



Personal project: Changes to objectives and criteria

Purpose of this document

This document is intended to provide a brief overview of the new *Personal project guide* and the changes that have occurred. The guide will be published in January 2011. It is for use from September 2011 or January 2012, depending on the start of the school year, and for first use in final assessment in June 2012 (northern hemisphere) and December 2012 (southern hemisphere). Schools are advised to wait for publication of the new guide in 2011 before making amendments to any documents about the personal project they give to parents or students.

The personal project remains a project based on a topic of personal interest to the student with a focus area of interaction and is completed over a period of time.

The revised aims reflect the current aims, with the addition of the student developing confidence as a lifelong learner as a result of completing the personal project. Changes to the objectives and assessment criteria are explained in the following table. The weighting of each criterion remains the same with a maximum level of 4. The level descriptors have a single achievement level.

Significant changes to the personal project are as follows.

- The project report has been formerly known as the “written statement”, “structured writing” or “personal statement”. The project report can be produced in different formats, including a written, oral or multimedia report. Whichever format the project is reported through, the same assessment criteria apply. Although the International Baccalaureate (IB) would encourage schools to consider any of the formats, ultimately schools should use their discretion in deciding on which formats to make available to students. Logistics and resources will need to be considered during the organization of the project stage in the school. The project report has a specific structure that is explained in the guide. This includes: title page; table of contents; body of the report; bibliography; appendices. The body of the report is structured around the objectives and criteria: the goal, selection of sources, application of information, achieving the goal and reflection on learning.
- If a student chooses to write an essay as the product of their project, the essay is separate to the project report.
- It is strongly recommended that students choose one area of interaction only as a focus to the project.

Overview

2004 objective/criterion	2011 objective/criterion	What has changed and why?
G Personal engagement	A Use the process journal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the 2004 guide, the application of approaches to learning (ATL) skills and the working behaviours associated with these are the focus of objective/criterion G “Personal engagement”, which is used as an holistic judgment of the students engagement with the project. The process journal is referred to as part of this preamble. The descriptors of this objective/criterion refer to “required qualities” and “working behaviours”. <p>In the 2011 guide, while not being called personal engagement, objective/criterion A is still a measure of the student’s engagement with the project through his or her use of the process journal. It is essentially about the student recording the process using ATL skills and showing evidence of his or her engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant difference is that this new objective/criterion will be moderated when samples of student work are submitted for moderation. It will be necessary for extracts from the process journal to be included with the project report in order to support the level awarded for objective/criterion A. The complete process journal will not be sent and a limited number of extracts will be submitted. The new guide will provide more specific guidelines about the number and type of extracts. It is expected that the student would be involved in the selection of extracts along with the supervisor. • The reasons for these changes are to promote the use of the process journal more strongly and to acknowledge students’ good practice during the project. Apart from its important role in enabling the student to report the project following completion of the outcome/product, the process journal authenticates the work of the student. The format is discussed in the guide. However, there is flexibility for students. The moderation of the use of the process journal is to ensure that this aspect of the personal project is considered as important as completing an outcome or product.
A Planning and development	B Define the goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An item that has been removed from this objective/criterion is the requirement for students to describe the steps that will be followed to achieve the goal. There were several places in the personal project report based on the 2004 guide where students discussed the planning, the process and the reflection on the process and there was overlap between these aspects. It is not necessary for students to discuss how they intend to complete the project in this section, as the whole project report is a summary of this process and will reflect the steps that they took. Specific planning for the project will feature in the process journal in the form of notes, annotated illustrations or Mind Maps® for example, and provide evidence through that source. • An addition that has been made is for the student to create specifications that they will use to evaluate the outcome or product. The specifications are essentially a checklist of features or aspects that the outcome or product must

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		<p>meet. As the student decides on his or her goal and the outcome/product of the project, her or she will define exactly what he or she wants to achieve. The specifications enable the student to focus clearly on his or her outcome/product. These specifications are detailed in the project report in order to meet one of the strands of this objective/criterion.</p> <p>There is an overlap here with the specifications that are used in the design cycle in the MYP <i>Technology guide</i> and the artistic intentions as referred to in the appendix of the MYP <i>Arts guide</i>, “The intended or planned outcomes or goals for the artwork”. It is anticipated that specifications may change as the student works on the project and discovers new information or challenges. However, the specifications that are reported should be the final ones that were developed during the process.</p> <p>The reason for expecting the creation of specifications is to ensure that students are focusing on goals that are realistic as well as challenging. Students are expected to think ahead about the outcome or product of the project and define it as clearly as possible at the early stages of the process. This is not new to the MYP and throughout the MYP, students will have been receiving guidelines, criteria or instructions that tell them what is required for a specific task. They will have had opportunities to practise creating their own criteria or specifications in different contexts in subject groups.</p>
B Collection of information/resources	C Select sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2004 and 2011 objectives and criteria both require students to select sources of information. The differences are the following. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The use or application of information has been placed in the objective/criterion D “Apply information”. – Students are expected to evaluate the sources, which involves the use of information literacy skills. – Bibliography and referencing conventions are placed in the objective/criterion G “Report the project”, which relates to reporting the project and organizing the report coherently. • Separating the selection of sources from the use of sources is to help the student focus on the process of selecting information and his or her ability to think critically about information, which is the evaluation of sources, as referred to in the previous bullet point. The use of these sources and the information is addressed in objective/criterion D “Apply information”. The referencing of sources is part of the reporting of the project and has been placed in this objective/criterion as it relates to the presentation of information.
C Choice and application of	(See objective/criteri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This objective/criterion has been removed and been incorporated into the objective/criterion D “Apply information”. There is overlap between application of information and/or techniques depending on the nature of the project. When

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techniques	on D.)	students select sources, these may relate to techniques as well as information.
D Analysis of information	D Apply information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was confusion over the use of “reflection” in the descriptors of this objective/criterion in the 2004 guide. The objective/criterion in the 2011 guide refers specifically to how the student transfers and applies information or techniques in order to achieve the goal. Students need to make this explicit in the report by explaining how they used the information from sources in order to move their project forward. In <i>MYP: From principles to practice</i> (August 2008), the ATL skill area “Transfer” is partly defined as “making connections—including using knowledge, understanding and skills across subjects to create products or solutions, applying skills and knowledge in unfamiliar situations”..
N/A	E Achieve the goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a new objective/criterion and includes the final outcome/product as part of the assessment. This has been included in response to feedback from schools that students felt the outcome or product was not being taken into consideration in the assessment. This objective/criterion will not be moderated. The student will use the specifications created earlier in the process to evaluate the outcome or product and to self-assess with the assistance of the supervisor. It is expected that the student reports his or her evaluation in the project report but the evaluation itself is not assessed.
E Organization of the written work	(See objective/criterion G.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This objective/criterion is still a part of the personal project and is called “Report the project” and has become the final objective/criterion. The same aspects are included: structure and clarity of language. Referencing has additionally been placed in this objective/criterion rather than in the old objective/criterion B “Collection of information/resources” as it relates to the presentation of the report.
F Analysis of process and outcome	F Reflect on learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This objective/criterion has been changed to a holistic reflection on learning about the topic and area of interaction, as well as ATL. Students are not expected to reflect in detail on each stage of their project. Rather, this is an opportunity for them to highlight their specific learning in the topic through completing the project as well as how their understanding of the area of interaction has developed. The report as a whole is a summary of the process of completing the project and all of the assessment criteria B-F in the 2011 guide relate to the analysis of the process. The process journal is the tool for recording this process. Students are expected to reflect on themselves as learners, thinking about how they have developed their ATL skills through completing the project. In many project reports based on the current 2004 guide, students comment on their development in ATL and this is a way of formalizing this further and encouraging it.

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		<p>It also emphasizes that approaches to learning is a part of every project. ATL is only a focus area of interaction in some clear cases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The evaluation of the outcome/product has been placed in the objective/criterion E “Achieve the goal”, as this objective/criterion specifically addresses the outcome/product.
	G The project report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This objective/criterion relates to how the student communicates the project through the report. It focuses specifically on the report as a tool for communicating the process and outcome/product of the project. It takes into consideration the structure and length of the report, as well as language and referencing conventions used. This does not differ substantially from the 2004 objective/criterion E: “Organization of the written work”. As mentioned earlier, the difference is that the report can take various formats. The reason for making this change is to open up the possibilities for students and address different learning and communication preferences. The <i>Personal project guide</i> stresses the importance of considering student strengths when deciding on a format for the project report and not underestimating the preparation required for an oral or multimedia report and their challenges. The ultimate decision for the project report format is with the school although the IB would encourage schools to be open-minded with the options given to students based on resourcing capabilities.