Guide to Creating your Programme Handbook

This guide will support you as you write your programme handbook. If you would like to see an exemplar version of a programme handbook then you can download one from the link in the course..

Purpose of the handbook

Your programme handbook will act as a one stop receptacle for all the most important aspects of your programme. You will probably base part of your very first guided learning session around the information that is contained within your handbook and from that point onwards it can act as a reminder for your candidates.

Section One:

Consider

You may be the programme manager of a small programme managing a small number of mentors or you may be managing a large programme with multiple trainers in addition to your mentors. We looked at the person specification and job description for mentors in weeks 3 and 4 and these will help you to select appropriate people.

If you will be forming a large programme team with trainers then below are the roles which a trainer may undertake and this will help you with the selection of these key team members.

Trainers

Trainers are expected to:

• design and manage learning activities for particular sessions/aspects of the programme, following the design of the programme plan and the lead from the Programme Leader
• prepare the learning environment and resources for the sessions/activities for which they are responsible
• co-operate with colleagues in the training team
• monitor progress and support the learning of particular candidates
• guide candidates so they avoid plagiarism and other forms of malpractice
• liaise with the Programme Leader to advise on the ongoing evaluation of the programme.

A programme team will enable you not only share to the workload but to also strengthen your programme. The shape of your team should be appropriate to your context. It is your decision on how to form the team, which roles are allocated, how often you meet, etc.

Section One of the handbook is shown below and should be used to give the names and details of your programme team members.

Introduction

Welcome to your Cambridge Professional Development Qualification. This handbook will give you all the information that you will need whilst you are studying for your PDQ.

Section One:

The Programme Team

Use this section to give the names and contact details of your programme team members.

- Programme Leader Name and contact details
- Trainers Names and contact details
- Mentor Names and contact details

Pause for Thought 1: Succession Planning

Hopefully at this point in your journey to becoming a Cambridge Programme Leader moving on is the last thing on your mind. However, programme leaders do change roles and this can be devastating for the programme and the candidates if it is not properly managed.

If at all possible it is worth talking with your senior leader about a person or persons who could be 'next in line' should your time as the programme leader come to an end. It would be advisable to involve these individuals in your planning and delivery as much as possible, maybe even asking them to conduct some of or part of the guided learning sessions so that they are familiar with the programme and are not starting from the very beginning if they need to take on the role.

Should you find yourself in this position, please contact **Cambridge** as soon as possible so that the PDQ team can guide you through the steps to replacing the programme leader.

Programme Logistics

Communications

Whether you are responsible for a small programme team or a large programme team consisting of multiple trainers and mentors, it is vital that you set up a robust communications protocol and that you make your expectations clear. You should consider:

- When your guided learning sessions will take place
- The timescales in which you will ask your candidates to complete their work-based learning
- The timescales in which you will ask mentoring (collaborative) or individual work to take place
- When and how often your programme team should meet
- How the programme team can communicate with one another outside of these times
- How candidates can get in touch with their mentors or the programme leader
- What to do if a candidate is unhappy with the programme, or their mentor or if the mentor is unhappy with their mentee
- How you will feedback formative assessment
- How you will feedback the results from Cambridge

Outside of formal meetings and guided learning sessions, some programme leaders have found it useful to use part of their school's Learning Management System (LMS) and others make use of social media tools to allow candidates, mentors, trainers and programme leaders to stay in touch.

The 'Communications' section of the handbook is shown below and should be used to outline how you will stay in touch with your candidates and how they can contact you, your programme team and their mentors.

Communication

Use this section to indicate when key members of the team will be available and how your candidates can get in touch with them. You can also give them information about any systems or tools you have put in place for internal communications and how they can expect to hear about their results from Cambridge.

- With Programme Leader
- With Trainers
- With Mentors
- With each other
- From Cambridge

Pause for Thought 2: Candidate Recruitment and Marketing

The Professional Development Audit you conducted in Week One will have given you a good idea of who your candidates should be, but now you need to tell them about the Cambridge PDQ attract them to your programme.

Now would be a good time to think about whether or not you need to develop some candidate criteria to help you select how you will choose your cohorts. Depending on the syllabus you are following these criteria may well differ.

When it comes to marketing your programme you can use the standard Cambridge PDQ resources to provide information. The **PDQ brochure** is often a good place to start. Alternatively, you can use information from the Cambridge International **communications toolkit**.

It is also worth thinking about how the candidate fees will be met. Will internal candidates be paying all, some or none of the fee themselves? If you are including external candidates, what will you charge them on top of the entry fee to cover your costs? What is the cost of professional development in your market?

Finally, remember that there is a level of English language competency attached to the Cambridge PDQs.

To take part in the Certificate or Diploma programme candidates are required to have sufficient competence in English.

- All candidates should have English language competence comparable to Level B2 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This framework is provided by the Council for Europe. Further details can be found on the Council's website at http://coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp-reg/cefr grids EN.asp
- We recommend a minimum requirement of 5.5 on the International English Language Testing System. See www.ielts.org/ for more details.

Section Two: Mentoring

We spent a lot of time thinking about the role of the mentor in weeks 3 and 4. It is important that you are able to explain this vital relationship to your candidates and that you can give them some guidance as they begin to think about who they will choose to support them.

The 'Mentoring' section of the handbook is shown below.

Section Two:

Mentoring

Use this section to give an outline of what mentoring is within the PDQ programme, how they should go about finding a mentor and when their mentoring sessions will take place.

- What it is
- What will happen
- How to find a mentor

Section Three: Language, Academic Expectations and Assessment

In compiling their portfolios your candidates will need to adhere to certain expectations in terms of English language requirements, academic expression and academic referencing and they will need to understand the assessment framework against which their evidence is being judged. This section of the handbook will help them to understand these expectations.

Academic Expression

For some of your candidates it may have been a long while since they last took part in any formal academic training and so they may have lost the confidence and skills required to write in an academic way. Communication is an assessment strand in the Cambridge PDQ and it may not be possible for a portfolio to be given a pass grade if the level of communication does not meet the standard.

Part of your Professional Development Audit should consider whether or not your candidates will need support in this area and how you will tutor them to gain these skills.

Academic Referencing

To avoid plagiarism it is important that candidates understand how to reference the external material they refer to in their portfolio. Again, this may be a long-forgotten skills so do think about how and when you will cover this with your candidates.
In the Programme Leader Guide it states:

"Candidates must appropriately reference and acknowledge any work taken from another source. Referencing external sources demonstrates that candidates can effectively locate and integrate relevant theories and ideas into their portfolio. Candidates are required to acknowledge external sources using a common referencing system, e.g. the Harvard referencing system. Any referencing system adopted must be used consistently throughout the portfolio."

Language, Academic Expectations and Assessment Continued.

Assessment

In each of the syllabuses the assessment standards are published for Fail, Pass and Distinction grades. It is important that you share the criteria with your candidates so that they understand what they are working towards.

The assessment criteria for Distinction are copied from the syllabus, here. You might like to copy all of the assessment criteria into your handbook so that your candidates can access them easily.

Assessment criteria

Candidates will be assessed for the Certificate according to the following criteria, applied to the portfolio of evidence as a whole:

1. Understanding teaching and learning with digital technologies.
2. Developing thinking and practice in teaching with digital technologies.
3. Analysis and discussion.
4. Communication and presentation.

DISTINCTION	
Understanding teaching and learning with digital technologies	Demonstrates a well-focused understanding of relevant concepts and principles, with evidence of analysis of strengths and weaknesses. Applies relevant concepts and principles to own practice, with evidence of critical evaluation and limitations.
Developing thinking and practice in teaching with digital technologies	Evidences effective practice, with a well-focused understanding of relevant theories and principles underlying practice in teaching, and applied to own practice. Evidence of reflective evaluation of own practice, and identification of learning from experience.
Analysis and discussion	Analyses questions and issues arising from study, enquiry, discussion and experience, in a well-focused manner, supported by relevant and useful examples drawn from valid and reliable evidence. Evidence of a range of information sources to inform the analysis and discussion. Well-structured work.
Communication and presentation	Presents ideas, arguments and information in a well-structured and consistent manner. Professional approach to presentation of work, with opinions only given when justified and/or backed up by evidence. Academic conventions followed, with appropriate referencing to published work or other accepted sources of evidence.

The 'Assessment and Academic Expectations' section of the handbook is shown below.

Section Three:

Assessment and academic expectations

Use this section to highlight the academic expectations of the programme. You could include a copy of the assessment criteria from the syllabus so that candidates have these to refer to. You could describe the level of English competency and academic expression needed to meet the 'Communication' aspect of the assessment criteria. You should highlight what the expectations are for the content of the portfolio, including ensuring that work is their own and any external sources are properly referenced.

NB: you may want to add to this section in Week 7 once you have looked at the Assessment Criteria.

- Assessment
- Academic expressions
- how to avoid plagiarism and other forms of malpractice
- how to ensure portfolios are complete and authentic
- how to reference work appropriately and follow academic conventions using the Harvard or a similar system

Your handbook will be a key resource for your programme team and your candidates so do spend time working with the exemplar provided to tailor it to your context. If you have any additional questions about your handbook, your facilitator would be happy to help you.