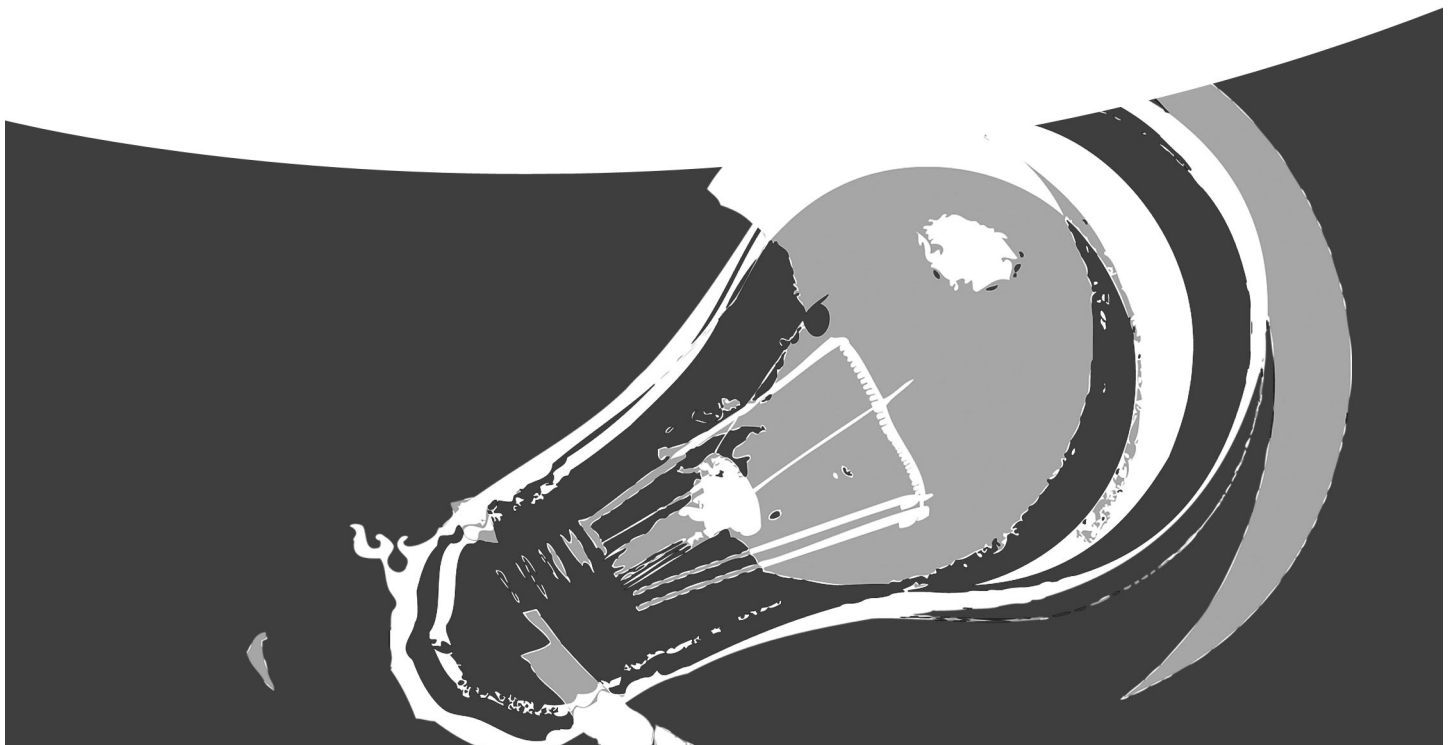


Teacher Resource Bank

Extended Project Qualification

Introduction:

- Staffing



STAFFING

Introduction

QCA's 'Guidance on managing project delivery' provides a general summary of the staffing requirements for the Extended Project (p19). AQA - City & Guilds require that two staff roles must be identified:

- the 'Supervisor' who meets the candidate regularly for mentoring and review from the initial proposal stage through to the presentation, and with the knowledge gained through that contact makes the required assessment;
- the 'Centre Coordinator' who is responsible for the overall management of the supervision and assessment process and for the standardising and moderation within the centre.

It is a requirement that each candidate have a single named Supervisor throughout their work, and it is important that the Supervisor is fully aware of other elements of support given to the candidate so that they are able to confirm that they are appropriate to the particular project. However, it may not be possible or appropriate for the Supervisor to provide all elements of the required taught element or arrange provision of particular expertise or facilities. Other staff involved might include:

- Librarian
- Classroom Assistant
- Learning Mentor
- Functional / Key Skills tutors
- Project management skills tutors
- Specialist subject teachers
- Workshop / Laboratory / AV / ICT technicians

In addition, many candidates and/or centres may make appropriate use of external resources from local institutions of higher education, employers, parents, etc.

The following case studies from the pilot illustrate a variety of staffing approaches.

Case Studies

Case Study One

“A school sixth form (Humanities College status) with two hundred students, of which about fifteen opted to take part in the Extended Project pilot”

The EPQ for the pilot year had no allocation on our students' timetables. There was no timetabled provision for staff members involved. The EPQ was introduced to students as an extra-curricular qualification to be carried out in their personal time as a means of developing independent study skills essential for their life in the sixth form as well as their needs in higher education and future careers.

There were 3 supervisors and 2 coordinators for the EPQ pilot, one of whom was also the Centre coordinator responsible for formal procedures. This suited the small number of students taking part. The heads of department were also consulted, as well as the librarians and any other members of staff who wished to become involved.

Students were supervised largely by a Learning Mentor (as supervisor and coordinator) responsible for holding fortnightly meetings with students on an individual basis. Here,

students were free to discuss their progress; at this time students were also offered any help or aids they feel they needed. From these meetings, students were referred to subject specialists and also to those members of staff who helped with skills teaching.

Our two librarians were a huge help, offering students help to find books to research their topics and also showing students how to access websites correctly. One of our science teachers also offered 2-hour slots each week for students to consult with him on essay writing skills.

Due to lack of time available, 2 group sessions were held with students to offer skills teaching. During these 2x1hour sessions, we discussed essay writing tips and research and referencing skills needed for the project. Students were shown clearly how to think about planning the layout of their final project, and also how to reference their sources correctly. We felt this would also help to develop their independent skills as they progress into higher education.

The students were also provided with production logs and folders at the outset of the project. Here, they recorded every piece of work they completed (showing place, time taken, work completed etc.) in order for us to supervise their work more efficiently (we felt this would eradicate any problems created by lack of formal timetabling, and this has in fact proved successful). On this log students also noted any meetings that took place with members of staff as a means of showing guided learning hours.

Students were also referred to the careers adviser in order to provide them with links to external organisations that may have proved helpful with their projects (e.g. local schools and hospitals, professionals, foreign exchange programmes for schools, work experience placements).

Case Study Two

“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”

As part of our vocational status we looked into the Extended Project as a means to develop our student’s skills and implement vocational initiatives.

In the first year of the pilot, there was no time allocation and only two teachers were involved: one as centre coordinator and supervisor and one who was supervising some projects and helped with internal moderation. Additional teachers volunteered to help the students according to their specialist needs. Skills teaching and supervision were all undertaken on a voluntary basis.

The EPQ was introduced to students in assemblies and parents were informed through Open evenings and newsletters. Some time was devoted in staff meetings to introduce the EPQ to all members of staff in order to encourage them to volunteer to provide specialist help or supervision.

In the second year, some time was allocated to the centre coordinator and the EPQ was also introduced on certain students’ timetables but it was still considered an enrichment activity and therefore not available to all.

For next year, we are thinking of opening it up to all students with a choice between EPQ and General Studies so that all students have the opportunity to develop their general knowledge and / or skills. We are thinking of timetabling it for two hours a week so that formal time can be devoted to the taught element and there is also time for mentoring sessions.

Case Study Three

“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”

We offer the Extended Project as an option to all students who are keen to take it, beginning in June of Year 12 and completing at the end of the autumn term in Year 13. A team of 15 staff from a range of curriculum areas have volunteered to be supervisors, overseen by a college coordinator.

We aim to group EPQ students by broad subject area, matching their choice of project to the skills of the supervisor as far as possible. If possible we allocate 8-10 students to a supervisor. Staff with this number of students have a total of 48 hours allocated to their timetable – four hours per week in June and July and two hours per week from September to December. We aim to complete all projects by the end of the autumn term, and to submit them in May. This avoids the clash that tends to occur with January examination resits and the pressurised coursework period in the spring term. Half of the time each week is timetabled, so that supervisors can meet with the whole of their group; the other half is given over to one to one meetings between supervisor and student.

The more intense period of four hours per week at the end of the summer term allows the students to make a strong start. We set them generic research tasks at this point, not directly related to their own project area, so that they can learn how to use the range of resources on offer in our own library and elsewhere. They can work in pairs or small groups if they wish, researching a question that is set for them (but which they are encouraged to modify). An important focus is the process of being critical about the sources they use, particularly internet sites. We get them to use bibliographies, indexes and generic critical works. They must produce a short product, but their critique of the sources is more important than their own findings. We also train them to use reference systems and to practice them in a short (500 word) piece.

For a supervisor with a group of dance students who might be engaged in a group project, it might be appropriate to use the four hour slots to teach generic skills relating to dance and working as a team.

In the one to one sessions, meanwhile, supervisors meet with students and begin to establish with them what they want to do. We aim to have the Record of Initial Planning meeting, the Project Proposal Form and the Plan at Start of Project meeting all completed by the middle of July when students break up for the summer.

Case Study Four

“A Sixth Form College 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 EPQ pilot provision is primarily the responsibility of two members of staff – a deputy head-teacher and an EPQ coordinator. The coordinator is allocated two days to carry out the task. The role includes the recruitment of supervisors. Induction of supervisors involves the distribution of written information and after school meetings as well as more informal discussions when appropriate. Both members of staff responsible for the EPQ are experienced in dealing with coursework submissions and are comfortable with research methodology. They are English and History teachers.

The college has established strong links with two local universities, one in the town and the other an accessible Russell Group institution. We took groups of students to both universities. They were inducted into the libraries and encouraged to make independent future use of research facilities. The arrangements worked well and culminated in some of our students undertaking their EPQ presentations at the universities.

In future we shall institute a teaching programme for EPQ students in which skills associated with research, writing up findings and presentations etc. will feature. During the pilot there were a number of short sessions in which students received various information sheets outlining good practice. These worked reasonably well but were somewhat impersonal and did not encourage students and staff to share their experiences – a development which we feel would be desirable.

During the pilot, while students regularly met with supervisors, these sessions were not timetabled – this aspect will also be addressed in the future.