



International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
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Middle Years Programme

Personal project guide

For use from September 2004 or January 2005





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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.

IB learners strive to be:

Inquirers	They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.
Knowledgeable	They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.
Thinkers	They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.
Communicators	They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.
Principled	They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.
Open-minded	They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.
Caring	They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.
Risk-takers	They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.
Balanced	They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.
Reflective	They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

Contents

Personal project in the MYP	1
How to use this guide	1
Introduction to the MYP personal project	2
Aims and objectives	3
Requirements	5
Organizing the personal project	7
Supervising the personal project	22
Guidance for students	25
Assessment	30
Assessment in the MYP	30
Personal project assessment criteria	32
Determining the grade	40
Personal project: Moderation	42
Personal project: Monitoring of assessment	45
Appendix	47
MYP personal project glossary	47

How to use this guide

The *Personal project guide* provides the framework for undertaking the personal project in the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and must be read in conjunction with the document *MYP: From principles into practice* (August 2008).

This guide was originally published in January 2004 for use from September 2004 (northern hemisphere) and January 2005 (southern hemisphere). However, the document *MYP: From principles into practice* (August 2008) now includes all general information about the programme and, as a result, the format of subject-group guides has been changed so that they include only subject-specific information.

This revised edition of the *Personal project guide* includes all personal project-specific information as published in the earlier version. Importantly, requirements for the personal project, aims, objectives and final assessment details have not changed. For information, minor modifications have been made to criterion D for clarity and consistency but they do not change the criterion in any significant way. However, general information about the MYP has been taken out and some additional personal project-specific information included (for example, examples of personal projects related to each of the areas of interaction).

Introduction to the MYP personal project

The personal project is a significant body of work produced over an extended period and is a product of the student's own initiative. It holds a very important place in the MYP and should reflect the student's experience of the programme. It provides an excellent opportunity for students to produce a truly creative piece of work of their choice and to demonstrate the skills they have developed through approaches to learning.

The personal project offers students a great deal of flexibility and many opportunities for differentiation of learning and expression according to their individual needs. It is a rich opportunity for students to complete an extended piece of work that challenges their own creativity and thinking about issues of concern to themselves. Creativity is encouraged by the aims and objectives of the personal project; the results are usually rewarding, and sometimes spectacular.

As shown in the programme model, and exemplified in the subject-group guides and other MYP documents, the five areas of interaction form the core of the programme: they are addressed through the subject groups; they bind various disciplines together; they are the basis of varied learning experiences through project work, interdisciplinary activities, and real-life community involvement. Although students are not awarded individual grades for the areas of interaction, they are central to the experience of the personal project, which is intended to be the culmination of the student's involvement with the five areas of interaction; the project is therefore normally completed during the **last year** of the student's participation in the MYP.

Students may discover that completing a personal project is an excellent preparation for future studies. It is also very rewarding for supervisors to work closely with individual students to see what they can achieve.

The personal project may take many forms, for example:

- an original work of art (visual, dramatic, or performance)
- a written piece of work on a special topic (literary, social, psychological, or anthropological)
- a piece of literary fiction (that is, creative writing)
- an original science experiment
- an invention or specially designed object or system
- the presentation of a developed business, management, or organizational plan (that is, for an entrepreneurial business or project), a special event, or the development of a new student or community organization.

The student and the supervisor must agree that, whatever form the personal project takes, the finished product allows the student to **investigate and focus** on a theme, topic and/or issue closely connected to at least one area of interaction of the MYP. It must also include a **report**, as detailed in the "Requirements" section of this guide.

Aims and objectives

Aims

The aims of the personal project state in a general way what the student may expect to experience or learn. In addition, they suggest how the student may be changed by the learning experience.

The aims of the MYP personal project are to allow students to:

- demonstrate the personal abilities and skills required to produce and present an extended piece of work
- engage in personal inquiry, action and reflection on specific topics and issues
- focus on, and demonstrate an understanding of, the areas of interaction
- reflect on learning and share knowledge, views and opinions.

Objectives

The objectives of the personal project state the specific targets that are set for learning. They define what the student will be able to accomplish as a result of completing the personal project.

These objectives relate directly to the assessment criteria found in the “Personal project assessment criteria” section.

A Planning and development

Students should be able to:

- identify a clear and achievable goal
- describe and justify a focus on the chosen area(s) of interaction
- describe the steps followed to achieve the stated goal
- adhere to the stated goal throughout the project.

B Collection of information/resources

Students should be able to:

- select and use adequate, varied resources
- identify and use relevant information critically
- acknowledge sources of information appropriately.

C Choice and application of techniques

Students should be able to:

- choose techniques relevant to the project's goal
- justify this selection
- apply the chosen techniques consistently and effectively.

D Analysis of information

Students should be able to:

- analyse the information in terms of the goal and the focus of the project
- express personal thought
- support arguments with evidence
- respond thoughtfully to ideas and inspiration.

E Organization of the written work

Students should be able to:

- organize their work in a coherent manner according to the required structure
- present information clearly
- present references, bibliography and symbolic representations appropriately.

F Analysis of the process and outcome

Students should be able to:

- identify the strengths and weaknesses of the project at different stages of development
- where appropriate, suggest ways in which the project could have been tackled differently
- assess the achieved results in terms of the initial goal and the focus on the chosen area(s) of interaction
- show awareness of the overall perspectives related to the chosen topic or piece of work.

G Personal engagement

Students should be able to:

- meet deadlines
- follow agreed procedures and work plans
- make appropriate use of a process journal
- show initiative, enthusiasm and commitment to the task.

Requirements

The personal project is a requirement for **all** IB World Schools offering the MYP, whether or not they request IB-validated grades.

Organizing the personal project in the school

Schools are expected to organize and support the completion of the personal project for all students in the last year of the programme. Schools must ensure that students receive proper guidance and encouragement.

The personal project must not form part of the coursework for any subject: it must provide an opportunity for students to select a topic or theme about which they are enthusiastic, and to show commitment to the completion of their own project.

The personal project must not be limited to one specific discipline. It must be inspired by, and focused on, topics and issues related to the areas of interaction to show the student's understanding of the chosen areas. Most of the work involved in the personal project will be done outside class time.

Supervision

It is the school's responsibility to ensure that each student receives direct supervision from a qualified person in the school, who can provide appropriate guidance and confirm the authenticity of the work submitted. Students should be guided in the planning, research and completion of their projects. They should receive formative feedback on their work and be encouraged to test and develop their own ideas and to respect established deadlines.

Schools should facilitate contact between students and supervisors, and ensure that similar standards are applied, especially in the assessment process.

Adequate training for those individuals involved in the supervision of the personal project must be provided. The supervisors must have knowledge of the MYP and be especially familiar with the objectives and assessment criteria for the personal project. The supervisor does not need specialist knowledge in the area selected by the student; outside help may be requested in some instances.

Assessment

The personal project should be assessed according to the criteria stated in this guide.

Supervisors are responsible for the formative and summative assessment of the projects.

Internal standardization of assessment among supervisors is essential to ensure comparable and fair application of the criteria to the individual projects. A process of internal standardization of assessment for the personal project should be developed in each school where there is more than one supervisor.

Grades are awarded for the personal project in the same way as for the eight subject groups of the MYP curriculum. In addition, for schools requiring IB-validated grades, the award of a grade 1 or 2 for the personal project makes a student ineligible for the award of the MYP certificate.

Structure of the personal project report

The report for all types of personal projects must follow the same general structure and include the following elements.

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Introduction, defining the goal of the project and an explicit focus on the chosen area(s) of interaction, and providing an outline of how the student intends to achieve the goal
- Description of the process, including production steps, the characteristics, aspects or components of the work
- Analysis of the inspiration, research and influences guiding the work, the findings and decisions made, the resulting product and the process in terms of the goal and its focus on the area(s) of interaction chosen (where the student has chosen to write an essay about a specific issue, the essay itself forms the main part of this analysis)
- Conclusion, where the student reflects on the impact of his or her project, and on new perspectives that could be considered
- Bibliography
- Appendices, where appropriate

Length of the personal project report

The length of the personal project report must not exceed 4,000 words.

Written work within a personal project varies, given the variety of types of projects that is acceptable. Where students write an essay to analyse an issue that they have investigated, the essay must be incorporated into the required structure of the report and not exceed 4,000 words. Where a student chooses creative writing (for example, a set of short stories) as a project, the length of the work will be agreed between the student and the supervisor, and the report of the project (following the required structure) will be shorter than an essay-type project, as will reports for other projects of a creative nature.

Organizing the personal project

Preparation for the personal project

The successful organization of the personal project within a school can be facilitated in a number of ways. The school needs to plan carefully in advance to ensure it has the correct structure in place when the year 5 students begin work.

During years 1–4

The school should:

- devise an approaches to learning (ATL) strategy within the school from year 1 so that the students have a range of opportunities to practise the necessary skills
- keep parents informed of the objectives and characteristics of the personal project, because their support and understanding of its place in the MYP will be invaluable for the students
- allocate adequate resources for the successful completion of projects, building up library and media resources
- treat the personal project as an important part of the MYP experience by exhibiting students' work and presenting the personal project to new students as an exciting and rewarding experience.

At the beginning of year 5

The MYP coordinator should make sure the systems are set up so that all staff members involved in the personal project understand their role. In particular, coordinators should allocate enough time to ensure that the overall strategy for personal projects is working successfully.

The school is expected to:

- provide supervisors with sufficient time to help students effectively and to do collaborative work
- provide proper information and adequate training to all supervisors
- explain the objectives and assessment criteria clearly to supervisors and students before they begin the personal project
- establish procedures for assigning a supervisor for each project and limit the number of students allocated to each supervisor
- ensure there is agreement on the timetable for the work
- determine the procedures of internal standardization among the supervisors in the school.

Choice of supervisors

Many schools find it beneficial to both staff and students to involve all teaching and other professional staff in the supervision of personal projects. This helps to make the teaching of approaches to learning more purposeful for everyone and also reduces the often heavy load placed on the year 5 teachers.

In a large school with a number of supervisors it may be appropriate to name one person as personal project leader, to be responsible for documentation, assessment criteria and many other aspects of the

administration of the personal project. This leader should also call meetings and, if necessary, could advise students experiencing difficulties that their individual supervisor may not be able to resolve.

The number of supervisors and the number of projects supervised by each person will vary from school to school, as will the release time from teaching or other duties for each supervisor. Schools have used a variety of methods for choosing supervisors.

- Students approach a supervisor of their own choosing.
- Supervisors choose from a list of projects and are informed of the corresponding student names afterwards.
- Supervisors are assigned to students by the school at random.

A student may choose to seek advice from a qualified adult outside the school structure. However, the internal supervisor remains responsible for administrative aspects, such as deadlines and passing on information, and for the final assessment of the project.

It is important to remember that the supervisor need not be an expert in the topic the student chooses for the personal project.

Potential problems

When organizing the personal project for their students, schools should bear in mind the following points.

- The personal project should not become an impossible task for students. Supervisors must be reminded that the personal project is not a university thesis.
- The preparation and work involved in supervising a personal project must not be underestimated. Schools should share the supervision of personal projects among their staff to avoid placing an undue amount of extra work on their year 5 teachers.
- Schools should not be reluctant to allow students to choose topics in a field where they have no specialist to supervise. Where necessary, a qualified adult from outside the school may be consulted by the student or by the supervisor.

Preparing supervisors

Responsibility for the organization of the personal project lies, as with other aspects of the MYP, with the MYP coordinator and, if applicable, with the personal project leader.

The MYP coordinator should provide all supervisors with the following.

- A copy of this guide and the document *MYP: From principles into practice* (August 2008)
- A general introduction to the personal project, with an explanation of where it is placed in the overall philosophy of the MYP
- An explanation of their role as supervisors of students' personal projects
- A description of the responsibilities of the student
- Guidance on how to help plan the student's work and to set deadlines
- Examples of personal projects completed by students from other schools (where available) and/or from their own school in previous years
- Training on assessment procedures for the personal project

Timetables

Each school should decide on a timetable for the personal project. It should give realistic dates for the students that identify important stages in the development of the project.

The school should remind students about the importance of planning their work to meet these deadlines (an important approaches to learning (ATL) skill) and of having regular meetings with their supervisor (whether in groups or as individuals), so that they can maintain steady progress and can be briefed on the next stage of the process.

Supervisors should also emphasize to students the importance of keeping to the timetable.

Preparing the students

The preparation of students for the personal project begins early in the MYP with exposure to the areas of interaction, and in particular approaches to learning, in order to prepare them for the organization of their project.

Towards the end of year 4 many schools provide specific orientation on the personal project so that students have sufficient time to think about a topic or theme on which they would like to work. This helps to make the students more aware of what is expected of them, and gives them the opportunity to ask questions before they begin the preliminary stages of their project. The presence of some year 5 students who have just completed their own personal project, and of their supervisors, may provide support and inspiration.

At the end of year 4, or the beginning of year 5, students should receive the following information and guidance.

- Guidelines about the personal project
- A timetable with deadlines
- The assessment criteria
- The importance of personal reflection and analysis
- Advice on how to keep and use a process journal
- The importance of positive attitudes such as initiative, willingness to correct or perfect their work, responsibility and a sense of organization
- The need for academic honesty

Process journal

A process journal is required because it provides support to students. It should be updated regularly during the development of the project and should be used to record progress honestly, containing thoughts, ideas, decisions, feelings and reflections. It does not need to be well presented, but the students should use it in discussions with their supervisor.

The process journal is a particularly useful tool for students because it helps in the organization of the report, an important part of the project.

The supervisor may use parts of this journal to assess the progress of students' personal projects (see assessment criterion G).

The language of the project

The personal project will normally be written in the school's language of instruction. However, all projects submitted to the IB for moderation or monitoring of assessment must be written in one of the MYP working languages. See the *MYP coordinator's handbook* for details.

In some cases, where schools can provide proper guidance and assessment, some students may be allowed to write the personal project and the report in a language other than the school's language of instruction. It is essential, however, that the standards used in the assessment of such projects are the same as those applied to all personal projects in the school. Therefore, schools must only allow personal projects to be written in other languages when internal standardization can take place and uniformity of standards can be ensured.

Group work

While some personal projects will undoubtedly involve group work (for example, the organization of a play) the individual student's contribution must be clearly evident in all stages of the development of the personal project, and the report must be written by the student alone. The personal project is always assessed individually for each student.

Exhibiting the outcome

Some personal projects will be of a public nature (for example, a play, concert, musical piece or visual arts display). However, other types of personal project could also be displayed and shared. The presentation of personal projects to the community can be both a way of publicizing students' successes and of providing an inspiration for other students who are about to begin work on their personal projects.

While a presentation is not prescribed by the IB, it is recommended, because it can give an opportunity for others in the school to become aware of the richness and the diversity of the MYP.

Examples of personal project development

The following examples are based on the topic "Poverty in my city".

Required structure	Essay	Mural	Fund-raising
Title page	Poverty in my city: How can it be explained?	Murals: Why do we create them?	Fighting poverty in my city
Table of contents	Titles of sections and sub-sections of the project	Titles of sections and sub-sections of the project	Titles of sections and sub-sections of the project
Introduction	<p>Area of interaction Environments</p> <p>Goal Examine how local environments affect poverty in my city and write an essay to present my findings.</p> <p>Outline/plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail the steps necessary for the completion of the project • Conduct a general review of poverty through local statistics • Review the main aspects of poverty and its causes or consequences in terms of local environments 	<p>Area of interaction Human ingenuity (formerly <i>homo faber</i>)</p> <p>Goal Explore and gain an understanding of why we create murals and create a mural about overcoming poverty.</p> <p>Outline/plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail the steps necessary for the completion of the project • Consider the ways of conveying a feeling and a message • Research different murals and techniques • Conduct a general review of poverty in my city • Draw my way of perceiving poverty • Seek feedback from others • Complete the mural 	<p>Area of interaction Community and service</p> <p>Goal Find ways in which different groups of people can take action to fight poverty in my city and contribute to one of these organizations.</p> <p>Outline/plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail the steps necessary for the completion of the project • Conduct a general review of poverty in my city • Find out about people and organizations fighting poverty • Evaluate ways of contributing • Decide on processes and procedures, beneficiaries • Organize a fund-raising activity to help a selected organization

Required structure	Essay	Mural	Fund-raising
Description of process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct research through reading various documents, statistics Interview social workers, sociologists, psychologists, people in different parts of the city, police Document environmental evidence through photographs and newspaper reports Analyse data and information Justify decision to write an essay; analyse structure and content of formal essay genre and its application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate different sources (about art and the topic at hand) Choose aspects of poverty to be reflected in the mural Choose techniques, sketches Obtain feedback on stages of completion and final product Justify decision to create a mural and for using this style of mural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate poverty in the city and organizations that already work with poor people Conduct interviews and gather data about needs and possible action Choose strategy to organize and publicize the fund-raising activity Organize and complete the activity Follow up with beneficiaries Justify decision to organize these events in this way to achieve the goal of the project
Analysis of the inspiration, research and influences guiding the work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show the contrast between what different sources say about the main causes of poverty in the city Give definitions of poverty in this local context Analyse how the local environments are related to poverty (may include housing, access to services, local amenities and other factors) Review the process in terms of difficulties encountered and ways in which these were solved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show how the symbols of poverty are used and explain how to produce the impact I want to create in the community with reference to other artists who have used murals in their work Justify the use of different techniques and colours in the mural Show the contrast between own interpretation of symbols, techniques and colours used, with the feedback received from others Evaluate the changes introduced into the mural Analyse the characteristics of the audience Analyse the best location for the mural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give a short analytical description of the different ways in which institutions are working to raise money to fight poverty and discuss how their actions have made a difference Analyse the way in which the fund-raising activity will be carried out to make it appealing and effective Review the process in terms of difficulties encountered and how these were overcome Analyse a community's response to poverty

Required structure	Essay	Mural	Fund-raising
<p>Conclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the main causes of poverty in the city that are linked to environments, according to the findings of the research A new approach to the question could be to consider what changes in the surrounding environment are needed to improve the quality of life of people in the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate whether the mural has been able to reflect the issues linked to poverty in the city Reflect on the impact the mural has had on the community Reflect on the impact the mural has had on my own perception of poverty Formulate a new question: how can we give people a voice in our city? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the impact of the project on people who benefited from the fund-raising activity Review the outcome (money raised versus expectations), involvement of others, responses Indicate other ways to help to fight poverty in terms of community and service Review what this project did to prevent a culture of dependency Give an overall perspective on how the project changed views, including my own
<p>Bibliography</p>	<p>Books, newspapers, magazines, interviews, internet sites</p>	<p>Books, newspapers, magazines, interviews, internet sites</p>	<p>Books, newspapers, magazines, interviews, internet sites</p>
<p>Appendices, where appropriate</p>	<p>Statistics, graphics, histograms, questionnaire used for interviews, other material</p>	<p>Pictures, photographs, list of artists, art movements that provided inspiration</p>	<p>Questionnaire used for the interviews, supporting statistics</p>

Addressing the areas of interaction

The areas of interaction provide contexts through which teachers and students consider teaching and learning, approach the disciplines, and establish connections across disciplines. They are organizing elements that strengthen and extend student awareness and understanding through meaningful exploration of real-life issues. All teachers share the responsibility of using the areas of interaction as a focus for their units of work.

The process of inquiring into the subject content through the different perspectives or contexts of the areas of interaction enables students to develop a deeper understanding of the subject as well as the dimensions of the areas of interaction. Through this inquiry cycle of understanding and awareness, reflection and action, students engage in reflection and metacognition, which can lead them from academic knowledge to thoughtful action, helping to develop positive attitudes and a sense of personal and social responsibility.

The document *MYP: From principles into practice* (August 2008), in the section “The areas of interaction”, provides further information relating to the dimensions of each area of interaction, the inquiry cycle, planning units of work, and focusing relevant content through these areas of interaction.

There are five areas of interaction:

- approaches to learning (ATL)
- community and service
- health and social education
- environments
- human ingenuity (formerly *homo faber*).

The areas of interaction are central to the personal project and must be carefully considered when deciding on the choice of project. When the personal project is first introduced, it will be of great benefit to the students to hold an open forum where they can brainstorm topics that allow a focus on, and a further exploration of, one or more areas of interaction. This will help them to understand more clearly what is expected of them. Students must always bear in mind that the aim of the project is not simply to display knowledge; they will apply methods and techniques developed through ATL and illustrate their appreciation of the dimensions of the areas of interaction.

Where feasible, schools are encouraged to include an oral interview or presentation to a group as part of the experience of the personal project. This creates a further opportunity for discussion of the student’s understanding of the areas of interaction.

The following sections provide brief ideas for personal projects, focusing on each area of interaction. They are examples and are not fully developed plans for a personal project. Some examples could easily fit into more than one area of interaction perspective. However, it is the main area of interaction that has been highlighted as the focus.

Please note that any reference to “I” in the areas of interaction questions could also be interpreted as “we” where this is more appropriate to the social ethos of the school or location.

Approaches to learning

How do I learn best?

How do I know?

How do I communicate my understanding?

Approaches to learning (ATL) are central to all MYP subject groups and the personal project. Through ATL, schools provide students with the tools to enable them to take responsibility for their own learning. This involves articulating, organizing and teaching the skills, attitudes and practices that students require to become successful learners.

The MYP has identified seven groups of skills that encompass ATL: organization, collaboration, communication, information literacy, reflection, thinking, and transfer. The school community will need to spend time defining the ATL attitudes, skills and practices that they consider important within these groups, both for an individual subject group and across subject groups.

As this area is concerned with the development of effective study skills, of critical, coherent and independent thought, and of the capacity for solving problems and making decisions, it prepares students for the completion of independent work in the last year of the programme, in the form of the personal project.

In their individual work, students should develop:

- organizational skills, study practices and positive attitudes towards work
- collaborative skills, that is, learning to work in groups and to consider each others' strengths and different points of view
- communication skills of essay, analytical and creative writing, as well as other appropriate forms of expression to suit various contexts
- information literacy, that is, knowing how to access information and use it wisely, and understanding the research process (from finding and selecting information to judging it critically)
- reflection, developing the ability to appraise work and evaluate performance realistically, and using this evaluation to adapt behaviour and learning strategies
- thinking skills, building a higher thought process using convergent and divergent thinking, making a point of view coherent, creatively generating new ideas and considering issues from multiple viewpoints
- transfer skills, including the ability to make connections across subjects and apply skills and knowledge in unfamiliar situations.

The personal project provides many opportunities for students to demonstrate the skills and approaches developed in ATL over the five years of the programme, and to develop these further as part of the project. In addition, the opportunity to conduct inquiry into the areas of interaction can include ATL as an object of study in itself.

Examples

Topic	Goal of personal project	Process	Product
Yoga	Examine how I might structure a course to provide basic information to peers on how yoga can be used effectively for relaxation. Inspired by own enjoyment of yoga and desire to teach others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research how to devise a basic course and what the main elements should be • Write the course • Explore strategies for advertising the course • Deliver the course and evaluate it 	A six-week introductory yoga course, delivered and evaluated.

Topic	Goal of personal project	Process	Product
Communication skills	Develop my ability to communicate with different groups of people by learning basic sign language. Inspired by meeting a deaf friend last year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the different forms of course available and complete the appropriate course • Record my progress • Practise with local contacts 	The test of new skills through a social event. A presentation to peers.
Animals	Learn how to train my dog and inform others of the benefits. Inspired by a new dog in the family home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research dog obedience classes or courses and attend the appropriate course • Record our progress • Research general information about training dogs • Explore techniques for presenting information • If possible, give training demonstration to peers 	An information board with pictures, facts and details of own experiences about dog training.

Community and service

How do we live in relation to each other?

How can I contribute to the community?

How can I help others?

The emphasis of community and service is on developing community awareness and a sense of belonging and responsibility towards the community so that students become engaged with, and feel empowered to act in response to, the needs of others.

Community and service starts in the classroom and extends beyond it, requiring students to discover the social reality of self, others and communities. This, in turn, may initiate involvement and service in the communities in which they live. Reflection on the needs of others and the development of students' ability to participate in and respond to these needs both contribute to the development of caring and responsible learners.

Community and service in years 1–4 may have opened students' eyes to different realities. An awareness of community needs and first-hand experience should have created an interest in finding out more about the issues and problems the student has witnessed and been involved in. The choice of the personal project can derive directly from this interest and sense of commitment developed over the four years. The research and thought involved in the completion of a personal project may even provide the student with valuable experience and knowledge to develop further an existing community service project in the last year of the programme.

Some of the skills, attitudes and values closely linked with this area of interaction are:

- an interest in today's world
- sensitivity to the needs of the community and society in general
- social awareness
- an altruistic attitude
- a sense of responsibility and self-esteem.

Examples

Topic	Goal of personal project	Process	Product
Depression in adolescents	Help young people deal with negative thoughts and pressure that can lead to depression. Inspired by own and friends' experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research anxiety and depression in teenagers • Explore techniques used to produce a video • Show the video to peers and evaluate the response 	<p>A short video that looks at pressures on young people and positive ways of counterbalancing these.</p> <p>An evaluation of the impact of the video.</p>
Aggression in sport	Aim to reduce the aggression directed at the referee in football/soccer by presenting a plan to the local football/soccer teams. Inspired by negative experiences when playing football/soccer for local team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research techniques for dealing with aggression in other sports as well as football/soccer • Develop and write up a plan and look into techniques for effective presentations 	<p>A plan for the local football/soccer association and a record of its response.</p>
Local amenities for young people	Seek to improve the facilities for young people in the local community by producing a report to present to the local government. Inspired by lack of facilities in local community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research available amenities and the issues faced by young people • Explore techniques for writing an informative report, and evaluation techniques • Evaluate the results of the report 	<p>A report for local government and an article for the school magazine summarizing the outcome.</p>

Health and social education

How do I think and act?

How am I changing?

How can I look after myself and others?

This area of interaction is about how humanity is affected by a range of social issues (including health). It includes an appreciation of these effects in various cultural settings and at different times. It is concerned with physical, social and emotional health and intelligence—key aspects of development leading to a complete and balanced lifestyle.

There are many issues in this area where students may reflect and demonstrate understanding, exploring topics such as:

- hygiene, physical and mental health, nutrition, work, rest, exercise, leisure, alcohol, drugs and tobacco
- adolescence, emotions, family life and sexual issues
- consumer issues, peer influences, advertising, media and pressure groups
- interpersonal relations, self-respect, responsibility and respect for others, family and group relations, schools and peers
- health and legal services, social issues, safety, firearms, vandalism, poverty and delinquency.

Examples

Topic	Goal of personal project	Process	Product
Music	Show how music can challenge society and defend the work of selected notorious artists. Inspired by my love of music by notorious artists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research perceptions of music in society and explore ideas • Conduct interviews • Research articles on music in magazines 	A PowerPoint® presentation of the work of selected artists to peer group and/or others.
Genealogy	Find out about the history of my family in the last 100 years and examine my place in it. Inspired by the emigration of my family over time and what this means for me.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use techniques to research my family tree • Read family memoirs • Write my own family memoir • Analyse how the family has impacted on me and my identity 	A family memoir.
Extreme sports	Explain what motivates people to take part in extreme sports through a manual on the subject (to be donated to the library for anyone who has an interest in the topic). Inspired by my interest in rock climbing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research a defined number of extreme sports and how they have developed • Investigate presentation techniques for the manual (considerations of extent of information to be included, and so on) 	An extreme sports manual.

Environments

What are our environments?

What resources do we have or need?

What are my responsibilities?

This area of interaction considers environments to mean the totality of conditions surrounding us, natural, built and virtual. It focuses on the wider place of human beings in the world and how we create and affect our environments. It encourages students to question, to develop positive and responsible attitudes, and to gain the motivation, skills and commitment to contribute to their environments.

In the personal project students may choose to explore issues such as:

- the interdependence of human and other forms of life
- the consequences of human manipulation of the environment
- pollution and population growth
- the links between health and changes in the environment
- world problems and common issues
- local, regional, national and international responsibilities
- the environmental choices and opportunities offered by technology
- the political responsibility of each individual.

Examples

Topic	Goal of personal project	Process	Product
Nature	Enhance the aesthetic environment of the school and support local insect life by designing and creating a small garden in the school grounds. Inspired by my enjoyment of nature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research gardens suitable for small spaces and the local environment • Design the garden and create it • Enlist the help of other students 	A garden.
Birds	Encourage birdlife in local gardens by providing information to local people to help them make their gardens more attractive to birds. Inspired by membership of bird society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research techniques for encouraging local species of birds to visit gardens • Test findings on willing volunteers • Research techniques for communicating information to public • Produce leaflet with basic information 	A leaflet with basic information. A presentation at parents' evening.

Topic	Goal of personal project	Process	Product
Art	<p>Improve the environment in the local hospital by designing and creating a series of pictures to hang in the corridors leading to the children's ward.</p> <p>Inspired by a cousin's experience in hospital.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the type of pictures that would be suitable • Survey children in the hospital about what they would like 	A series of five pictures to hang in the hospital.

Human ingenuity (formerly *homo faber*)

Why and how do we create?

What are the consequences?

Human ingenuity looks at human contributions in the world both in their particular context and as part of a continuing process. It stresses the way humans can initiate change, whether for good or bad, and examines the consequences (intended and unintended). This area also emphasizes both the importance of researching the developments made by people across place, time and cultures, and the importance of taking time to reflect on these developments.

Within a personal project, focusing on human ingenuity involves questioning, investigating the creative process, reflecting on one's own and others' involvement in it, engaging with the product or concept, and reflecting on its role and context.

The following themes could relate to this area of interaction:

- the development of mathematical and scientific thought through the ages
- ethical values through the ages
- the diversity of moral and aesthetic judgments
- the human capacity for change, and for reaction to changes
- the influence of men and women of genius
- great cultural and historical movements
- great scientific discoveries
- the impact of inventions and discoveries on society.

The personal project may be the best opportunity in the MYP for students to use their creativity in the development and treatment of these ideas.

Examples

Topic	Goal of personal project	Process	Product
Religion	Examine different religious views on life after death, considering why humans develop these ideas, and present as a short radio programme. Inspired by my own thoughts on life and death.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select five major world religions and research their ideas about life after death Interview members of those religions about their ideas Research techniques for making radio programmes 	A radio programme.
Plastic surgery	Debate the use of plastic surgery in the 21st century, resulting in an expression of my views through an argumentative essay. Inspired by pressures on people to seek perfection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research the development of plastic surgery and its impact on individuals and society Investigate essay writing and presentation techniques 	An essay, which will be included in the school journal.
Music	Explore the development of rap as a style of music and why it speaks to me. Inspired by my love of rap.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research the development of rap and analyse rap songs that are significant for me Perform a rap song for peers and have a question and answer session 	A presentation to peers, including performance of rap song.

Supervising the personal project

The role of the supervisor

Each student must have a supervisor to work with on the personal project. The supervisor is expected to:

- make sure that the student has been provided with, and understands, the guidelines and the assessment criteria for the personal project
- guide the student on how to complete the personal project successfully
- emphasize to the student the importance of keeping an effective process journal
- carry out formative assessment by offering positive, constructive oral and written comments at each stage, using the personal project assessment criteria as a basis for discussion
- assess the project according to the assessment criteria
- ensure that the project is authentic and entirely the student's own work, and that the material is adequately referenced
- take part in the standardization of assessment process in the school.

Reminder

The supervisor should be an appropriately qualified person within the school but need not be a specialist in the particular field of study chosen by the student.

Guidelines for supervisors

Working as a supervisor and helping a student prepare a personal project can be a very rewarding experience. The supervisor and student can work closely together as the project develops.

The following guidelines, which can be applied to the supervision of all types of personal project, describe some of the ways in which the process of interaction between the supervisor and student can be arranged.

Advice on choice of topic, theme or idea

The topic, theme or idea for the personal project should initially be chosen by the student, followed by discussion with a supervisor who should ensure that it is well defined and inspired by one or more areas of interaction. Students should be able to define their goals clearly by writing key questions and a statement of intent.

The personal project must offer students scope for personal reflection and must have an obvious focus on at least one of the areas of interaction. The area of interaction will focus the research. Personal reflection may be more difficult to attain where it is too strictly related to one academic subject. The scope of the personal project should go beyond a single subject.

During the latter part of year 4 students should discuss ideas for their personal projects with as many people as possible, for example, other students, friends outside the school, relatives and teachers, and their supervisor. During and following these discussions, students should draw up an outline of the goal they wish to pursue, which will form the basis of the first meeting between the student and the supervisor. It is important to note that this initial research is essential to determine whether the goal is realistic in terms of time and scope.

At this initial stage students should discuss the possible choice of project with the supervisor who should ensure that the goal of the personal project is:

- well defined
- clearly focused on one or more areas of interaction
- attainable by the student
- of clear interest to the student.

The student needs to choose carefully the type and goal of his or her project in terms of the skills and techniques that are required to bring it to a successful conclusion. Some projects may be too ambitious, or require overly complex procedures or a lengthy process of learning. Other projects may be too simplistic and present no challenge to the student. Deciding whether a project is realistic or unrealistic for a student will be based on discussions between the student and the supervisor. Students should be encouraged to challenge themselves but not to a point where the personal project takes over their lives.

A few examples of realistic and unrealistic personal projects follow. Few examples have been given as there is the possibility that what is labelled as too ambitious or limited for one student will be accessible or challenging for another. The student's individual strengths and limitations need to be considered alongside his or her specific interests. This is part of the challenge for students in deciding what their goal should be.

Realistic project	Unrealistic project
A student who has studied the piano for a number of years decides to write and interpret a musical score for parts of a school play.	A student decides to learn to play the piano as a personal project. (This is too ambitious.)
A student decides to design a playground for young children and produce a model.	A student decides to design a playground for young children, produce a model, raise finance and arrange for the playground to be built. (This is too ambitious.)
A student decides to create teaching materials for primary students for a unit of work on Maori culture.	A student decides to create a poster showing Maori culture. (This is too limited.)

Meetings

Meetings of supervisors

Time must be set aside by the school for supervisors to meet to agree on common deadlines, decide on common expectations from students and standardize assessment. There must also be time for supervisors to meet students on a regular basis. The school may need to adapt some aspects of the schedule to allow these meetings to take place.

Meetings with students

Personal project supervisors will work more effectively with students if they are available to meet with each student regularly. Both supervisor and student need to acknowledge this and agree on appropriate meeting times.

Different projects will require different contact times between the individual student and the supervisor. The frequency of these meetings may change according to the type of project, the topic, the characteristics of the individual student and local circumstances. Supervisors should keep a record of each meeting to obtain an overall view of the student's progress.

The aim of the **first meeting** is to help the student focus on the exact nature and goal of the personal project, and to discuss the student's proposed topic.

At **regular meetings** the supervisor:

- discusses with the student relevant sources of information and, when necessary, other resources that the student may use to develop the project
- reviews with the student the appropriate areas of approaches to learning that will help develop the personal project
- focuses on the organization and presentation of the final piece of work, advising the student to be thorough and methodical
- helps the student establish and maintain the focus of the personal project, and ensures that it is proceeding as planned
- encourages the student to keep a detailed and useful process journal
- advises the student to review and revise the project in the context of the assessment criteria.

These regular meetings allow students to discuss and explain parts of the work that may be unclear or need further explanation, help increase students' awareness of the topic and its focus on the areas of interaction, and allow students to demonstrate their attitudes towards their own work. These are all significant aspects as students prepare their personal project report.

Reminder

Many students find it difficult to maintain focus on a specific task over an extended period of time. Even dynamic and interested students may need to be encouraged and stimulated to maintain interest in their personal project. Students should be encouraged by the supervisor, who should also show enthusiasm for the personal project and offer support to overcome difficulties.

Guidance for students

Note to schools

This section provides advice to students about the completion of a successful personal project. It is important to add, or replace this section with, school-specific guidelines and information for students (including advice on, for example, the choice and submission of a project, a timetable, information on the selection of a supervisor, organizational details about meetings, and details about formative and summative assessment and criteria). Examples of school-specific documents are available on the online curriculum centre (OCC).

What is a personal project?

Have you ever wanted to build a musical instrument? Do you have a secret passion to write a play? Now is your chance! The personal project is **your** project to do what **you** want to do, to show the skills you have developed over the years in your subjects and through approaches to learning, and to apply them to the chosen goal that focuses on dimensions of the area(s) of interaction.

The personal project holds a place of special importance in the MYP, and so it should be clearly focused on an issue or theme closely related to the areas of interaction. Remember, you will be working on this project for an extended period of time, so it needs to be something you **really** want to do.

Whatever type of personal project you decide on, it should:

- have a clear and achievable goal
- be focused on at least one area of interaction
- allow you to express a truly personal message
- be the result of your initiative, creativity and ability to organize and plan
- reflect your special interests, hobbies, special abilities, or concerns about particular issues
- deal with a topic or area to which you are committed
- be entirely your own work—authenticity is very important and you may be required to sign a document stating that the personal project is your own work.

Your project must not:

- be part of any assessed course work
- take over your whole personal and social life, nor interfere with your studies, even though it will involve many hours of work
- be too closely linked to any specific subject.

Why do a personal project?

The personal project is the culmination of your experience in the MYP. During the programme you will have developed in many ways and learned about the areas of interaction. If you choose the right personal project, it will give you the opportunity to share with others something that is of great interest to you as an individual but that also shows some of what you have learned as a result of being in the MYP.

What type of personal project can I do?

Depending on your goal, you might choose one of the following types of projects:

- an original work of art (for example, visual, dramatic or performance)
- a written piece of work on a special topic (for example, literary, social, psychological or anthropological)
- a piece of literary fiction (for example, creative writing)
- an original science experiment
- an invention or specially designed object or system
- the presentation of a developed business, management, or organizational plan (that is, for an entrepreneurial business or project), a special event, or the development of a new student or community organization.

All personal projects must include a report, whatever your overall plan. This report must have:

- a title page
- a table of contents
- an introduction, defining the goal of your personal project, describing an explicit focus on chosen area(s) of interaction, and providing an outline of how you intend to achieve the goal
- a description of the process, including production steps, the characteristics, aspects or components of the work
- an analysis of the inspiration, research and influences guiding the work, the findings and decisions made, the resulting product and the process in terms of the goal and its focus on the area(s) of interaction chosen (if you have chosen to write an essay about a specific issue, the essay itself will form the main part of this analysis)
- a conclusion, where you will reflect on the impact of your project, and on new perspectives that could be considered
- a bibliography
- appendices, if appropriate.

Your project may involve others (for example, if you are directing a play, organizing an exhibition, or starting a new student/community organization). Remember, however, that your own contribution must be central to the event, and clearly visible. It is **your** work that will be assessed.

How do I start?

A **supervisor** will advise you throughout the project and meet you on a regular basis and make sure you complete the various stages of the project according to the deadlines set by your school. Your supervisor need not necessarily be an expert in what you want to do, but will be able to guide and help you as needed. You may decide with your school supervisor to consult another person from outside the school structure who can give you more expert help.

You will receive information and guidelines (individually and/or in groups) about your school's regulations and advice about the completion of the personal project. You should also receive, read and discuss the assessment criteria for the project. These will be useful as a basis for discussion at different stages of development of the project (this is known as "formative assessment") and will state clearly what is expected of you in the final assessment of the project.

What steps should I follow?

Your study of approaches to learning has prepared you for your personal project. The stages in the development of your personal project will include the following.

- Exploring and choosing themes and topics with a clear focus on the dimensions of at least one area of interaction
- Planning the project
- Gathering the necessary material
- Working on the project
- Using a process journal effectively
- Presenting the outcome (the product and the report)

Investigating and choosing the goal and topic

Any project will involve an important phase of investigation or research. When you are choosing your topic or theme, the goal of your project and your approach, you must remember that the personal project is your way of demonstrating your understanding of the areas of interaction. You must therefore choose a goal and focus on one or more areas of interaction that will allow you to do this.

You should discuss ideas with different people, both inside and outside the school, to help you to focus on precisely what you are going to do.

It is also important that you have a discussion with your supervisor about your choice to see whether or not your intentions are realistic. This may be the first time you have been asked to do a significant independent investigation. You should realize that your supervisor is not looking for work of university standard. Instead, this is an opportunity for you to demonstrate such things as the approach you are taking, the methods you are using, and your ability to describe and justify a focus on your chosen areas of interaction.

Your topic or theme should not be too general, nor must it be one that would lead you to paraphrase or summarize what you have read in a book, in an encyclopedia, or on the internet. It should be a topic or theme that you really want to explore, and that will allow you to reflect on and analyse ideas to express a personal point of view.

It is important that you keep the goal of your personal project in mind continuously, although the goal could be modified in the light of experience gained during the process.

Planning the project

The next part of the process is to plan the steps towards completing your personal project. You should write an outline of your main ideas, guided by a statement of your goal, as discussed with your supervisor. The purpose of the outline is to:

- define the investigation
- help in the choice of appropriate sources and material.

Ask yourself the following questions (which are neither definitive nor exhaustive).

- Where do I find the necessary material?
- Who has information about my topic?
- Do I have to carry out my own experiments?
- Do I need to prepare, circulate and analyse a questionnaire or survey?
- Do I need to go to libraries other than the school library?
- Do I need to visit museums?
- Do I need to interview individuals?

Write down these questions (and others) along with the answers, as a way of reminding yourself of the variety of potential sources. It is only by looking at a variety of sources that you can make a judgment about their relative usefulness.

Check with your supervisor that you have included all the sources you can.

Make a list of what you will need to do to collect the necessary material. Put these tasks into a suitable order. Once you have done this, start gathering the material.

Completing any type of project is not usually a simple process; it may be messy and involve changes in your plans, especially in the developmental stages.

Collecting the necessary material

When you have found a source of information or inspiration, you will need to decide how useful it is. The list of sources in your report should only include those you have actually used.

Remember to keep the goal of your project in mind. This will help you to select what is useful and relevant.

Always write down the source of your material. This information will vary according to the type of source consulted.

- A book: record the author(s), title, edition, series and bibliographical address (city, editor and date of publication).
- An interview: record, for example, the name, address and function of the person.
- An experiment: record, for example, the apparatus and the circumstances.
- A work of art: record, for example, the name, artist or other reference (such as the location of a gallery or museum).
- An internet site: record the address, the name of author and the date of publication.

Other sources can also help you: a book might have a bibliography, mentioning other useful books; the person you interview might have a suggestion to investigate something else; an experiment might lead to other investigations.

Working on the project

Depending on the nature of your project, you will need to reflect on, analyse, criticize and synthesize the material in a constructive way. You may also have to change your original plans in the light of circumstances or new information. Consult your supervisor regularly.

You must keep a process journal containing relevant thoughts, decisions and actions. This is a document that allows you to record your progress as you work on the project. It need not be neat or well presented, but should be completed honestly and regularly to show you how your project is developing. It can be used to show your supervisor the rate and direction of progress being made. It will also guide you as you write your project report.

Presenting the outcome

Towards the end of the personal project you will need to think carefully about how you should present it. You must always consider your presentation from other people's perspectives: perhaps you and your school will want to exhibit the outcome?

The nature of the presentation will vary depending on the type of personal project. However, all personal projects must include a report. Please refer to the structure described earlier in this section to guide you in the organization of your content.

Remember that if you have decided to explore a particular issue for your personal project, your report will include a description of your process and your findings, as well as your analysis of the issue and your observations and reactions. In that case, the piece of writing will be much longer than, for example, the presentation of a creative product or an event.

The personal project must not be longer than 4,000 words.

Useful ideas

- Always assume that the people who will look at your personal project know little or nothing about the topic.
- Use drawings and pictures only when necessary, for example, if they add to the clarity of the personal project.
- Access to a computer at different stages of the development of the project would be very helpful as you write your personal project, making it easier to edit a draft version and produce a neat, easy-to-read product. In any case, your final report should be typewritten or word processed, where possible.
- Have a look at the examples of personal projects that other students have done and see how they have presented their ideas. Discuss the final structure you propose to use with your supervisor before you start work on it. You could also ask other students for their opinions. Remember, however, that your personal project is **your** piece of work.

Assessment in the MYP

There is no external assessment provided by the IB for the MYP and therefore no formal externally set or marked examinations. All assessment in the MYP is carried out by teachers in participating schools and relies on their professional expertise in making qualitative judgments, as they do every day in the classroom. In line with the general IB assessment philosophy, a norm-referenced approach to assessment is not appropriate to the MYP. Instead, MYP schools must follow a criterion-related approach. This means that students' work must be assessed against defined assessment criteria and not against the work of other students.

The IB moderation and monitoring of assessment procedures ensure that the final judgments made by these teachers all conform to an agreed scale of measurement on common criteria.

It is expected that the procedures for assessment and the MYP assessment criteria are shared with both students and parents as an aid to the learning process.

Using the assessment criteria

The assessment criteria published in this guide correspond to the objectives of the personal project. The achievement levels described have been written with year 5 final assessment in mind.

All schools **must** use the assessment criteria published in this guide for final assessment, although local or national requirements may involve other assessment models and criteria as well.

The “best-fit” approach

The descriptors for each criterion are hierarchical. When assessing a student's work, teachers should read the descriptors (starting with level 0) until they reach a descriptor that describes an achievement level that the work being assessed has not attained. The work is therefore best described by the preceding descriptor.

Where it is not clearly evident which level descriptor should apply, teachers must use their judgment to select the descriptor that best matches the student's work overall. The “best-fit” approach allows teachers to select the achievement level that best describes the piece of work being assessed.

Further guidance

Only whole numbers should be recorded; partial levels, fractions and decimals are not acceptable.

The levels attributed to the descriptors must not be considered as fixed percentages, nor should it be assumed that there are arithmetical relationships between descriptors. For example, a level 4 performance is not necessarily twice as good as a level 2 performance.

Teachers should not think in terms of a pass or fail boundary for each criterion, or make comparisons with, or conversions to, the IB 1–7 grade scale, but should concentrate on identifying the appropriate descriptor for each assessment criterion.

The highest descriptors do not imply faultless performance, but should be achievable by students at the end of the programme. Teachers should therefore not hesitate to use the highest and lowest levels if they are appropriate descriptors for the work being assessed.

A student who attains a high achievement level for one criterion will not necessarily reach high achievement levels for the other criteria. Similarly, a student who attains a low achievement level for one criterion will not necessarily attain low achievement levels for the other criteria.

Teachers should not assume that the results of a group of students being assessed will follow any particular distribution plan.

Further information on MYP assessment can be found in the document *MYP: From principles into practice* (August 2008) in the section “Assessment”.

Personal project assessment criteria

Please note that the assessment criteria in this guide are for first use in **final assessment** in June 2005 for northern hemisphere schools and December 2005 for southern hemisphere schools.

The following assessment criteria have been established by the IB for the personal project in the MYP. All assessment of the personal project in the final year of the MYP must be based on these assessment criteria even if schools are not registering students for IB-validated grades and certification.

Criterion A	Planning and development	Maximum 4
Criterion B	Collection of information/resources	Maximum 4
Criterion C	Choice and application of techniques	Maximum 4
Criterion D	Analysis of information	Maximum 4
Criterion E	Organization of the written work	Maximum 4
Criterion F	Analysis of process and outcome	Maximum 4
Criterion G	Personal engagement	Maximum 4

For each assessment criterion, a number of band descriptors are defined. These describe a range of achievement levels with the lowest level represented as 0.

The descriptors concentrate on positive achievement, although failure to achieve may be included in the description for the lower levels.

Criterion A: Planning and development

Maximum: 4

Students should be aware that it is essential to define a clear goal before starting detailed research and work. A goal can be defined as a statement, or one or more key questions, which identify the focus of the personal project based on one or more areas of interaction. The goal may alter during the course of the personal project but students need to state and explain clearly the reason(s) for a change in goal.

Evidence of students' achievement in this criterion will be found in the introduction, the body of the work and the conclusion.

Achievement level	Level descriptor
0	The student has not reached a standard described by any of the descriptors given below.
1	The student identifies the goal of the personal project but does not provide an outline of how he/she aims to achieve this goal.
2	The student identifies and describes the goal of the personal project, states the focus on the chosen area(s) of interaction and provides a simple outline of how he/she aims to achieve this goal.
3	The student identifies and clearly describes the goal of the personal project, describes the focus on the chosen area(s) of interaction and provides a coherent account of how he/she aims to achieve this goal. The development of the personal project is generally consistent with this description.
4	The student identifies and clearly describes the goal of the personal project within a context, develops and justifies the focus on the area(s) of interaction and provides a coherent and thorough description of how he/she aims to achieve this goal. The development of the personal project is totally consistent with this description.

Criterion B: Collection of information/resources

Maximum: 4

This criterion allows the student to demonstrate the ability to collect relevant information from a variety of sources and to compile a bibliography of sources used in the project. Students should select sufficient information and appropriate resources to substantiate all arguments and/or to support the project. Students should also acknowledge their sources of information clearly in the body of their text through clear referencing.

Achievement level	Level descriptor
0	The student has not reached a standard described by any of the descriptors given below.
1	<p>Few sources of information and resources have been collected, or the majority is irrelevant to the goal of the personal project.</p> <p>The student has provided a summary bibliography, where many elements are missing.</p> <p>Few references are made in the text to sources of information used.</p>
2	<p>The student has chosen and used a limited amount of relevant information and resources, from a limited number of appropriate sources.</p> <p>A bibliography has been compiled with most elements present and/or appropriately presented.</p> <p>Some references are made in the body of the text and appendices, where appropriate.</p>
3	<p>The student has chosen and used a good amount of relevant information and resources, from a fairly extensive number of appropriate sources.</p> <p>A bibliography has been compiled with all important elements present and/or appropriately presented.</p> <p>Detailed references are made in the body of the text and appendices, where appropriate.</p>
4	<p>The personal project contains excellent, relevant information and resources from a wide variety of appropriate sources.</p> <p>The bibliography is complete and well presented, with clear references to sources in the body of the text and appendices, where appropriate.</p>

Criterion C: Choice and application of techniques

Maximum: 4

This criterion assesses students' abilities to choose techniques relevant to the personal project's goal, as defined by the key questions, or statement of intent of the personal project. Students should justify this selection and apply the chosen techniques consistently and effectively.

Students should choose a goal that is achievable. Because of circumstances that may be beyond their control, students may find unforeseen difficulties prevent successful completion of ambitious projects. These types of ambitious personal project may still result in a good level of achievement for this criterion.

Achievement level	Level descriptor
0	The student has not reached a standard described by any of the descriptors given below.
1	Large parts of the project are not relevant in terms of the goal that had been identified by the student. The techniques used are largely inappropriate and inadequately applied .
2	The techniques chosen vary in their appropriateness with some being applied to an acceptable standard in order to contribute to the achievement of the goal. The student begins to provide justification for the use of the chosen techniques.
3	The techniques chosen are generally appropriate and well applied to contribute to the achievement of the goal. The student provides some justification for the use of the chosen techniques.
4	The student has chosen absolutely appropriate techniques, provided specific justification for their choice and applied them effectively to achieve the stated goal.

Criterion D: Analysis of information

Maximum: 4

This criterion measures students' abilities to analyse information in terms of the personal project's goal and focus on the chosen area(s) of interaction. Students should express personal thoughts and support arguments with evidence.

Achievement level	Level descriptor
0	The student has not reached a standard described by any of the descriptors given below.
1	The personal project contains little reflection in terms of the goal and focus on the chosen area(s) of interaction, and is largely narrative/descriptive . The student misses many opportunities for personal treatment of the topic/theme.
2	The personal project contains some reflection in terms of the goal and focus on the chosen area(s) of interaction. Personal thought is mostly supported with arguments and evidence. However, some opportunities for analysis are not pursued .
3	The personal project contains significant reflection in terms of the goal and focus on the chosen area(s) of interaction. Personal thought is almost always supported with arguments and evidence. Few opportunities for analysis are not pursued .
4	The personal project clearly shows the depth of reflection and vitality of the student's own ideas and vision in terms of the goal and focus on the chosen area(s) of interaction. A truly personal response is consistently supported with arguments and evidence. Opportunities for analysis are consistently pursued .

Criterion E: Organization of the written work

Maximum: 4

This criterion focuses on the presentation of the written work (including title page, contents page and page numbering, overall neatness, and the appropriate use of graphs, diagrams and tables, where appropriate). It also assesses the internal structure and coherence of the work.

Achievement level	Level descriptor
0	The student has not reached a standard described by any of the descriptors given below.
1	The written work is poorly organized , lacking a sensible order and coherent structure. The presentation of the work (for example, table of contents and page numbering) is lacking in several respects.
2	The student has made some attempt at logical organization and an attempt to respect the required structure of the personal project. There are some coherent links between parts of the personal project, and the presentation of the work is often appropriate .
3	The student has made a good attempt at logical organization, respecting the required structure of the personal project. There are some good links between parts of the personal project, and the presentation of the work is almost always appropriate .
4	The organization of the work is completely coherent with the required structure. Ideas are sequenced in a consistently logical manner with appropriate transitions. Overall presentation and neatness of the work are excellent .

Criterion F: Analysis of process and outcome

Maximum: 4

Evidence of students' achievement in this criterion will be found in the conclusion and also in the body of the report. Students are expected to describe, and reflect on, the stages of development of the personal project and the thought processes followed. Students should reflect on the ways in which the personal project has fulfilled the initial goal. In this reflection, students should review the ways in which the project has been focused on the chosen area(s) of interaction, and on how dimensions of the area(s) have been explored and developed. Students should attempt to define new perspectives that could be investigated further through future inquiry into the topic/theme. Using their process journals as a prompt for reflection, students will provide comments on such questions as:

- What have been the strengths and the weaknesses of the personal project at different stages of development?
- What would the student do differently next time?

Achievement level	Level descriptor
0	The student has not reached a standard described by any of the descriptors given below.
1	The student's review is simply a narrative summary or a superficial review of the development of the personal project in terms of the goal set at its start. There is little understanding of the dimensions of the area(s) of interaction that were stated as the focus for the personal project.
2	The student adequately reviews his/her personal project in terms of the goal set at its start. The student's review shows some reflection on different stages of the process including an adequate analysis of the quality of the product. The student's review shows some understanding of the dimensions of the chosen area(s) of interaction that served as a focus for the personal project.
3	The student consistently reviews his/her personal project in terms of the goal set at its start. The student's review shows significant reflection on different stages of the process. The evaluation includes a good analysis of the quality of the product, and shows a clear understanding of the dimensions of the chosen area(s) of interaction that served as a focus for the personal project.
4	The student consistently and thoroughly reviews his/her personal project in terms of the goal set at its start. The student's review shows excellent reflection on different stages of the process. The evaluation includes an excellent analysis of the quality of the product and reveals a thorough understanding of the dimensions of the chosen area(s) of interaction that served as a focus for the personal project. The student presents new perspectives emerging from the chosen topic.

Criterion G: Personal engagement

Maximum: 4

This criterion focuses on an overall assessment of students' engagement and application of approaches to learning (ATL) skills during the planning and development stages of the personal project. Qualities such as organization and commitment to the task should be considered. By their very nature these are difficult to quantify and the assessment should take into account the context in which the personal project was undertaken.

The assessment should also take account of working behaviours such as the amount of encouragement required by students, the interaction between students and supervisors, the attention to deadlines and procedures, as well as the appropriate use of supporting documentation such as process journals.

The levels of achievement awarded should be based on a holistic judgment of the degree to which these qualities and working behaviours are evident in the personal project.

Achievement level	Level descriptor
0	The student has not reached a standard described by any of the descriptors given below.
1	The personal project shows little evidence of any of the required qualities and working behaviours.
2	The personal project is judged to be satisfactory in terms of most of the required qualities and working behaviours.
3	The personal project is judged to be good in terms of most of the required qualities and working behaviours.
4	The personal project is judged to be outstanding in terms of the required qualities and working behaviours.

Determining the grade

This section explains the process by which a student's overall achievement level (in terms of the assessment criteria) is converted to a single grade.

1. Collecting the information and making a final judgment for each criterion

Where several teachers are involved in the supervision and assessment of the personal project, they must carry out their own process of **internal standardization** to ensure that similar standards have been applied to all students.

Supervisors will then be in a position to establish a profile of achievement for each student by determining the single most appropriate level for each criterion.

In some schools, students may be grouped according to ability. In such cases, the supervisors' final assessment of students' performance across all groups must be based on a **consistent application of the assessment criteria to all students**. A different standard should not be applied to different groups.

Assessment of the personal project should reflect achievement against the criteria and provide equal opportunities to all students, regardless of gender, culture and special needs.

2. Determining the criterion levels total

The levels for each criterion must then be added together to give a criterion levels total for the personal project for each student. In the personal project, students have the opportunity to gain a maximum level of 4 for each criterion A–G. Therefore the maximum final criterion levels total for the personal project is 28.

The criterion levels total is the total that will be submitted to the IB via IBIS (IB information system) for those schools that have registered students to receive IB-validated grades.

3. Determining the grade for the personal project

Grade boundaries must be applied to the criterion levels totals to decide the grade for each student.

Please see the *MYP coordinator's handbook* for the table of grade boundaries for the personal project.

All MYP subjects and the personal project receive final grades in the range from 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest) on the IB record of achievement, where students have been registered for IB-validated grades. The general MYP grade descriptors describe the achievement required for the award of the personal project grade. After using the conversion table to determine a student's personal project grade, supervisors should check the general grade descriptor table to ensure that the description equally reflects the student's achievement.

Schools requiring **IB-validated grades** are required to use only the published MYP personal project criteria as a basis for the results that they submit to the IB (both for moderation and as assessment for certification).

Those schools not requiring IB-validated grades are also required to use the published criteria and report internally to students and parents.

Personal project: Moderation

The following details apply **only** to schools that request **IB-validated grades**.

Please ensure that you also refer to the section “Assessment in the MYP”.

Purpose of moderation

The external moderation procedure in all MYP subjects and the personal project exists to ensure that students from different schools and different countries receive comparable grades for comparable work, and that the same standards apply from year to year.

All MYP assessment is carried out by the students’ own teachers (or by the supervisors in the case of the personal project). The IB moderation procedures ensure that the final judgments made by these teachers all conform to an agreed scale of measurement on common criteria.

To ensure this comparability and conformity, moderation samples submitted to the IB **must** be assessed using the assessment criteria and achievement levels listed in this guide.

The submission date for moderation samples is before the end of a school’s academic year.

For general information on moderation, please see *MYP: From principles into practice (August 2008)*, section “Moderation”.

Teachers should note that there are three distinct phases to the moderation process.

- Phase 1: Submission of moderation samples
- Phase 2: Submission of criterion levels totals
- Phase 3: Award of MYP grades

Phase 1: Submission of moderation samples

Schools that request IB-validated grades for their students must register these students following the guidelines in the *MYP coordinator’s handbook*. This includes students who are only eligible for the record of achievement along with those who are also eligible for the MYP certificate.

Each moderation sample must include **eight folders of students’ work** with each folder representing the work of a single student. The selection of student work should be representative of a range of abilities within the final year group, comprising two comparatively good folders, four folders showing average ability and two comparatively weak folders. Only the work of students registered for IB-validated grades should be submitted. If there are fewer than eight students registered, the sample will therefore have fewer than eight folders.

Since June 2006, schools that have had minimal adjustments to their results over a three-year period have been instructed to send only four folders of student work instead of eight in the relevant subjects or personal project. "Minimal adjustments" means differences between teachers' and moderators' totals of within plus or minus 3. This does not mean that there will be no changes to final grades, as some students' totals will still cross grade boundaries even though the differences, and therefore the moderation factors applied, are small. Schools are advised via the moderation reports whether they can send four folders the following year. The situation is monitored annually and applies only to the subjects that have been identified in the moderation reports. For further information, please see your MYP coordinator.

Prescribed information to be included in the sample

Samples submitted for moderation must include the following information.

In the background information folder:

- a summary of the internal standardization process undertaken for personal projects in the school
- any other information thought relevant by the school to the organization of the personal project in the school (anything in the moderation sample that differs from the requirements should be explained in the background information).

In **each** student folder:

- the personal project report (and final product and/or photographs of final product, where appropriate) or the personal project essay (a word count should be included at the end of each personal project)
- the completed coversheet *Form F3.2* (each supervisor of a personal project must write comments about the award of levels for individual criteria on the form sent with each personal project).

Important notes

- Supervisors' assessments of students' work must be based entirely on the criteria published in this guide.
- It is standard MYP policy that work submitted for moderation will not be returned to schools. Schools are advised to send photocopies and photographs rather than original projects.
- If it is neither possible nor appropriate to send the outcome of a personal project (for example, if it is a work of art), representation of the product by means of a photograph or a series of photographs is necessary. In such cases, it is particularly important for the supervisor to provide relevant comments about the quality of the product to support the choice of levels of achievement for the criteria, where the product itself forms part of the assessment.
- Although the student's journal is a very useful tool in the formative assessment of a personal project, and may provide the supervisor with information about the student's personal engagement (see assessment criterion G), it should not be sent with the personal project.
- The process involved in the student's personal project can only be properly assessed by the supervisor. This means that the levels awarded by the school for assessment criterion G will **not** be affected by moderation.

- In law, students retain copyright in work they create themselves, and the school probably retains copyright in the tasks created by teachers. However, when the school submits this work to the IB, students and schools are deemed to be granting the IB a non-exclusive worldwide licence to use the work. Please see the *MYP coordinator's handbook*, sections F1 and F3 for further information on how this work may be used and section F4 for the *Student claim of exclusive copyright* form if needed.
- If students use third-party material as stimuli and/or as part of their personal project, this material must be fully referenced. This will include the title of the source, the author, the publication date, the publisher and, for books only, the ISBN. Examples of third-party material include newspaper and magazine articles, cartoons, videos, movie excerpts, extracts from books, pictures (please check the acknowledgments in the original publication for the original sources), diagrams, graphs, tables, statistics, materials from websites, and so on.

Phase 2: Submission of criterion levels totals

After final assessment, supervisors should use the procedure described in “Determining the grade” to arrive at a **criterion levels total** for each student registered for certification.

The MYP coordinator will then enter each registered student’s criterion levels total on **IBIS**, and submit this to the IB.

Phase 3: Award of MYP grades

Following moderation in each subject and the personal project, the IB may, where appropriate, apply a moderation factor to the criterion levels totals submitted by a school. Final grades will then be determined by applying grade boundaries to these moderated totals.

Schools will receive notification of the final grades for their students and the IB will also provide a general and a school-specific moderation report for each subject in which students were registered and the personal project.

The *MYP coordinator's handbook* provides further guidelines on submitting criterion levels totals in each subject and the personal project.

Personal project: Monitoring of assessment

The following details apply to schools **not** requesting IB-validated grades.

Please ensure that you also refer to the sections “Assessment in the MYP” and “Personal project: Moderation”.

Definition

Monitoring of assessment is a service available to IB World Schools offering the MYP, whereby schools can send samples of assessed student work to the IB to receive feedback from an experienced MYP moderator in the form of a report. This service is subject to a fee.

Monitoring of assessment is aimed at providing support and guidance in the implementation and development of the programme with regard to internal assessment procedures and practices. It is not linked to validation of students’ grades, and therefore differs from the process of external moderation. Monitoring of assessment is currently limited to assessment conducted in the final three years of the programme.

Samples for monitoring of assessment in the personal project must be submitted in English, French, Spanish or Chinese, although these may be translations into one of these languages.

Details on registering for monitoring of assessment and fees, as well as the latest updated version of the coversheets, are available in the *MYP coordinator’s handbook*.

Further information on monitoring of assessment can be found in the document *MYP: From principles into practice* (August 2008), in the section “Monitoring of assessment”, as well as in the *MYP coordinator’s handbook*, section F. Brief information follows here.

Purpose

There are three reasons why schools send in a monitoring of assessment sample:

1. as a requirement for the school’s programme evaluation visit
2. as a pre-check before sending in samples for moderation
3. to receive guidance on a particular subject.

Information to be sent for monitoring of assessment

As the personal project is completed in year 5 of the programme, the information schools will submit for monitoring of assessment will be based on the prescribed information detailed in the “Personal project: Moderation” section. This will apply to any of the three reasons for monitoring of assessment.

Prescribed information to be included in the sample

Samples submitted for monitoring of assessment must include the following information. This is the prescribed information listed in the “Personal project: Moderation” section.

In the background information folder:

- a summary of the internal standardization process undertaken for personal projects in the school
- any other information thought relevant by the school to the organization of the personal project in the school (anything in the sample that differs from the requirements should be explained in the background information).

In **each** student folder:

- the personal project report (and final product and/or photographs of final product, where appropriate) or the personal project essay (a word count should be included at the end of each personal project)
- the completed coversheet *Form F4.3* or *Form F4.5* (each supervisor of a personal project must write comments about the award of levels for individual criteria on the form sent with each personal project).

MYP personal project glossary

Personal project	A project that is the culmination of the students' experience in the MYP and shows their experience of the areas of interaction. It is completed in year 5 of the programme.
Personal project supervisor	The member of staff within a school who is responsible for working directly with the student on the completion of the personal project.
Report	This is the written work that accompanies the product of the personal project. In the case of an essay-type project, the report is also the product.
Required structure	The structure of the report required for all personal projects, detailed in the "Requirements" section of this guide.