

OxfordAQA International EPQ (9695)

Teaching guide: The project process and Production Log for Project Qualifications

For teaching from September 2023 onwards

Project Qualifications are process-based. As students work through a process, they're taught skills to use in their project (see the *Teaching guide: The Taught Element of Project Qualifications*). These skills will be used by the students within their own unique project. Evidence of the skill development will be the basis of the final assessment.

When planning delivery of a Project Qualification, it's important to plan it as a process. The process has various stages.

Initial ideas for projects

Usually, students will have more than one idea for their project at the beginning of the process. Students should make notes about all their initial project ideas and how they might research them. These initial ideas and associated research will form the basis of your students' first meetings with their Supervisors. This initial period should run alongside delivery of the Taught Element and may take several weeks or months.

Whilst considering their initial ideas, students should read the [Welcome Trust ethics guide](#) and, where relevant, Supervisors should encourage students to complete both a general risk assessment and a specific assessment of their initial project ideas relating to the ethics of research. Ethical considerations must be undertaken before students decide on their project aims and methodology. Supervisors will work hard during this initial phase, challenging students and encouraging students to establish a sound initial research base and to check fully that their proposed topic is truly suitable for a Project Qualification. Supervisors will also work with students to establish that there's no risk of Dual Accreditation. By the end of this stage around half of the Taught Element will have been delivered.

Submitting a proposal

Once students reach proposal stage, supervision will be firmly established on a one-to-one basis. Students will submit a formal proposal to the Centre Coordinator clearly explaining what topic they would like to research and what form their proposed project product will take. (See the *Teaching guide: Artefact products for EPQ* for more detail about the different forms of project product that are possible). The Supervisor should be able to write in detail to support the proposal and the Centre Coordinator can either approve the proposal or not. Note that OxfordAQA does not play any role in the approval process. This responsibility rests with the Centre Coordinator and proposals need to be carefully and thoroughly scrutinised.

Planning and research

Once a proposal has been approved students can start to plan their project. Project planning will be followed by a period of independent research. For both of these activities, students should be developing the skills they have been taught. During this period, the students should embark on a genuine research journey and by the end of it, there's an expectation that some change or development of the planning or title or the aims and objectives will have occurred. Throughout this period, delivery of the Taught Element continues, delivering skills that will be used during the product realisation stage.

Product realisation

Once the research has been completed, it will be time for the student to start work on their chosen product. Students will continue to develop and use the various skills they have been taught. All students, for example, will be writing an academic research report. Throughout this period delivery of the Taught Element continues, delivering skills that will be used during the presentation, final review and hand-in stages.

Presentation

Students must deliver a live presentation to a non-specialist audience. The presentation should focus on the whole project and cover the following:

- what their project is about and how they chose this topic
- their aims and objectives
- what research has been undertaken, how and why it was done this way
- what conclusions their research led them to
- how their project changed or developed during the process
- a review of the whole project process and the skills they've developed
- lessons they've learnt
- how their product might affect their future career/education.

The presentation provides students with an opportunity to tell the story of their project, from initial project choice right through to final reflections. Students can demonstrate their project management, research and evaluation skills which can provide excellent evidence to contribute towards the holistic assessment.

The presentation may be given in English, or the student's first language. Should the presentation be given in a language other than English, an authenticated translation to English should be provided along with the record of the presentation. All written evidence, including the bibliography, should be provided in English.

Final review

Once the presentation is completed students have the opportunity to reflect on the whole project experience. They can audit their own skill development and evaluate not only their final product, but also their own learning.

Project submission

All that remains is for students to hand in their completed project. It'll be assessed by their Supervisor against five Assessment Objectives. (See *Teaching Guidance*).

The Production Log

The Production Log is a document used to record a student's journey throughout the project process. The Production Log is not an admin document; it provides the student with the backbone of their project. Much of the evidence of skill development will be found in a well completed Production Log.

It's vital that students are made aware of how important this document is in relation to their final outcome and that they complete the Production Log as they go along. Production Logs should never be completed retrospectively and it's the responsibility of Supervisors to make sure that there's no retrospective editing undertaken by the students.

Students should be encouraged to consider the assessment criteria when completing their Production Logs and answer the question/respond to the statement at the start of each section in a clear and focused way. The Production Log has been designed to provide students with appropriate prompts for each section and following this structure will provide students with a framework for their project.

The Production Log belongs to the student. It's their document and they are the ones who are responsible for its completion (apart from the pages indicated for the Supervisor and Centre Coordinator to complete).

Below is an outline of each page of the Production Log and some tips for their completion.

Candidate record form

Similar to student record forms for all coursework, this should be completed by the student and the Supervisor at the end of the process. It confirms that the work submitted was produced, unaided by the student.

Submission checklist

This is partly an aide memoir for the Supervisor to complete before submitting a Project but it contains helpful information for the OxfordAQA moderators.

The taught skills element

Using the space provided, the Supervisor should record details of the taught skills programme followed by the student. This section can be pre populated by the Centre Coordinator before issuing the Production Log template to students see the *Teaching guide: The Taught Element of Project Qualifications* for more detail).

Record of marks

The checklist is again partly an aide memoir for the Supervisor marking the project but it contains helpful information for the OxfordAQA moderators.

The mark table is where the Supervisor records the final marks awarded to the student. The

Supervisor should write a supporting statement for each Assessment Objective indicating the evidence found within the submission that justifies the marks awarded. The Supervisor may also make a concluding statement on the project as a whole, including information about any change in supervision if relevant. If the project has been used for internal moderation the Centre Coordinator should complete the internal moderation comment as appropriate. (See *Teaching guidance* for detail on marking and internal moderation).

Record of initial ideas

It's usual for students to have more than one idea for their project at the beginning of the process. Students should record all their initial project ideas on this page and record how they intend to research these ideas in the space provided. The initial ideas and research will form the basis of the student's early meetings with their Supervisor. The contents and outcomes of these meetings should be recorded in the space provided. This page may be the record of several weeks or months of initial thinking and planning.

Part A: Candidate proposal

This page is to be completed by the student. They should be encouraged to be as clear and detailed as possible when discussing the types of research they plan to undertake; more detail is expected than 'I will read books and look on the internet'. At the proposal stage, it's recommended that a full evaluation of all resources thus far discovered is submitted by the student. They should, where relevant, be encouraged to explain the ethical principles applied to their project proposal. This is also where students record what other courses they are undertaking. Whilst students might be inspired to look more deeply into a topic they have touched on in another area of study, they should be looking to extend and develop away from those core areas of study. (See the *Teaching guide: When and how to deliver Project Qualifications* for more advice on how to avoid Dual Accreditation).

Part B: Supervisor's comments on candidate proposal

This is to be completed by the Supervisor. The Supervisor should comment on the suitability of the project working title and proposed research base, how the project proposal extends/develops from the student's main course of study and whether the student's research plan is feasible. The Supervisor should also indicate what form the final project product, as currently intended, will take.

Part C: Centre Coordinator's approval of student's proposal

This page is to be completed by the Centre Coordinator, who gives the final approval for a project to go ahead. If your centre has a sole Supervisor who is also working as the Centre Coordinator, they should enlist the help of a colleague to countersign this page. The Centre Coordinator should refer to the five-point checklist in section 2.4 of the specification before approving project proposals. In particular, this stage of the project process is the coordinator's opportunity to influence specific project proposals from an ethical point of view before the student begins to plan their project research. (Information on the proposed research process and evidence that ethical principles have been considered may be in the initial ideas section, but if this is lacking then resubmission may be required, with a request to the student that this is included prior to resubmission).

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Planning review

This section provides the student with an opportunity to map out their next steps by developing a project plan that will allow them to chart and monitor their progress. Some students use Gantt charts or other project management tools to help with the management of their projects. These can be helpful tools when used effectively but they aren't compulsory for a successful project; students can use the Production Log to plan and monitor their progress. The planning review also provides the opportunity for the student to record the review meeting held with their Supervisor to discuss the project planning. Students should record outcomes and actions from this meeting in the space provided.

Mid-project review

Students should have completed the bulk of their research by the time of this review and should be ready to start producing their product. Any changes and developments that have occurred as a result of their research, conversations with their supervisors or other input should be logged and fully explained. If they have made a decision to refine their title, for example, then this would be the appropriate time for them to justify that decision and reflect upon how they came to that decision. By this stage, the student's title should be finalised and the form of the intended product should be clearly stated.

Project product review

This section provides students with an opportunity to measure how well they have managed the project process since the mid-project review. Students should be reminded of the necessity of recording their own monitoring processes and discuss the extent to which they have reached the goals they set themselves/met their own deadlines. If the supervisor has read a draft of the report they may have made some generic comments or points. The student should record this advice but it's up to the student to decide how or whether they will incorporate this advice in their final draft of the report. Note that whilst Supervisors can give criticism and advice, this must be at a general level only.

Presentation record part A

This page in the Production Log offers an opportunity for the student to outline what form their presentation will take, who will be there, the content of their presentation and any changes they make as a result of a discussion with their supervisor after a rehearsal.

Presentation record part B

This page of the Production Log is completed by the Supervisor. A detailed record should be written and this record is available as valid assessment evidence. Centres should not submit audio or video recordings of the presentations, but a comprehensive written record including the questions asked by the Supervisor and answers given by the student can offer a wealth of valuable assessment evidence. Supervisors should avoid vague statements such as 'the student answered confidently' and instead document specific examples from the presentation, as directed by the prompts on Presentation record part B.

Summary and reflection

Students should provide an abstract/brief outline of their product. (There are online resources on writing an effective abstract which could form part of the Taught Element). This final page in the Production Log offers a great opportunity for objective evaluation. Often students think that if they admit to any failings they will be penalised; this isn't the case. Honest reflection on what went well and what they have learned, as well as what went less well and what they would do differently, are key to a successful reflection. Students should understand admitting to problems they encountered and acknowledging ways they dealt with those problems are a legitimate aspect of an effective reflection.