Reflective project criteria

Criterion A: Focus and method

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

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

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding in context

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

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

Criterion C: Critical thinking

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

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

Criterion D: Communication

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

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

Criterion E: Engagement and reflection

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

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

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