

Keeping records

Learners should provide a written or electronic log to show to the tutor as evidence that they have actually done some research between supervisions. The information that needs to be recorded is pretty straightforward and it will make things easier for learners later on, when they are writing up. The log should record:

- Date
- Source
- Brief notes on the evidence
- Comments (credibility/bias etc.)
- Complete specific reference (for books and magazines, including page number(s) – so it is easy to find if they need to return to it).

It is important that learners keep a note of the URL and the access date of any websites they use. For books, the author, title, date and place of publication and the page need to be quoted.

Learner research log

In addition, learners should keep a notebook (electronic or hard copy). This should be brief – it is a record, a prompt for the next stage of their research and is **essential**. Learners should record:

- Details of research as it is carried out.

Websites accessed and their URLs

Books/journals/magazines consulted

(see section 3.7 on how to write footnotes and the bibliography, below – recording this information now will make life easier later for them)

- Brief notes on content.

Include useful quotes (noting carefully where they came from) and comments about credibility/reliability/authority of source.

Questions that occur to them either for further research or to ask their supervisor.

Ideas about how the research fits into their overall plan.

- Preparation and record of meetings with their supervisor.

Questions for the supervisor.

Suggestions made by the supervisor.

Ideas about what to do next.

Learners should be regularly reminded that this research log is a required component of the research report and must be submitted at the end. It will also form direct evidence for the award of marks for the learner's research skills. Besides this, however, it is a powerful tool for more effective research and they should be encouraged to see it as such. This can be done by making links with the reflective paper which formed part of the Team Project. There learners were taught to engaged with a formal reflective cycle and to apply it to an evaluation of their progress in working as a group. Here the reflection is more sustained and focused on the research process itself, but the principle is the same.