**Personal Project**

**Overview and Frequently Asked Questions**

All students in a 10th grade English class will be required to complete the MYP Personal Project this year. This is an opportunity for students to self-select a topic they are passionate about and conduct an investigation. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to develop/refine many transferable skills. In order to support them throughout the process, all staff members will serve as a Personal Project supervisor (unless you already have (3) DP Extended Essay mentees). Hopefully, this will be as rewarding for supervisors as it is for the students. Thank you for your effort in encouraging students to make this a positive experience and worthwhile endeavor.

**What is the MYP Personal Project?**

This is exactly what it sounds like—a project that is of personal interest to the students. They choose the topic to explore and the type of product they will create to showcase what they have learned. The process encourages them to demonstrate initiative while exploring something that is meaningful to them.

The Personal Project involves several component parts:

* process journal
* report
* product/outcome

During the process students will:

1. Select a topic and then define a **goal** they have related to that topic. For example, their goal may be to become more physically fit by reducing their body fat index.
2. They will conduct research. This involves generating questions to be answered. For example if they are investigating body fat index and physical fitness they might research :

* What is body fat index?
* How is body fat index measured?
* What is the relationship between body fat index and health? Is there a target number people should reach for if they want to be healthy?
* How does food intake impact body fat index?
* What foods make the most difference in a person’s body fat index? Is it specific foods or quantity of specific foods?
* How does exercise impact body fat index?
* Are there certain exercises that play a greater role in changing body fat index?
* Does genetics play a role in body fat index?
* What suggestions have experts made to change body fat index?

1. After conducting research through a variety of sources the student will decide how they want to showcase what they learned. For this example, they might decide to:

* Create a 6 week personal plan for reducing their body fat index.
* Create an instructional video explaining the role of exercise and diet in determining body fat index and how this information can be used to create a healthier lifestyle.

**Why is the personal project important?**

There are many positive outcomes related to completing the MYP Personal Project including, but not limited to, an opportunity to:

* Select an area of interest to explore in depth.
* Create a product that showcases learning in a manner that celebrates a students’ talents and individuality.
* Develop/refine skills that will support Diploma level class expectations, particularly the Extended Essay.
* Continue to develop the attributes of the IB learner profile.
* Extend the investigation into service learning.
* Build self-confidence and self-awareness as a learner.
* Make connections between/within disciplines and skills.
* Take risks in a supported environment.

**What is the timeline of the personal project?**

Students were introduced to the Personal Project in June 2017 through their English 9 classes and are expected to submit the three component parts fully completed by early February 2018. The timeline for the process is below:

***June 2017****–* Introduce PP through English 9 classes.

***September 2017*** – “Reintroduce” PP; request supervisors; complete Journals 1 -4

***October/November 2017*** – Supervisors assigned; complete Journals 5 – 8; develop goal; conduct research (time provided in English classes); draft Part 1 (Investigation) of the Final Report; brainstorm product possibilities.

***December 2017*** – Analyze research; finalize product choice; define product specifications and criteria; begin creating product; complete Journals 9 - 10.

***January 2018*** – Complete Journal 11; finish product; draft Part 2 & 3 of Final Report and submit to supervisors for feedback.

***February 2018*** – Week 1 – Edit report; finalize product.

Week 2 - Submit Process Journal; report and product.

**What skills will students develop or refine in order to be successful?**

* ***Communication*** – Students will have opportunities to further develop effective oral and written communication skills (process journal; report; e-mail/face-to-face meetings with supervisors; product fair). Students may additionally choose to share their new information and understanding with friends, teachers, family …
* ***Self-Management*** – Students will learn to establish appropriate short and long term deadlines; manage tasks; manage state of mind (focus, perseverance, motivation, resilience); and reflect throughout the process. Students may change their behavior as a student in response to their learning.
* ***Research*** – Students will find, interpret, analyze and create information. They will use appropriate methods for citing sources.
* ***Thinking*** – Throughout the process students will be analyzing and evaluating ideas and information; generating new ideas and considering different perspectives. They will use prior knowledge as they acquire new knowledge and compare/contrast to make connections between contexts and disciplines. Students will connect how their new learning impacts attitudes, behaviors, actions and decisions.
* ***Social*** – Students will build and develop a relationship with their supervisor and other sources of support. Students may realize they can make a difference through decisions and actions associated with their new learning.

**What is a process journal and how does it contribute to the Personal Project?**

The process journal is the medium students will use to chronicle their journey. They will be provided with specific journal prompts to address, but the way they choose to address them may vary. While the process journal will ultimately “live” in google classroom students can respond in individual ways.

* Some students may choose to respond in a very traditional manner by writing their thoughts in complete sentences.
* Other students may create very detailed lists and sub-lists of their ideas while others may provide sketches with some commentary (they will likely do these on their own paper and then take a picture to upload to the google classroom).
* Some may use some very unique methods or combinations of methods.

This is an opportunity for them to explore and reflect on their learning styles and make adjustments as needed while completing the demands of the Personal Project. **Students will use these journal entries to write their final report so the more “detailed” and intentional their responses are the easier it will be when they are tasked with sharing their entire process in their report.**

**What supports will students have during the process?**

Students will have the support of their English teacher; their supervisor and the MYP Coordinator (Kathe Naughton) and Personal Project Manager (Lisa Gunther). Some aspects of the process will be delivered through their academic classes (primarily English). The process journal will “live” in google classroom.

**What is my role as a supervisor?**

As a supervisor you are in a position to motivate, ask targeted questions (to help students problem solve; organize; evaluate sources ….) and evaluate their work. Ultimately this is the students project and they will have to take ownership for the process and outcome; however, all of the students will benefit from some outside support, some more than others!

* You should plan to have several face-to-face meetings with your mentees and may also decide to communicate via email as needed.
* Familiarize yourself with the rubric criteria and sample IB Personal Project Reports so you can provide positive, honest and informative feedback throughout the process (see attachments and links provided).
* Be prepared to help students narrow their focus if needed (and perhaps become more realistic about their outcome in the time frame allocated for this project).
* Read the students process journals periodically (google classroom) to inform your feedback to students.
* Assess the final project (late February).

**How will students be assessed? What is my role in the assessment process?**

Students will be assessed using the (4) assessment criteria developed by IB for ***Year 5 Personal Project*** which include the following:

*Criterion A: Investigating*

*Criterion B: Planning*

*Criterion C: Taking Action*

*Criterion D: Reflection*

All components of the Personal Project (process journal, report and product/outcome) are considered when applying the demands of the rubric criteria. **It is important that students and supervisors familiarize themselves with the descriptors for each criterion and note the adjectives that differentiate achievement levels within each criteria before beginning the Personal Project.**

Once students submit their final Personal Project:

* Supervisors, the MYP Coordinator and Personal Project Manager will review each Personal Project according to the rubric criteria to determine the overall grade.
* The grades will be submitted to IB.
* IB will select a limited number of Personal Projects to review and compare to the internal scoring submitted by Stuart.
* IB will provide feedback through this monitoring process.