The production log and its purpose

What is the Production Log?

The Production Log is a document that is used to record a student's journey through the project process. The Production Log is not an admin document but rather provides the student with the backbone of their project.

The project qualifications are process-based qualifications. The outcome (essay, artefact, production) is a significant component, but the Production Log is just as important. It charts the student's progress from initial ideas, through their research to their final outcome and evaluation.

It is vital that students are made aware of how important this document is in relation to their final outcome and that they complete the log as they go along, rather than trying to fill it in retrospectively.

The assessment criteria

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 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.

Below is an outline of each page of the 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 at the end of the process. It confirms that the work they are submitting is their own.

Submission checklist

This is an aide memoir for the Supervisor to complete before submitting a project.

The taught skills element

Using the space provided, the supervisor should record details of the taught skills programme followed by the student.

Record of marks

This 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 seen to justify the marks awarded. The supervisor may also make a concluding statement on the project as a whole. If the project has been used for internal moderation the centre coordinator should complete the internal moderation comment as appropriate.

Record of initial ideas

It is acceptable 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 will research these ideas in the space provided. The initial ideas and research will form the basis of the student's first meeting with their supervisor, the contents and outcomes of this meeting should be recorded in the space provided.

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; we are expecting more detail than 'I will read books and look on the internet'. This is also where students record what other courses they are undertaking. Please note that 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. This is particularly true at Level 3 (EPQ).

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, 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 whether the student is working as part of a group and what form the final project product will take.

Part C: Centre coordinator's approval of candidate proposal

This page is to be completed by the centre coordinator who gives the final approval for a project to go ahead. If you are the sole supervisor and are also working as the centre coordinator, please enlist the help of a colleague to sign projects off. The centre coordinator should refer to the five point checklist in section 2.4 of the specification before approving project proposals.

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 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 plot and chart their progress against their aims. The planning review also provides the opportunity for the student to arrange a meeting with their supervisor to discuss their planning, and record outcomes and actions from this meeting in the space provided.

Mid-project review

By this stage the student's title should be finalised. They will have undertaken most of their research, and will be ready to start producing their outcome. Any changes that have been made as a result of their research, conversations with their supervisors or other input should be logged and fully explained. Students should be reminded that the project is marked holistically and that there may be opportunity for reflection and evaluation at any point. If they have made a decision to refine their title, for example, then this would be an appropriate time for them to justify that decision and reflect upon how they came to that decision.

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 they reached the goals they set themselves/met their own deadlines. The supervisor may have some more comments or points that the student could choose to incorporate in their product at this stage.

Presentation record part A

This is 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. See the quick guide to the presentation for more information on this important aspect of the project qualifications.

Presentation record part B

This is completed by the supervisor. In order for AQA moderators to support the marks you award as a result of the presentation, a detailed record must be made which supports those marks. We do not ask you to submit recordings of the presentations, but a comprehensive written record of the questions asked and answers given makes it much easier for moderators to support your marks. Please 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 a number of online resources on how to write an effective abstract which could form part of the taught skills programme.

Often students think that if they admit to any failings they will be penalised; this is not the case. Honest reflection on what went well and what they have learned, coupled with what went less well, and what they would do differently, are key to a successful reflection. Students should understand that admitting to any problems they encountered and acknowledging the ways in which they dealt with those problems are a legitimate aspect of an effective reflection.

The Production Log belongs to the student. It is their document and they are the ones who are responsible for its completion (apart from the pages indicated for the supervisor and centre coordinator). The student is also responsible for the selection of any additional evidence they wish to include. Some of the most successful projects we have seen have comprised simply a Production Log (including presentation record) and the completed project product. Additional evidence can be useful only if it is relevant to the project process and outcome. The judicious selection of such material should form part of the taught skills programme.

What support is there to help me with the Production Log?

We can provide support in a number of ways, including:

- your allocated project adviser
- the Projects team on projects@aqa.org.uk and 0161 957 3980

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