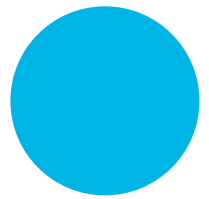# The Higher and Extended Project Qualification

Tutor Resources

Supervising the higher and extended project qualification

Introduction

The role of supervisor is key to the Higher and Extended Project. The supervisor is professionally responsible, through the centre coordinator, to City & Guilds for the immediate oversight of the candidate throughout the project process and for the final assessment. It is important that there is one person responsible for the whole 'supervision and assessment'.

There will be exceptional circumstances (staff illness, change of employment, etc.) that require a change of supervisor but these should be avoided as far as possible and suitable arrangements for transfer of notes/records made.

The supervisor will:

- undertake training as necessary and determined by the centre coordinator including required administrative procedures such as project acceptance

- oversee the work of candidates throughout the project process through regular contact in meetings or other suitable means (e.g. e-mail or bulletin board)

- keep records of their supervision as required by the centre coordinator

- develop a common understanding with other supervisors of the assessment criteria as led by the centre coordinator

- make the final assessment and comply with any moderation procedures required by the centre coordinator.

The supervisor role as required by City & Guilds relates solely to the elements required for quality control of the assessment of candidates on the project process. In many centres supervisors will have other additional roles, perhaps including a contribution to the taught element by delivering some skills teaching or administrative responsibilities relating to organisation of presentations.

General Oversight

Throughout the project process the supervisor provides general oversight through regular contact with the student.

This will include discussions that explore the student's progress and current understanding of their work. Guidance can and should be given but care should be taken not to remove the autonomy of the student. Give time (between meetings as well as in them) for students to think ideas through and make their own decisions and offer direction through description of alternative approaches used in the topic area or by open questions so that students make their own informed choices.

A basic record of supervision should be kept (dates and main topics of meetings) and particular notes made of elements that may not be recorded by the student in their own production log but that may contribute to your final assessment (for example, the development of a new idea that changes the direction of the project).

Such supervision will aid the student (and is also usually very enjoyable!) but is also, of course, extremely important in the professional quality control of the assessment – your assessment is based upon real knowledge of the student's development through the project process – and also as a major preventer/detector of possible malpractice or plagiarism.

In addition to this regular contact there are other key points in the process that also require supervision and monitoring. These are outlined in the following sections.

Project Acceptance

The project approval process is a formal one that is overseen on behalf of City & Guilds by your centre coordinator. There is guidance in the specification and in the supervisor's notes that accompany the production log. The supervisor's role at this extremely important stage is to negotiate with the student, exploring fully their initial ideas, and confirm formally that this is a project you are willing to supervise and meets the requirements of the qualification.

Mid-project reviews

At this stage the student should have a clear outline of their project in mind developed through initial research and skills/technique exploration. The supervisor agrees with the student the aims and objectives for completion of their project product – which may well have developed some way from the original proposal – and other necessary planning information such as the expected project product evidence, submission dates and procedures and presentation arrangements.

The student should record this in their production log but it is important that the supervisor records all agreed details. These aims and objectives become a major part of the baseline against which the candidate's achievement will be assessed.

Presentation

It is important to stress that the chief contribution of the supervisor is to prepare questions to the candidate based upon the project product and the process that has created it. Appropriate notes of responses to these questions (that may be made on the Presentation Record as part of the production log or in additional pages) are an important contribution to the final assessment.

Assessment

You should be prepared for assessment, through standardising meetings or otherwise, by your centre coordinator. Complete the Candidate Record Form as part of the production log with marks that are given using the criteria holistically across all the evidence available to you. Your own notes and the evidence submitted by the candidate including the log, their product and presentation details. It is particularly important that you note the reasons for particular marks where the evidence is based upon your own knowledge of the candidate's work which is not otherwise be evident to your centre coordinator or City & Guilds moderator.

Feedback

Your centre coordinator should provide you with an outline of any relevant feedback on the assessment given by City & Guilds, and to make use of the experience gained during your supervision to benefit other supervisors and candidates at your centre.

Presentation of the higher and extended project qualification

Introduction

A mandatory elements of the Higher and Extended Project Qualification is that the learner gives a presentation at the end of the project. The presentation may be in any appropriate form and some pilot examples are described below.

Presentations should include an evaluation of Extended Project Qualification outcomes, including the individual's own learning and performance. The person supervising the Extended Project Qualification is a key member of the audience for presentations and should negotiate with the learner whether others, such as learners, teachers, employers or other members of the local community, should be invited.

For authentication purposes, at least some aspects should be 'live' and there must be opportunities for questioning individuals. Delivery may be via any suitable means appropriate to the particular needs of the individual and type of extended project" (from the QCA guide *'An Introduction to the Extended Project'*, available from **http://archive. teachfind.com/qcda/www.qcda.gov. uk/resources/publication6814.html.)**

Presentation requirements

The City & Guilds specification interprets this presentation requirement as:

"The presentation should be for a non-specialist audience and use media appropriate to the type of project. The presentation could take the form of a verbal or written presentation or may involve the use of flipcharts, posters, OHP transparencies, PowerPoint or short excerpts of video material. This could take the form of a group presentation, in the case of a group project, or a one-to-one presentation to the supervisor. The presentation should be supported by answers to any questions from supervisors."

The essential elements that must be present in whatever form the presentation takes are:

- 'Non specialist audience' – this requirement directs the learner to give a presentation that explains the researched background of their project and their thinking. It is not to encourage 'dumbing down' or avoidance of newly learnt technical language, but to demand that they demonstrate depth of understanding by explaining such language rather than just using it.

- 'Questions from supervisors' – the supervisor must be part of the audience and the presentation must include 'live' individual response to question(s). These may come from other members of the audience but the supervisor must ensure that the learner is given the opportunity to respond in depth and demonstrate their grasp of the work that they have done. Pilot supervisors have found it helpful to have some in-depth questions prepared in advance, based upon the report and the discussions they have already had with the learner. These can be adapted or used as necessary.

- It is important to recognise that this is an opportunity for learners to demonstrate a range of understanding, reasoning and communication skills. They should be given the opportunity to push their skills to the limit and 'soft' questioning may do them no favours.

One moderator visiting some excellent presentations at a pilot centre noted:

"What was disappointing was the quality of questioning. Questions were few and far between. The first question to the first student started with a diffident 'Do you mind if I ask you a question?' and the students were never seriously challenged. Yet it was obvious that they were more than capable. It was unfortunate that the students were not given the opportunity to really display their grasp and interest in their topics. In an informal session at the end over a cup of tea they all really responded to the chance to talk in more depth about their subjects."

Form of the presentation

The majority of presentations given during the pilot were 15-30 minute talks to an audience consisting of their supervisor, a few other teachers (senior staff, subject specialists, other supervisors) and other Extended Project Qualification learners. Often these were accompanied by presentation slides and sometimes handouts. This form is most certainly adequate, although other forms might be more appropriate for some projects, and are relatively easy to arrange if entry numbers are small. Many other forms might be considered, however, as appropriate for certain types of project or to fulfil additional aims – such as advertising the achievement of students to future learners, other staff, parents, governors, etc. – or to make use of a wider range of opportunities in order to accommodate the needs of a large number of learners.

These might include:

- One-to-one – the presentation might be conducted as a 'viva' or individual interview.

While only the supervisor would conduct such a presentation it would be strongly recommended that an additional adult be present and able to confirm the supervisor's record if necessary. Such a presentation might be combined with or built upon existing schemes for providing university interview practice.

- Exhibition – for many creative projects the presentation can be combined with a formal exhibition of the work. The student responds to questions and/or gives a series of short explanations to visitors as they arrive and is visited during the exhibition by their supervisor for the required questioning in depth.

- Poster session – each learner creates a poster summary of their work, perhaps accompanied by a table with research or related material, that is put up for a visiting audience. Supervisors visit each poster for the required questions.

- Performance – if a project product is a performance or other live event such as a conference, it may be possible to incorporate the required presentation.

It is important that the learner is given the opportunity to respond to questions about the process of their work and their reflection upon what they have achieved, so this will often be an additional element at the end – the 'producer' comes on stage for a separate question session after the completion of the performance with perhaps only some of the original audience remaining.

- External audiences – use may be made of organisations that have contributed in some way to the project. For example, a local university that has given help by providing library research facilities might welcome a session at which students present their work to the library team involved. A group of councillors might welcome a presentation on a local issue.

- Other students – rather than give their presentations to other Extended Project Qualification learners, teaching colleagues might welcome presentations given to other classes for whom the project topic has some relevance. Some centres have gone further and had students give presentations to much larger groups at assemblies and the like.

Case studies

The project approval process is a formal one that is overseen on behalf of City & Guilds by your centre coordinator. There is guidance in the specification and in the supervisor's notes that accompany the production log. The supervisor's role at this extremely important stage is to negotiate with the student, exploring fully their initial ideas, and confirm formally that this is a project you are willing to supervise and meets the requirements of the qualification.

Case study One

A Sixth Form Centre that is part of an 11-18 institution with an arts-media specialism. The Sixth Form has approximately 450 students comprised of roughly 50% from the school and 50% external students.

The initial preparation for presentations began with advice in the form of a brief 'good practice' handout, which was also posted on the Extended Project Qualification notice board and website. The details included were a product of consultation between Extended Project Qualification coordinators and communication studies staff in college.

All students then undertook a practice presentation in college and received feedback on their performance from Extended Project Qualification coordinators. The final presentations varied greatly in terms of audience, venue and approach. For example, half of cohort three delivered their presentations at one or other of two Universities with whom the college had established connections, in front of an audience of academics, coordinators, supervisors, fellow students and even a film crew!

Others delivered their final presentations in college usually in front of a smaller audience.

The vast majority of students chose to deliver their presentations using a PowerPoint format. In terms of their ICT skills, they were usually well equipped to do so. Equally, however, a few students deemed their development of such skills as one of the most useful aspects of the Extended Project Qualification experience as they had never before produced a power-point presentation. The medium proved suitable for presenting a range of subject matter ranging from the purely academic to the essentially practical – in the case of the latter visual records of developments were easily facilitated.

At the same time, a number of students decided to supplement their presentation with physical visual aids, ranging from swimming equipment to a live model, making three costume changes! Interestingly, one student chose to simply talk about her findings without any additional electronic or visual aids and was confident enough to produce an interesting and insightful presentation.

Case study Two

A moderator visiting presentations at an 11-18 mixed comprehensive with over 1000 students made the following comments on a project that included aspects of the presentation element.

The student chose to develop, and run twice, a science fair for Year 5 pupils from primary schools in the catchment area. The dates of the 2 events were chosen to coincide with Science Week organised by the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

Each event included demonstrations of scientific experiments and a practical exercise in which teams of pupils competed with each other on a simple task.

47 pupils from 2 primary schools, accompanied by 3 teachers, attended the event I visited. It was based in the main hall, but required transfer to a laboratory for 1 demonstration that required .

The student's presentation consisted of introducing each element with a description of the science involved, using appropriate language; each description was supported by a single slide summarising the principles involved. He interacted with the pupils very well, asking simple questions and giving opportunities for them to ask questions at the end of each demonstration.

Evidence was collected in the form of photographs of each team during practical work, a video of the testing of the artefacts and questionnaires completed by the teachers accompanying the pupils. The student also had some discussion with staff. It became clear at the end that it would be necessary to set up a short additional interview with the supervisor as the opportunity to respond in depth and reflect on the work had not been sufficiently covered by the relatively informal conversation with the visiting teachers.

Case study Three

A school Sixth Form (Humanities College status) with two hundred students, of which about fifteen opted to take part in the Extended Project pilot.

To prepare students for their presentations, we made sure they were aware of this requirement from the outset.

This ensured they had the chance to continue to add to their notes etc. whilst they developed their folders and research. Students were also seen in advance of the presentation (during fortnightly supervision meetings) to outline what their presentations would involve and also to discuss what students might be expected to produce. Here, students laid out step-by-step what props, notes, power-point slides etc. would be included. This was also an opportunity for me as a supervisor to offer any advice and guidance to prepare them.

Our presentations were delivered in 2 varying formats (as we felt this suited our students, some of whom would find it difficult to stand alone in front of an audience and therefore may have lost marks as a result). 7 of our students presented their projects in an exhibition, attended by several members of staff and students, as well as supervisors. Here, students set up 'stalls' to display their work and were then asked questions as visitors wandered between the different projects.

The audience response was extremely positive. This was our first exhibition-style presentation, and allowed both coordinator and supervisors the opportunity to ask each of the 7 students presenting some questions personal to them, and also allowed us a more detailed probe of the work completed.

Members of staff attending who had not been directly involved with the Higher or Extended Project commented on how passionate the students were about their work, feeling that this is often rare to find in their normal academic subjects.

Many noted that the project adapts to include students with varying abilities, giving those students who may not achieve high grades and above at A-level the chance to achieve something valuable through work that they felt passionate about, and through means which may ordinarily not be recognised. The remaining 4 students presented in a more formal setting, in front of 3 supervisors. Here, they presented their work using notes and PowerPoint and then had a number of questions to answer at the end.

Case study Four

A non-selective secondary school with a Vocational and Performing Arts status. There are about 1400 students in the school including 250 in the Sixth form.

Our taught element included: communication, use of notes, voice projection. The presentations were organised to happen after the main report had been handed in and at a time when the school was not too busy with exams (before Easter). Students were allocated a minimum 10 minutes to present their project and at least 5 minutes was devoted to questions. The audience was 2 members of staff.

Nearly all students used PowerPoint and therefore required a projector. One student showed a video of her performance and one student had us listen to a song, therefore a CD / DVD player was required. To accommodate all this, we used a room equipped with an interactive whiteboard. This also helped the students present better as they were standing in front of the audience and could make eye contact as well as decide when to change slides themselves. Some students provided us with hand outs of their presentation slides, some brought some artefacts.

Colleagues were impressed with the quality of the projects that were reflected in excellent presentations. Students knew their project well and could answer questions easily even though some of them were nervous when first presenting their work.

Case study Five

A moderator visiting presentations at a Sixth Form College with about 1300 students made the following comments:

"Four students presented. It was the Humanities/Science session between 4.00-6.00pm.They were doing Performing Arts/Business Studies on another day.

The audience consisted of the three supervisors (two students had the same supervisor), three senior members of staff from the college and two friends of the students. It felt very much the right size of audience.

Each presentation followed roughly the same format. A 10-15 minute presentation using PowerPoint followed by questioning for between 5-15 minutes. In two cases detailed hand outs were given out as well. The relevant supervisor made notes for the Production Log form during the actual presentation and questioning.

The best presentation had clearly been well prepared and thought through and there was very good use of extensive slides designed to back up the students 'case' about the archaeology/history of a local monastery. The least good presentation, which although very thorough, was little more than a reading out of the actual information on the PP slides. All four students clearly had done a great deal of independent research and knew a lot about their topic. They all got the pitch right for these presentations and targeted their talks at the reasonably intelligent lay audience.

All the four presentations were recorded onto the College's system. The whole session was very well organised. A medium sized conventional classroom laid out in seminar style with good projection/interactive whiteboard facilities was used which was very appropriate for the occasion."

Case study Six

A Sixth Form College, specialising in education for 16-18 year olds. There are 2000 full time 16-18 students, the majority of whom are on level 3 courses, and a range of targeted provision for adult learners and employers.

Our approach to presentations has been reasonably fluid. We have kept to the main requirement of making the presentation for a new audience, but have tried to take advantage of the opportunity presented by having a student 'expert' in their field share their knowledge with students who would be interested in their findings.

Students have the chance to practice presentation skills during the extended project and are encouraged to test out what they plan to do before the real thing. In future years we intend to have more mini-presentation opportunities during the run up to the real thing, to help students with training. One of these will happen in the first 5 weeks of the extended project.

Some students opted for their actual artefact to be a presentation, alongside a 1000 word accompanying written piece. In one case we called this presentation a 'lecture'. It was on the work of the Romantic poet William Blake and his involvement in the anti-slavery movement. The lecture lasted 30 minutes and the script was around 5,000 words long, so we were able to count this as an entire project. The lecture was delivered to extension English students, but we were able to have a short phase at the end in which the student reflected on the strengths and weaknesses of the whole project. Thus we were able to keep within the requirement of addressing a 'new', non-specialist audience as part of the presentation.

For some students, the presentation was actually a viva with one or two members of staff.

As coordinator I sat in on some of these vivas, and asked some general questions.

Another colourful and successful model was the photography exhibition for all students doing an Extended Project Qualification in this field. The more relaxed environment of the exhibition room lent itself to more open discussion about the nature of the work.

A large number of the students delivered 10-15 minute presentations that summarised their projects and project findings. We tried to always have an audience of interested people, such as a first year group who might consider taking up the extended project, or to a class of students studying a subject related to the project.

In all cases where an audience was assembled for an actual presentation/lecture, PowerPoint was used. We provided guidance for students on the use of PowerPoint and have concluded that this needs to be enhanced in the future. PowerPoint can be a wonderful tool if well used, and generally students did not commit the crime of reading closely typed texts off a screen, but used it, instead, to enhance what they did. Some required members of the audience to respond in some way. One demonstrated a fully operational model of a 14th century crossbow at the front of the class! Perhaps most pleasingly, the presentations have generated interest from future Extended Project Qualification students and acted as the best possible kind of marketing ploy. We intend to formalise this in the future, so that most students in college have some access, either live or via the VLE, to presentations from former extended project students.

Assessment of the higher and extended project qualification

Introduction

Assessment of the Higher and Extended Project Qualification follows requirements laid out in the specification. Each project submitted is assessed by the supervisor who has overseen the candidate throughout the project process. These assessments are standardised and moderated internally by the centre coordinator who has formal responsibility for this process, supported by City & Guilds. The major principles of the assessment only are outlined in the following sections.

What is assessed

The assessment for the Higher and Extended Project Qualification is of the project process alone, i.e. of the single substantial piece of work that the student has done autonomously and that was approved by the centre coordinator.

This work must not be submitted for (or have been submitted for) any other accredited award.

Any work that the student may have completed as part of the required taught element, such as exercises in research and referencing or worksheets on particular research methods, may have been delivered as part of or alongside other courses. This is acceptable but such work does not form part of the assessment except in as far as it provides a baseline from which the student's choices and decisions may be judged.

For example, a series of statistical techniques may have been taught as part of research methods in psychology, biology or geography. In assessment for the Higher or Extended Project Qualification, it will be the student's autonomous choice and use of the appropriate technique in the context of their project work that may be assessed.

Holistic makings

While the assessment is weighted by particular assessment objectives – for each of which a range of assessment criteria are provided – there is no weighting given to any particular element of the overall project process. For example, the presentation is not marked separately.

The supervisor has the evidence submitted by the candidate – the project product and the candidate's production log that includes project approval and presentation record. They also have their own supervision notes. For each of the assessment objectives the supervisor marks using the evidence available wherever it might be.

For example, evidence of solving a problem that has arisen might be recorded in the production log, might be outlined in the written report, and might have been used as a focus in the presentation or arisen during questions at the presentation. It might be in the supervisor's notes of a meeting with the candidate. Wherever the evidence is, it should make an appropriate contribution to the marks.

Projects in different topic areas or in different forms by different students may well have a different distribution of assessment evidence.

Criteria Bands

Each of the assessment objectives is marked by placing the candidate in one of three bands and then allocating additional marks as appropriate based on the evidence available.

Roughly the three bands might be described as:

Higher band – Achieves all the objectives at a high standard across different aspects of the work.

Middle band – Is distinguished by the word 'some'. These candidates do essentially achieve an appropriate end result and demonstrate abilities but the achievement is across only some elements of the work.

Lower band – Is distinguished by the word 'limited'. There is some achievement (otherwise the requirements for assessment would not have been met at all) but the end result is substantially incomplete or not of an acceptable standard, non-required elements of the expected assessment evidence (e.g. planning details or records of advice from the supervisor in the log) are missing

Administration

Supervisors complete a mark sheet recording their assessment with any necessary additional comment. Supervisors' marks are moderated internally in a process managed by the centre coordinator and the full entry from the centre is moderated externally by City & Guilds following a standard sampling procedure. In addition moderators may visit centres as part of the overall quality control process to see presentations, examine project approvals, etc. either on a random sampling basis or for other reasons.