Overview of the reflective project

This section covers all the main aspects of the reflective project that a teacher introducing it will need to consider:

- Reflective project within the CP
- Requirements
- The career-related context
- Links with the personal and professional skills course
- The international dimension

Reflective project in the CP

The reflective project encapsulates the fundamental elements of the Career-related Programme. It is what makes the CP unique and meaningful, and enables students to see the culmination of their programme strands in formal assessment. It allows formal assessment of students' development indirectly and directly in all components of the core as well as their DP courses.

Requirements

All CP students are required to complete the reflective project.

Students should be told about the reflective project at the beginning of the CP in order to be thinking about, and working on, the reflective project throughout their CP.

The career-related context

From their career-related study, students identify an issue of interest then explore the ethical dimension associated with the issue in order to arrive at a focused ethical dilemma. The reflective project's primary focus is the ethical dilemma embedded within the issue, not the issue itself.

Students undertake research and analysis on the chosen ethical dilemma. This research will include consultation with the local and/or global community.

Linking the reflective project to the career-related studies of students provides a way for them to explore ethical dilemmas in real-life situations.

Links with the personal and professional skills course (PPS)

The relationship between the five themes of personal and professional skills and the reflective project is relevant and useful to students. Both the reflective project and the personal and professional skills course promote the development of research, writing and extended communication skills, intellectual discovery and creativity. In particular, the theme of applied ethics in the personal and professional skills course directly supports students in understanding and determining key concepts for their reflective project.

The five themes can be utilized by the reflective project supervisor in consultation with the personal and professional skills teacher.

Theme	Links to reflective project
1. Personal development	Forms the basis for self-reflection and explores the skills required to organize and manage time, make decisions and manage change; students require all of these to complete the reflective project successfully.
2. Intercultural understanding	Directly links with students' need to develop an appreciation of how cultural contexts may affect different perspectives on an ethical dilemma.
3. Effective communication	Its focus on interpersonal communication, writing, presentation and IT skills strengthens students' ability to present a structured and coherent project.
4. Thinking processes	The topics of ethical thinking, critical thinking, creative thinking, problem-solving and lateral thinking have direct application to the ways in which students learn and engage with the reflective project.
5. Applied ethics	Allows students to explore ethics, develop understandings, examine case studies and identify a focus for their reflective project.

The international dimension

The reflective project adds to the international dimension of the CP. It examines different cultural perspectives on an ethical dilemma, thus fostering an international perspective. The reflective project seeks to develop intercultural understanding as well as to raise students' awareness of the role that culture plays in their day-to-day lives.

While exploring an ethical dilemma, students become aware of the similarities and differences between their own cultures and those of others. Students can investigate and reflect on cultural values and behaviours, leading to a greater understanding and respect for other peoples and the way in which they lead their lives.

Options for the reflective project

At the end of the project, students submit:

- an essay or an essay with an additional format—see Options 1 and 2 below

- a *Reflections on planning and progress form* (1,000 words).

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

Option 1

A written essay (maximum 3,000 words). This should cover all the reflective project's requirements except reflection, which forms the content of the RPPF.

Option 2

A written essay (1,500–2,000 words) accompanied by an additional format (film, oral presentation, interview, play or display). Together, the written essay and additional format should cover all the reflective project's requirements except reflection.

Additional formats

The permitted additional formats are:

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

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

- **An interview** (recorded on audio/video; 7 minutes). An interview allows students to be creative by imagining and developing a discussion between two or more people. They 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. Students 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. Students can decide what their imagery will accomplish and how it will contribute to the reflective project overall. For example, it could provide an overview of their reflective project and create points of discussion or illustrate particular ideas.

Function of additional format

The chosen additional format should support and add information to the reflective project overall. For example, a film or presentation could reflect the different perspectives of the stakeholders involved, or detail the local/global manifestation of the issue, while the written essay contains the central argument(s) of the ethical dilemma.

Crucially, the content of the additional format must be different from the essay. For example, students should not take an argument presented in the essay and then repeat it in the additional format. The two elements should complement each other, each adding value to the other, ensuring that as an overall submission the assessment criteria are satisfied. Repetition or simply reformatting information will lose a student marks.

Whatever format the student chooses, it must be capable of being sent electronically to the IB for moderation. Live links to the reflective project are not permitted.

Time

Students should also consider carefully the amount of time associated with each format. Students are assessed on the reflective project's content, not their technical skills. Students should not spend the majority of their time making a technically brilliant film, but leaving insufficient time to write their accompanying essay.

Essay

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

Choice

How students choose to use the additional format is at their discretion and should be made in light of discussions with their supervisor.

Word limits

The IB sets an upper word limit to give a framework to students. Moderators will not assess beyond the upper word limit. There is no lower word limit, but submitting assessments considerably below the indicated limit are self-penalizing with regard to the degree to which the criteria can be satisfied.

Language

The reflective project must be submitted in one of the working languages of the IB (*IB language policy*, 2014)—English, Spanish or French.

The *Reflections on planning and progress form*

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

Process for the reflective project

Key activities

In developing the reflective project, students should:

- Identify an issue directly linked to their career-related study.

- Decide on an ethical dilemma that arises from the issue.

- Show an awareness of the ethical dilemma.

- Identify the key community(ies) involved in the dilemma.

- Examine different viewpoints.

- Develop a personal and relevant evaluation of the ethical dilemma.

- Reflect continuously at key points of the process.

Throughout, students are supported by their supervisor. They meet formally with their supervisor three times: before, during and at the end of the project.

Key content

While there is no prescribed structure for the project, the following features must be included.

The issue

Students need to explain the issue and clearly and explicitly link it to their career-related study. However, they must also remain aware that the issue itself is not the main focus of the reflective project.

The ethical dilemma

Students must be able to recognize the ethical dilemma that arises from the issue.

Research question

Students need to identify and describe accurately the question to be answered that explicitly references the ethical dilemma that has been identified.

The research

Students must provide evidence of research that supports different viewpoints on the ethical dilemma. They should also critically examine the research itself.

There are five main stages in the research process:

1. Defining the research's purpose and objectives and the research question.

2. Conducting a literature review.

3.   Designing appropriate data collection methods and analysing the data.

4.   Reflecting on the research methodology adopted.

5.   Presenting the research findings.

Critical analysis of the ethical dilemma

This involves students evaluating the viewpoints on the ethical dilemma and then articulating their own point of view based on reasoned argument.

References, citations and a bibliography

The reflective project is an academic piece of work and should be presented as such. This ensures academic honesty and allows the readers to check the evidence themselves.

•   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 reflective project. For further information please consult the IB publications *Academic honesty in the IB educational context* and *Effective citing and referencing*.

•   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.

Meetings

Students will have three formal meetings with their supervisor: prior to commencement of the reflective project, while working on it and at the end.

Reflections on planning and progress

Students record their reflections on planning and progress on the form provided—the RPPF—after each of their three formal meetings with their supervisor. See also Reflection below.

The students' responsibilities

Students are **required** to:

- choose an issue arising from their career-related studies that presents an ethical dilemma

- consult with their supervisor regarding the ethical dilemma

- develop a well-formulated and focused research question

- state clearly the linked career-related study at the start of the reflective project

- complete the RPPF as the work progresses, and after each of the scheduled meetings with their supervisor

- meet both internal and external assessment deadlines

- address the assessment criteria fully

- acknowledge all sources of information and ideas in references, citations and bibliography

- inform their supervisor of details of any external assistance received.

It is **strongly recommended** that students:

- plan how, when and where they will find material for their project

- plan a schedule for researching and producing the reflective project, allowing time for delays and unforeseen problems

- record sources as the research progresses (rather than trying to reconstruct a list at the end)

- maintain a "researcher's reflection space" (see appendix 3) to reflect upon their progress and inform scheduled meetings with the supervisor

- have a clear structure in mind for the reflective project before beginning to write

- carefully check and proofread the final version of the reflective project

- ensure that all basic requirements are met.

Assessment objectives

The reflective project will assess the following assessment objectives (AO), which are to be demonstrated throughout the students' reflective project process, from identification of an ethical dilemma embedded in an issue linked to their career-related study, to planning, through to reflection.

Students will be expected to:

AO1: Focus and method

- select and explore an ethical dilemma embedded in an issue linked to a career-related context
- select and apply appropriate research methods and collect and select relevant information from a variety of sources, showing an understanding of bias and validity

AO2: Knowledge and understanding in context

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the issue
- contextualize the ethical dilemma and analyse different perspectives on it through the use of a local/global example of the issue in which the dilemma is embedded
- demonstrate awareness and understanding of the impact of the ethical dilemma on a local/global community and the cultural influences on, and perceptions of, the ethical dilemma

AO3: Critical thinking

- demonstrate logical reasoning processes and the ability to interpret, analyse and evaluate material
- develop the ability to synthesize information, making connections and linking ideas and evidence

AO4: Communication

- present a structured and coherent project, use appropriate terminology accurately and consistently, and communicate ideas and concepts clearly

AO5: Engagement and reflections on planning and progress

- reflect on and refine the research process, and react to insights gained through exploration of the ethical dilemma
- critique decisions made throughout the research process and suggest improvements to their own working practices

Marking

Criterion	Aspect of reflective project assessed	Marks available
A: Focus and method	• Ethical dilemma and issue • Research question • Methodology	6 marks
B: Knowledge and understanding in context	• Context • Local or global example • Alternative perspectives and perceptions of dilemma	9 marks
C: Critical thinking	• Research • Analysis • Discussion and evaluation	12 marks
D: Communication	• Structure • Layout	3 marks
E: Engagement and reflection	• Process • Engagement • Research focus	6 marks
Total marks		**36**

Teachers and moderators should give students a mark for their achievement against each criterion based on a best-fit approach. A best-fit approach means that compensation should be made when a piece of work matches different aspects of a markband at different levels. The aim is to find the level that most appropriately conveys the level attained as demonstrated by the student's work.

The mark awarded should 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 awarded. For example, if student work matches two of the three requirements within a markband but one is lacking, the student should be rewarded for the strands that have been met well, but the mark awarded should be at the lower end of the markband to compensate for the element that is lacking.

Teachers and moderators should read the level descriptors in ascending mark order until they reach a descriptor that most appropriately describes the level of the work.

If a piece of work falls between two level descriptors, both should be read again and the one that best fits the student's work should be chosen.

Teachers and moderators should then award the mark that most fairly reflects the student's balance of achievement. Students do not need to meet every element of a level descriptor to receive a mark within that mark band.

Reflective project criteria

Criterion A: Focus and method

This criterion assesses the student's ability to select and explore an ethical dilemma embedded in an issue, which is contextualized in light of their career-related study, through careful formulation of a focused and systematic research question. It also assesses the student's ability to select and apply appropriate research methods and collect and select relevant information from a variety of sources, showing an understanding of bias and validity.

Markband	Descriptor
0	• The work does not reach the standard of the descriptor below.
1–2	• The research question identifies an issue related to the career-related study, but not a suitable ethical dilemma relating to that issue. • There is limited evidence of a planned approach, resulting in little information on how the research is intended to be conducted, used and analysed.
3–4	• There is an identification of an issue linked to the career-related study and an arising ethical dilemma. The research question is clearly stated and the focus on it is generally sustained throughout the project. • There is evidence of a planned approach and the determination and collection of largely appropriate sources/data/information. There is evidence of understanding of potential bias and validity.
5–6	• Clear identification of an issue linked to the career-related study, and the arising ethical dilemma. The relevance of the study is clear. The research question is clearly stated and sharp focus on it is sustained throughout the project. • There is evidence of excellent planning of research, and the determination and collection of appropriate and varied sources. There is evidence of understanding of potential bias and source validity and measures have been taken to limit bias through source selection.

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding in context

This criterion assesses the way in which the student evidences an understanding of the issue and the ability to contextualize the ethical dilemma in light of the wider issue, and through a local or global example of the issue and dilemma. It assesses also the ability to analyse different perspectives, showing an awareness and understanding of the impact of the dilemma on a global or local community, appreciating also the cultural influences and perception of the ethical dilemma.

Markband	Descriptor
0	• The work does not reach the standard of the descriptor below.
1–3	• The central ethical dilemma is identified and the student shows an awareness of its context(s), although this is largely implicit. Overall, the project demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of the ethical dilemma, generally dominated by one view. • There is evidence of an awareness of the relevance of the chosen dilemma to community members, which is only partially integrated into the overall inquiry. • Some awareness of how cultural perspectives can influence the ethical dilemma is demonstrated, although this is likely to be largely implicit.
4–6	• The central ethical dilemma is described from more than one perspective. Overall, the project demonstrates clear and consistent knowledge and understanding of the ethical dilemma and its context(s). • There is evidence of a relevant and sustained understanding of the impact of the ethical dilemma on community members. • Understanding of how cultural perspectives can influence the ethical dilemma is demonstrated and supported, where appropriate, with relevant examples.
7–9	• The central ethical dilemma is analysed from different perspectives, which are evaluated in a balanced way. Overall, the work demonstrates a considered and developed knowledge and understanding of the ethical dilemma with a clear sense of scope and context(s). • The use of a local or global example to contextualize the ethical dilemma is effective and well integrated. • The impact of the ethical dilemma on community members is analysed and forms an integral part of the inquiry. • Analysis of how cultural perspectives can influence the ethical dilemma is developed and integrated into the ideas presented.

Criterion C: Critical thinking

This criterion assesses the student's logical reasoning and evaluation of the issue, the ability to interpret, analyse and evaluate material, and the student's ability to synthesize and make connections, linking ideas and evidence and weighing them up as necessary. It assesses also the student's reasoning processes and the ability to present a coherent and sustained argument and personal voice. Finally, it assesses the appropriateness of findings and opinions related back to the research question.

Markband	Descriptor
0	• The work does not reach the standard of the descriptor below.
1–4	• A basic argument is presented. Evidence is presented. • The student presents straightforward conclusions, although these are asserted without drawing on any arguments or evidence provided. • Some simple ideas are connected and supported with evidence, although this may not be consistent throughout the project.
5–8	• An argument is presented with a viewpoint maintained throughout. Partial use of evidence is made to develop the argument. The student is able to reason and demonstrates an understanding of cause and effect. • Conclusions made are logical, drawing on the arguments and evidence presented. • Ideas are supported by relevant evidence from different sources to develop an overall argument.
9–12	• The argument presents a considered and convincing discussion of the issue and the associated ethical dilemma, interpreting and applying evidence to draw considered inferences. • Conclusions made are perceptive and concise, drawing consistently on the arguments and evidence presented. • Connections made between ideas are insightful, sustained and coherent and developed by a range of well-chosen evidence.

Criterion D: Communication

This criterion assesses the way in which the student presents a structured and coherent project through their communication style, using appropriate terminology accurately and consistently, assisting to convey ideas and concepts clearly.

Markband	Descriptor
0	• The work does not reach the standard of the descriptor below.
1	• There is a straightforward structure to the project as a whole, with similar material grouped together in a logical manner.
2	• Communication is generally clear and structured appropriately, with consistent use of appropriate terminology.
3	• Communication is coherent and structured in a way that supports the understanding of the student's ideas and arguments, with effective use of appropriate terminology to support and develop ideas.

Criterion E: Engagement and reflection

This criterion assesses how the student has engaged in discussions with their supervisor in the planning and progress of their research; the student's ability to reflect on and refine the research process, and react to insights gained through the exploration of their research question; and how well the student has been able to evaluate decisions made throughout the research process and suggest improvements to their own working practices.

This criterion also assesses engagement with the focus of the research through an insight into the student's thinking, their intellectual initiative, and their creativity through reflections on the thought and research process. Finally, through reflections on the process, it assesses the extent to which the student voice is present rather than only that of the supervisor and academics.

Markband	Descriptor
0	• The work does not reach the standard of the descriptor below.
1–2	• There is evidence of student reflection but this is mostly descriptive. • Reflections given on decision-making and planning are procedural. • These reflections communicate a limited degree of personal engagement with the subject and/or the process of research.
3–4	• There is evidence that student reflection is analytical. • Reflections given on decision-making and planning include reference to conceptual understanding and skill development. • These reflections communicate a moderate degree of personal engagement with the subject and process of research, demonstrating some intellectual initiative and/or creativity.
5–6	• There is evidence that student reflection is evaluative. • Reflections given on decision-making and planning include reference to the student's capacity to consider actions and ideas in response to setbacks experienced in the research process. • These reflections communicate a high degree of intellectual and personal engagement with the subject and process of research, demonstrating authenticity, intellectual initiative and/or creativity in the student voice.

Clarification and explanation of the criteria

This section will help the teacher/moderator to decide which descriptor best fits the student's work.

It gives a detailed description of the characteristics of each descriptor, with examples, for each of the five assessment criteria.

A: Focus and method

Markband	Descriptor	Characteristics of performance
0	• The work does not reach the standard of the descriptor below.	• Work in this band will not meet the requirement to select and define an appropriate research question.
1–2	• The research question identifies an ethical dilemma related to the career-related study. • There is evidence of planning and acknowledgement of bias and validity.	• Work in this band may identify an issue, but not an ethical dilemma arising from the issue. There will be a weakness in shaping it into a meaningful research question. For example, there may be identification of an issue (animal experimentation) without linking it to an ethical dilemma (Should animals be used for medical testing for the development of better medicines for humans?). It may be a descriptive project and may lack contrasting perspectives. • There will be a link to a career-related context, although this is likely to be incidental or undeveloped. • Work in this band will include relevant supporting evidence but may draw heavily on a limited range of sources (eg quoting large sections from a single document or over-relying on websites such as Wikipedia). Selection of evidence will tend to be heavily weighted to one perspective. • Any awareness of bias and validity is likely to be mainly implicit and inadvertent (eg quoting evidence from contrasting sources without an explicit recognition that they are contrasting in nature).

Markband	Descriptor	Characteristics of performance
3–4	• There is an identification of an issue linked to the career-related study and an arising ethical dilemma. The research question is clearly stated and the focus on it is generally sustained throughout the project. • There is evidence of a planned approach and the determination and collection of largely appropriate sources/data/information. There is evidence of understanding of potential bias and validity.	• Work in this band is likely to both identify a relevant issue with an ethical dilemma (eg privacy in social media) and develop it into an appropriate research question (eg How far is it acceptable for social media companies to use data gathered from their users?). The approach to the question is likely to be methodical (eg acknowledging points from opposing perspectives) and rely on a straightforward "for and against" format. • The information gathered will be well chosen and consistently relevant. Evidence for different perspectives is more balanced, but still may be weighted towards one side. Quotations and evidence tend to be used more selectively, drawing on a wider range of sources and formats (eg including graphs and tables as well as quotations). • Understanding of bias and validity is likely to be mainly implicit, but there is clearer evidence of choosing reliable sources and understanding the difference between fact and opinion.
5–6	• Clear identification of an issue linked to the career-related study, and the arising ethical dilemma. The relevance of the study is clear. The research question is clearly stated and sharp focus on it is sustained throughout the project. • There is evidence of excellent planning of research, and the determination and collection of appropriate and varied sources. There is evidence of understanding of potential bias and source validity and measures have been taken to limit bias through source selection.	• Work in this band includes a question that provides the opportunity to evaluate the implications of the ethical dilemma beyond simply giving the case for and against. For example, "Should terminally ill individuals have the option of physician-assisted suicide?" allows the student to explore a wider range of perspectives at a theoretical (medical, legal, moral) and personal (doctor, patient, family) level. • Source materials are well chosen, varied and are often used with precision to illustrate particular points, arguments and ideas. Work in this band is likely to take account of aspects such as value judgments, bias and misrepresentation of evidence/statistics in their responses and comment on them where appropriate.

B: Knowledge and understanding in context

Markband	Descriptor	Characteristics of performance
0	• The work does not reach the standard of the descriptor below.	• Work in this band shows little or no awareness of the wider contexts that might affect or influence the ethical dilemma chosen (eg choosing an ethical dilemma around animal experimentation, but not considering life-saving medicines that may have been developed as a result).
1–3	• The central ethical dilemma is identified and the student shows an awareness of its context(s), although this is largely implicit. Overall, the project demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of the ethical dilemma, generally dominated by one view. • There is evidence of an awareness of the relevance of the chosen dilemma to community members, which is only partially integrated into the overall inquiry. • Some awareness of how cultural perspectives can influence the ethical dilemma is demonstrated, although this is likely to be largely implicit.	• Work in this band is likely to focus on the more obvious or surface features of the ethical dilemma or mainly deal with one aspect at the expense of a broader perspective (eg Wind power is good because it does not hurt the environment). Wider contexts (eg negative impact on residents, cost versus benefit) are likely to be referred to only in passing or left implicit. • Work in this band may be more likely to present a particular view on the ethical dilemma, rather than explore different perspectives on it. Consequently, while different viewpoints may be acknowledged or referred to, evidence is not weighed up or balanced. • Work in this band demonstrates awareness that the ethical dilemma will have a particular impact on relevant community members, but this will tend to be stated rather than explored or presented in a way that is self-evident. As with wider contexts, cultural perspectives are likely to be referred to only in passing or left implicit.

Markband	Descriptor	Characteristics of performance
4–6	• The central ethical dilemma is described from more than one perspective. Overall, the project demonstrates clear and consistent knowledge and understanding of the ethical dilemma and its context(s). • There is evidence of a relevant and sustained understanding of the impact of the ethical dilemma on community members. • Understanding of how cultural perspectives can influence the ethical dilemma is demonstrated and supported, where appropriate, with relevant examples.	• Work in this band presents a balanced view of the ethical dilemma recognizing the pros and cons of different viewpoints (eg Wind power is a clean, renewable energy source, but can be unreliable), all with supporting evidence, although coverage may still be uneven. • The different ideas and arguments will be presented/described, often methodically, in a way that shows an understanding of the issue and related ethical dilemma. However, there is likely to be limited analysis and the responses will still tend to deal mainly with the more obvious aspects of, and perspectives on, the ethical dilemma. • An understanding of the impact on the communities and influence of cultural perspectives is beginning to be more integrated into the overall arguments presented and informs the whole response. Examples are relevant and begin to develop some of the points made.

Markband	Descriptor	Characteristics of performance
7–9	• The central ethical dilemma is analysed from different perspectives, which are evaluated in a balanced way. Overall, the work demonstrates a considered and developed knowledge and understanding of the ethical dilemma with a clear sense of scope and context(s). • The use of a local or global example to contextualize the ethical dilemma is effective and well integrated. • The impact of the ethical dilemma on community members is analysed and forms an integral part of the inquiry. • Analysis of how cultural perspectives can influence the ethical dilemma is developed and integrated into the ideas presented.	• Work in this band is beginning to be more nuanced (eg becoming aware of the subtleties, ironies and contradictions within the different perspectives: The hazard to wildlife/visual impact on the landscape of the most "green" source of power), although this may not be sustained throughout the whole response. • A range of different perspectives/viewpoints is analysed and evaluated rather than just presented/contrasted. There is justification of the validity and weaknesses of different arguments and balance between them when drawing conclusions (eg large upfront investment required to build wind turbines balanced against low running costs). • Similarly, the impact on communities and/or global and cultural perspectives is considered and, where appropriate, balanced (eg impact on rural communities of wind turbines, the economic impact on mining communities of decreasing reliance on coal balanced with the global environmental benefits of clean renewable energy).

C: Critical thinking

Markband	Descriptor	Characteristics of performance
0	• The work does not reach the standard of the descriptor below.	• Work in this band will tend not to present an argument, but simply describe an issue.
1–4	• A basic argument is presented. Evidence is presented. • The student presents straightforward conclusions, although these are asserted without drawing on any arguments or evidence provided. • Some simple ideas are connected and supported with evidence, although this may not be consistent throughout the project.	• Work in this band presents a basic argument, outlines some main points that are relevant and, as a minimum, acknowledges different viewpoints. However, some ideas are likely to be presented as self-evident rather than explained (eg poorer people don't have any choice but to use payday loan companies). • The viewpoint expressed in the project (eg banks behave unfairly) is mostly consistent and at times supported with evidence, but remains largely undeveloped. Similarly, inferences made from the evidence are relevant but mainly at the surface level (eg The high fees charged by banks are unfair because they affect those who can least afford them). • Conclusions are relevant, but may be repetitious or not well linked to the ideas in the rest of the essay.
5–8	• An argument is presented with a viewpoint maintained throughout. Partial use of evidence is made to develop the argument. The student is able to reason and demonstrates an understanding of cause and effect. • Conclusions made are logical, drawing on the arguments and evidence presented. • Ideas are supported by relevant evidence from different sources to develop an overall argument.	• Work in this band uses evidence more effectively to develop ideas and shows a straightforward understanding of consequences (eg Building a hotel resort bordering a nature reserve can damage the reserve). • Conclusions may still tend to re-present points made in the main body of the essay rather than use them to develop new ideas, but the point of view reached will be justified and explained. • Points made are beginning to build on one another in a logical sequence to provide an overview of the ethical dilemma, although this may not always be consistent.

Markband	Descriptor	Characteristics of performance
9–12	• The argument presents a considered and convincing discussion of the issue and the associated ethical dilemma, interpreting and applying evidence to draw considered inferences. • Conclusions made are perceptive and concise, drawing consistently on the arguments and evidence presented. • Connections made between ideas are insightful, sustained and coherent and developed by a range of well-chosen evidence.	• In this band, points made and evidence chosen combine to develop a clear and coherent argument, moving with confidence between taking an overview of the subject and engaging with specific details and evidence. • Understanding of concepts such as cause and effect is becoming more developed and nuanced, for example by considering different unintended negative consequences of positive actions (Diverting resources into cancer treatments leads to lower funding for social care and a reduction in the quality of life for a larger number of patients with less serious, chronic conditions). • Conclusions tend to draw on, but not simply repeat, ideas, evidence and arguments from earlier in the response, providing an effective overview of the issue and the associated ethical dilemma. • Work in this band begins to synthesize, rather than simply select and present, evidence, bringing together ideas and information from different sources to support and develop the argument.

D: Communication

Markband	Descriptor	Characteristics of performance
0	• The work does not reach the standard of the descriptor below.	• There is little sense of a logical sequence to the response; introductions and/or conclusions may be brief or missing.
1	• There is a straightforward structure to the project as a whole, with similar material grouped together in a logical manner.	• Work in this band provides a structure that is appropriate to the task, including an introduction and conclusion. The response is organized into paragraphs with simple links between them that usually follow a logical sequence, although transitions between sections may, at times, be awkward. • Work in this band uses terminology appropriately, but it may not always be fully explained and there may be some evidence of misunderstanding.
2	• Communication is generally clear and structured appropriately, with consistent use of appropriate terminology.	• Work in this band structures material to support the argument, with points following logically on from each other and leading to an appropriate conclusion. Linking between paragraphs and/or sections is clear and consistent, although it will often follow a straightforward "for and against" model. • Terminology is mostly used appropriately and is explained or defined where relevant.
3	• Communication is coherent and structured in a way that supports the understanding of the student's ideas and arguments , with effective use of appropriate terminology to support and develop ideas.	• The structure of the response is organized to develop an overall argument. Each section builds effectively on what has gone before, leading to a logical conclusion. • Terminology is used clearly and precisely to support and develop ideas.

E: Engagement and reflection

Markband	Descriptor	Characteristics of performance
0	• The work does not reach the standard of the descriptor below.	• There is little evidence of a planned approach to research or awareness of how it could be improved.
1–2	• There is evidence of student reflection but this is mostly descriptive. • Reflections given on decision-making and planning are procedural. • These reflections communicate a limited degree of personal engagement with the subject and/or the process of research.	• Work in this band tends to describe what was done rather than why it was done and what impact it had on the response. • Comments on how the research methods could have been improved are likely to be appropriate, but general. • Work in this band expresses a relevant personal view on the issue and related ethical dilemma, but this is unlikely to be developed.
3–4	• There is evidence that student reflection is analytical. • Reflections given on decision-making and planning include reference to conceptual understanding and skill development. • These reflections communicate a moderate degree of personal engagement with the subject and process of research, demonstrating some intellectual initiative and/or creativity.	• Work in this band considers what has been learned about the issue and research methods, justifying choices and suggesting improvements, although this may not be consistent. • Work in this band reflects critically on the choice of research methods and begins to link this to an understanding of the issue and related ethical dilemma (eg explaining the need for a range of evidence to represent different perspectives). • Work in this band expresses a reasoned personal response to the issue and related ethical dilemma and begins to show evidence of ability to identify and explain insights gained.

Markband	Descriptor	Characteristics of performance
5–6	• There is evidence that student reflection is evaluative. • Reflections given on decision-making and planning include reference to the student's capacity to consider actions and ideas in response to setbacks experienced in the research process. • These reflections communicate a high degree of intellectual and personal engagement with the subject and process of research, demonstrating authenticity, intellectual initiative and/or creativity in the student voice.	• Work in this band expresses and explains how the student's understanding of the issue and related ethical dilemma has changed and developed and what new insights they have gained as a result of undertaking the project. • Work in this band justifies the approach taken to developing a research method, often linking it explicitly to the chosen issue and related ethical dilemma (eg showing understanding that different forms of evidence can have different effects—a graph could show the scale of an issue precisely, but a first-person account may have a more emotional impact). • There is evidence in the work that the student is beginning to develop their own ideas and insights rather than re-presenting the views of others. Evidence of initiative in research methods could include effective primary research (eg seeking an interview with someone directly involved in or affected by the issue).