

Integrative Education



Independent Project Support Materials

Independent Project

Overview

This document supports learners undertaking an Integrative Education Independent Project through DHECH. It combines structured guidance, reflective prompts, and evidence requirements, adapted for a home-education and community-based setting.

Purpose of the Independent Project

The Independent Project is designed to help learners plan and carry out a substantial piece of self-directed work. Learners will manage a project over time, develop or deepen a skill, reflect on their learning journey, and present their outcomes.

Core Components

1. Project management (planning, organisation, time management)
2. Learning or extending a skill over time
3. Research and documentation of learning
4. Reflection and presentation of outcomes

Choosing a Project

Learners should propose up to three project ideas, considering:

- Why the project interests them
- What skills or knowledge they already have
- What new skills or knowledge they will need to develop
- Possible challenges and how they might overcome them

Project Aim, Objectives and Outcomes

Learners should define:

1. A clear project aim
2. Specific objectives (steps to reach the aim)
3. Measurable outcomes that demonstrate what has been achieved

Planning and Timeline

Learners must create a project timeline showing key milestones. This should be reviewed and updated regularly as the project develops.

Independent Project

Evidence of Learning

Learners must keep evidence of their learning, including:

- A bibliography of sources used
- Research notes, drafts, sketches or designs
- A log of hours spent on the project
- A reflective journal with at least 10 dated entries

Reflection and Review

Mid-project and end-of-project reflections should address:

1. What has gone well
2. What has been challenging
3. How plans or aims have changed
4. What has been learned about the subject and about themselves

Presentation

Learners will present their project outcomes to a familiar audience. This may be written, oral, visual, practical, or a combination, depending on the nature of the project.

Use of AI and Plagiarism

All submitted work must be the learner's own. AI tools may be used to support learning, but not to replace original thinking or reflection. Sources must always be acknowledged.

Mentor Support

Each learner will have a mentor who supports planning, reflection, and review. Mentor meetings should be documented, and mentors will sign off key stages of the project.

Learning Outcomes

Select, plan and carry out an independent project, within a given framework.

Learners will describe why they have chosen this specific project. They will identify the skills and knowledge they already have and what they will need to acquire. Learners should meet regularly with their mentor to plan and review their project. Learners will be helped to identify objectives for the project and produce a project plan and timeline. They must discuss possible risks to achieving their objectives with their teacher or mentor and describe how they plan to overcome them. Learners must keep records of their progress with the project, referring to the project plan and timeline. They must complete a mid- and end-of-project review, reflecting on any changes that were made or challenges that were faced. Changes to the project are accepted and even celebrated as part of the learning journey, so long as they are reflected upon, and this process is sufficiently evidenced. A framework and structure for an Independent Project is available.

Research, compare and select information and resources from a range of sources across at least two curriculum areas that are relevant to their project.

Learners will be taught how to research information and resources from a range of given or easily accessible sources across at least two curriculum areas. They must select and compare the sources and identify which they have chosen to use, and why. They must keep records of their research and conclusions.

Select and use a range of skills, including appropriate technologies and practical skills, to solve problems and work towards achieving their objectives.

They will be supported to develop and use at least three relevant skills to undertake their project. This may include appropriate technologies and practical skills. If necessary, learners will be taught specific skills and techniques that are necessary for safe and effective execution of their project; e.g. safe laboratory or workshop techniques, professional codes of practice. Learners must give an account of how they have solved problems that they encounter and the progress they have made in achieving their objectives.

Reflect on their project outcomes and draw their own conclusions. Communicate their project outcomes, presenting to a familiar audience in an appropriate format.

With their mentor, learners review the results of the project and their own role in it. Working with their mentor, learners decide how to present their project outcomes and their conclusions in a way that is appropriate to the project and their audience. Learners reflect on their learning and the journey of the project.

Requirements for Assessment

Evidence for achieving this module must include:

- A completed project topic and title form
- A completed project tracking and recording form
- A research record
- A 2,000 - 3,000 word written creative writing piece, dissertation or report OR a 20-30 minute presentation accompanied by notes, slides or handouts OR a performance of 15-30 minutes with evidence of 30-40 hours of rehearsal and preparation OR artefact(s) and/or artwork(s) with evidence of 30-40 hours of workshop or studio time
- A journal or log that has been completed at regular intervals (at least 10 times during the project).
- A presentation of the whole project, including personal conclusions. This should be 500 - 1,000 written words or a 5-10 minute live or recorded oral presentation.

Written dissertations or reports, presentations and journals or logs should demonstrate the ability to structure and use appropriate style and vocabulary. Relevant terminology should be used in relation to the subject of the project.

The word count or length of time of presentation given above is not mandatory but is recommended as the minimum required. Significantly shorter documents or presentations must be agreed in advance by the Internal Quality Assurer and referred to the External Quality Assurer to ensure that they are valid.

The project objectives set by you do not have to be met but should be reflected on in your personal conclusions and the mid- and end-of-project reviews.

All learning outcomes must be met to achieve this module. All outcomes are equally weighted.

Evaluation criteria statements are provided in four bands for each outcome. When assessments are made, the criteria statements will be used to judge which mark best fits the learner's work on their Level 2 Independent Project. The mark will be awarded on the basis of the general level of the learner's work in relation to the criteria statements for each level (i.e. an isolated example of performance at a different level should not be used to raise or lower the overall assessment). The work will clearly meet the evaluation criteria given for each learning outcome descriptor for the lowest available mark in that band as appropriate to the particular project. Higher marks for each band will be given where work is assessed to meet the evaluation criteria consistently and across various aspects of work. A minimum of 4 marks must be achieved for each learning outcome in order to attain this module.

Resource Bank

As part of our Integrative Education Independent Project pathway, learners are provided with a set of downloadable templates designed to support planning, reflection, and evidence-gathering throughout their project. These templates are not designed to be restrictive. Instead, they act as scaffolding to help learners organise their thinking, document their learning journey, and clearly demonstrate progress over time.

All templates can be completed digitally or printed and handwritten, depending on what best suits the learner.

1. Project Proposal Form

The Project Proposal Form is completed at the start of the project and helps learners clarify their ideas before beginning. It guides them to explain what they plan to do, why they have chosen the project, and what they hope to learn or develop through it.

Learners are asked to:

- Summarise their project idea
- Reflect on existing skills or knowledge
- Identify new skills or learning they aim to develop
- Set an initial project aim and key objectives
- Consider possible challenges and how they might overcome them

This form is shared with the learner's mentor, who supports refinement of the idea and signs off the project before work begins. The proposal can be revisited later if the project evolves, which is a normal and expected part of the learning process.

2. Timeline Planner

The Timeline Planner helps learners break their project into manageable stages and think realistically about time management. It encourages forward planning while also allowing flexibility as circumstances change.

Learners use the planner to:

- Map out activities week-by-week or by project phase
- Identify resources or support they will need
- Make notes when plans change or need adapting

The timeline should be updated as the project develops and can be discussed during mentor check-ins. Adjustments are not only allowed but encouraged, as long as they are reflected on and recorded.

3. Journal Template

The Journal Template supports regular reflection throughout the project. Learners are expected to complete a minimum of ten journal entries over the course of their project, though many choose to write more frequently.

Each journal entry prompts learners to reflect on:

- What they worked on
- What went well
- What felt challenging
- What they learned (about the project or themselves)
- What their next steps are

Entries do not need to be long or formal. Journals may be written, typed, dictated, audio-recorded, or video-based, as long as they clearly capture the learner's reflections and are dated.

4. Log of Hours Sheet

The Log of Hours Sheet provides a clear record of time spent working on the project. This helps learners recognise the sustained effort involved and provides evidence of ongoing engagement.

Learners use this sheet to record:

- Dates worked
- A brief description of activities undertaken
- The skill area being developed
- Time spent on each activity

This log is particularly useful for practical, creative, or performance-based projects and may be reviewed periodically by a mentor.

Key Facilitators

Paul, Research & Skills Workshop Facilitator

Paul delivers short, focused workshops that support the core skills learners need across a wide range of Independent Projects. Through group-based sessions, he introduces and develops practical approaches to research and source comparison, referencing, use of digital tools, and effective presentation and communication. Paul also supports learners to strengthen reflective writing and evaluation skills, helping them apply these techniques confidently within their own projects. His workshops are designed to be transferable, equipping learners with tools they can draw on throughout their Independent Project journey.



Toni, Project Studio Lead Facilitator

Toni leads the group-based Project Studios, creating a structured but collaborative environment where learners can develop their Independent Projects alongside their peers. Through these sessions, she supports learners to build research skills, plan and manage their time effectively, share resources, and reflect on their progress. Toni encourages thoughtful discussion, peer feedback, and skill-sharing, helping learners work productively within a group setting while gathering evidence and maintaining project journals. Her work ensures that Project Studios remain aligned with the Independent Project framework, supporting both individual learning journeys and collaborative growth.



Una, Programme Lead

The Integrative Education programme is led by Una Jenkins, founder of Durham Home Ed Community Hub. As Programme Lead, Una is responsible for the overall strategic direction, development, and coherence of the programme, as well as communication across the wider team. She brings extensive experience in designing and delivering high-quality, community-based educational pathways for home-educated learners, with a particular focus on integration, wellbeing, and meaningful progression. Una works closely with facilitators and mentors to ensure the programme remains responsive, inclusive, and rooted in best practice, while retaining the flexibility and learner-centred ethos at the heart of DHECH.

