

NPQH Covid-19 Guidance – updated January 2021

Presentation to governors – recording (Task 1)

A recording is expected under all circumstances. If participants are unable to present the project plan to the entire governing board (and gather feedback), then a sub-group or equivalent decision-making group is acceptable. A virtual meeting (e.g. through Zoom) is also acceptable and can be easily recorded. The recording should be stored securely until the assignment is submitted.

The aim of the presentation is to evidence ‘analysis of stakeholder views’ as part of 3.3.3, in the form of challenge and feedback. Although the recording to governance boards is mandatory, there are additional ways to evidence this criterion and participants should also consider how they have gained the views of other stakeholders, and used this information to ‘communicate, negotiate or persuade’.

Covid – project focus (Task 1)

Many schools have had to address issues arising over the last year and continue to do so e.g. vulnerable pupils / gaps in teaching and learning / pupils falling behind / no GCSE or SAT results / keeping staff and pupils safe / catch-up etc. Much of this work could form the basis for suitable NPQ projects. Participants may choose to continue with their originally-planned school improvement project. Alternatively, they could swap to lead an area more, or most useful to the school.

It is acceptable to write up leadership of one project which changed once measures had to be taken for Covid, explaining in the submission why and how the project was altered, and why leadership re-focused. This would mean an entirely new project would not need to be started, even though it were significantly compromised.

It may also be appropriate to change the focus of Task 2 if the priorities of the placement school have changed.

Collecting data and evidencing impact (Task 1)

Formal or external data to evidence impact is not necessarily needed. Even if the whole project was intended to rely on SAT/ GCSE / A-level scores, it doesn’t matter if this is not now available. Data means ‘pieces of information’, and not necessarily ‘GCSE’ or ‘SAT’ scores.

Data can take many forms, not necessarily numerical, although participants should aim to use tangible measures where possible. This could involve, for example, use of internal tracking data such as mock examinations, ‘working at’ grades / levels or teacher assessments. ‘Softer’

measures, such as teacher questionnaires and pupil voice should also be used where possible. Participants should consider how they can best use the remaining time in order to collect this.

Participants should remember, however, that they are trying to evidence that they are able to lead whole-school improvement, at headship level, and need to be able to demonstrate the impact of this.

What may be useful is a table of data which, at its simplest, looks like this (adapted as necessary for the qualification / area of focus):

	All pupils	Target group/s	Comparison group/s in school	Comparison groups national/similar schools
Data prior to project beginning				
Data collected at start of project				
Data collected mid-project				
Current data (last collected)				
Projected data at end of project				
Future projected data				
Permanent effect on future data				

A project must be related to progress and attainment e.g. a participant may carry out an excellent project on mental health, but this must then state clearly how improvements in mental health have led to improvements in, say, maths.

Where it has not been possible to collect final, or even mid-project data, or the nature of the data has changed considerably:

- Is the new data (e.g. vulnerable pupils) relevant to the original intention of the project?
- Can the changed nature of schools in itself be a part of the project?
- Is there time for the current situation in schools to form the basis for a changed or new project?
- What conclusions can be drawn, or projections made into a future 'normal' world, relating to the impact of the project?

Participants must ensure that they:

- Have carried out a proper early analysis – why have they carried out the project they have?
- Understand that data is not necessarily a statistic (although all data can be made into a statistic, e.g. ‘Six out of ten pupils said they were more confident’)
- Evidence the general impact of their project on an improving trajectory of progress and attainment (even if their project was just one of a number of contributing factors)
- Identify the factors in the changed ways adults work as a result of their leadership, which is contributing to improved progress and attainment
- Predict the changes in progress and attainment in the future
- Reflect on which parts of the project they would have carried out differently for an even greater impact
- Where there has been no improvement, or a smaller-than-expected improvement, be reflective on the reasons why
- Understand that in two long terms, a properly- and robustly-planned and introduced change project is unlikely to lead to large amounts of, or readily-measurable change after such a short time, and to therefore write about the greater change which will occur in the future.

The ability to monitor implementation and make necessary adjustments is an important leadership skill, as is the process of evaluation in order to identify next steps and this should also be reflected in the assignment, as guided by the criteria.

Placement Schools (Task 2)

- Nine days are still required as a minimum time for this project. The DfE have currently defined the time spent ‘on the ground’ in the placement school as 4.5 days. Where this is not possible, the entire project may be carried out remotely.
- Where a participant has already been in their placement school for up to 4.5 days, then the rest of the time can be carried out remotely
- Where the participant has not physically been in the placement school, then the 4.5 days can be made up remotely through webinars, phone calls, emails and other contact.
- The remaining 4.5 days can be spent researching, analysing, evaluating, planning, etc. using the placement school’s information.

Contact by email, phone and webinar with the following people, or representatives of key groups could be carried out, dependent on the project focus:

- The headteacher
- Senior staff, such as the deputy headteacher or vice principal
- Key school leaders, such as curriculum or pastoral leads
- Governors
- Teachers
- Support staff

- School Business Manager
- School Data Manager
- Parents and other stakeholder groups
- Where possible, alongside a member of the placement school staff, a webinar with a pupil group

This can be coupled with analysis of key documentation, most of which is already in the public domain:

- Website, and statutory published documents
- Last two or three inspection reports
- Comparison data
- Internet search
- School financial budget
- Staff allocation
- Reports from external visits, such as the local authority
- Governor minutes

Participants are required to present their action plan to the placement school's governing board and gather their feedback - this can be achieved by webinar, with a reasonable number of governors in attendance (minimum of two, but ideally three or more). Presenting to governors may be by sending them information, documents or recordings. **This meeting does not need to be recorded**, although it is a mandatory part of the assignment and their feedback is important for evaluating the effectiveness of the action plan and how it is presented. You will also need to your host-school to make a comment regarding this, as guided by the assessment template.

Although the completion of Task 2 remotely is not ideal, a participant will not be disadvantaged if this was their only alternative to completing the task at this time. As with other contingency measures, participants should make reference in the assignment to this advice, and to the circumstances and manner in which they have undertaken this work, so that the assessor is fully aware of the context whilst they are assessing the submission. The assessor will then be able to use their professional judgement in favour of the participant in such circumstances.

Please note that, despite the impact of Covid and the described contingency arrangements, the same standards and requirements apply as are set out in the Content and Assessment Framework and Mark Scheme and are not changed. The interpretations made in our guidance are in line with both documents, and take a pragmatic approach to this in the current situation.

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