

OXFORD

INTERNATIONAL  
AQA EXAMINATIONS

# INTERNATIONAL INDEPENDENT PROJECT QUALIFICATION (IPQ)

(9693)

Quick guide to remote delivery of the IPQ

v1.0

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For teaching from September 2017 onwards

The International Independent Project Qualification (IPQ) is a student-led, independent research project, supported by a supervisor and underpinned by taught skills. It provides a great opportunity for students looking to enhance their skills by studying at home or outside the timetable or school environment. Never underestimate the benefit the skills developed by undertaking the IPQ will bring to students; skills that will enhance attainment in their sixth form studies and beyond.

This quick guide offers a route through the IPQ process, with all teaching and supervision delivered remotely.

## USING THIS GUIDE

This guide could be used to support delivery of the IPQ as a full remote programme, or simply to help students get ahead by providing learning opportunities to develop research and study skills. The aim could be to complete an IPQ, to help prepare students who are shortly about to start A-level students looking towards Higher Education. Whatever the aim, the advice and resources offered here provide a great opportunity for students to get ahead with independent research and study skills.

This guide is aimed at the IPQ coordinator. It will also be useful for supervisors and those thinking about using the IPQ for remote learning.

## GOOD PRACTICE FOR REMOTE IPQ

This section provides advice on setting up remote IPQ delivery and preparing your teaching and learning resources to enable success. As coordinator, you may delegate activities to the supervisor and/or skills teacher depending on the set up at your school/college.

Please note: some of the resources in this document refer to EPQ, AQA's UK project qualification. However the content is just as relevant and useful for IPQ.

1. **Understand the IPQ.** Clear, upfront information about what the IPQ is (and isn't) for students and supervisors is crucial. The following resources will help you get the right messages across. Before your students commit to undertaking the IPQ remotely, we suggest that you and your students review the following resources and activities:
  - Listen to AQA's [podcast](#) and [bonus episode](#) on the EPQ and read the [episode resources](#) which explain how the EPQ benefits A-level performance.
  - Watch the [student's view](#) case study video.
  - Hold a group video call with your students to make sure that the demands and requirements of the qualification are fully understood.
  - Ask students to write a paragraph saying why they believe the IPQ is suitable for them and send this to you by email. They may already have some ideas about a project topic, but at this stage it's an understanding of the IPQ and commitment to independent project work that's required.
  - There is also an IPQ [textbook](#) available.

- 2. Establish clear and agreed communication methods for your students and supervisors** for updates, individual meetings and group teaching. Make sure that all those interactions that usually happen in and around school/college are considered now the learning is virtual. Ensure safeguarding is fully considered when remote communication tools and methods are decided.
- 3. Consider how to manage files and digital media created for IPQ work.** You could use services like Project Q, Google Docs or Teams, or an agreed method of file management using your own school systems. Make sure your students and supervisors have access to the right documents and know how to manage their work online.
- Use the [quick guides](#), [teacher guidance document](#) and the video training webinars, accessed through the [online staffroom](#) to provide online training to your IPQ team. This includes ensuring everyone is working to appropriate guidelines and knows how their role fits into the IPQ programme.
- 5. Know your students.** Ask your IPQ students to undertake a skills audit so you can determine their existing skills and what they will need to learn. You could, for example, use [this questionnaire](#) from the University of Sheffield to kick start your skills audit, then hold a group/individual call to discuss and examine the audit with your students in more depth.
- 6. Consider your students' skills audits** as you plan how to deliver and support the taught skills learning. The IPQ scheme of work, available through the [online staffroom](#) provides comprehensive coverage of the required taught skills, with links to useful resources.

## TAUGHT SKILLS

Taught skills are essential to a successful IPQ and students should learn these skills ahead of implementing them in their project. The skills can be delivered in flexible ways, including student-led learning. In addition to the scheme of work and resources links, there are lots of other resources available to support taught skills learning.

- To help students get used to independent learning, you could use one of these free FutureLearn courses:
  - [Developing your research project](#) from the University of Southampton: eight sessions each of one hour.
  - [How to succeed in your EPQ: the nuts and bolts of completing your project](#) from the University of Bath: three sessions each of three hours.
- There are many excellent resources delivered by UK universities for delivering the EPQ – all easily adaptable for remote delivery. Some of these resources can be used independently by students at home but others would benefit from teacher delivery and input.
- Depending upon your timescales, consider asking students (possibly in small groups) to complete a mini project, with a 1,000-word research report on a given topic, in order to teach and develop some of the core IPQ skills in a project context. Group video calls could be hosted by the skills teacher during which ideas for the mini project can be shared whilst skills develop. This may help to reduce the isolation felt by some students embarking on a remote IPQ. This group work can run alongside your students' initial research for their own individual project.
  - Please note that ideally at least half the taught skills should be delivered before a proposal is submitted.

## THE PROJECT PROCESS

### RECORD OF INITIAL IDEAS

It's ok for your students to have more than one idea for their project at the beginning of the process. Students should record all their initial project ideas and how they will research them. The initial ideas and research will form the basis of your students' first meeting with their supervisor. For remote learning, it's very important that the body of research available is considered from the initial ideas stage onwards.

#### Notes on research

1. Researching at home, or in a remote environment, poses particular challenges and must be taken into account when selecting a topic. Your supervisors should question their students about the proposed research and its feasibility. Reject a topic if resources can't be accessed.
2. In tackling initial ideas research, students should read the [Wellcome Trust ethics guide](#) and supervisors should make good use of the [quick guide to ethical principles](#). Students should complete an assessment of their project ideas relating to the ethics of research.
3. Before students commence any online research, they should have covered the taught skills on how to keep safe online and how to scrutinise online sources for reliability, relevance, currency, etc. Great emphasis should be placed on the need to **evaluate** online sources thoroughly **before** using them.
4. Be mindful that practical resources, for example for practical science based IPQs, are less likely to be available if your students are working at home, or their usual school/college spaces are unavailable to them. The supervisor must be alert to this and be prepared to reject a proposal if they think the tools to successfully develop the IPQ will not be available.

### STUDENT PROPOSAL, SUPERVISOR COMMENTS, AND COORDINATOR APPROVAL

Once students reach proposal stage, supervision should be established on a one-to-one basis. At proposal stage it is recommended that a full evaluation of all resources discovered so far is submitted so the supervisor can support the proposal and you, as coordinator, can approve with confidence. Careful consideration must be made to the student's working arrangements and access to their proposed body of research, to ensure the remote execution of an IPQ is feasible and the project proposal enables the student to target the full set of assessment objectives.

### PLANNING, MID-PROJECT AND PROJECT PRODUCT REVIEWS

Each of these three important review meetings can be conducted online and documented in the [production Log](#) in the normal way. Your students and supervisors will need to consider how they tackle online meetings and how to best prepare to make the most of their time together. For example, it might be a good idea for the student to share any relevant documents with the supervisor prior to the meeting, but remember that the supervisor is there to provide support and guidance only. The supervisor should not mark/annotate any work, nor should they give specific advice on structure or content. It's a good idea to remind students and supervisors about the level of feedback allowed, especially in remote learning circumstances where face-to-face dialogue may be replaced with written exchanges.

At the mid-project review, the student will confirm the final title project product. This gives the student the opportunity to address any issues related to how remote learning has impacted on the final title. For example, perhaps the student has modified their final title, or adjusted the focus of their research based on the availability of research sources.

It's expected that by the project product review the student will send their supervisor a draft of their project report. It is important that any feedback on this report is at a general level only, and whilst it might be written, feedback must not be recorded on the report itself, instead written in an email where video or voice calls are not available.

## PRESENTATION PARTS A AND B

A remote presentation may be delivered to an invited non-specialist audience. Provided the presentation is delivered live and a Q&A session is recorded by the supervisor, the full specification requirements can be met. If video is not possible, presentation materials can be posted or emailed to the audience in advance of the presentation day and telephone delivery may be used. Your students may exercise creativity and ingenuity to deliver exciting presentations that tell the story of the challenges met and overcome during their IPQ journey.

## SUMMARY AND REFLECTION

In addition to the usual reflections relating to strengths and weaknesses discovered during the IPQ journey, remote delivery offers your students opportunities to reflect on the many additional challenges posed. Perhaps they will evaluate the different online platforms for communication; why for example do they prefer use of one platform over another? They could reflect on the limits presented by reduced access to a wider range of resources or how they feel about working in isolation.

## ADMINISTRATION

### IPQ entries

The entry deadline for IPQ is February, and the submission deadline is March but delivery duration can be as long or short as a centre deems appropriate for their students. For example, if your students have limited other academic work to undertake, the required 30 hours of teaching and 90 hours of independent input could easily be completed in a shorter time period than you would normally allocate.

## STANDARDISATION, GRADING AND MODERATION

Standardisation examples are available from [the online staffroom](#) and can be used as the starting point to standardise supervisors that are preparing to grade completed projects. You should ensure your supervisors are trained in the IPQ standard before grading any work. Once grading is complete, internal moderation should be carried out. This is your responsibility but you may invite your supervisors to take part in moderation. Because the IPQ has been delivered remotely it is expected that the [production log](#) and project product will be available electronically. If any part of the IPQ is not available in this way the supervisor must make adequate arrangements to view the full project submission so grading can take place. We will accept electronic signatures for all paperwork related to the IPQ. The moderation sample required by us should be a hard copy.

## FURTHER SUPPORT FROM OXFORDAQA

- [Quick guides](#)
- [IPQ Teacher guidance document](#)
- [IPQ Textbook](#)

If you have further questions, use the contact form at the bottom of the IPQ page of the [OxfordAQA website](#)

For further advice and guidance, you can also contact your local OxfordAQA Qualifications Consultant.



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