

Additional guidance for the reflective project

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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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About this guide

This guide is intended to support teachers working with students on their International Baccalaureate Career-related Programme (CP) reflective project. It supplements the *Reflective project guide*.

This guide consists of three sections.

1. Section one (re)introduces the reflective project. It provides a brief overview of the project's aims and reflections on planning and progress.
2. Section two focuses on the support that teachers can offer students while undertaking the project in terms of selecting their topic, carrying out their research and making use of the data that they gather.
3. Section three consists of a selection of teacher support documents.

Overview

Aims

The reflective project provides students the opportunity to explore an issue which particularly interests them, and to develop skills which will be of value to them in the future.

It is an in-depth body of work produced over an extended period and submitted towards the end of the CP. The reflective project is one of the CP's four core components.

The reflective project is designed to draw together key elements of students' wider scheme of study:

1. their career-related study
2. the other components of the CP core (language development, service learning, personal and professional skills)
3. their Diploma Programme courses.

Students are required to identify and explore an ethical dilemma associated with an issue that arises from their career-related studies and then develop a well-reasoned argument based on appropriate supporting evidence.

Presenting the reflective project

Students can choose to present their reflective project in two different ways:

Option 1	A written essay (maximum 3,000 words) plus reflections (maximum 1000 words) on the <i>Reflections on planning and progress form</i> .
Option 2	A written essay (1,500-2,000 words) accompanied by an additional format (film, oral presentation, interview, play, or display), plus reflections (maximum 1000 words) on the <i>Reflections on planning and progress form</i> .

Points to bear in mind when working with students

The reflective project is an in-depth body of work.

- It requires both breadth and depth in students' approach to an issue and its ethical dilemma.
- Students are expected to devote a minimum of 50 hours to the reflective project.

Students should be thinking about and working on their reflective project throughout the CP. It is produced over an extended period of time and submitted towards the end of the CP.

- It is helpful for students to decide on a timeline with their teacher/supervisor for completing the reflective project (see *Creating a timeline for the reflective project*).

The reflective project is initiated, planned, researched and created by the student.

- While the teacher's role is to support the student while undertaking it, the reflective project must be all the student's own work.

The reflective project draws together all parts of the CP. It uses:

- students' career-related studies as a focus for the chosen issue
- the skills students develop in personal and professional skills such as the ability to create a reasoned argument (critical thinking), to understand ethical dilemmas (ethical thinking) and to prepare the structure and format of the reflective project itself (communication)
 - Teachers can encourage students to look for ways that their personal and professional skills course can support their reflective project. What skills will be helpful? What skills do they need to develop?
- the skills and knowledge students develop in service learning and language development

Diploma Programme (DP) courses may also contribute towards the reflective project, eg students can use DP course resources. However, teachers must ensure that students are aware that they cannot use any of their Diploma Programme coursework in the project.

Reflections on planning and progress form

Students should be completing their Reflections on planning and progress Form (RPPF) throughout the time they are engaged on the reflective project, but particularly following scheduled meetings with their supervisor.

The form is presented as a writable PDF document, and should be a maximum of 1000 words.

The RPPF requires the student to reflect on the challenges encountered during the reflective project, how these can be overcome (looking forward to the next stage of the reflective project), or how they were overcome and what was learnt from the process and the changes in approach.

Important points:

- The RPPF provides an insight into students' thinking processes and how they may have developed while researching and completing the reflective project.
- The assessment criterion E: Engagement and reflection will be applied in the assessment of students' reflections. Representing 6 marks out of a total of 36, this is an important part of the overall reflective project assessment.
- Criterion E assesses the student's engagement with their research focus and the research process. It will be applied at the end of the assessment of the reflective project, after consideration of the student's RPPF.
- An essay that achieves highly against criteria A–D will not automatically achieve highly against criterion E.
- Students who have struggled with the reflective project can nonetheless achieve quite highly against criterion E.
- It is crucial that students show what they have learned in terms of their understanding of the research process, its challenges and their own personal development.
- Exemplars for guidance can be found in the reflective project teacher support material. There is no one "right" way to complete this form and the examples provided **must not** be viewed as the "ideal".

Meetings

The RPPF is a formally assessed element of the reflective project through Criterion E: Engagement and reflection. It acts as a record to support the authenticity of students' work in conjunction with three scheduled meetings with their supervisor. It is important that students attend these meetings as they are an opportunity for students to reflect on the different stages of the research process.

During these meetings, students discuss their planning, progress and any concerns they have with their supervisor. After each meeting they complete the specified section of the RPPF.

While not part of the formal assessment process, the meetings also serve the following purposes:

- an additional check that the work is the student's and contains no plagiarism
- an opportunity for the student to reflect on what they have learned up until the point that the meeting takes place, and how they may adapt their technique and/or approach as they progress to the next stage.

A copy of the RPPF appears at the end of the *Reflective project guide*.

See also: Academic honesty

Research for the reflective project

When researching for the reflective project, teachers should support students to do the following:

1. Read the assessment criteria.
2. Select an issue that interests them.
3. Undertake sufficient preparatory reading on their chosen issue. Students should read a selection of articles, newspapers, magazines, books and websites that will help them determine the significance of their issue and formulate a good reflective project question. As they read, they should underline or note down key words, phrases and ideas that can be used to further their search for information. They should also keep in mind the reflective project guidelines.
4. Formulate a well-focused research question on an issue. If students discover that it will not be possible to obtain the evidence needed in the time available, they should change their question - and do this sooner rather than later. They should not lose time waiting and hoping that something will turn up. Rather, they should start the research process over again and develop a new question.

See also: Developing a research question

5. Plan their investigation and production/writing process.
 - a. Identify how and from which sources they will gather material (by secondary research and/or primary research).
 - b. Identify which system of academic referencing they will use.
 - c. Set deadlines for each stage of their reflective project.

See also: Planning form and Creating a timeline for the reflective project

6. Plan a structure that is based on their research and logically supports their research question. The structure of their reflective project may change as they conduct more research, but it is useful to have a sense of direction.

See also: Contents of the reflective project

7. Carry out the research.
 - a. Access, read and gather information from a wide variety of sources: journals, books, databases, and other secondary source documents when appropriate. Students should not rely on internet search engines as their sole access point for locating information.
 - b. Undertake primary research within their chosen community if that is what the student has decided to do.
 - c. The material gathered should be assembled in a logical order, linked to the structure of the reflective project. Only then will students know whether they have enough evidence for each stage of the argument so that they can proceed to the next.

- d. Be prepared to handle different perspectives. Students' thoughtful analysis and commentary on different viewpoints serve to strengthen their reflective project.
8. Collate all the research sources that they have used in their reflective project and place them in a bibliography to be included in their final submission.
9. If they wish, use the Checklist for the reflective project to help them go through what they have done and ensure they have completed the reflective project to the best of their ability.
10. Fill in their RPPF at the beginning, during and on completion of their reflective project.

Teachers should ensure that the school librarian is aware of and involved in the reflective project from the outset. Teachers can then encourage students to ask the librarian for help in finding the necessary research materials.

Researcher's reflection space

Students are formally required to reflect so that they can complete the Reflections on planning and progress Form following the meetings with their supervisor, but they should not limit their reflection to this.

A researcher's reflection space (RRS) is a useful tool to encourage students to reflect. It invites them to reflect on the process of researching and then creating their reflective project throughout the time that they are working on it.

The RRS can be in the form of a journal or a blog. It will help students prepare for their meetings with their supervisor and identify the most relevant points for inclusion in their RPPF. However, it will not be formally submitted and assessed.

Here are some examples of what students may include their RRS.

- Annotated newspaper cuttings or web printouts on their research topic
- Concept maps, tables, charts, graphs and any other salient information relating to their research topic
- Images of products, people, institutions or events that are related to the issue under study
- Maps of connections that illustrate how people, communities and places are connected by their topic
- Entries that describe or explain their personal feelings about the issue and ethical dilemma under study, about themselves and the community around them as they learn more about their topic
- Records of how students may have changed their mind about the ethical dilemma
- Brainstorms of the possible methods that could be used for their study
- Work plan for the research, with reflections on its usefulness
- Key quotations with attributions that students have found relevant and useful for their research topic

It may help students to see the RRS in terms of a journey. At the beginning of the journey they decide on the issue they want to explore. They then develop a research question leading to an ethical dilemma related to their issue. At this point they may have an initial personal reaction to this. They are likely to have their own perspective on the issue and the associated ethical dilemma.

However, they are then going to explore this issue from different perspectives and maybe discover new insights— aspects of the issue that they did not expect at the start and that might even surprise them.

Eg, a reflective project focused on homeless people and whether society has a duty to look after them.

The student's first reaction based on instinct or on brief encounters with people begging on the streets is negative. The student feels that homeless people are on the streets by choice, that they are doing nothing to help themselves and that they are probably homeless as a result of their own actions.

However, by spending time with homeless people as part of service learning and/or by talking to social care workers dealing with the homeless or researching causes and consequences of homelessness, the student changes their point of view. They discover that the reasons that lie behind a person becoming homeless are much more complex than they initially thought.

Teachers should encourage students to identify their initial point of view at the start of their reflective project. Later on, ask them to reflect on whether their initial viewpoint has been confirmed or whether it has changed.

Gathering data

Students are required to collect evidence related to the issue and the related ethical dilemma.

The grade students are awarded for Criterion C is largely dependent on the quality of the research done and the information gathered to support their arguments and points of view (Criterion C: Critical thinking – research, analysis, discussion and evaluation = 12 marks).

Students must show critical judgment in the use of their data—the first source of information that they come across may not be the best one. They should therefore be prepared to seek out multiple sources of information.

Although students require a significant amount of data to inform and support their reflective project, they do not need to present it in lengthy annexes and appendices. Any material included in an appendix or annex is not part of the reflective project's total word count, and the examiner is not required to read it. If a piece of information is important, students must include it in the body of their reflective project.

Students must take care when using sources and double-check that the information is valid and reliable.

Relevant data

Students are required to find a range of evidence from a variety of sources, to give contrasting views of the issue and its ethical dilemma. Students should cite evidence throughout their reflective project and not simply add it in at the end.

Relevant data could and should come from multiple sources, such as:

- statistics from reputable sources (eg, government organizations, professional organizations and non-governmental organizations)
- an interview conducted with an authority or an expert on the issue in question (this could be conducted by the student or be an interview that has been published elsewhere).
- an essay, article or book on the subject
- documentaries
- credible internet sites (eg, those provided by universities, museums, non-governmental organizations).

Students must exercise critical judgment when using websites to ensure that the information gathered is relevant and valid.

Students should avoid:

- Surveys carried out with their friends, teachers, colleagues from their work placement or their parents
Although these sources may have ideas or opinions on the issue, for a survey to have scientific validity it has to be conducted on a larger scale and to be socially representative.

- Source material that is not fully synthesized

Students must summarize the data that they use and ensure it is part of the main body of their argument. This will also make their arguments more effective.

- Using themselves as a source

Students cannot use themselves as their principal source.

- Long passages copied from the internet or books or journals, which are not analyzed in any way

If students cite a source, they must explain how it contributes to the issue under discussion.

- Using other people's work or thoughts without citing the source

Students must not take credit for someone else's work. This is plagiarism. Students must always cite their sources and use an appropriate referencing system. Students should talk to their teacher and/or librarian about what referencing system to use.

See also: Academic honesty and Effective citing and referencing

Academic honesty

Academic honesty is a set of values and behaviours informed by the attributes of the IB learner profile.

In teaching, learning and assessment, academic honesty:

- promotes personal integrity
- engenders respect for the integrity of others and their work
- ensures 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—must be authentic and based on students' individual and original ideas. It must also fully acknowledge the ideas and work of others.

See also: *Academic honesty in the IB educational context* and *General regulations: IB Career-related programme*

Acknowledging the ideas or work of another person

Students must acknowledge all sources used in their reflective project using a standard style of referencing in a consistent manner.

Some further points:

- The IB does not prescribe which style of referencing or in-text citation should be used.
- Regardless of the reference style students use, the minimum information must include: name of author, date of publication, title of source, and page numbers as applicable.
- Students must use their style of referencing consistently so that credit is given to all sources used, including sources that have been paraphrased or summarized.
- Students should clearly distinguish between their words and those of others by the use of quotation marks (or other methods like 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 must ensure that all sources have been acknowledged, including all audio/visual material, text, graphs, images and/or data published in print or in electronic sources.

See *Effective citing and referencing* for a comprehensive guide to best practice.

Useful explanations

What is an issue?

An issue is a topic that is worthy of consideration in a particular context—for example, for people in the workplace, or those engaging in a sporting activity.

The issue can be one that directly affects those who are interested in it, or one outside their immediate situation.

In the case of the reflective project, the issue **must** arise from your career-related study. At the beginning of the reflective project you must state what your linked career-related study is.

What are ethics and an ethical dimension?

Ethics are a set of moral principles within a society or culture that help to guide behaviours, actions and choices.

The ethical dimension refers to the range of moral aspects related to a topic.

In the context of the reflective project there are two useful ways to think of ethics:

- as the standards of right and wrong
- as the rules of conduct that govern how people behave towards each other, or towards society as a whole.

There are many opinions as to what is “right” and what is “wrong”. What one person is opposed to may be quite acceptable to another. It all depends upon the context of the situation, and the way that individuals respond to that situation.

This is what makes the reflective project such a rich task, with the chance to form, critique and defend opinions, and to appreciate their strengths and weaknesses.

Students will need assistance in order to support their understanding of ethics, and to understand how ethics should be applied in order to produce a successful reflective project. The personal and professional skills course is where ethics should be explained and discussed for the purposes of the reflective project.

What is an ethical dilemma?

Within an ethical dimension there are ethical dilemmas. An ethical dilemma is a choice between two (or more) conflicting moral perspectives where neither provides a perfect solution.

In philosophical terms, an ethical dilemma is something to which, whatever a person's views, there is no right or wrong answer.

Issues that involve conflicts of interest in the workplace or at a societal level are often referred to as ethical dilemmas.

When you choose an issue and ethical dilemma within your career-related studies for your reflective project, you need to consider:

- Can you identify the different perspectives that various stakeholders may adopt?
- Can you understand the arguments each stakeholder puts forward?
- Can you put forward a reasoned argument to support your own view on the dilemma and so answer the research question?

The issue to be explored should:

- be controversial
- have two or more perspectives on it based on the moral principles of the individuals or groups involved
- be open to different answers according to the respective moral principles of those involved.

What is meant by community?

A community is a group of people with common interests such as where they live, religion and ethnicity. A community has its own set of attitudes and way of life. Those attitudes and way of life make the members of the community see the world around them in a certain way. Students need to be aware of what those attitudes are and the way in which they influence the community.

It is tempting for you to see the community as simply those around you, for instance at your school, at home or on work placement. But this is a limited definition of the word. You need to think about the wider sense of the term. It could be your local neighbourhood, your town, your city, even your country or it could be a religious community or an ethnic community.

You are required to find out how the community feels about the ethical dilemma and how they will be or are impacted by it. This can be done through either primary and/or secondary research.

For logistical reasons, you may choose to engage with your local neighbourhood or town, particularly if you want to undertake primary research. Secondary research is probably more appropriate if you want to take a broader view of community.

What is meant by primary research and secondary research?

- **Primary research** is collecting data and information first-hand, i.e. through the use of questionnaires, surveys and interviews.
- **Secondary research** is collecting data and information that already exists, i.e. by reading reports, publications and other literature.

Your research question will help you focus your research. You should know what data/information you want to get, and ensure your question promotes research.

What are cultural perspectives?

You should be able to demonstrate an awareness of how culture can influence perspectives on the ethical dilemma of the issue. You could explore social and cultural differences based on cultural identity and how these differences may lead to different perspectives. This, therefore, allows you to look for differences related to, for example:

- age
- ethnicity
- gender
- history
- language
- location
- nationality
- religious beliefs
- socio-economic background.

Roles and responsibilities

You are required to:

- choose an issue with an ethical dilemma that is related to your career-related study
- consult with your supervisor about the issue chosen before beginning research
- plan a schedule for researching and producing the reflective project
- meet deadlines
- acknowledge all sources of information and ideas in an approved academic manner
- make sure you carefully address the assessment criteria for the reflective project
- complete the *Reflections on planning and progress form*
- carefully proofread all aspects of the reflective project prior to submitting.

Your supervisor is required to:

- discuss the choice of topic with you
- provide you with advice and guidance in the skills of undertaking research including:
 - access to appropriate resources (such as people, a library, a computer)
 - techniques of information/evidence/data-gathering and analysis
 - documenting sources
- support you throughout the research and creation of the reflective project (including individual interviews)
- read and comment on your first draft only of the reflective project (the supervisor may not edit your draft)
- monitor your progress
- ensure the work is your own
- read the final version of your reflective project to confirm its authenticity.

Options for the reflective project

You can choose one of two options:

Option 1	A written essay (maximum 3000 words) plus reflections (maximum 1000 words) on the <i>Reflections on planning and progress form</i> .
Option 2	A written essay (1500-2000 words) accompanied by an additional format (film, oral presentation, interview, play, or display), plus reflections (maximum 1000 words) on the <i>Reflections on planning and progress form</i> .

Option 1: Essay and *Reflections on planning and progress form*

An essay is a piece of formal writing organized into a number of sections or as a number of paragraphs linked together. Although you can choose the style of essay, the expository essay may prove to be the most suitable for the reflective project.

Option 2: Essay and additional format and *Reflections on planning and progress form*

For option 2, you write an essay and choose one of six additional formats.

Whatever the format, it must be capable of being sent electronically to the IB for moderation and be presented in English, French or Spanish.

When an additional format is submitted alongside the essay, these are marked and assessed together.

The content of the additional format should be different from the essay component. Eg, an argument presented in the essay should not be repeated in the additional format. Repetition or reformatted information already stated in the essay will lose you marks.

The additional formats:

Format	Maximum length
Short film	A 7 minute film or a written script of 700 words
Spoken presentation	7 minutes of audio/video or a written script of 700 words
Interview	7 minutes of audio/video, or a written script of 700 words
Play	7 minutes of audio/video, or a written script of 700 words
Display	A storyboard or a photo essay using up to 15 annotated images, 700 words

A short film (7 minutes). you are free to create whatever type of film you believe will be a valuable component of your reflective project, for example a documentary, a drama, a news report and so on. You can choose to submit a written film script instead (700 words).

A spoken presentation (recorded on audio/video; 7 minutes). A presentation provides you with the opportunity to address in a spoken format aspects of your reflective project. You can choose to submit a written script instead (700 words).

A play (recorded on audio/video; 7 minutes). The play should include one or more characters performing a spoken drama that supports elements of the reflective project. It can include dialogue, music and sound effects. You can choose to submit a written script instead (700 words).

An interview (recorded on audio/video; 7 minutes). An interview allows you to be creative by imagining and developing a discussion between two or more people. You can choose to submit a written script instead (700 words).

A display (a storyboard or photo essay using up to 15 annotated images; 700 words). A storyboard/photo essay is usually a linear narrative told through imagery. You can decide what your imagery will accomplish and how it will contribute to the reflective project overall. For example, it could provide an overview of your reflective project and create points of discussion or illustrate particular ideas.

<p>Note: When you are deciding on what format to use, make sure your choice will enable you to meet the assessment criteria.</p>

Contents of the reflective project

The following must be included in the reflective project:

1. The issue

You must explain the issue and place it in context. But the issue itself is not the primary focus of the reflective project.

2. The ethical dilemma

You must examine an ethical dilemma associated with the issue and examine two (or more) perspectives in a fair and equal manner. This is the primary focus of the reflective project.

3. The research

You must provide evidence of research that supports the differing viewpoints on the issue and its ethical dilemma.

4. An evaluation

You must evaluate the viewpoints on the ethical dilemma and then articulate their own point of view based on reasoned argument.

5. References, citations and a bibliography

The reflective project is an academic piece of work and should be presented as such. References, citations and a bibliography ensure intellectual honesty and allow the readers to access the evidence themselves. You should use a consistent style of referencing throughout the reflective project.

Appendices, footnotes and endnotes are not necessary but if you choose to use them you should do so appropriately.

6. The RPPF

The RPPF requires you to reflect on the challenges encountered during the reflective project, how these can be overcome (looking forward to the next stage of the reflective project), or how they were overcome and what was learnt from the process and the changes in approach.

The RPPF is used to formally assess Criterion E: Engagement and reflection. It also acts as a record to support the authenticity of your work. Each entry on the RPPF is informed by a meeting with your supervisor, where progress, planning and issues are discussed.

Suggestions for the reflective project

Before starting the reflective project, you should:

- start thinking about the issue at the beginning of your CP
- read the assessment criteria
- read previous reflective projects to identify strengths and possible pitfalls
- spend time working out your research question
- plan how, when and where you will find material for the reflective project
- have a clear structure in mind for the reflective project (see Planning form for the reflective project).

During your reflective project, you should:

- create a researcher's reflective space where you can record your thoughts on the aspects of the reflective project that specifically require reflection. This could be in the form of a journal or a blog.
- plan a schedule for researching and producing the reflective project, including time for delays and unforeseen problems (see Creating a timeline for the reflective project).
- start work early and adhere to deadlines
- maintain a good working relationship with your supervisor
- use the library and consult librarians for advice
- record sources with full referencing details as you go along (rather than trying to reconstruct a list at the end)
- choose a new topic and a research question that can be answered if there is a problem with the original topic
- use appropriate language
- let your interest and enthusiasm show.

After completing the reflective project, you should:

- check and proofread your final version carefully (see Checklist for the reflective project).

Reflective project details

Illustrations

Graphs, charts, tables, cartoons, photos, or other images can be used. However, they must be related to the reflective project and acknowledged correctly

References, citations and bibliography

This reflective project is an academic piece of work and should be presented as such. All information obtained for the reflective project needs to be acknowledged.

Appendices

Any information that is important to the reflective project should be included in the body, not the appendices. The examiner is not bound to read appendices, so a reflective project that is not complete in itself will lose marks. You must ensure you are not relying on any part of the appendices to address the assessment criteria.

Word limit

Examiners will not read beyond the maximum word limit when assessing the reflective project.

The word count does not include

- acknowledgements
- the contents page
- maps, charts, diagrams, annotated illustrations and tables
- equations, formulas and calculations
- citations or references (whether parenthetical or numbered)
- footnotes or endnotes
- the bibliography
- appendices.

Reflecting throughout the research process

Reflection is a continual process. If you are constantly considering the decisions you are making in the reflective project process, you are better able to avoid the common pitfalls of independent research. Reflection also helps you plan, allowing you to monitor your progress.

The following table identifies stages in the process and the kinds of questions you can usefully consider at each. It also suggests what evidence you might use in your meetings with your supervisor to demonstrate your progress and learning.

Stage	Types of questions you may ask yourself	Evidence from my researcher's reflective space
Initial: planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What am I interested in researching and why? • What are my motivations for undertaking research in this area? • How will I begin the research process? • Do I have sufficient knowledge of the issue? • What possible question(s) might I research? • How might I go about undertaking this research? • Do I have access to appropriate sources? • Are my chosen research methods appropriate for the subject I have chosen to complete it in? • Are there any ethical issues I need to consider before pursuing this area of research? • Is there sufficient focus to my research area? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind map • Annotated bibliography • Annotated photograph, newspaper article, etc
Background reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have I learned about my issue so far? • What questions are emerging? Are these similar or different to my initial questions? • Given the initial reading I have undertaken on the issue, is my research question appropriate for the ethical dilemma? • Is my research question manageable within the word limit of the reflective project? • Will my research question allow me to think critically about the ethical dilemma I am researching? If it suggests a descriptive response, how might I need to change it to allow for more critical thinking? • Are there any challenges that I need to overcome in order to achieve my desired outcomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes • Annotated article • Brainstorm of questions • Mind map of potential challenges and possible strategies

Stage	Types of questions you may ask yourself	Evidence from my researcher's reflective space
Interim: writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I have sufficient data/information to begin formulating an argument? • If I do not have sufficient data/information, how will I go about resolving this? Can it be resolved? • To what extent does the data/information I have relate to my proposed research question? • Given the data/information I have collected, do I need to reformulate my research question? • Has the data/information collected taken me in an unexpected direction? • Do I want to change course now? Is it too late? • Are there still questions/issues that I am unclear how to resolve? • Am I keeping to a schedule with the writing process? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the reflective project • Annotated sections from books, journals, articles, etc • Reworked research question • Examples of data/information collected from research
Final: writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I have a reasoned argument that can be sustained? • Am I able to make coherent links between different points made and the evidence presented? • To what extent have I answered my research question? • What reasons may have affected my ability to answer my research question? • If I have been selective in the evidence presented in my reflective project, can I justify my choices? • Is there a clear summative conclusion, and does this reflect the discussion that has taken place? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An outline of the main argument • Timeline • Bibliography
On completion of the reflective project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do I think I have fulfilled the expectations of the reflective project? • Has my research resulted in me changing my perspective or views on the ethical dilemma in question? • What strategies did I employ that proved particularly effective in the research process? • What skills have I developed and how might these be useful in the future? • What improvements might I suggest to my own working practices? • How might different research strategies have impacted my outcomes? • What did I learn about myself as a learner in this process? 	

A brief guide to assessment

The reflective project is graded on five criteria:

Criterion	Overview	Marks
A: Focus and method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethical dilemma and issue Research question Methodology 	6 marks
B: Knowledge and understanding in context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context Local or global example Alternative perspectives and perceptions of dilemma 	9 marks
C: Critical thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Analysis Discussion and evaluation 	12 marks
D: Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure Layout 	3 marks
E: Engagement and reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process Engagement Research focus 	6 marks
Total marks		36

Where a reflective project comprises two formats (for example, the essay accompanied by a recorded interview), the assessment criteria will be applied to the overall reflective project.

- There are a total of 36 marks possible.
- Grades correspond with the total number of marks achieved across all criteria.
- Assessment is completed by a teacher/supervisor at their school.
- Samples of student reflective projects are sent to an IB nominated moderator outside the school to confirm marking.
- The IB will award a grade based on the mark.
- Any student awarded a grade of E for the reflective project will not be awarded the CP.

Descriptive versus interrogative reflective projects

A good research question focuses your reflective project. It is essential that you spend time developing a clear and focused research question that, crucially, allows for discussion of an ethical dilemma.

Examiners have identified two possible problem areas with regard to the reflective project:

1. confusion between **descriptive** and **interrogative** projects
2. a good question on a controversial issue with no ethical dilemma.

Confusion between descriptive and interrogative reflective projects

Although descriptive reflective projects can be interesting, they do not fit the requirements of the reflective project.

- **Descriptive reflective projects** lead to a single answer or an explanation of why a situation has arisen. They simply describe a social phenomenon or situation.
- **Interrogative reflective projects** provide a discussion and debate on differing points of view related to an issue that has an ethical dilemma.

You must consciously develop a research question that will lead to an interrogative reflective project, not a descriptive reflective project.

The following three examples demonstrate how to avoid a descriptive project.

Research topic 1: Women in business

The student develops the question: *Why are so few women in my country involved in business?*

This question leads to a descriptive reflective project about what is happening in a specific context and requires some research on statistics to justify the explanation given.

A better-formulated question leading to an interrogative reflective project is:

- ✓ *Should positive discrimination in the workplace be promoted if it leads to more women in senior company positions?*

Research topic 2: Adult-only hotels

The student develops the question: *Is the practice of hotels being exclusively for adult-only, as opposed to child-friendly, widespread?*

This leads to a simple yes or no answer following a description of the data collected.

A better-formulated question is:

- ✓ *Are adult-only hotels and resorts discriminatory?*

Research topic 3: Cyber bullying

The student develops the question: *Why do teenagers use cyber bullying to harass others? What are its effects on the victim and what can be done about it?*

This question asks simply for the reasons behind a phenomenon and then the consequences of this. It then requires solutions to the situation.

A better-formulated question is:

- ✓ *Would it be acceptable for school authorities to insist on access to the internet accounts of their students in order to prevent cyber bullying?*

A good question on a controversial issue with no ethical dilemma

It is possible to design a question on a controversial issue that has no ethical dilemma, eg: *Would the introduction of video refereeing improve the modern game of football?*

This is an open question that would encourage different points of view and would lead to a good discussion and debate. However, it does not involve an ethical dilemma and, therefore, cannot be used in a reflective project.

You must make sure that any question you create on an issue does have an ethical dilemma.

Developing a research question

Step 1

Start at the top of the table and find an issue related to your career-related study.

Step 2

Formulate a non-ethical question that simply asks you to describe what you know about the issue.

Step 3

Redraft your question so that it just asks for one solution to the problem or issue.

Step 4

Try to think of the ethical dilemma associated with the issue and open up the question so it leads to multiple answers.

Step 5

Now focus on the ethical dilemma and enlarge it so that the question now goes beyond the limits of the original observation. Your question should have more than one right answer and require the use of argument.

	Level	Descriptors	Example A	Example B	Example C
Step 1	Real-life situation in the context of your CP	Observation from the workplace, class discussion, something read in a newspaper, etc.	Video refereeing	Deforestation	Child labour
Step 2	Non ethical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple description • Does not involve an ethical dilemma • Yes or no answer 	Would the introduction of video refereeing improve the modern game of football?	Does deforestation have an impact?	Is child labour common in some countries?
Step 3	Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed question • Descriptive answer 	What would improve the game of football?	Why human needs can lead to deforestation?	How does child labour affect both the children and the economy in a country and what is being done to prevent it?

Step 4	Average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open question • Touches partially on an ethical dilemma 	Should a club be concerned with behaviour on and off the pitch?	Should we be concerned with the origin of the wood that we use?	How concerned should we be with child labour?
Step 5	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open question • Clear ethical dilemma • More than one right answer 	Should a club be excluded from competitions because of the behaviour of its fans?	Knowing that many communities rely on woodcutting, should we forbid the use of wood that is not from sustainable forests?	Knowing that many poor communities rely on income from all family members, should child labour be entirely illegal?

Examples of research questions

Each example allows students to explore an ethical dilemma arising out of an issue within a career-related area. A good question also encourages different viewpoints on a socially significant topic.

Issue	Ethical dilemma	Career-related study
The way banks make money	Should the practices of certain parts of banking business be constrained or controlled, perhaps by requiring bankers to swear an "ethics oath"?	business studies
Accepting inducements in order to win contracts	Should businesses accept any form of inducement either before winning or during a contract?	business studies
Fracking for shale gas	Should the government grant fracking licences to companies in order for them to make potentially high profits?	business studies, outdoor education, environmental studies
Building on flood plains	Should construction firms be granted planning permission to build on areas that are known to have flooded in the past?	outdoor education, environmental studies
Childcare for under fives	Should one parent stay at home to look after children?	childcare, health and social studies
Behaviour on the football pitch	Should the use of tactics designed to gain unfair advantage be deemed professional or intolerable?	sport studies
Police tactics used during civil protests or demonstrations	Should police be allowed to use force when dealing with demonstrators?	police studies
Bonuses for executives in government-supported banks	Is it fair and just to pay bank executives big bonuses?	finance
The education of elite athletes	Is it appropriate that elite athletes are offered scholarships to attend particular universities?	sports
Crime prevention	Should governments install cameras in all public areas, which may impact on freedom and privacy?	law, social studies
The public interest	Should the media publish stories that are in the public interest, even if it affects the private life of an individual?	journalism, media studies
The impact of advertising on young children	Should advertising be banned on children's television programmes?	advertising, marketing
Tourism associated with fragile ecosystems	Should tourism be restricted in fragile coastal areas?	tourism, environmental studies

Creating a timeline for the reflective project

Due date	Task	Comments	Notes
	Identify your topic or issue to be explored.	Your issue is related to your career-related studies, has an ethical dilemma and will promote higher level thinking, creativity, research, writing skills and is intellectually challenging. More than one perspective to this issue is identified.	
	Create a plan that will help you get your thoughts together about your reflective project.	If you are thinking of doing one of the formats with an essay, which format are you going to choose to do?	
	Meet with supervisor to discuss progress.	This should be your first meeting with your supervisor to discuss your plan. Complete the first section of the RPPF.	
	Research: notes taken and sources identified.	Keep a record of your research sources.	
	Re-evaluate plan.	As you conduct research, you may modify your original plan—this is fine as long as you are following the CP criteria for the reflective project.	
	Reflective project outline is written.	This will put your ideas in a logical order, and make sure you are not missing any important elements.	
	Reflective project draft is completed.	Use the assessment criteria for reference as you are writing.	
	Meet with supervisor to discuss progress.	This should be your second meeting with your supervisor. Complete second section of RPPF.	
	Reflective project self- evaluation is completed.	Do this well—if you cannot answer a question, then your reflective project is missing an important component.	
	Reflective project draft is read and discussed.	Hand your reflective project to your supervisor to read and comment on. Your supervisor does not edit your draft.	

Due date	Task	Comments	Notes
	Complete final reflective project.	<p>Taking into account your supervisor's comments, make any changes you believe necessary and complete the reflective project.</p> <p>Use the "checklist" before submitting your reflective project.</p>	
	Third meeting with your supervisor.	Complete the RPPF.	
	Submit your reflective project to your supervisor.	Your supervisor confirms its authenticity.	
	Your final reflective project is assessed by your supervisor.	Once assessed, the grade given for your reflective project is submitted to the IB.	
	Moderation by the IB.	<p>The IB will provide a random list of candidate names to your school. Your school will then send the reflective projects of these candidates to an external moderator. The submission of sample work from candidates allows the IB to moderate the marking of supervisors in order to achieve a common standard across schools.</p>	

Planning form

Reflective project: My plan

Date: _____

Issue: Explain what is going to be the issue of your reflective project. Remember to tie it to your career-related studies.

Ethical dilemma: What is the ethical dilemma you will be addressing in your reflective project?

Perspectives: What are the two (or more) sides to this ethical dilemma of the issue that you will be researching?

A:

B:

Others?

Type: Which option will you choose, 1 or 2?

If 2, what type of format will you use? Describe what you are planning to do.

Research/Resources: What are your primary/secondary sources? Have you organized a system to keep track of your sources?

What system of academic referencing are you going to use?

When: Your reflective project needs to be completed by _____.

Create calendar/timeline/goals to accomplish this deadline. This is not a reflective project that can be done in a day, a week or overnight!

See: Creating a timeline for the reflective project

Checklist for the reflective project

Use this checklist before, during and after your reflective project.

- Is the title of the reflective project in the form of a question rather than a statement or hypothesis?
- Is your question interrogative rather than descriptive?
- Is there more than one right answer to the question?
- Have you planned your answer carefully?
- Have you explained the issue at the start of your reflective project?
- Have you clearly identified an ethical dilemma?
- Have you clearly shown different community/cultural perspectives with respect to the ethical dilemma of the issue?
- Does your reflective project show that you have explored different perspectives on the issue?
- Have you supported your arguments with relevant, credible and well-chosen facts, data and examples?
- Is your own viewpoint clear?
- Have you arrived at a reflective answer?
- Does the reflective project respond to the title question in a clear, logical and coherent manner?
- Have you carried out a self-evaluation on your reflective project based on the 5 assessment criteria?
- Have you cited all of your sources?
- Have you completed your RPPF form?