

Reflective project guide (first teaching 2025)

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Career-related Programme

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IB mission statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.



IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

INQUIRERS

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

KNOWLEDGEABLE

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

THINKERS

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

COMMUNICATORS

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

PRINCIPLED

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

OPEN-MINDED

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

CARING

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

RISK-TAKERS

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

BALANCED

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

REFLECTIVE

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

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Purpose of this document

This publication is intended to guide the planning, teaching and assessment of the Career-related Programme (CP) reflective project (RP) core component in schools. The RP supervisor and the RP coordinator are the primary audience, although it is expected that teachers will use the guide to inform students, parents/legal guardians and school staff about this core component.

This guide can be found on the CP core page of the Programme Resource Centre (PRC) at resources.ibo.org, a password-protected International Baccalaureate (IB) website designed to support IB teachers. It can also be purchased from the IB Store at store.ibo.org.

Additional resources

Additional publications, such as teacher support materials (TSM), can also be found on the PRC.

This guide references the following types of resources.



Teacher support material: additional guidance, suggestions, examples



RP toolkit: Key tools or resources for teachers and students

Teachers are encouraged to check the PRC for additional resources created or used by other teachers. Teachers can provide details of useful resources, for example, websites, books, videos, journals or teaching ideas.

Acknowledgement

The IB wishes to thank the educators and associated schools for generously contributing time and resources to the production of this guide.

First assessment 2027

The Career-related Programme

The Career-related Programme model

Figure 1
Career-related Programme model



The Career-related Programme (CP) is inclusive by design and provides a choice of different pathways for students aged 16 to 19. Contemporary life places complex demands on graduates entering further/higher education or employment. An integral part of the CP is enabling students to become self-confident, skilled and career-ready learners.

To prepare students to succeed in a rapidly changing world, schools must not only equip them with the necessary skills and dispositions, but also the ability to manage and influence change. The CP supports this by offering a flexible framework of experiences that function in a synergistic way and can be personalized to allow for multiple means of engagement, representation, action and expression (CAST 2018).

The CP enables students to:

- develop a broad range of competencies and deepen their understanding in specific areas of knowledge through their Diploma Programme (DP) courses and career-related studies (CRS)
- develop flexible strategies for knowledge and skill acquisition, or enhancement, in varied contexts

- foster attitudes and habits that empower them to become lifelong learners able to engage with diverse perspectives, opportunities and challenges
- prepare for effective participation in the changing world
- become involved in learning that develops their capacity and will to contribute in constructive ways.

The Career-related Programme core

The CP core enhances students' personal qualities and professional development. The core contextualizes the DP courses and the career-related study, and brings all aspects of the framework together. The core develops many of the student characteristics and attributes described in the IB learner profile and has three distinct qualities. It:

- is driven by student voice, choice and ownership
- emphasizes connected, enduring and transferable knowledge, skills and attitudes
- offers a variety of opportunities for authentic evidencing and ongoing assessment of learning.

There are four components of the CP core.

1. Community engagement (CE)
2. Language and cultural studies (LCS)
3. Personal and professional skills (PPS)
4. Reflective project (RP)

Schools should design the delivery of the components by considering the needs, interests and backgrounds of their students.

Aims of the Career-related Programme core

The four components of the core are designed to be connected—by their nature, their learning outcomes, and their intentional connections. Viewed as a whole, the core aims to:

- anchor the programme to the IB mission through the development of the IB learner profile attributes and international-mindedness
- contextualize and enhance the DP courses and career-related studies, drawing together all the aspects of the framework
- promote the development of enduring personal, academic and professional knowledge, skills and attitudes
- reflect the understanding that learning is iterative, interconnected and a cornerstone of ongoing personal and community well-being.

The significance of the core to the CP experience cannot be understated, and it is important for CP school stakeholders to collaborate in the construction of learning environments and experiences that support and empower students to make meaningful connections between components.

The IB mission statement and the IB learner profile

The CP aims to develop in students the knowledge, skills and attitudes they will need to fulfil the aims of the IB, as expressed in the organization's mission statement and the IB learner profile. Learning and teaching in the CP represent the reality in daily practice of the organization's educational philosophy.

IB Programme standards and practices

Programme standards and practices (PSP) is the foundational set of principles for schools and the IB to ensure quality and fidelity in the implementation of IB programmes. Learning and teaching are the most important markers of quality and effective practice in schools; thus, the expectations that teachers and learners share across all IB programmes can be found in the PSP.

The PSP has been designed as a framework to help teachers understand their rights and responsibilities in IB World Schools as they develop learning environments and experiences for their students. The IB recognizes that for effective teaching to take place, teachers must be supported in their understanding, well-being, environment and resources. Teachers, in turn, use core tenets of IB philosophy and pedagogy (such as the approaches to learning, the approaches to teaching, and the IB learner profile) to design learning engagements and prepare learners to fulfil the aims and objectives outlined in this guide.

To learn more about teachers' rights and responsibilities, please see the PRC and [Programme standards and practices](#).

Approaches to learning and approaches to teaching

Approaches to learning and approaches to teaching across the IB programmes refer to deliberate strategies, skills and attitudes which permeate the learning and teaching environment. These approaches are intrinsically linked with the IB learner profile attributes. They enhance student learning and assist student preparation for CP assessment and beyond.

The five approaches to learning, along with the six approaches to teaching, encompass the key values and principles that underpin IB pedagogy.

Approaches to learning	Approaches to teaching
- Thinking skills - Research skills - Communication skills - Social skills - Self-management skills	Teaching is: - based on inquiry - focused on conceptual understanding - developed in local and global contexts - focused on effective teamwork and collaboration - designed to remove barriers to learning - informed by assessment.

The IB approaches to learning and approaches to teaching allow schools to identify the distinctive nature of a CP education, with its blend of idealism and practicality, and support meaningful experiences that:

- empower teachers to create clearer strategies for facilitating learning engagements that support meaningful inquiry and critical and creative thinking
- promote connections to prior knowledge and to other areas of learning
- encourage both teacher and student agency and self-directed learning
- enhance the coherence and relevance of students' CP experiences
- encourage students to develop an explicit variety of skills that will enable them to be lifelong learners and will prepare them for multiple pathways beyond high school.

For more information about approaches to learning and approaches to teaching, see the following resources.

- [Programme standards and practices](#)
- [Diploma Programme Approaches to teaching and to learning](#)
- The "Approaches to learning and approaches to teaching in the reflective project" section of this guide
- [Reflective project teacher support material](#)

Learning diversity and learning support requirements

Schools must ensure that equal access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are provided to students with learning support requirements that are in line with the IB documents *Access and inclusion policy* and *Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes: Removing barriers to learning*.

The documents *Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom* and *The IB guide to inclusive education: a resource for whole school development* are available to support schools in the ongoing process of increasing access and engagement by removing barriers to learning.

Academic integrity

Academic integrity in the CP is a set of values and behaviours informed by the attributes of the learner profile. In learning, teaching and assessment, academic integrity serves to promote personal integrity, engender respect for the integrity of others and their work, and ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they acquire during their studies.

All coursework—including work submitted for assessment—is to be authentic, based on the student's individual and original ideas, with the ideas and work of others fully acknowledged. Assessment tasks that require teachers to provide guidance to students or that require students to work collaboratively must be completed in full compliance with the detailed guidelines provided by the IB for the relevant subjects.

For further information on academic integrity in the IB, please consult the IB publications *Academic integrity*, *Effective citing and referencing* and *Career-related Programme: From principles into practice*. Specific information regarding academic integrity as it pertains to external assessment of this CP component can be found in this guide.

Acknowledging the ideas or work of another person

Coordinators and teachers are reminded that students must acknowledge all sources used in the work submitted for assessment.

CP students submit work for assessment in a variety of media that may include audio-visual material, text, graphs, images and/or data published in print or electronic sources. If a student uses the work or ideas of another person, the student must acknowledge the source using a standard style of referencing in a consistent manner. A student's failure to acknowledge a source will be investigated by the IB as a potential breach of regulations that may result in a penalty imposed by the IB final award committee.

The IB does not prescribe which style(s) of referencing or in-text citation should be used by students; this is left to the discretion of the appropriate faculty/staff in the student's school. The wide range of subjects, three response languages and the diversity of referencing styles make it impractical and restrictive to insist on particular styles. In practice, certain styles may prove most commonly used, but schools are free to choose a style that is appropriate for the subject concerned and the language in which work submitted for assessment is written. Regardless of the reference style adopted by the school for a given subject, the minimum information should include the name of the author, date of publication, title of source, and page numbers as applicable.

Students are expected to use a standard style and use it consistently so that credit is given to all sources used, including sources that have been paraphrased or summarized. When writing text, students must clearly distinguish between their words and those of others by the use of quotation marks (or other method, such as indentation) followed by an appropriate citation that denotes an entry in the bibliography. If an electronic source is cited, the date of access must be indicated. Students are not expected to show faultless expertise in referencing, but are expected to demonstrate that all sources have been acknowledged. Students must be advised that audio-visual material, text, graphs, images and/or data

published in print or in electronic sources that are not their own must also attribute the source. Again, an appropriate style of referencing/citation must be used.

Nature of the reflective project

The reflective project (RP) is an in-depth body of work focused on an ethical dilemma in a career-related area. It is developed and reflected upon over an extended period of time; as a product of the students' own initiative, it provides a thoughtful representation of their cumulative personal experience and skills gained over the course of the Career-related Programme (CP). Students have the option to develop their RP using a variety of format options, which include written, verbal, visual and audio-visual modes of communication.

The RP provides students with the opportunity to think like a future career practitioner. It promotes in-depth and critical research, reflection and reflexivity, professional communication skills, intellectual discovery and creativity through the exploration of a career-related dilemma while considering the impact on, and perspectives of, others through current, historical, local and global contexts. Students practise self- and critical-reflexivity to arrive at a personal position on the dilemma.

Key features

- The RP is an extended independent piece of work focused on an ethical dilemma in a career-related area chosen by the student in consultation with a designated RP supervisor in the school.
- The RP can be submitted in a choice of formats containing no more than 4,000 words, which is inclusive of a reflective statement of no more than 1,000 words provided on the *Reflective project—Final reflection form* (RP/FRF).
- Supervisors support students for a minimum of three hours and a maximum of six hours during the RP learning journey; this includes a viva voce, which is a concluding interview with the RP supervisor.
- All RPs will be submitted to the International Baccalaureate (IB) for assessment.
- Through the RP process, students develop skills that prepare them for both tertiary education and employment.

The reflective project and international-mindedness

The RP adds to the international dimension of the CP. While exploring intercultural understanding through various perspectives in local and global contexts, students become aware of the similarities and differences between their own cultures and those of others. Students can investigate and reflect on ethics and personal values in different contexts, leading to a greater understanding and respect for other peoples and the way in which they lead their lives.

Aims

The aims of the reflective project are for students to:

- engage in personal inquiry
- develop critical thinking and research skills to explore an ethical dilemma
- seek and appreciate local and/or global perspectives
- appraise the reliability and bias of resources found during the research process
- develop effective communication skills by creating a structured, coherent and balanced argument
- develop self-management skills to support the research, writing and product-creation process
- engage in ongoing reflective practice.

Assessment objectives

Students aim to achieve the following assessment objectives (AOs) during the completion of the RP.

Assessment objectives	
AO1: Knowledge and understanding	- Identify and describe an ethical dilemma linked to a career-related issue. - Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of terminology and concepts related to the focus of the project.
AO2: Application and analysis	- Apply appropriate research methods. - Analyse differing perspectives on an ethical dilemma. - Analyse the implications and impact of an ethical dilemma on different individuals or groups and in different contexts.
AO3: Synthesis and evaluation	- Demonstrate the ability to synthesize research, making connections between ideas and linking ideas to evidence. - Formulate a personal position on an ethical dilemma and reflect on the potential impact. - Justify thinking and choices using reasoning and reflexivity. - Evaluate and reflect on the learning experience, including project effectiveness and personal growth.
AO4: Communication of research	- Communicate research findings in an organized and coherent manner. - Communicate research findings using appropriate terminology, and structural and stylistic conventions.

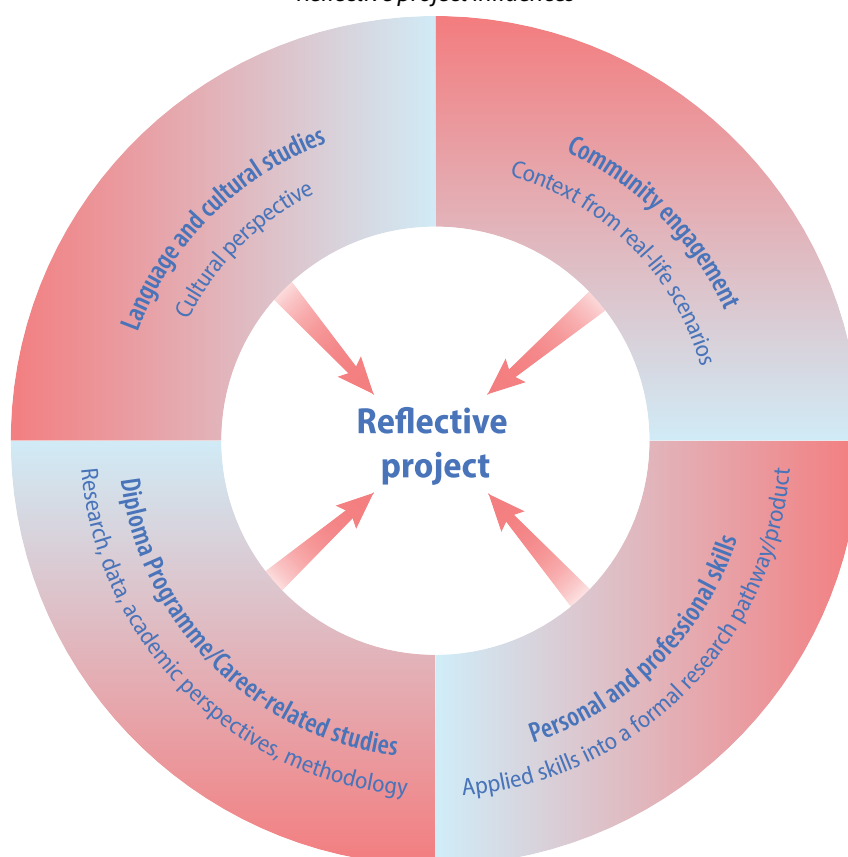
The reflective project and connections to the other core components

When designing and implementing the CP core, making connections across the core components and other elements of the programme is very important. The four core components support, enrich and enhance one another in ways that make the core as a whole greater than its parts. These connections are more likely to happen if they are deliberately and explicitly integrated and activated in learning and teaching. Doing so creates opportunities for students to enhance conceptual understanding, to connect their learning to the world around them, and to apply and transfer their skills and understandings across learning contexts. By collaborating, CP core component teachers and RP supervisors develop and deliver learning engagements that create connections between the core components whenever appropriate.

The RP provides meaningful opportunities to build connections with the other CP core components. The other core components provide a scaffold and guidance as students integrate many of the essential skills developed across the core, for example, the ability to create a reasoned argument (critical thinking), to understand ethical dilemmas (ethical thinking), to reflect critically on their own and others' perspectives (reflection/reflexivity), and to share their research and their thinking (communication) effectively.

Personal and professional skills (PPS), language and cultural studies (LCS), and community engagement (CE) also offer opportunities for students to identify ethical dilemmas based on the real-world problems they might encounter through inquiry and experiences. Together, they provide a comprehensive framework for students to explore, analyse and propose a position on an ethical dilemma while fostering critical thinking, ethical awareness and a holistic understanding of complex ethical issues.

Figure 2
Reflective project influences



The reflective project and personal and professional skills

The RP is a unique research-based project that each student produces according to their interests and abilities. The PPS course can be crucial in preparing students to engage in such an in-depth research and reflection process. The ability to apply research skills, thinking processes and communication skills to analyse, synthesize, organize and present arguments in a sophisticated way is a key factor in the production of a successful RP. At every stage of the RP journey, students can also benefit from the skills developed in PPS, such as agency, social skills, self-monitoring and time management.



Examples

- The development of ethical thinking through inquiries conducted in the PPS course will support students in identifying an ethical dilemma. Considering the ethics related to choices and actions can support students in the development of an informed personal position on an ethical dilemma.
- As students regularly engage in reflective practice throughout the PPS course, they can apply the skills of reflection and reflexivity to investigate an ethical dilemma, to support the selection of resources, and to explore various perspectives on the ethical dilemma for their RP.

The reflective project and community engagement

CE enables students to explore and understand the nature of a community's needs, the complexities of social interactions and the importance of reciprocal collaboration. CE projects can inform and nurture the RP with meaningful connections between the research process and theoretical perspectives, and with authentic social experiences connected to the career-related studies (CRS) or Diploma Programme (DP) courses. Students learn to realize the impact of the ethical dimension on specific communities.



Examples

- While developing their CE projects, students will learn about the nature of an ethical dilemma through real-life situations, and the importance of using research, communication and reflexivity to make good decisions.
- As students engage with communities to address relevant challenges or opportunities, they may identify the ethical dimensions of complex issues such as poverty, environmental sustainability, human rights, peace and conflict etc. and build meaningful connections between the research process, an ethical critique, and the experience of diverse, multiple and divergent perspectives within communities.

The reflective project and language and cultural studies

The RP can be nurtured through LCS, where students explore the relationship between language and culture, and how language and culture shape identities and perspectives. In LCS, students reflect on their own (and others') positionality, the linguistic and cultural contexts and factors that shape it, and how it in turn influences worldviews, values and behaviours. This reflection is critical when analysing multiple perspectives, implications and impact on various stakeholders and the development of one's own position on an ethical dilemma.

In exploring the ideas or cultural values of a group, students may see new connections to ethical considerations, either through greater cultural appreciation or a broader understanding of how language and culture facilitate the creation and sharing of meaning. In turn, their RP might highlight these understandings through examples or case studies that demonstrate this knowledge where applicable to a particular ethical dilemma.



Examples

- Exploration of the status of languages/language varieties in the school or wider community could inspire students to explore ethical questions around language rights and access in relation to a career field (e.g. language access in the education or healthcare system).
- Choosing to enhance language for professional or academic purposes in LCS can support students in articulating and communicating their ideas effectively in their RP.

The reflective project, DP subjects and the career-related study

Each student identifies an ethical dilemma to explore based on their career interests. This means that each student is inspired and informed by their unique combination of CRS and DP subjects, which personalizes and contextualizes the RP, and makes it relevant to their own personal and professional goals.

The content, learning engagements, skills and tasks experienced in the DP subjects and career-related study will support the skills and knowledge needed to develop the RP and contextualize the ethical dilemma within a career field. Teachers must ensure that students are aware that they **cannot reuse any other work to be submitted for assessment in their DP subjects or CRS courses in the RP.**



Examples

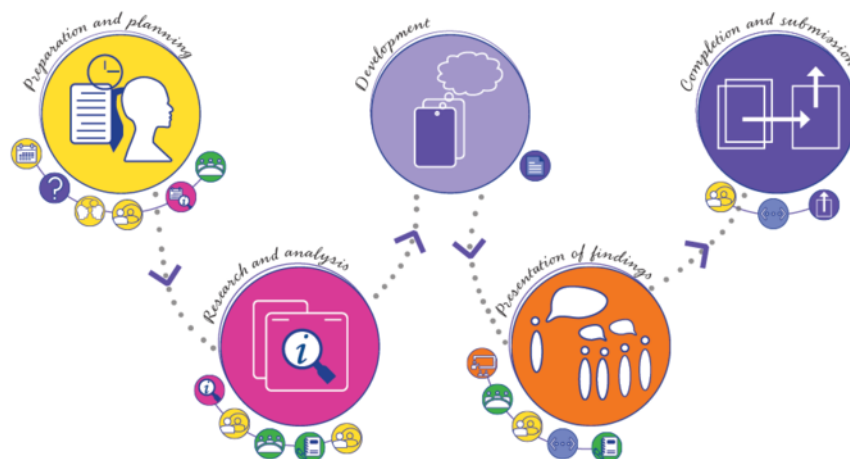
- Students within a sports-related career-related study might learn about ethical issues related to sports, such as inequalities in competition or the use of performance-enhancing substances. This knowledge gained in the career-related study class could spark an interest, helping them to identify and explore a related ethical dilemma.
- Students conducting DP sciences internal assessments might learn valuable information to reflect on the ethical dimensions of human activity in the environment, which can serve as a context for exploration of a related ethical dilemma.
- Students within a career-related study related to health and social care might encounter ethical dilemmas related to decision-making processes, regulatory discrepancies or resource allocation in the field, which can help them to develop an informed perspective.

As the knowledge, experiences and skills developed across students' entire CP journey can serve as both inspiration and a foundation for students' approach to the RP, it is beneficial for teachers to encourage students to make explicit connections and reflect on the skills developed in the other core components, DP subjects and the career-related study. Collaborating with the RP coordinator helps teachers to develop and deliver lessons that link the RP to other programme experiences. Further explanation and examples of these connections are outlined in the *Reflective project teacher support material* (TSM).

Outline of the reflective project learning journey

The reflective project (RP) learning journey is structured to reflect the processes of problem-based learning and represent the main activities in which students should engage. While the RP is ultimately an individual product, a guided pathway has been provided to scaffold the learner experience by ensuring multiple opportunities for timely support, guidance, feedback and reflection. Several feedback loops and reflection points have been included. Students and teachers can also initiate additional opportunities whenever appropriate.

Figure 3
The learning journey



The learning journey (PDF)

Students will keep a learning journal throughout the RP journey to record their ideas, notes, experiences, feedback and reflections. This practice promotes authentic and sustained reflective practice.

The RP learning journey includes the following activities.

Preparation and planning phase

- **Preparation and building of background knowledge:** Students should develop research and self-management skills; establish foundational knowledge for applied ethics and intercultural understanding; learn how to give, receive and respond to feedback; explore and practise different types of reflection and reflexivity; and confirm understanding of the requirements and criteria for the RP.
- **Identification of an ethical dilemma:** Students might begin by researching issues related to a career field to identify an ethical dilemma of interest. Through their research, they begin to identify which groups are impacted by the dilemma, and how they are impacted, and then consider the various contexts and perspectives that might inform further research for their project.
- **Peer discussions:** Discussions with peers and RP supervisors are critical for giving and receiving feedback early in the RP learning journey.
 - Topics for discussion might include how to move beyond researching an issue to identify an ethical dilemma; how to construct a research question; different approaches to the learning

journal; how to use technology effectively and ethically; format options; clarification of requirements; sharing of research plans, as well as current progress and thinking.

- **Research plan and project proposal:** Students should consider and articulate their approach to the RP through the creation of a research plan and submission of a proposal to the RP supervisor. This allows students to refine their dilemma/research question, determine a research approach and potential resources, and decide on a project format.
- **Peer/RP supervisor feedback:** The feedback points identified throughout the RP journey are the minimum expectation; however, additional opportunities may be added. Once students have done some initial planning and research, they should have peer and/or supervisor conversations on relevant topics. This allows for feedback, reflection and progress towards successful completion of the project.
 - Topics for discussion and feedback at this point might include the project proposals; planning; research methodology; contexts and perspectives relevant to identified dilemmas; and format choices.
- **Reflection point:** Reflective practice should be ongoing and continuous. When peer and/or RP supervisor feedback is given, students should reflect on the feedback and determine what, if any, action is appropriate. Reflections and any actions are recorded in the learning journal.

Research and analysis phase

- **Conduct research:** Using the research methodology determined with their RP supervisor, students conduct research and record notes in their learning journal for use in creating their project.
- **Reflection point:** As the research is being analysed, students should reflect on their understanding of the information found in the research to develop a personal and critical position on the ethical dilemma. Reflections are recorded in the learning journal.
- **Supervisor feedback:** Once students have completed their research, RP supervisors should meet with them to explore their current thinking and progress, and to provide guidance and feedback.
- **Reflection point:** Students should reflect on the RP supervisor feedback and determine whether any action is appropriate. Reflections and any actions taken should be recorded in the learning journal.

Development phase

- **The initial project draft:** When creating their initial project draft, students should organize their research and ideas, and include all required elements.

Presentation of findings

- **Presentation:** The presentation gives students an opportunity to share the findings and ideas from their research and initial draft, not only with their supervisor but also with peers and/or other appropriate school or community members. The presentation allows students to practise oral communication skills and receive feedback.
 - Topics for feedback might include the clarity and coherence of their argument; the quality of the research; the inclusion of required elements and the effectiveness of the organization; and communication of ideas. This presentation happens early enough for students to make additional changes based on feedback or further thinking.
- **Reflection point:** After the presentation, students should reflect on the status of their current draft and the feedback provided, then determine how to finalize their project. Reflections and any actions taken should be recorded in the learning journal.

Completion and submission

- **Revision and final project:** Based on their reflections and any further actions taken, students should revise and finalize their project, and ensure that all required elements are included. Assessment criteria

can be used to self-evaluate the projects. Students develop their written reflection for the *Reflective project—Final reflection form* (RP/FRF) to be submitted with their project.

- **Viva voce:** Once students have completed and submitted their final project, RP supervisors will conduct an interview with students to discuss and reflect on the process, the final project, the learning journey, any new understandings, personal growth and impact. While the supervisor plays a guiding role by asking questions to prompt conversation, the viva voce is a dialogue and can be student-led, with excerpts from the learning journal serving as launching points for discussion.
- **Project submission:** Upon completion of the viva voce, RP supervisors will provide predicted grades and confirm student authenticity upon upload of the projects to the International Baccalaureate (IB).

See the “[Approaches to learning and approaches to teaching in the reflective project](#)” section of this guide for general guidance for the different steps of the learning journey and the *Reflective project teacher support material* for additional resources.

Requirements

- The RP is a compulsory component of the Career-related Programme (CP).
- The RP must focus on an ethical dilemma in a career-related area.
- The RP can be submitted in a choice of formats and total of 4,000 words, which is inclusive of a reflective statement (maximum 1,000 words, provided on the RP/FRF).
- Students are expected to spend a minimum of 50 hours of independent work to complete the RP.
- Supervisors provide between three and six hours of support for students.
- Students present their research findings for feedback prior to finalizing the RP.
- At the completion of the RP, students participate in a viva voce, which is a concluding interview with the RP supervisor.
- All RPs must be submitted to the IB for assessment.
- The RP is assessed using five assessment criteria that align to the assessment objectives (AOs).
- A student must achieve a D grade or higher for the RP to be awarded the IB Career-related Programme Certificate.

Each RP must include the following.

- **An ethical dilemma:** Students must explore and examine an ethical dilemma associated with an issue related to a specific career field. This is the primary focus of the RP.
- **Contexts and perspectives:** Consideration should be given to how the ethical dilemma has an impact on different groups and how it might be viewed in different contexts. Students must examine different perspectives on the dilemma in a balanced manner.
- **Research:** All RPs must be research-based. Students must analyse and synthesize research using a variety of resources that consider differing viewpoints on the ethical dilemma.
- **A personal position:** Students must critically examine not only the perspectives of others but their own prior assumptions and viewpoints to arrive at, and articulate, a personal position on the ethical dilemma based on reasoned argument. Students must justify this position while also considering what impact or implications their position might have on themselves, others or the career field in general.
- **Clear communication:** While students may submit their project in a variety of formats, ideas must be coherently organized in all RPs. Students should attempt to use appropriate terminology, structural conventions (e.g. headings or labels, where appropriate; introduction/body/conclusion; paragraphing; epistolary conventions for a formal letter; structured dialogue for an interview; introduction and outro (concluding section) for podcasts) and common stylistic conventions (e.g. imagery, sound, visual effects, word choice, tone, formatting, gestures or body language in a presentation or film) to communicate their ideas effectively. (Refer to the *Reflective project teacher support material* or the toolkit for “conventions”.)
- **A written reflection:** The written reflection should include evidence of metacognitive and critical reflection, as well as critical- and self-reflexivity. Subjects of the written reflection should include the research, planning and development process, an evaluation of the project, and the impact of the learning on the student’s thinking, actions and personal growth. Students will have recorded their reflections in a learning journal to ensure that authentic reflection is captured throughout the learning journey; excerpts from the learning journal can serve as a launching point for the written reflection, which students will submit using the RP/FRF.
- **References, citations and a bibliography:** The RP is an academic piece of work and should be presented as such. References, citations and a bibliography ensure intellectual and academic integrity and allow the readers to access the evidence themselves. Students should choose and apply a

consistent style of referencing throughout the RP; the IB does not require a specific style. Appendices, footnotes and endnotes are not necessary but, if used, they should be appropriately written. Refer to *Effective citing and referencing*.

Please note that when submitting an audio, visual or audio-visual recording, a **transcript** must also be provided as an appendix. The transcript will not be marked by examiners or included in the word limit but serves to support the recording in case of technology difficulties.

Time

Students should spend a **minimum of 50 hours** of independent, self-directed learning to research and develop their RP over an extended period of time.

However, the RP is also a guided experience that includes feedback opportunities with RP supervisors or other school-based educators (e.g. RP coordinator, CP coordinator, teachers), peers, mentors, career experts or other relevant community members. RP supervisors should spend a minimum of three hours and a maximum of six hours providing guidance and support.

The students' RP journey should span the two years of the CP, with the submission of the project taking place in the final year.

Table 1
Learning hour requirements

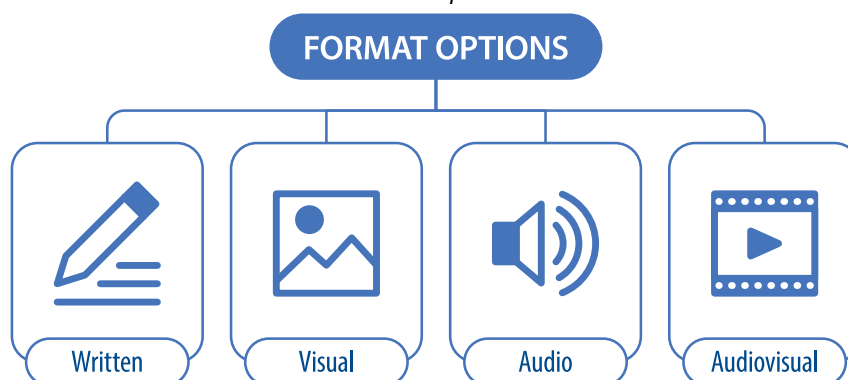
Type of learning	Independent	Guided
Participants	Students	Students with RP supervisors or other school-based educators
Minimum time requirement	50 hours	3–6 hours

Format options for the reflective project

A variety of format options allows students to demonstrate their understanding using different modes of communication. All format options provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate their exploration and understanding of the ethical dilemma and to share their personal position and reflections. The ability to communicate ideas using a variety of modalities not only increases student agency and engagement but also allows students to practise communication skills that may be useful in their future academic or career pathways.

Format options include written, visual, audio and audio-visual modalities.

Figure 4
Format options



- **Written options** are products that convey ideas and information in forms that can be read. They do not move or produce sounds.
- **Visual options** are products that convey ideas and information through still and/or moving images.
- **Audio options** are products that convey ideas and information through recorded sound.
- **Audio-visual options** are products that convey ideas and information through a combination of visual and audio modes.

Students may choose any of the format options, but the format chosen should:

- represent a communication mode that the student is familiar with and/or has an interest or preference for
- have a connection to a typical product that might be expected in the student's future career field and/or be relevant in some way to the nature of the ethical dilemma being explored.

Requirements for each format option are described in table 2.

Table 2A
Written format options and requirements

Format	Option descriptions	Requirements
Written	The written option should take the form of an essay. Students may choose any style of essay; however, those that are expository in nature may prove to be most effective. Examples of expository essays include: • dissertation-style essay (e.g. academic report, case study) • proposal (e.g. business plan) in which the dilemma is outlined and a resolution proposed • newspaper or magazine article (e.g. investigative in nature, possibly an interview) • blog post that outlines the dilemma and shares the student's personal position • formal letter to an appropriate organization or individual that seeks to outline the dilemma and share the student's position.	A total of 4,000 words maximum (including 1,000 words maximum for the written reflection). A maximum of five labelled graphs, tables or still images may be included, if appropriate, to support text content. Whichever essay style is selected, students should use structural elements and conventions appropriate for the style, and ensure that the ethical dilemma is thoroughly explored to achieve all aspects of the criteria. Sources must be properly cited. Submissions should be in DOC, DOCX, PDF (non-editable), RTF file types. See section "C3.9.3 Formatting guidance" of the Career-related Programme Assessment procedures for formatting guidance.

Table 2B
Visual format options and requirements

Format	Option descriptions	Requirements
Visual	Visual options include a variety of images that together make a statement or tell a story about the dilemma. The images can be created by the student, or collected and curated by the student, or might include a combination of both of these options. Possible visual products include the following. • Storyboard (e.g. storyboard for a film, media campaign or graphic novel) • Photo essay	Total equivalence of 4,000 words maximum (including 1,000 words maximum for the written reflection). A minimum of 5 images and maximum of 15 images with a description or annotation of a total minimum of 500 words and maximum of 2,000 words. The description/annotation should include an explanation of what the images are, why they were chosen or created, and how they contribute to the project. Sources must be properly referenced for any images not produced by the student. Images should be in JPG, JPEG or PNG file types. Images can be copied/pasted into a document to include annotations and submitted as a DOC or PDF (non-editable).

Table 2C
Audio format options and requirements

Format	Option descriptions	Requirements
Audio	Each of the audio options can alternatively be submitted in the form of an audio-visual recording. Possible audio products include the following. • Audio recording of an interview • Audio recording of a speech or presentation (e.g. TED Talks-style presentation or speech to a relevant organization) • Audio podcast (e.g. possible styles include investigative, storytelling, interview, debate). If appropriate, podcasts can be imagined as one episode of a podcast series focusing on the ethical dilemma.	Total equivalence of 4,000 words maximum (including 1,000 words maximum for the written reflection). A minimum of 10 minutes (approximately 1,500 words) and maximum of 15 minutes (approximately 2,250 words) with any additional explanations, annotations or context provided in writing. For any music or sound effects that are used, students should explain why they were chosen and how they contribute to the project. A transcript should be attached as an appendix to all audio products. It will not be marked or included in the word limit but serves to support the recording in case of technological difficulties. Audio submissions should be in MP3, M4A format.

Table 2D
Audio-visual format options and requirements

Format	Option descriptions	Requirements
Audio-visual	Possible audio-visual products include the following. • Documentary film • Short film (live or animated) • Video recording of an interview • Video recording of a speech or presentation (e.g. TED Talks or TED-ED style presentation) • Animated presentation with recorded voiceover • Video podcast	Total equivalence of 4,000 words maximum (including 1,000 words maximum for the written reflection). A minimum of 10 minutes (approximately 1,500 words) and maximum of 15 minutes (approximately 2,250 words) with any additional explanations, annotations or context provided in writing. For images, music and sound effects that are used, students should explain why they were chosen and how they contribute to the project. A transcript should be attached as an appendix to all audio-visual products. It will not be marked or included in the word limit but serves to support the recording in case of technological difficulties. Film/video/screencast submissions should be in MP4, MOV (codec H264), M4V format.

Regardless of format, students should ensure that appropriate terminology, structural elements and conventions of style are used, and that the ethical dilemma is thoroughly explored. To ensure that all aspects of the criteria have been achieved, the visual, audio and audio-visual submissions are accompanied by annotations and/or additional written text not to exceed the equivalent maximum word limit.

To guide and support students in selecting an appropriate format, it is strongly recommended that students submit a project proposal to their RP supervisor, who can then assist and advise as students determine the format and direction of the development of their RP.



Guidance for choosing a format option



Tools to support students' choice of format and sample templates for project proposals

Word limits

All RPs are limited to a maximum total of 4,000 words (or word/time equivalence for audio/visual/audio-visual formats). This word limit includes a separate required written reflection that has a maximum limit of 1,000 words.

Note: The 4,000-word limit for audio, visual or audio-visual formats includes any combination of product, written support and reflection.

The IB sets an upper word limit to give a framework to students. Examiners will not assess beyond the upper word limit. Minimum word restrictions are not given; however, students should note that extremely brief projects or projects significantly below the indicated word limit can reduce their ability to explore and reflect on an ethical dilemma to the depth expected for the RP as established in the assessment criteria.

All students must provide a bibliography as an appendix; students submitting an audio or audio-visual project must also provide a transcript as an appendix. Neither the bibliography nor the transcript counts as part of the word limit; they may be viewed by examiners but not marked. The transcript serves to support the recording in case of technological difficulties.

Language

The RP must be submitted in one of the working languages of the IB—English, Spanish or French.

Additional requirements for the reflective project

The following activities, although not assessed, are required for all students undertaking the RP.

Learning journal

Students will maintain a learning journal throughout their RP journey. While the learning journal is not formally assessed, it serves to provide:

- an ongoing record of students' reflective practice
- a scaffold and support for students' RP development process
- evidence to support authenticity of work submitted for assessment
- a foundation for dialogue and reflection during the viva voce.

Students are not limited to any specific format. As they maintain their learning journal, students can use a variety of tools and technologies or combine a variety of mediums, depending on their preferences. For example, the learning journal can be written, visual, audio or a combination of these, and can be in paper or digital form. Schools can support students' work by providing templates, using reflection prompts and regularly incorporating the learning journal as a starting point for ongoing dialogue between students and RP supervisors.

While several specific reflection points are identified along the RP journey, maintaining the learning journal should be considered an ongoing activity.

The learning journal can scaffold and support the development of the project itself by using recorded ideas, outlines, notes or excerpts to create initial drafts, particularly for the additional written component for audio, visual or audio-visual formats, and/or as part of the final written reflection. Students might also select excerpts from their learning journal to document authenticity or to develop additional written portions that evidence research, critical thinking, self-management, communication and transversal skills, as well as to demonstrate and reflect on the process of investigating, planning and decision-making, if these aspects are not already clearly evidenced in the project.

Further suggestions regarding the content and use of the learning journal can be found in the *Reflective project teacher support material* available on the Programme Resource Centre (PRC).

Presentation

Once students have completed an initial draft of their RP, they will give an oral presentation to peers, RP supervisors and, if appropriate, mentors or other school or community members. During the presentation, students should share their findings and current thinking based on their research and initial draft, followed by an opportunity to address questions.

No specific format is required for the presentation. Students are free to use presentation software or employ appropriate visual aids, although it is not mandatory. The presentation should be no longer than 10 minutes.

The focus of the presentation should include:

- the ethical dilemma and how it relates to a career field
- the contexts and perspectives explored
- what research has been undertaken

- what research findings have been gathered
- how their ideas or understanding changed through analysing the research
- their personal position on the dilemma, how they arrived at it and how it might have an impact on themselves or others
- how their learning/new understanding might have an impact on their future career/education.

While the presentation is mandatory, it is not formally assessed. Its purpose is rather to provide an opportunity for students to articulate their thinking and receive feedback in a timely manner so that they can make revisions or strengthen their argument prior to finalizing their project. While feedback from RP supervisors and peers can be valuable in helping students to clarify and confirm their thinking, it must be emphasized that the final RP must represent the student's own work.

Written reflection

Each RP includes a final written reflection of **no more than 1,000 words**, which is written at the end of the RP process on a separate RP/FRF and is submitted along with the RP.

The RP/FRF is uploaded as a mandatory separate file to the RP. The written reflection will be **assessed using criterion E**, which centres on reflective and reflexive practice. Blank RP/FRFs will be awarded a mark of 0 for criterion E. Examiners will consider:

- how effectively the student has demonstrated reflective practice
- whether the student has reflected on their learning process and final project
- whether the student reflects on their own thinking and actions, including why and how they may have changed
- whether the student has critically examined their own and others' thinking, actions or decisions in relation to the ethical dilemma.

Viva voce

Following the submission of their final project, students will participate in an interview with their RP supervisor. The viva voce is not formally assessed by the IB but serves as a final dialogue about students' learning over the entire RP journey. The viva voce may also serve as an opportunity to confirm the authenticity of the work submitted for assessment.

RP supervisors can use question prompts to guide the discussion or students can lead the discussion by using excerpts from their learning journal to inform the focus of the discussion. Topics to address in the conversation include, but are not limited to, the process of researching and developing the project; reasoning for the format option chosen; research or reasoning that may have influenced their personal position; how the student responded to feedback throughout the process; students' self-evaluation of the final project; and the impact of the students' new learning or understanding.



Further guidance and sample guiding questions for the viva voce



Viva voce guidance

General guidance

Preparation

The reflective project (RP) incorporates many of the essential skills developed throughout the Career-related Programme (CP) and enables students to see the culmination of their programme of study in a formal assessment. Every programme element plays a part in the development of important skills, such as research, communication, critical thinking, reflexivity and self-management, each of which plays an important role in the RP.

The CP is designed to help students make explicit connections to transfer knowledge and skills that support learning and growth. Throughout the CP, students can practise research skills, such as determining bias and validity of sources, and how to manage the research process with academic integrity. Giving, receiving, reflecting and responding to feedback should become a habitual process for students. Students might also explore, or be exposed to, a wide range of text types, including audio and visual modalities.

It is expected that these various skills will be drawn upon and further developed during the completion of the RP. For example, students will develop a depth of knowledge about their career field in their career-related studies (CRS) and gain a wider appreciation of the significance of ethics in personal and professional contexts through the personal and professional skills (PPS) course. Throughout their Diploma Programme (DP) courses, students will develop an understanding of research skills, critical thinking and how to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different ideas. In language and cultural studies (LCS), students will consider the role that culture and context play in creating perspectives. Community engagement (CE) encourages collaboration and building of interpersonal skills, which are essential in the RP supervisor–student relationship, as well as in peer feedback.

Nevertheless, coordinators, teachers and RP supervisors may also wish to incorporate timely lessons or information sessions on skills specific to the RP, such as research and information literacy, project- and time-management strategies, reflection and reflexivity, giving and responding to feedback, or how to maintain a learning journal. Table 3 lists some of the foundational knowledge and skills that will support students in the completion of the RP, with suggestions for contexts in which they might be developed.

Table 3

Strategies for building foundational knowledge and skills

Foundational knowledge and skills	Possible approaches or contexts for development
Introduction to the nature, aims, assessment objectives (AOs) and requirements of the RP	• Whole or small group presentation to CP students and parents or legal guardians in the first year of the programme • RP supervisor guidance/meetings • Information posted on the school or class website
Understanding how to give, receive and respond to feedback	• Whole or small group presentations to CP students • Activities in the PPS course • Workshop or foundational unit prior to beginning the RP • RP supervisor guidance/meetings • Online Open Educational Resources (OERs)
Orientation to ethics and ethical thinking	• PPS course • CE

Foundational knowledge and skills	Possible approaches or contexts for development
	• LCS • DP or other local courses • Workshop or foundational unit prior to beginning the RP • Online OERs
Research and information literacy skills (including appropriate referencing and citation methods, and ethical use of technology)	• PPS course • DP or other local courses • Whole or small group presentations to CP students • RP supervisor guidance/meetings • Online OERs combined with practice in using online research tools
Project/time management	• PPS course • Learning engagements in other core components and courses • Whole or small group presentations to CP students • RP supervisor guidance/meetings • Online OERs
How to identify an ethical dilemma and create a research question	• PPS course • CRS or DP courses • Whole or small group presentations to CP students • RP supervisor guidance/meetings
Knowledge of career field and relevant ethical issues	• CRS or DP courses • Individual student research • Career-related inquiries in the PPS course
Knowledge of structural conventions for optional formats	• PPS course • DP or other local courses • Whole or small group presentations to CP students • RP supervisor guidance/meetings • Information posted on the school or class website • Online OERs • Interaction with a variety of text types during courses and inquiries
Approaches to reflective and reflexive practice	• PPS course • CE • LCS • DP or other local courses • Workshop or foundational unit prior to beginning the RP • RP supervisor guidance/meetings

The role of feedback

Approaches to assessment (0404)

Approaches to assessment 1: Students and teachers use feedback to improve learning, teaching and assessment. (0404-01)

Programme standards and practices

Giving, receiving and responding to feedback effectively is essential for both personal and professional growth. In the RP, feedback is offered to help others improve and foster growth rather than as criticism or judgement; it should be considered as part of a supportive, ongoing dialogue rather than isolated events throughout the process.

As feedback plays such an important role in guiding students through the RP journey, students, their peers and their RP supervisors should learn and practise how to give feedback in an effective and appropriate manner. Feedback can be given through a variety of thinking routines, which can also serve as a general approach to individual growth throughout the students' CP experience.

During the RP journey, students will have several feedback points with both supervisors and peers. These feedback points enable students to reflect critically on their thinking and actions as they seek to further clarify their understanding and improve their skills during the development of their RPs.

The focus of feedback will be dependent upon the stage of the learning journey. For example, early in the development of the RP, feedback might focus on the wording or focus of the ethical dilemma identified; details of the project proposal; planning and time management; research methodology; the identification of contexts and perspectives relevant to the ethical dilemma; and format choices. Feedback given following the presentation might focus on the clarity and coherence of the student's argument, any gaps in the research or inconsistencies in reasoning. As students work towards finalizing their project, feedback might focus more on the inclusion of required elements and the effectiveness of the organization and communication of ideas. Commenting on one completed draft of the RP is the last point at which the RP supervisor will review the project before it is submitted and the viva voce is conducted.

Educators may determine which topics are most relevant for RP supervisor feedback and which are appropriate for peer feedback; however, students should also be empowered to seek out feedback from others on their own, as this is an important personal and professional skill.

For feedback to be effective, it must be specific, mindful and given respectfully. Likewise, it should be received with an open and curious mindset. Feedback should always be followed by reflection to determine what, if any, change or action should be taken as a result. When feedback is given, students should record their reflections—both on feedback given and on actions taken (or not taken), and why (or why not)—in their learning journals.



Further guidance on feedback



Lesson outlines for fostering peer feedback

The role of reflective and reflexive practice

Students as lifelong learners (0402)

Lifelong learners 2: Students demonstrate and reflect on their continued development of the IB learner profile attributes. (0402-02)

Students as lifelong learners (0402)

Programme standards and practices

Continuous and consistent reflective and reflexive practice is central to the RP. It is the focus of one of the five AOs and is critical for attaining high marks in criterion E. Students are required to record their reflections regularly throughout their RP journey (through the learning journal), and as a conclusion to the RP, they provide a comprehensive written reflection (using the *Reflective project—Final reflection form* (RP/FRF)) and reflect on their learning with their RP supervisor during the viva voce.

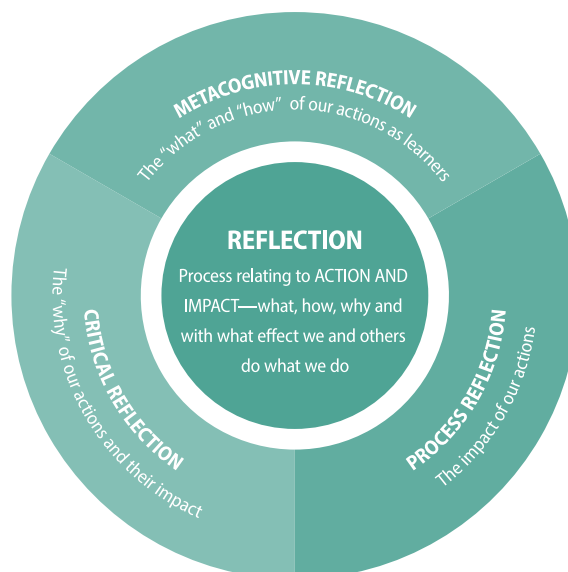
The goal of this embedded approach to reflective practice is to encourage more authentic reflection and to scaffold students through different types of reflection—from metacognitive and process reflection to critical reflection and self-/critical reflexivity. Therefore, teachers should help students to develop an understanding of the different ways in which reflection is realized at various points of the RP process. By emphasizing meaningful reflective and reflexive practice throughout the learning journey, teachers can guide students towards an appreciation of the role reflective practice plays in other, wider contexts. Teachers encourage students to develop habits that will help them to become reflective, both now and in the future, as responsible citizens and as practitioners in their future careers.

Types of reflection and reflexivity

Reflective and reflexive practice is an intentional and active process of reviewing one's thinking, practice and actions, examining views and assumptions, and being open to having one's own perspectives challenged and changed. It is to be understood as habitual, ongoing and action-oriented. This understanding lies behind the feedback and reflection points, learning journal and viva voce, underscoring their importance in the RP process. Reflection and reflexivity refer to different types of thinking.

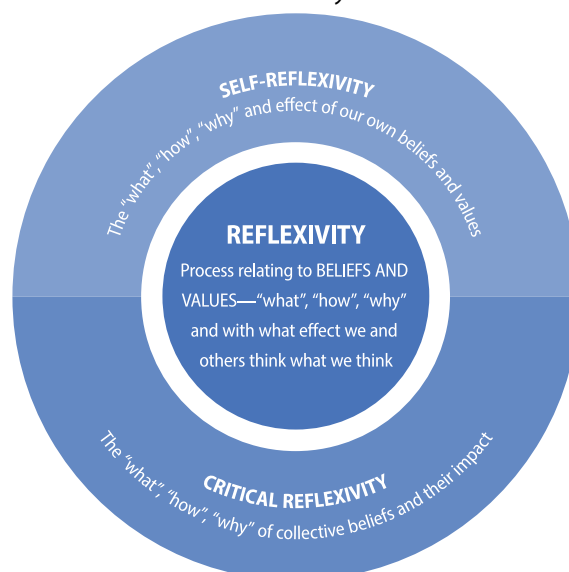
Reflection involves thinking about **action and impact**—what, how, why, and with what effect we and others do what we do. Reflection is the critical review of one's learning to consider improvements or alternatives through metacognitive and process reflection (the “what” and “how” of action and impact), with critical reflection demonstrated by an ability to perceive intentions and reasons (the “why”) (Andreotti et al., 2018).

Figure 5
Reflection



Reflexivity, however, involves thinking about **beliefs and values**—what, how, why, and with what effect we and others think what we think. Reflexivity requires greater introspection as to the nature and construction of one's perceptions, assumptions, beliefs and values (one's positionality), along with the ability to challenge them (Bolton, 2009, p. 14).

Figure 6
Reflexivity



Supporting reflective and reflexive practice

Students will require support, feedback and guidance in developing reflective and reflexive practice. The development of reflective skills can be explicitly taught, and will guide students towards independent reflection.

The amount of guidance and scaffolding needed will vary for different students and/or for different stages in the learning journey. Initially, students may perceive the act of reflection as a discrete task or simple requirement and, not understanding its value, may reflect in a superficial manner. Students should be supported through the different purposes and types of reflection so that they can begin to understand and value reflective and reflexive practice as an important part of the learning process.

While specific feedback and reflection points are identified in the RP journey, once students understand the purpose and process of reflection, they may choose other appropriate moments and methods to reflect. With this greater sense of autonomy and responsibility, students can develop insights through their reflection, including those related to the AOs and assessment criteria. Ultimately, students should reflect independently and habitually.

Students can be guided in reflection through the following processes.

- **Defining reflection and reflexivity:** A helpful way to initiate discussion is for students to collaborate with their peers and draw up a table of understanding of the differences between the various types of reflection and reflexivity.
- **Creating time and (safe) space for reflective and reflexive practice:** Dedicated time should be planned for students to engage in reflective and reflexive practice in settings and configurations that are conducive to reflection and in which students feel safe and comfortable.
- **Modelling reflective and reflexive practice:** Provide examples of what reflection and reflexivity could look like and ways it could occur. When teachers and RP supervisors position themselves as co-learners in the RP process, they are able to model reflection and reflexive practice authentically.
- **Leading reflective and reflexive practice:** Engage students in diverse practices that cater for different learning preferences and different levels of support.
- **Sharing samples of reflection and reflexivity:** Share current and past student examples of reflection and reflexivity (with appropriate permissions).

- **Provoking reflection and reflexivity:** Provide a series of questions, statements or experiences that elicit thoughtful responses from students. Students may rewrite the questions or change them in their learning journal over time. They may also lead to reflexive practice with their peers and teachers.
- **Providing feedback on reflection and reflexivity by acknowledging, confirming or clarifying student understandings and insights:** Feedback can take many forms; students may suggest their own preferred method for receiving feedback, including keeping some elements private.

The role of ethics in the reflective project

The notion of ethics is present in all four core components of the CP. It is essential that students develop the ability to use an ethical lens when analysing personal, professional, local and global challenges. The RP incorporates important skills and knowledge from across the CP core as students cultivate their ethical-thinking skills, explore and understand differing perspectives, evaluate the impact of decisions on different stakeholders and communities, and formulate ideas to take action on issues that require ethical thinking.

Ethics is a key and overarching aspect of the RP as it is the focus of all students' research and work. Ethical concerns are at the heart of every RP and further enhance students' understanding of the complexities and nuances of ethical decision-making in a diverse and interconnected world.

The RP requires students to examine various dimensions of an ethical dilemma related to a chosen career field. By investigating and analysing an ethical dilemma, considering the perspectives of multiple stakeholders, and examining cultural, social, historical, economic and other influences, students gain a deeper understanding of ethical complexities in a variety of contexts.

In the RP, students are prompted to consider the impact of the ethical dilemma on different stakeholders, whether in their immediate community or beyond. This helps students to understand the interconnectedness and interdependence of individuals and communities on a global scale. It fosters a broader, systemic perspective on ethical considerations and shared responsibilities.

Furthermore, the RP requires students to analyse and evaluate different contexts and perspectives—facilitating the self-evaluation of their own values and beliefs, as well as those of others—and promotes understanding of how personal and collective values are formed.

As a final step, students adopt a practitioner's perspective and formulate a position to address the issues associated with their identified ethical dilemma. The students' communication of their perspectives should show a nuanced understanding of the ethical implications, an understanding of the impact on stakeholders and their communities, and evidence of ethical thinking as they use reasoning to arrive at their personal position. This process challenges students to use the knowledge, skills and ethical thinking acquired throughout the CP core, and encourages them to think beyond boundaries and restrictions.

It is the school's responsibility to help students address and explore the complexities of the world through critical exploration of different perspectives, including their own. Students must be encouraged to think critically, challenge assumptions, explore and respectfully engage with diverse perspectives through their research, and participate in ongoing engagement in reflective and reflexive practice. Students should learn to examine their own positionality and be open to revising their position on the ethical dilemma as they explore the dilemma from multiple perspectives and in multiple contexts (e.g. local, global, specific, wide-reaching, personal, professional, historical, social, ecological). Students must use a critical lens to consider the implications and potential impact of the ethical dilemma on all stakeholders, and justify their position.

Students should be encouraged and supported in exploring concepts (e.g. social and ecological justice, sustainability, individual and shared responsibility and accountability, power, care, choice, agency) that are key to ethical thinking and action, and to explore a range of ethical frameworks or lenses. These can be used to make decisions, inform the development of a personal position, and to evaluate students' own and others' perspectives and actions.

Engaging with sensitive topics

Undertaking the RP provides students with an opportunity to engage with a broad range of interesting and stimulating topics as they research and explore a variety of contexts and perspectives to address ethical

dilemmas of personal, local and global significance. Through the RP, students are invited to reflect on others' perspectives critically to determine their own personal position on the ethical dilemma, while considering the implications and impact on various groups and in various contexts.

However, the exploration of an ethical dilemma may challenge learners intellectually, personally and culturally. Inherent in the nature of an ethical dilemma is the possibility of varied perspectives and often difficult decisions or consequences that may explicitly address sensitive or mature topics. CP and RP coordinators and RP supervisors should be aware of this; they should provide guidance to students on how to approach and engage with such topics and issues in a responsible manner.

Engaging with sensitive topics in the RP must be done with every reasonable effort to encourage students to respond with respect for their peers and the wider learning community. Providing a safe environment in which discussion may be facilitated is an important role of the teacher. In general, approaching sensitive topics in the RP must be done through a caring and critical lens, and bearing in mind the International Baccalaureate's (IB's) commitment to international-mindedness and intercultural respect.

Overview of the research and development process

Research is at the heart of every reflective project. The research and informational literacy skills that students develop throughout the Career-related Programme (CP) will be of critical importance as they undertake the RP. Other skills developed across the CP core that will support the demands of the RP include organization, time and self-management, reflection and reflexivity.

The RP journey provides a structured process to help students produce their final product. Similarly, students should create a research plan that outlines and structures their research process to ensure that the development of their RP is well planned and effectively executed.

Students should share their approach to the RP with their RP supervisor by submitting a proposal. This will allow the supervisor to provide feedback and guidance regarding the identified ethical dilemma, the wording of their research question, the scope and relevance of the research approach, the range of resources, and the project format.

These are the major steps in the research process students will take.

Identify an ethical dilemma related to the career-related studies (CRS) or career field of interest

- Ensure that the nature of the dilemma is suitable for an in-depth, reflective investigation.
- Develop a research question appropriate to the ethical dilemma. Research questions should be clear, focused and guide both the research and the writing and development of the RP itself.
- Determine the format option for the project.

Create and submit a research proposal

- Outline the project's dilemma, research objectives, methodology, perspectives and contexts to be explored, and reasoning for the format chosen in the research proposal.
- Include a timeline and potential resources in the research proposal.
- Ensure that the research adheres to [ethical guidelines](#).
- Refine or adjust the approach to the RP following feedback and guidance from the RP supervisor.



Sample templates for proposal forms

Conduct research

- Conduct a literature review to understand the contexts and perspectives related to the ethical dilemma.
- Evaluate resources for bias and relevance.
- Keep notes and create an annotated bibliography to ensure correct citations and to document key findings.
- Collect data for primary research, according to the chosen research methods (e.g. surveys, interviews, observations).

Analyse research

- Analyse the findings from the research to confirm or develop new understandings of the issues related to the ethical dilemma, as well as the impact of the dilemma in the identified contexts and on the perspectives of relevant groups.
- Use reasoning to identify a personal position on the ethical dilemma.

Reflect on findings

- Reflect critically on the findings of the research and examine biases, assumptions and ideas.
- Reflect on how new understandings of the ethical dilemma, and how the approach to research and development of the RP, may have evolved.
- Record all reflections throughout the research and development process in the learning journal.

Create an initial draft of the project

- Organize any findings and ideas into a structured first draft that includes all of the key elements required.
- Ensure that the project uses appropriate terminology, and stylistic and structural conventions appropriate to the selected format option.
- Use the assessment criteria as a guide to ensure all descriptors have been addressed.

Ensure appropriate referencing and citation of sources

- Cite and reference all sources used in the project properly. While no specific format is required, the method chosen should be used consistently.
- Adhere to guidelines in the [Academic integrity policy](#).

Present findings

- Prepare a presentation, based on the research and initial draft, to present the findings and personal position to peers, RP supervisors, mentors and/or other appropriate community members.
- Receive and provide feedback after the presentation to allow each student to reflect and develop further or revise the RP.

Reflect, revise and finalize the project

- Reflect on the feedback provided and make any revisions or decisions.
- Develop the final written reflection and record it on the *Reflective project—Final reflection form* (RP/FRF).
- Ensure that all required elements have been addressed and finalize the project.
- Use the assessment criteria to self-evaluate the RP.
- Submit the final RP to the RP supervisor.

Participate in the viva voce

- Reflect on the entire RP experience and engage in dialogue with the RP supervisor.

Discussions should include students' self-evaluation of the final completed product, reflections on how the skills and learning the students have developed have contributed to their personal growth, and how the students' new understanding of the ethical dilemma might impact them as a future practitioner in their career field.

Using the assessment criteria to inform project development

Students can use the [assessment criteria](#) as a guide during project development. This will ensure students are fully aware of the descriptors against which their projects will be evaluated, and will also support students in the reflection and self-assessment of their projects.

Table 4 shows additional guidance regarding each assessment criterion that can inform students' project development.

Table 4
Assessment criteria explanations

Assessment criterion	Explanation
A: Focus on the ethical dilemma	The research question should clearly define an ethical dilemma, and its connection to a specific career field should be clearly stated.

Assessment criterion	Explanation
	There should be a clear, sustained focus on the ethical dilemma throughout the project. This can be shown by: - contextualizing the dilemma within relevant issues in the career field - using examples from a variety of contexts (e.g. local, specific, global, wide-ranging, historical, cultural) - explaining how it has an impact on various individuals or groups whose perspectives are explored and discussed in a balanced way. (This also demonstrates that differing views have been taken into consideration as students develop their own personal positions.)
B: Knowledge and understanding through research	The project should demonstrate what students have learned from their research on the issues and perspectives related to the dilemma. This can be evidenced by: - the range of resources used - a thorough discussion of issues related to the ethical dilemma and its impact on different individuals or groups - the variety and quality of examples used.
C: Critical thinking	It should be clear to the reader that students have thoroughly analysed and thoughtfully reflected upon the research. This can be demonstrated through clear and relevant connections between conclusions drawn and evidence from the research. Students must use reasoning from their findings and reflections to clearly state a personal position on the ethical dilemma. The personal position should be justified by explaining their reasoning. The justification should demonstrate that students have considered the potential impact or implications of their position.
D: Communication of ideas	The project should be structured in a way that supports clear communication of the student's ideas. This can be shown by: - ensuring a clear and cohesive organization of ideas - using structural conventions (e.g. headings, labels for graphs or tables, transitions, bullets, quotations, introduction and outro–concluding section for podcasts that are appropriate to the format used - correctly using terminology that is specific to the topics being discussed - using appropriate stylistic conventions for the chosen format (e.g. imagery, sound, visual effects, word choice, tone, formatting, gestures or body language in a presentation or film).
E: Reflective practice	Several areas for reflection should be included in the final written reflection. - Reflection on the planning and research process - Reflection on feedback and any meaningful action taken (if appropriate) - Evaluation of the project's execution and final result

Assessment criterion	Explanation
	Reflection on how the student's learning and any new understandings from the project have had an impact on their thinking or decision-making The reflections recorded throughout the RP journey can be used as a starting point for developing the final written reflection, as students should have already reflected authentically on these aspects of their project.

Completing the reflective project

During the research and development of the RP, students will have several opportunities to discuss their progress, including any challenges or concerns they may have, and to share their learning and thinking. This includes the presentation and RP supervisor meetings. Reflections on these topics will be recorded in a learning journal that is maintained throughout the entire RP process.

In this final phase, once students have created a final draft of their project, they submit it to their RP supervisor for review. The RP supervisor is allowed to provide feedback for the student's consideration, but it is the last time the RP supervisor will see the project until it is submitted as final. Students then consider the feedback, make any final revisions and complete their final reflections.

The final reflection is a written summary and students must use the RP/FRF to record their reflections on their learning journey. This final reflection might include the following subjects.

- Skills and new knowledge gained throughout the learning journey
- Important choices, challenges or decisions made during the planning, research and development process
- Insights and new learning gained as a result of researching and developing the project
- How, or whether, peer or RP supervisor feedback had an impact on students' thinking, actions or choices
- A critical evaluation of the final project's execution and outcome
- Changes in perspective on the ethical dilemma (or issues related to it), and how it may have had an impact on decision-making
- Experiences and insights that could shape future thinking

While the RP/FRF is completed at the end of the learning journey, reflective and reflexive practice takes place throughout the process, and a record of these reflections should have been recorded in the learning journal. The reflections from the learning journal can be used to develop the final written reflection and as the basis for discussion during the viva voce, when students will discuss their final project and final reflections with their RP supervisor.

The ethical researcher

Through the RP, students begin to develop an understanding of what it means to be an ethical practitioner in a career field. A significant aspect of the RP experience is learning how to be an ethical researcher, which is an important understanding students can take forward into their future studies, work and lives.

Components of ethical research

Students' capacity to research ethically depends on:

- understanding and implementing the principles and practices of academic integrity
- awareness of sensitivities around the topic being investigated, including the students' perspective and those of others identified in the research
- awareness of ethical and safety issues relating to people or animals connected with the research
- awareness of any potential impact of the research on the environment.

Academic integrity in the reflective project

In the world of research, academic integrity is essential. Readers must be able to trust the honesty and the accuracy of the information that they build on. In extreme cases, mistakes in research and misleading research can incur substantial cost to those who end up following false leads. In medicine and engineering, as well as other fields, misleading research can even cost lives.

For some students, the RP may be their first step into the world of research and the culture of ethical research. It is important, therefore, for CP teachers to support students in understanding how to conduct research ethically.

Several aspects of academic integrity are particularly important in the RP. It is essential that:

- students' work is authentically theirs, with any help or support given by others clearly acknowledged. This guide and the accompanying teacher support material (TSM) include advice on which forms of support are permitted, and which are not permitted. For example, students should do their own proofreading (e.g. carefully check initial drafts to edit spelling and grammar, fix typographical errors, check formatting), as RP supervisors are only permitted to comment in writing on the final draft of the RP
- readers can distinguish between students' work and where others' work has been used; other people's work should have citation indicators or footnote indicators; word-for-word quotations must be signalled with quotation marks or presented as indented paragraphs
- readers must be able to trust that students are reporting their research and findings as fully and accurately as possible.

Authenticity is important, not only for the integrity of the students' work, but for their own integrity as well. To this end, it is important that students are aware of the inappropriateness of collusion.

Collusion

Collusion involves unallowable cooperation between students to complete work that is to be submitted for assessment. Collusion in producing individual work for assessment is a breach of academic integrity. Specifically, students should not:

- allow their work to be submitted as part of another student's assessment
- include the work of another student as their own for assessment

- co-write information that students will use in work submitted for assessment. It is important to note that discussing one's ideas with others is allowed; indeed, the RP journey includes several opportunities for peer and supervisor feedback and discussions. However, the RP is an individual project; it is unlike other group assessment work that students may have encountered in their studies where they have been instructed to work together and the work is assessed as a group effort. The RP submitted for assessment must be the student's own work.

Students' own work

The existence of services, sites, software and technology tools that can be used to facilitate research can sometimes cause confusion as to the level of support acceptable when conducting research. For example, some people and sites offer services ranging from correction and editing of content to writing the content that is then submitted for assessment by the students. Use of these services and then presenting their output as the student's own is dishonest and shows a lack of integrity.

Using software or other technology as a tool to check spelling and grammar or to generate references for a bibliography is acceptable, however using software or other technology to write a complete essay is unacceptable. Most checking software still requires students to verify that suggestions or edits are correct and acceptable. Use of artificial intelligence (AI) software to write an essay that is then presented as the student's own is also dishonest and shows a lack of integrity.

Students should think about how they can use AI software as a tool to help them with their research in an allowable, positive way. For example, material created by AI can be considered as a resource, alongside resources gathered in more conventional ways (e.g. books, articles, websites), and should be acknowledged and cited appropriately. AI may also be used to help students compare and evaluate other resource materials. For further guidance on the use of AI, students and teachers should refer to "Appendix 6: Guidance on the use of artificial intelligence tools" in the International Baccalaureate (IB) publication [Academic integrity policy](#).

It is important to be aware that students found to have breached IB regulations on academic integrity or ethical research guidelines put their IB Career-related Programme Certificate at risk. Students should actively seek support from their RP supervisor and others to clarify any uncertainties and should practise ethical research in all of their work, not only for the RP.



Using the RP learning journal to support academic integrity

It is helpful for students to practise good note-making and organizational skills while conducting research and developing their reflective project. The learning journal can be a useful tool for recording not only reflections but also feedback, ideas and research notes.

Students might consider classifying, entitling or using icons for entries in the learning journal to indicate their reading, viewing and/or thinking according to:

- whether the entry is their own thought or a note of someone else's work
- whether the entry comes from someone else and, if so, whether it is a copy-paste quotation/a paraphrase in using students' own words/a summary in students' own words.

Students might consider recording all the bibliographical details available for the source of any entry that comes from someone else (author, title, page numbers, URL, date of publication and/or revision, name of the site and any other information which could be helpful).

While the formatting of bibliographical details is not necessary within the learning journal, it is important for the final product. If a digital learning journal is used, one suggestion might be to copy and paste the bibliographic details into each entry, then select them to add to the bibliography later, if the source is used in the final project.

Citations, referencing, bibliography

The RP is an academic piece of work and should be presented as such. This ensures academic integrity and allows readers to check the evidence for themselves.

When the work of other people is used to support the creation of something new or demonstrate divergent opinions, it is essential to give credit. All readers and audiences benefit from understanding how and what ideas contributed to an original piece of work.

When creating an authentic piece of work, the author is expected to:

- undertake research on what is already known about a subject
- analyse associated research in the context of the work to be produced
- compare and/or contrast existing knowledge against their own findings/thoughts/opinions
- synthesize and appropriately present the work for the expected audience
- acknowledge all contributing sources accurately and appropriately.

The effective citing and referencing of sources and influences used in academic writing is at the heart of good scholarship and fundamental to academic integrity.

- A reference acknowledges the source of the information that the student has used.
- A citation is a shorthand method of referencing, which is then linked to the bibliography.
- A bibliography is an alphabetical list (by author) of every source cited in the project.
- Students must use a consistent style of referencing throughout the RP.
- Appendices, footnotes and endnotes are not necessary, but if students choose to use them, they should do so appropriately and not circumvent the word limit.

Contributing sources and influences are acknowledged appropriately according to format and audience. For example, the presentation of sources will differ in a newspaper article, a piece of fiction, an artwork or musical performance, and a piece of academic writing. It is important that sources and influences are honestly and fully acknowledged. In academic writing and any work presented for assessment, it is essential to acknowledge sources appropriately and in a consistent style.

For further information, please consult the IB publication *Effective citing and referencing*. The *Academic integrity* publication provides guidance about the use of artificial intelligence (AI) (see “Appendix 6” of the *Academic integrity* publication).

Ethics and safety

Student safety and the safety of other participants are paramount in research that involves experimentation. The guidelines provided in the *Academic integrity policy* document are applicable for all students undertaking research related to the RP that includes the participation of others. The following are important considerations.

- Any research that creates anxiety, stress, pain or discomfort for participants is prohibited.
- Any research that involves unjustified deception, involuntary participation or invasion of privacy, including inappropriate use of technology, email and the internet, is prohibited. All participants in research activities must be informed before commencing the research that they have the right to withdraw at any time. Pressure must not be placed on any participant to continue with the investigation beyond this point.
- Each participant must be informed of the aims and objectives of the research and must be shown the results of the research.
- Research involving children needs the written consent of parents or legal guardians. Students must ensure that parents or legal guardians are fully informed about the implications for children who take part in such research. Where research is conducted with children in a school setting, the written consent of the teachers concerned must also be obtained.

- Participants must be debriefed and given the right to withdraw their own personal data and responses. Anonymity for each participant must be guaranteed.
- Students must exercise the greatest sensitivity to local, cultural and personal contexts when conducting research.
- Students must avoid conducting research with any participant who is not in a fit state of mind and cannot respond freely and independently.
- If any participant shows stress and/or pain at any stage of the research, the research must finish immediately, and the participant must be allowed to withdraw.
- All data collected must be kept in a confidential and responsible manner and not divulged to any other person. Any data collected offline should be destroyed according to local school policies once the research is complete.
- Research that is conducted online, using electronic and internet sources, is also subject to these guidelines. Any data collected online must be deleted once the research is complete. Such data must not be used for any purpose other than for conducting the research.

Environment

As in all aspects of personal and professional life, it is important for educators and students to be aware of the potential impact of the RP research and its associated activities on the environment. Schools and students should evaluate circumstances and take preventative action, where possible, in relation to aspects such as:

- the potential impact of fieldwork on the natural environment, including animal habitats
- pollution of the natural or built environments
- choice of modes of travel
- sustainable use of materials during the research and writing of the RP (e.g. paper, writing implements, digital devices, electricity).

Support and supervision of the reflective project

Students complete the RP independently; however, the RP supervisor plays a pivotal role in supporting and guiding students through the process. RP supervisors can serve as a sounding board, and can encourage students to keep them engaged and motivated over the extended length of time it takes to complete the project. They ensure students stay on track by monitoring their progress over time. This periodic monitoring not only supports students but assists in ensuring the authenticity of students' work at the end of the project. Most importantly, RP supervisors provide timely feedback and foster students' reflective practice.

Supervision requirements

To assist students in successfully completing their RP, the supervision process should be clearly structured and must incorporate supervision of **a minimum of three hours and a maximum of six hours** by allocated RP supervisors, during which they will provide guidance, feedback and support to students. Several specific opportunities for RP supervisor–student interaction are indicated in the RP journey; however, additional opportunities can be created by the school, coordinator or RP supervisor.

It is vital that the level of support given is appropriate: too little support and the RP might be a weaker piece of work than it could be; too much guidance and the RP will not be the work of an independent learner. For this reason, supervisors are limited to commenting on only **one completed draft** of the RP. However, the RP supervisor must at no point edit or heavily annotate the draft.

The IB recommends that the student gives the completed draft to the RP supervisor before they meet, so the RP supervisor has time to consider it and write comments. When they meet, the student and supervisor can go through the comments together. This provides a starting point for a dialogue about the RP. During this discussion, the RP supervisor can advise the student on how to improve the RP.

In providing guidance, RP supervisors must not:

- correct spelling or punctuation errors
- correct information, data or statistics
- rewrite, reorder or reproduce any content of the student's draft
- edit or heavily annotate the student's draft
- correct bibliographies or citations.

After this feedback on the completed draft, the RP supervisor does not read it again until the student submits the final project. After the submission of the final project, RP supervisors [conduct the viva voce](#) as a culminating reflection opportunity with students.

At the end of the viva voce, the RP supervisor will **initial and date the RP/FRF**. The RP supervisor will then use the grade descriptors to make a judgement for a **predicted grade**, and then liaise with the CP coordinator to submit and upload required documentation to the eCoursework system. See the [Career-related Programme Assessment procedures](#) document for details.

Completing and submitting the RP/FRF

Completing the RP/FRF is a requirement for the submission of the RP. It plays an important role in the assessment of the final project, and represents the learning and personal growth of the student. The following is offered as guidance for the completion and submission of the form.

- CP coordinators/RP supervisors, with the support of their school leadership team, must determine a system for the administration of the RP/FRF that ensures that both students and RP supervisors have

access to complete the required summative comments. This system also needs to ensure the integrity of the form.

- The maximum total word limit for the reflective statement on the RP/FRF is 1,000 words. Examiners will not read or assess beyond the maximum limit, so students whose word count exceeds this will compromise the assessment of their reflection.
- The RP/FRF must be completed in the same language as the student's RP submission. If it is submitted in a language other than that of the submission, it will be awarded "0 marks" for criterion E.
- If the RP/FRF is not submitted, or is blank, 0 marks will be awarded for criterion E.

The RP/FRF is on the Programme Resource Centre (PRC). If a student is a retake student, use "CP year 2" for reflections that have taken place in the academic year in which the student will submit their project.

Authenticating work submitted for assessment

All RPs submitted to the IB for assessment must be authenticated by the student and RP supervisor; they must not include any known instances of suspected or confirmed academic misconduct. All students and RP supervisors must confirm the authenticity of the work that is to be uploaded to the eCoursework system. Once the authenticity of the work submitted for assessment has been determined, it is ready to be uploaded to the eCoursework system for assessment. At this point, the RP supervisor must not allow any retraction of the project by the student for modification purposes unless there has been an administrative oversight.

The completed RP/FRF is initialled and dated by the RP supervisor and then uploaded to the IB eCoursework system along with the project. The upload process represents authentication of the work submitted for assessment. Further guidance on this is given in [Career-related Programme Assessment procedures](#).

It is extremely important that RP supervisors can confirm that they have followed the guidance for monitoring the work submitted for assessment throughout the process and can, to the best of their knowledge, confirm the authenticity of the work submitted for assessment at submission. If the RP supervisor is unable to confirm the authenticity of the work, this must be brought to the attention of the RP coordinator, who, in turn, should refer to the [Career-related Programme Assessment procedures](#) for guidance. No piece of work submitted for assessment should be uploaded/submitted to the eCoursework system if its authenticity is in doubt. It should be noted that work submitted for assessment that does not comply with the expectations and requirements outlined in this guide will be treated as a case of academic misconduct.

If authenticity is in doubt at any stage during the RP process, the RP supervisor's first step should be to discuss this with the student. In addition, one or more of the following actions may be helpful.

- Compare the style of writing with work known to be that of the student.
- Compare the final submission with the first draft of the written work.
- Check the references cited by the student and the original sources.
- Interview the student in the presence of a third party.
- Use software that detects and prevents plagiarism.

It is the responsibility of RP supervisors to ensure that students understand the meaning of academic integrity, especially the concepts of authenticity and intellectual property. RP supervisors must ensure that students understand that the RP must be entirely their own work. It should also be made clear that the same piece of work cannot be submitted to meet the requirements of both the RP and another Diploma Programme (DP) assessment component.

As the RP is an independent task and a formal assessment component, students must not receive assistance with any aspect of the research, writing or proofreading of the project beyond that which is permitted through their RP supervisor. If an RP supervisor suspects that the work submitted for assessment by a student could not have been completed without assistance, they are required to bring this to the attention of the RP coordinator, who, in turn, must inform the IB. This may then be investigated as a possible case of academic misconduct.

For further guidance on this issue and the procedures for confirming authenticity, please refer to the *Career-related Programme Assessment procedures*.

Who can be a reflective project supervisor?

An RP supervisor should be an educator who works at the school attended by the student. Schools should have in place a process for matching the needs of CP students with the available staff resources. Ideally, an RP supervisor will have some expertise in the subject area(s) relating to the student's identified career fields. However, it is important to note that the RP supervisor is primarily a guide and mentor, and that the responsibility for research and writing lies with the student, who will benefit from working and learning independently. Therefore, an RP supervisor's guidance is limited to questioning, prompting, suggesting, and recommending, rather than offering subject expertise.

The reflective project supervisor–student relationship

The mentoring nature of the RP supervisor–student working relationship is pivotal to the smooth operation of the RP process. Sometimes, the student and RP supervisor will have established a pre-existing, good working relationship in other areas of learning in the programme. If not, it is worthwhile investing time in getting to know each other and forming the basis for a comfortable, effective, ongoing connection, with the common goal of producing a project that represents the student's best efforts.

The RP supervisor–student relationship should be active and two-way, with the RP supervisor supporting and guiding the student as they plan, research and develop their project, engage in reflective practice, and complete and submit their work for external assessment.

Students should be encouraged to initiate discussions with their RP supervisor to obtain advice, but the role of the RP supervisor should be explained to them, so that there is a shared understanding of expectations and responsibilities. If it emerges that a student is struggling to complete their work without substantial, boundary-crossing support from their RP supervisor, or any other teacher, this should be discussed at an early stage between the RP coordinator and the RP supervisor, so that strategies can be developed to encourage the student to work more independently.

However, if academic misconduct is suspected, RP supervisors must report this to the CP coordinator. No work submitted for assessment should be uploaded/submitted to the IB if its authenticity is in doubt.

Key roles and responsibilities

While the RP is an independent student project, it is also a guided experience. As such, the responsibility for effective implementation of the RP learning journey is shared between:

- the school
- the RP coordinator
- the RP supervisor
- the school librarian
- the student.

The school

The school is **required** to ensure that:

- RPs conform to the requirements outlined in this guide
- students decide on the focus and format for their RP in consultation with their RP supervisor
- each student has an appropriately qualified RP supervisor, who is a teacher within the school
- RP supervisors and students are issued with the guidelines for the RP contained in this guide
- RP supervisors are familiar with:
 - recent RP subject reports
 - the IB publications *Academic integrity policy* and *Effective citing and referencing*
- students understand:
 - the RPs importance in the overall context of the CP
 - that they will spend approximately 50 hours on their RP
 - by what date they must submit their completed RP to their RP supervisor.

The school is **strongly recommended** to:

- ensure that students have been taught the necessary skills to meet the demands of the RP
- provide appropriate training for RP supervisors
- set internal deadlines for the different stages of the RP journey
- set its own final internal deadline for students to submit their RPs to ensure that all requirements are completed before the school's date to submit RPs to the IB for assessment.

The school must comply with the IB regulations and procedures related to the conduct of all forms of DP and CP assessment (*Programme standards and practices*, 0201-01-0242).

The school must also ensure that a programme coordinator is included on its pedagogical leadership team and that they are empowered to facilitate successful programme implementation (*Programme standards and practices*, 0201-02).

Reflective project coordinator

RP coordinators are responsible for ensuring that RPs are carried out in accordance with the rules, policies and guidelines stipulated by the IB. They must also ensure that all staff involved in the delivery of the RP—including teachers, teaching assistants, learning support requirements coordinators, counsellors and librarians—receive adequate training, so that students have an optimal educational experience.

RP coordinators are responsible for maintaining overall supervision of activities related to the RP at the school. They must maintain excellent communication with the RP supervisors, students and their parents or legal guardians.

The RP coordinator is **expected** to:

- undertake required IB training
- ensure that RPs conform to the requirements outlined in this guide
- ensure that each student has an appropriate RP supervisor who is a member of staff within the school
- introduce, explain and support the supervision and RP process
- provide RP supervisors and students with access to the information and guidance contained in this guide and the accompanying TSM, including relevant examples of RPs for reference
- organize meetings with teachers, students and their parents or legal guardians to explain the academic integrity policy and to respond to any questions that may arise in relation to the RP
- ensure that RP supervisors and students are familiar with the documents *Academic integrity policy* and *Effective citing and referencing*
- provide students and RP supervisors with a schedule of internal school events and deadlines related to the RP
- explain to students the importance of the RP in the overall context of the CP, including the requirement to achieve a D grade or higher in order to be awarded the IB Career-related Programme Certificate.
- ensure that the RPs are authenticated and submitted to the IB by the deadline via the IB eCoursework system
- act decisively when an incident of academic misconduct or maladministration occurs, which must be reported immediately to the school's leadership and the IB, as appropriate.

If the RP supervisor is unable to confirm the authenticity of the work, this must be brought to the attention of the RP coordinator, who, in turn, should refer to section "C5.2.1 Authentication" of the *Career-related Programme Assessment procedures* for guidance. **No piece of work submitted for assessment should be uploaded/submitted to the eCoursework system if its authenticity is in doubt.** It should be noted that work that is submitted for assessment but does not comply with the expectations and requirements outlined in this guide will be treated as a case of academic misconduct.

Reflective project supervisor

Any RP submitted for assessment must be the students' own work. However, the RP supervisor plays a crucial role in supporting the students while they are undertaking the RP.

The role of the RP supervisor is to:

- provide appropriate support and guidance to students as they produce their RPs
- clarify their role as RP supervisor to students
- ensure students understand:
 - the nature of the RP
 - the formal requirements and assessment criteria for the RP
- approve students' project proposals and provide feedback or guidance, as appropriate
- advise students as they plan and undertake their research for the RP
- ensure students understand that they are responsible for their own work and are familiar with academic integrity expectations
- encourage and empower students to seek the RP supervisor's advice and support, as needed
- ensure that students are familiar with the ethical guidelines for the RP.

The RP supervisor is **required** to:

- be familiar with the regulations governing the RP and the assessment criteria

- hold formal and informal meetings with the students to provide feedback and guidance, and to discuss students' progress and reflections
- dedicate between three hours and six hours to each student they supervise
- be available for regular check-ins with students
- discuss the choice of formats, ethical dilemma, contexts, perspectives, and the design of a suitable, focused and manageable research question
- encourage and support students throughout the research and production of the RP
- ensure that each student satisfies appropriate legal and ethical standards with regard to health and safety, confidentiality, human rights, animal welfare and environmental issues
- ensure that students have direct access to all the materials they need from the *Reflective project guide* (including the assessment criteria) and TSM, and that they are familiar with the regulations governing the RP
- monitor the progress of each student's project to offer guidance and to ensure that the project is the student's own work (this may include viewing/reviewing and discussing drafts or sections of the project)
- read and comment on one draft only of the RP (note that no direct editing is permitted); this should take place after the student's presentation, but before the viva voce
- ensure that the final version of the project is submitted before the viva voce takes place, and that no changes are made to it subsequently
- conduct the viva voce with each student upon completion of the final project
- confirm the authenticity of the finished RP
- sign and date the RP/FRF
- make the predicted grade judgement for the final project
- support the CP coordinator with the submission of the project via the IB eCoursework system.

The RP supervisor is **strongly recommended** to:

- read recent RP subject reports in conjunction with information sessions or workshops that may be organized by the school
- provide students with advice and guidance about research skills and methods that are appropriate for the pathway and subject(s) chosen
- ensure that the identified ethical dilemma and the research question are appropriate
- advise students on:
 - access to appropriate resources (such as people, a library, a laboratory)
 - techniques for information, evidence and data gathering
 - techniques for analysis of information, evidence and data
 - documenting sources.

In cases where the number of hours spent with the student in discussing the RP is less than the required time, identify how it has been possible to guarantee the authenticity of the RP.

If a student is unable to complete the RP without substantial help from the RP supervisor or any other teacher, the RP supervisor should record this on the appropriate form from the *Career-related Programme Assessment procedures*. Additionally, the RP supervisor can work with the CP coordinator to devise strategies to encourage the student to work more independently.

If malpractice is suspected in the final project, the RP supervisor must write a report and submit it to the CP coordinator. If a student has received substantial support from an RP supervisor or other person, but has not reported it, then this must also be recorded.

If a student works with, or consults, external experts or mentors, it remains the responsibility of the RP supervisor allocated by the school to attend to all the requirements described above.

Role of the librarian

Librarians are uniquely positioned to play an important and effective role in the RP process. As interdisciplinary educators, they are able to work across subject areas to help students become lifelong learners through inquiring, gaining and creating new knowledge, and pursuing personal interests. With the necessary educational background and training, they are able to support students in the development of information literacy and research skills. Students are often overwhelmed at the amount of unfiltered information available to them, so they need to develop the skills to be able to raise questions and evaluate the authenticity, validity and reliability of sources. Utilizing the knowledge and skills of a school librarian will help students to navigate and plan their RP more effectively, and to become independent researchers.

In order to prepare students to be successful in the RP process, librarians can help to lay the foundations for the development of research skills. Ideally, some of these skills will have already been developed through other areas of the students' programme of study, thus giving students a chance to demonstrate their learning. However, in situations where the concept of research is new to students, librarians have an invaluable role to play. The school librarian can provide leadership and expertise in the selection, acquisition, evaluation and organization of information resources and technologies in all formats, as well as expertise in the ethical use of information. These are all important concepts and practices students need to understand.

Further possibilities for the role of the librarian are in the IB document *Ideal libraries: A guide for schools*.

Student responsibilities

Students are **required** to:

- understand and use all the relevant information and guidance available in the *Reflective project guide* and TSM; students can refer to the RP supervisor for details and access
- identify an ethical dilemma and clearly indicate the career-related link at the start of the RP
- submit a project proposal to their RP supervisor before embarking on extended research
- consult with their RP supervisor regularly for feedback and guidance
- maintain a learning journal throughout the RP process to reflect upon their progress and inform conversations with their RP supervisor
- meet both internal and external assessment deadlines
- fully address all requirements and assessment objectives (AOs) within the final product
- acknowledge all sources of information and ideas in references, citations and the bibliography
- ensure that their RP conforms with policies and expectations regarding academic integrity and ethics
- inform their RP supervisor of details of any external assistance received
- participate in the viva voce with their RP supervisor to reflect on their RP process and product.

Students are **strongly recommended** to:

- develop a structured research plan
- develop a timeline for researching and producing the RP, allowing time for delays and unforeseen problems
- record sources as the research is conducted
- become familiar with style conventions of the chosen format option
- carefully check and proofread the final version of the RP
- seek and reflect on feedback regularly.

Assessment in the Career-related Programme

General

Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching. The most important aims of assessment are that it should support curricular goals and encourage appropriate student learning. Both external and internal assessments are used in the Diploma Programme (DP) and Career-related Programme (CP). International Baccalaureate (IB) examiners mark work produced for external assessment, while work produced for internal assessment is marked by teachers and externally moderated by the IB.

There are two main types of assessment identified by the IB.

- Formative assessment informs both learning and teaching. It is concerned with providing accurate and helpful feedback to students and teachers on the kind of learning taking place and the nature of students' strengths and weaknesses in order to help develop students' understanding and capabilities. Formative assessment can also help to improve teaching quality, as it can provide information to monitor progress towards meeting the course aims and objectives.
- Summative assessment gives an overview of previous learning and is concerned with measuring student achievement at, or towards the end of, the course of study.

A comprehensive assessment plan is viewed as being integral with learning, teaching and course organization. For further information, see the IB *Programme standards and practices* document.

The approach to assessment used by the IB is criterion-related, not norm-referenced. This approach to assessment judges students' work by their performance in relation to identified levels of attainment, and not in relation to the work of other students. For further information on assessment within the CP, please refer to the publication *Assessment: principles and practice—Quality assessments in a digital age*.

Methods of assessment

The IB uses several methods to assess the work produced by students. The methods applied to the reflective project (RP) are assessment criteria and markbands.

Assessment criteria

Assessment criteria are used when the assessment task is open-ended. Each criterion concentrates on a particular skill that students are expected to demonstrate. An assessment objective (AO) describes what students should be able to do, and the assessment criteria describe how well they should be able to do it. Using assessment criteria allows discrimination between different answers and encourages a variety of responses. Each criterion comprises a set of hierarchically ordered level descriptors. Each level descriptor is worth one or more marks. Each criterion is applied independently using a best-fit model. The maximum marks for each criterion may differ according to the criterion's importance. The marks awarded for each criterion are added together to give the total mark for the piece of work.

Markbands

Markbands are a comprehensive statement of expected performance against which responses are judged. They represent a single holistic criterion divided into level descriptors. Each level descriptor corresponds to a range of marks to differentiate student performance. A best-fit approach is used to ascertain which particular mark to use from the possible range for each level descriptor.

Analytic markschemes

Analytic markschemes are prepared for those examination questions that expect a particular kind of response and/or a given final answer from students. They give detailed instructions to examiners on how to break down the total mark for each question for different parts of the response.

Marking notes

For some assessment components marked using assessment criteria, marking notes are provided. Marking notes give guidance on how to apply assessment criteria to the particular requirements of a question.

Inclusive access arrangements

Inclusive access arrangements are available for students with access requirements. Standard assessment conditions may put students with assessment access requirements at a disadvantage by preventing them from demonstrating their attainment level. Inclusive access arrangements enable students to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible.

The IB document [Access and inclusion policy](#) provides details on all the inclusive access arrangements available to students. The IB document [Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes: Removing barriers to learning](#) outlines the position of the IB with regard to students with diverse learning needs in the IB programmes. For students affected by adverse circumstances, the IB document [Career-related Programme Assessment procedures](#) (section “C7 Candidates affected by adverse, medical or special circumstances”) provides details on access consideration.

Responsibilities of the school

The school is required to ensure that equal access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are provided to students with learning support requirements that are in line with the IB documents [Access and inclusion policy](#) and [Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes: Removing barriers to learning](#).

Assessment of the reflective project

Assessment of the RP is a combination of formative assessment (the learning journal as preparation for the RP/FRF, the student presentation, and the viva voce) and summative assessment (the RP itself and the written reflection on the RP/FRF).

The same assessment criteria are applied to all RPs and all format options. Application of the criteria is informed by the final submitted project. The assessment criteria are published in this guide (in “[The reflective project assessment criteria](#)” section). The assessment criteria and the markbands are related to the AOs and the grade descriptors established for the RP.

The RP is externally assessed; therefore, RP supervisors are not expected to mark the projects or arrive at a number to translate into a grade. Predicted grades for the RP should be based on the qualitative grade descriptors. These descriptors are used by senior examiners to set the boundaries.

Best-fit approach and markbands

Levels of performance are described using multiple indicators per level. In many cases, the indicators occur together throughout the project, but not always. Also, not all indicators are always present. This means that a student can demonstrate performances that fit into different levels. To accommodate this, the IB assessment models use markbands and advise examiners and teachers to use a best-fit approach in deciding the appropriate mark for a particular criterion. From various assessment trials, we know that introducing markbands and using the best-fit model are not always self-evident, and guidance is needed to help with their application.

While the RP is an externally assessed component of the CP, RP supervisors are required to submit a predicted grade (refer to the “[Assessment grade descriptors for the reflective project](#)” section). However, understanding the way in which the **criteria** are applied by examiners will assist with the guidance given to students. The following explains how **markbands** are used by examiners.

The best-fit approach and approach to positive marking

The aim is to find the descriptor that conveys most accurately the level attained by the student’s work, using the **best-fit approach**. A best-fit approach means that compensation will be made when a piece of work matches different aspects of a markband at different levels. The mark awarded will be one that most fairly reflects the balance of achievement against the markband. It is not necessary for every indicator of a level descriptor to be met for that mark to be rewarded. (For example, if work submitted for assessment matches two of the three requirements within a markband, but one is seriously lacking, the student should be awarded for the strands that have been met well, but the mark awarded should be at the lower end of the markband to compensate for what is lacking in one strand.)

When assessing the work submitted for assessment, in light of the IB approach to positive marking, examiners will read the level descriptors from the highest markband down 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 will be read again, and the one that more appropriately describes the work submitted for assessment will be chosen. A number of marks are available within a level; examiners will award the upper marks if the work submitted for assessment demonstrates the qualities described to a greater extent. Examiners will award the lower marks if the work submitted for assessment demonstrates the qualities described to a lesser extent.

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

The reflective project assessment criteria

How the assessment criteria are applied

Examiners mark **positively**, giving credit where appropriate for what students have produced, rather than looking for omissions. Their aim is to find the markband descriptor that conveys most accurately the level attained by the student's work, using the **best-fit** approach. A best-fit approach means that compensation should be made when a piece of work matches aspects of different markbands. The mark awarded should be one that most fairly reflects the balance of achievement against the markband. It is not necessary for every indicator within a markband to be met for a mark to be awarded in that markband. **Awarding the top mark does not imply faultless performance.** While the level descriptors concentrate on positive achievement, in the lower level descriptors, a failure to achieve may be included in the description.

Criterion A: Focus on the ethical dilemma

This criterion assesses the extent to which the work submitted for assessment identifies and explores a career-related ethical dilemma by focusing on differing perspectives and varied contexts.

Guiding questions

- Does the student identify an appropriate career-related ethical dilemma?
- Does the student explore the ethical dilemma from multiple perspectives?
- Does the student sustain focus on the dilemma by providing relevant examples from varied contexts?

Markband	Nature of the ethical dilemma	Perspectives	Focus and context
0	If the work does not reach a standard outlined by the performance level descriptors, 0 marks are awarded for this criterion.		
1–2	An ethical dilemma is implicit but not stated. The relation of the ethical dilemma to a specified career is unstated.	The exploration of the ethical dilemma is limited. Only one perspective is identified.	The focus on the ethical dilemma is unclear. The examples provided are irrelevant or isolated to one context.
3–4	An ethical dilemma is described but is inarguable or has a predictable resolution. The relation of the ethical dilemma to a specified career is vague or inferred.	The project identifies differing perspectives on the ethical dilemma. The exploration is dominated by one perspective.	There is a clear focus on the ethical dilemma. The examples and variety of contexts provided are relevant but limited.
5–6	An ethical dilemma is clearly and precisely defined, and could lead to several possible resolutions. The relation of the ethical dilemma to a specified career is clearly stated.	The work balances the exploration of differing perspectives on the ethical dilemma.	There is a clear, sustained focus on the ethical dilemma. The examples and variety of contexts provided are effective.

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding through research

This criterion assesses how effectively the work submitted for assessment uses research to develop and demonstrate understanding of issues related to the ethical dilemma and their impact.

Guiding questions

- Does the student conduct research effectively?
- Does the student demonstrate knowledge and understanding of issues related to the ethical dilemma?
- Does the student consider the implications and impact of the ethical dilemma in different contexts and on different individuals or groups?

Markband	Research	Knowledge and understanding	Impact of dilemma
0	If the work does not reach a standard outlined by the performance level descriptors, 0 marks are awarded for this criterion.		
1–2	The scope and depth of the research are superficial. An insufficient range of resources is used.	The work indicates limited knowledge and understanding of issues related to the ethical dilemma.	The work demonstrates limited understanding of how identified contexts, individuals or groups are impacted by the issues explored.
3–4	The scope and depth of the research are appropriate. A sufficient range of resources is used.	The work indicates adequate knowledge and understanding of issues related to the ethical dilemma.	The work demonstrates satisfactory understanding of how identified contexts, individuals or groups are impacted by the issues explored.
5–6	The scope and depth of the research are comprehensive. An extensive range of resources is used.	The work indicates extensive knowledge and understanding of issues related to the ethical dilemma.	The work demonstrates excellent understanding of how identified contexts, individuals or groups are impacted by the issues explored.

Criterion C: Critical thinking

This criterion assesses how effectively the work submitted for assessment analyses the ethical dilemma and synthesizes research to propose and justify a personal position, taking into consideration the impact on, and implications for, various contexts and groups.

Guiding questions

- Has the student analysed the research and synthesized the information?
- Has the student used reasoning to identify a personal position on the ethical dilemma?
- Has the student justified their position?
- Has the student taken into consideration the impact or implications of their position?

Markband	Analysis and synthesis of research	Personal position: Reasoning and evidence	Personal position: Justification and impact
0	If the work does not reach a standard outlined by the performance level descriptors, 0 marks are awarded for this criterion.		
1–2	Analysis and synthesis of the research are unclear. The project is descriptive rather than analytical.	A personal position is not clearly identified, is not supported by reasoning and is not linked to evidence.	Justification of a personal position is inferred or undeveloped. There is limited evidence that the impact or implications of the personal

Markband	Analysis and synthesis of research	Personal position: Reasoning and evidence	Personal position: Justification and impact
			position have been considered.
3–4	Analysis and synthesis of the research are limited. Relevant findings are partially discussed.	A personal position is identified and supported by mostly clear reasoning, some of which is linked to evidence.	There is an attempt at justification of a personal position, but it may be lacking in depth. There is some evidence that the impact or implications of the position have been considered.
5–6	Analysis and synthesis of the research are appropriate. Relevant findings are adequately discussed.	A personal position is identified and supported by coherent reasoning, which is derived from, and adequately linked to, evidence.	There is clear justification of a personal position. There is clear evidence that the impact or implications of the personal position have been appropriately considered.
7–8	Analysis and synthesis of the research are thorough. Relevant findings are effectively discussed.	A personal position is identified and supported by clear, focused reasoning, which is synthesized from, and explicitly linked to, well-selected evidence.	There is a clear and concise justification of a personal position. There is substantial evidence that the impact or implications of the personal position have been thoughtfully considered.

Criterion D: Communication of ideas

This criterion assesses how effectively the work submitted for assessment uses appropriate organization, terminology and structural elements to support the clear, cohesive and effective communication of ideas.

Guiding questions

- Are terminology and structural elements used appropriately and effectively to support the communication of ideas?
- Are ideas coherent and organized in order to communicate clearly and effectively?

Markband	Terminology	Structure	Development and organization of ideas
0	If the work does not reach a standard outlined by the performance level descriptors, 0 marks are awarded for this criterion.		
1–2	Relevant terminology and/or appropriate stylistic conventions are seldom used.	The project is insufficiently structured, which may impede the communication of ideas.	Ideas may be insufficiently developed or irrelevant, or are presented in a confusing or unclear manner.
3–4	Relevant terminology and/or appropriate stylistic conventions are generally used appropriately to	The project is adequately structured, which supports the communication of ideas.	Ideas are mostly developed and are presented in a logical manner; they are mostly clear and relevant.

Markband	Terminology	Structure	Development and organization of ideas
	support the communication of ideas.		
5–6	Relevant terminology and/or appropriate stylistic conventions are consistently and accurately used to support the communication of ideas.	The project is effectively structured, which supports the clear and coherent communication of ideas.	Ideas are well developed and are presented in a logical and coherent manner.

Criterion E: Reflective practice

This criterion assesses how effectively the work submitted for assessment demonstrates planning, research and implementation of reflective practice during the project completion process.

Guiding questions

- How effectively has the student demonstrated reflective practice?
- Does the student reflect on their learning process?
- Does the student reflect on their learning, its impact and any future impact on themselves or others?
- Does the student critically examine their own and others' thinking, actions or decisions?

Markband	Reflection on process	Reflection on project	Reflection on learning
0	If the work does not reach a standard outlined by the performance level descriptors, 0 marks are awarded for this criterion.		
1–2	Reflections are limited and may include reference to decisions, actions or thinking, but without explanation.	There is a limited description of the project's effectiveness; strengths and limitations are unstated.	Reflections on how learning and new understandings have an impact on the student or others are only inferred or are irrelevant.
3–4	Reflections include general explanations for decisions, actions and thinking.	There is an evaluation of the project's effectiveness. Some strengths and limitations are stated.	Reflections on how learning and new understandings have an impact on the student or others are commented upon, but in a limited way.
5–6	Reflections include adequate explanations for decisions, actions and thinking, and some may be justified.	There is an adequate evaluation of the project's effectiveness. Relevant strengths and limitations are described.	Reflections on how learning and new understandings have an impact on the student or others are discussed.
7–8	Reflections include thoughtful explanations for decisions, actions and thinking, and most are justified.	There is a detailed evaluation of the project's effectiveness. Relevant strengths and limitations are explained.	Reflections on how learning and new understandings have an impact on the student or others are thoroughly considered and discussed.

Alignment with assessment objectives

Criterion	Assessment objectives	Why these assessment objectives?
A: Focus on the ethical dilemma	AO1: Knowledge and understanding	The identification and description of the ethical dilemma indicate knowledge and understanding of both the subject and the career field. The contextualization of the ethical dilemma and related issues, as well as the discussion of multiple perspectives, demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the ethical dilemma, and how it has an impact on individuals or groups.
B: Knowledge and understanding through research	AO1: Knowledge and understanding AO2: Application and analysis	The application of research methods establishes knowledge of the subject. The analysis and understanding of differing perspectives are evident through the discussion presented in the project.
C: Critical thinking	AO2: Application and analysis AO3: Synthesis and evaluation	Appropriate analysis is used to determine and discuss relevant findings. Both analysis and synthesis are used to draw conclusions from research and reflection that lead to the development and justification of a personal position.
D: Communication of ideas	AO3: Synthesis and evaluation AO4: Communication of research	There is a balanced discussion of the research findings. Ideas are communicated using appropriate terminology, as well as structural and stylistic conventions. Ideas are organized in a coherent manner.
E: Reflective practice	AO2: Application and analysis AO3: Synthesis and evaluation	Reflection on the research process demonstrates analysis and evaluation of actions and feedback. Student growth and the final project are evaluated.

Assessment grade descriptors for the reflective project

The RP is externally assessed; therefore, RP supervisors are not expected to mark the projects or arrive at a number to translate into a grade. Predicted grades for the RP should be based on the qualitative grade descriptors.

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 work submitted for assessment—to allow for some compensation across the different aspects. The grade descriptors help teachers explain the academic requirements of this element of the CP to students who undertake the RP. While boundaries are subject to change, it is the grade descriptors that remain consistent. Please refer to the document [Assessment principles and practices—Quality assessments in a digital age](#).

Table 5
Grade descriptors

Grade A
Demonstrates: • effective research skills, resulting in a well-focused and appropriate research question that defines and contextualizes an ethical dilemma related to the career-related study • balance of multiple perspectives • 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, individuals and groups • effective application of source material and correct use of subject-specific terminology and/or concepts further supporting this • relevant conclusions that are proficiently analysed and help support a consistently held position throughout • sustained, reasoned argument supported effectively by evidence • critically evaluated research • consistent and accurate use of terminology, structural and stylistic conventions • excellent presentation of the project where the coherence of ideas and consistency further support the reading of the project. 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 with detailed evaluation through reflections, including personal impact, being 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, individuals 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 that, 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 and 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 the impact on identified contexts, individuals and groups; attempted application of source material and appropriate terminology and/or concepts; attempted synthesis of research results with partially relevant analysis that, at times, contributes to a partially maintained position throughout • conclusions partly supported by the evidence; discussion that is descriptive rather than analytical; attempted evaluation • satisfactory presentation of the project—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 evidence that feedback has been acted upon; personal reflection is mostly limited to procedural issues.
Grade D
Demonstrates: • a lack of research, resulting in unsatisfactory focus and a research question that is not answerable within the scope of an ethical dilemma; limited acknowledgement of differing perspectives • engagement with appropriate research areas, methods and sources at times, 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 is, at times, irrelevant, and limited awareness of the impact on identified contexts, individuals and groups • the attempted application of source material, but includes inaccuracies in the use or underuse of terminology and/or concepts • irrelevant analysis that does not support a consistent position throughout; inconsistent conclusions as a result of descriptive discussion • a lack of evaluation; presentation of the project is, at times, illogical and hinders the reading • that 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 resulting in an unfocused research question that is not linked to an ethical dilemma and that offers a single perspective
- limited engagement with limited research areas and sources
- generally limited knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the relevant discipline that is only partially accurate and lacks awareness of the impact on identified contexts, individuals and groups
- ineffective connections in the application of source material and inaccuracies in terminology and/or concepts used
- summarizing 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.

Review and evaluation

Course review

Teachers and coordinators must continually and collaboratively review the delivery of the four core components to ensure relevance and links between them.

Teachers should also seek to improve understanding of the CP core components among all school staff, and discuss opportunities for connections between other elements of the programme and the core components.

Programme evaluation

Every five years, schools engage in a programme evaluation and self-study process to assess the implementation of their CP. The school's implementation of each core component is evaluated as part of this process. Schools submitting their programme evaluation self-study will be required to provide evidence that the planning, organization and delivery of each core component meet the requirements of the individual core components.

Evidence that is relevant for the RP may include:

- sample RP learning journals or presentations
- schedules/timetables indicating how the RP journey is supported
- documentation of the student–RP supervisor assignment process
- evidence of the viva voce being conducted.

Please see the [Guide to programme evaluation](#) and [Self-study questionnaire: For use during programme evaluation](#) for the CP for more detailed guidance about the process and the evidence that must be submitted.

Glossary of subject-specific terms

Glossary term	Glossary definition
Bias	Bias describes preconceived opinions, judgements, or favouritism. In the RP, it is essential to recognize and address bias in resources when conducting research to ensure fair and accurate conclusions can be drawn.
Concepts	Concepts organize and connect learning and information. Concepts are transferred and applied across multiple contexts.
Contextualization	Contextualization refers to the process of considering something in relation to the situation in which it happens or exists. In the RP, the ethical dilemma must be contextualized to gain insight that helps to interpret or understand the dilemma more fully.
Convention	The accepted rules and practices of a literary or linguistic form.
Ethical dilemma	A choice between two (or more) conflicting values or courses of action, where each alternative has its own drawbacks or may lead to undesirable consequences. Because neither alternative provides an ideal solution, there is no clear-cut answer and an ethical decision is difficult to make.
Ethical issue	Ethical issues may be encountered in all areas of life (e.g. personal, social, professional, economic, environmental) and may be related to questions of fairness, honesty, justice, or human rights.
Ethical thinking	Ethical thinking involves thinking critically about and applying ethical values to navigate our personal and professional lives. It fosters moral development and enables us to make responsible choices and be accountable for our decisions. Self-reflexivity supports ethical thinking as it enables us to identify and examine our personal values , which guide us in our actions and decisions.
Ethics	Ethics is the study of right and wrong, as well as any system or code of moral rules, principles, or values. Understanding why something is right or wrong helps to inform and guide our choices, actions and behaviours.
Global context	Global contexts encompass worldwide dynamics emphasizing interconnectedness, interdependence and shared challenges faced by humanity as a whole.
Interview	A structured conversation where one participant asks questions which are answered by the other participant(s). Common examples include interviews with employers, news reporters, or television/radio programme hosts. Interviews can be in audio, visual, or audio-visual modes, and can be transcribed in writing such as in magazines, newspapers or court records.
Local context	Local contexts refer to specific geographical, social, economic, environmental, cultural and political dynamics that characterize a particular place or community at a given moment in time.
Modalities	Modalities encompass the aspects related to how different forms of media function and communicate. It focuses on how meaning is conveyed through different modes or elements within a medium.

Glossary term	Glossary definition
Perspective	How we perceive and judge situations, facts, or issues. Our perspective influences our understanding and interpretation of information and events.
Podcast	A podcast is a programme (typically an episodic series) made available in digital format for download over the internet. It is primarily in audio format, although it can also be in video format.
Position	This represents a person's perspective or attitude towards something; for example, a person's position on a controversial issue. In the RP, students must determine and justify their position on an ethical dilemma.
Reflection and reflexivity	Reflection: Metacognitive and process reflection involve examining past experiences and actions to improve future practice (focused on the "how" of actions). Reflection as a metacognitive skill enhances awareness of one's own cognitive/ learning process. It involves examining one's thinking, actions and goals, leading to self-regulated learning. Process reflection starts with an experience and leads to new or changed understandings, insights and/or actions. Critical reflection links reflection with analytical and critical thinking, encouraging students to focus on experiences and actions within a broader, systemic context. Self-reflexivity involves considering one's positionality; identifying and questioning one's own assumptions, biases and attitudes; understanding how they influence one's own responses and actions; and how they impact others, given the complexity and interconnectedness of roles and relationships. Critical reflexivity involves critically examining and challenging collective assumptions, values and frames of reference; understanding their contexts (e.g. cultural, societal, historical); how they shape perceptions and actions; how they impact others; and how they might change in the future.
Transversal skills	Transversal skills are skills that can be applied in a variety of contexts appropriate to both a person's personal and professional growth.
Validity	In research, validity refers to how accurately something measures or reflects what it claims to. In the RP, it is important to ascertain the validity of sources to ensure that conclusions drawn are accurate and reliable.

Bibliography

This bibliography lists the principal works used to inform the curriculum review. It is not an exhaustive list and does not include all the literature available: judicious selection was made in order to better advise and guide teachers. This bibliography is not a list of recommended textbooks.

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