade will be awarded. For further details refer to the IB publication Academic honesty and the relevant articles in the General regulations: Diploma Programme.

The same piece of work cannot be submitted to meet the requirements of both the internal assessment and the extended essay.

Time allocation
Internal assessment is an integral part of the economics course, contributing 20% to the final assessment in the SL and the HL courses. This weighting should be reflected in the time that is allocated to teaching the knowledge, skills and understanding required to undertake the work, as well as the total time allocated to carry out the work.

It is recommended that a total of approximately 20 hours should be allocated to the portfolio at both SL and HL. This should include:

– time for the teacher to explain to students the requirements of the internal assessment
– class time for students to work on the internal assessment component
– time for consultation between the teacher and each student
– time to review and monitor progress and to check authenticity.

Using assessment criteria for internal assessment
For internal assessment, a number of assessment criteria have been identified. Each assessment criterion has level descriptors describing specific levels of achievement together with an appropriate range of marks. The level descriptors concentrate on positive achievement although, for the lower levels, failure to achieve may be included in the description.

Teachers must judge the internally assessed work at SL and at HL against the criteria using the level descriptors.
– The same assessment criteria are provided for SL and HL.

– The aim is to find, for each criterion, the descriptor that conveys most accurately the level attained by the student, using the best-fit model. A best-fit approach means that compensation should be made when a piece of work matches different aspects of a criterion at different levels. The mark awarded should be one that most fairly reflects the balance of achievement against the criterion. It is not necessary for every single aspect of a level descriptor to be met for that mark to be awarded.

- When assessing a student's work, teachers should read the level descriptors for each criterion until they reach a descriptor that most appropriately describes the level of the work being assessed. If a piece of work seems to fall between two descriptors, both descriptors should be read again and the one that more appropriately describes the student's work should be chosen.

- Where there are two or more marks available within a level, teachers should award the upper marks if the student's work demonstrates the qualities described to a great extent. Teachers should award the lower marks if the student's work demonstrates the qualities described to a lesser extent.

- Only whole numbers should be recorded; partial marks, that is, fractions and decimals, are not acceptable.

- Teachers should not think in terms of a pass or fail boundary, but should concentrate on identifying the appropriate descriptor for each assessment criterion.

- The highest level descriptors do not imply faultless performance but should be achievable by a student. Teachers should not hesitate to use the extremes if they are appropriate descriptions of the work being assessed.

- A student who attains a high level of achievement in relation to one criterion will not necessarily attain high levels of achievement in relation to the other criteria. Similarly, a student who attains a low level of achievement for one criterion will not necessarily attain low achievement levels for the other criteria. Teachers should not assume that the overall assessment of the students will produce any particular distribution of marks.

- It is recommended that the assessment criteria be made available to students.

Internal assessment details—SL and HL

Portfolio
Duration: 20 hours
Weighting: 20%

Rationale
Internal assessment in economics enables students to demonstrate the application of their knowledge and understanding of economic theory to real-world situations.

Requirements
Both SL and HL economics students produce a portfolio of three commentaries based on articles from published news media. Each article must be based on a different section of the syllabus (microeconomics, macroeconomics, international economics and development economics).

Articles
The articles may be from a newspaper, a journal or the internet, but must not be from television or radio broadcasts. If a student includes a relatively lengthy article, which is very much discouraged, the student must highlight the section(s) of the article upon which the commentary is based.

The article on which the commentary is based should, where possible, be in the same language as the commentary. If an extract in another language is used, the student must provide an accurate translation of the whole article. Students must also include the original article in their portfolio.

Individual work
Students must select their own articles to discuss. It may happen that more than one student bases his or her commentary on the same article, but the article must not be given to the class by the teacher, and the production of the commentary must be each student's individual work. A commentary must not be prepared collaboratively.

Focus
Each commentary must:

- explain the linkages between the article and economic theory taken from the section of the syllabus on which the article is based

- demonstrate economic insights into the implications of the article (that is, it should provide evidence of the student's ability to discuss current events from the point of view of an economist).

On each commentary students must record:
- the title of the article
- the source of the article (including date of access to the site if from the internet)
- the date the article was published
- the date the commentary was written
- the word count of the commentary
- the section of the syllabus to which the article relates.

Each commentary in the portfolio is assessed individually against the internal assessment criteria. The teacher will initially assess each student's work. A sample of the work will then be moderated by the IB.

Rubric requirements

If students do not adhere to the following requirements, they can lose marks under criterion F: Rubric requirements.

1. Word limit
Students must produce a portfolio of three commentaries. Each commentary must not exceed 750 words.
Note: Moderators will not read beyond 750 words for each commentary.
The following are not included in the word count.

- – Acknowledgments
- – Contents page
- – Diagrams
- – Labels—of five words or fewer
- – Headings on diagrams—of 10 words or fewer
- – Tables of statistical data
- – Equations, formulae and calculations
- – Citations (which, if used, must be in the body of the commentary)
- – References (which, if used, must be in the footnotes/endnotes)

Please note that footnotes/endnotes may be used for references only. Definitions of economic terms and quotations, if used, must be in the body of the work and are included in the word count. Please note that a citation is a shorthand method of making a reference in the body of the commentary, which is then linked to the full reference in the footnotes/endnotes.

2. Articles
Each article must be based on a different section of the syllabus.

3. Sources
Students must use a different source for each commentary.

4. Contemporary articles
Students need to look for articles relating to current events and these must be published no earlier than one year before the writing of the commentary.

5. Contents
Each portfolio must contain:

- – a summary portfolio coversheet
- – a commentary coversheet for each commentary
- – three commentaries, accompanied in each case by the relevant article.

Economics commentary rubric

Criterion A: Diagrams
This criterion assesses the extent to which the student is able to construct and use diagrams.

Level	Descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	Relevant diagrams are included but not explained, or the explanations are incorrect.
2	Relevant, accurate and correctly labeled diagrams are included, with a limited explanation.
3	Relevant, accurate and correctly labeled diagrams are included, with a full explanation.

Criterion B: Terminology
This criterion assesses the extent to which the student uses appropriate economic terminology.

Level	Descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	Terminology relevant to the article is included in the commentary.
2	Terminology relevant to the article is used appropriately throughout the commentary.

Criterion C: Application
This criterion assesses the extent to which the student recognizes, understands and applies economic information in the context of the article.

Level	Descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	Relevant economic concepts and/or theories are applied to the article.
2	Relevant economic concepts and/or theories are applied to the article appropriately throughout the commentary.

Criterion D: Analysis

This criterion assesses the extent to which the student can explain and develop appropriate economic theories and/or concepts in the context of the article.

Level	Descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	There is limited economic analysis relating to the article.
2	There is appropriate economic analysis relating to the article.
3	There is effective economic analysis relating to the article.

Criterion E: Evaluation

This criterion assesses the extent to which the student synthesizes his or her analysis in order to make judgments that are supported by reasoned arguments.

Level	Descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	Judgments are made that are unsupported, or supported, by incorrect reasoning.
2	Judgments are made that are supported by limited reasoning.
3	Judgments are made that are supported by appropriate reasoning.
4	Judgments are made that are supported by effective and balanced reasoning.

Criterion F – Rubric requirements

- Each commentary does not exceed 750 words
- Each article is based on a different section of the syllabus
- Each article is based on a different and appropriate source
- Each article was published no earlier than one year before the writing of the commentary
- The summary portfolio cover sheet, three commentary cover sheets and the article for each commentary are included.

Level	Descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	Three rubric requirements are met
2	Four rubric requirements are met
3	All five rubric requirements are met

Grade conversion (one commentary)

IB 1 to 7 scale	Score on 14
1	1-2
2	3-4
3	5-6
4	7-8
5	9-10
6	11-12
7	13-14