

## Assessment grade descriptors for the reflective project (for first assessment 2027)

This document contains descriptions (grade descriptors) of each grade for the reflective project, a core component of the Career-related Programme. Grade descriptors consist of characteristics of performance at each grade.

Senior examiners use grade descriptors across IB programmes when determining grade boundaries for examination papers and coursework components. Qualities of a typical performance are given for each grade, however the work of few students will be consistently characterized by a single grade descriptor. Most work will display some of the characteristics of more than one grade. Senior moderators and examiners therefore review the work of many students to determine a grade boundary—the lowest mark at which characteristics of a grade are consistently shown in student work—to allow for some compensation across the different aspects.

The grade descriptors are intended to help teaching staff explain the academic requirements of this element of the Career-related Programme to students who undertake formative assessment, and as an extra check once first-line marking of each reflective project has been completed internally.

### Grade A

Demonstrates: extensive research skills resulting in a well-focused and appropriate research question that defines and contextualises an ethical dilemma balancing multiple perspectives, related to the career-related study; effective engagement with relevant research areas, methods and sources; excellent knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the relevant dilemma and consistent awareness of its impact on identified contexts and groups; effective application of source material and correct use of subject-specific terminology and/or concepts further supporting this; consistent and relevant conclusions that are proficiently analysed and help support a consistently-held position throughout; a sustained reasoned argument supported effectively by evidence; critically evaluated research; excellent presentation of the project whereby the coherence and consistency further support the reading of the project; present and correctly-applied structural and layout elements.

Engagement with the process is thoughtfully planned and documented, with evidence that feedback has been meaningfully addressed. Key decision-making during the research process is documented and detailed evaluation through reflections, including personal impact, are evidenced.

### Grade B

Demonstrates: appropriate research skills resulting in a research question that can be explored within the scope of the chosen ethical dilemma and that outlines multiple perspectives; reasonably effective engagement with relevant research areas, methods and sources; good knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the relevant discipline and, at times, its impact on identified contexts and groups; reasonably effective application of source material and use of subject-specific terminology and/or concepts; consistent conclusions that are accurately analysed and contribute to a maintained position throughout; a reasoned argument often supported by evidence; research which at times evidences critical evaluation; clear presentation of all structural and layout elements that further support the reading of the project.

Engagement with the process is generally evidenced while feedback is acknowledged. Key decision making during the research process is effective and evidenced by reflections.

## Grade C

Demonstrates: evidence of research undertaken that has led to a research question not necessarily expressed in a way that can be explored within the scope of an ethical dilemma and that at times identifies differing perspectives; partially effective engagement with mostly appropriate research areas, methods and sources—discrepancies in the processes are present, but do not interfere with the planning and approach; adequate knowledge and understanding of the topic that is mostly relevant in the wider context of the discipline with some acknowledgement of impact on identified contexts/groups; attempted application of source material and appropriate terminology and/or concepts; attempted synthesis of research results with partially relevant analysis that at times contribute to a partially-maintained position throughout; conclusions partly supported by the evidence; discussion that is descriptive rather than analytical; attempted evaluation; satisfactory presentation of work—weaknesses do not hinder the reading of the project; some structural and layout elements that are missing or are incorrectly applied.

Engagement with the process is evidenced but shows mostly factual information with limited support that feedback has been acted upon, with personal reflection mostly limited to procedural issues.

## Grade D

Demonstrates: a lack of thorough research, resulting in unsatisfactory focus and a research question that is not answerable within the scope of an ethical dilemma with limited acknowledgement of differing perspectives; at times visible engagement with appropriate research, methods and sources, but discrepancies in those processes occasionally interfere with the planning and approach; some relevant knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the discipline that are sometimes irrelevant and limit awareness of the impact on identified contexts/groups; the attempted application of source material, but with inaccuracies in the use of, or underuse of, terminology and/or concepts; irrelevant analysis that does not support a consistent position throughout; and inconsistent conclusions as a result of descriptive discussion; a lack of evaluation; presentation of the project at times is illogical and hinders the reading; structural and layout elements are missing.

Engagement with the process is evidenced but is superficial, with personal reflections that are solely narrative and procedural.

## Grade E

Demonstrates: an unclear nature of the project; a generally unsystematic approach and resulting unfocused research question that is not linked to an ethical dilemma and offers a single perspective; limited engagement with limited research and sources; generally limited knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the relevant discipline that are only partially accurate and lack awareness of impact on identified contexts/groups; ineffective connections in the application of source material and inaccuracies in terminology and/or concepts used; a summary of results of research with inconsistent analysis resulting in an inconsistent position; an attempted outline of an argument that is generally descriptive in nature; a layout that generally lacks, or incorrectly applies, several layout and structural elements.

Engagement with the process is limited and shows limited factual or decision-making information with no personal reflection on the process.

## Updates to the publication

This section outlines the updates made to this publication over the past two years. The changes are ordered from the most recent to the oldest updates. Minor spelling and typographical corrections are not listed.

### Changes for June 2026

#### **Throughout the publication**

Alignment of language with other IB documentation.

Minor language corrections to reflect the IB inclusive language approach, and to align vocabulary used across various subject groups. Please note those changes are purely for the alignment, and they do not introduce any changes to the grading practice that is currently in place.