

## Foundation & Higher Projects

OCR Level 1 and Level 2 Projects H854 H855

### Examiners' Reports

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**H854-5/R/11J**

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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## **Chief Examiner's Report**

It was good to note the steady increase in numbers generally, including those linked to the Diploma. While there was some excellent work at all levels (the sheer diversity at both levels 2 and 3 was really splendid to see), there were two issues which caused some genuine concern. The first was a failure to give students enough time to do the necessary work, as seen in many of the plans. The second was a lack of awareness of what the assessment criteria are for the Project. Too often, high marks were awarded to work for the wrong reasons and it was unfortunate to see in some cases that the enormous effort on the part of students had been misdirected.

Care also needs to be taken to standardise internal assessment. There were some difficulties with centres where marking by some teachers was totally accurate and marking by other teachers in the same centre extremely generous. This led to an inappropriate rank order of candidates in some cases. Centres should be aware that, if the sample submitted for moderation has been generously marked, there is a risk that all the centre's marks may be reduced as a result.

There was also some evidence that coursework designed for other purposes was being resubmitted for the Project qualification, and these were rarely successful pieces. At all levels the most successful Projects came from students who were fully aware of the assessment criteria, had been given enough time to do the work, were properly trained and supervised and had had their work correctly standardised.

## **H854 01 & 02 Level 1 Foundation Project**

It was encouraging to see that there was a slight increase in the number of submissions for this series. The majority of these projects were submitted as part of a Diploma, and with more Diplomas now available, there was an increasing variety of topics chosen.

Use of the Project Progression Record by both candidate and mentor was varied; a number of centres use these well to monitor progress and set targets, but generally these were poorly or underused, and centres should consider appropriate strategies for the use of the compulsory documents.

Similarly, many Unit Recording Sheets had no comments at all from supervising staff, and this made moderation difficult in some cases as it was impossible to see why and how marks had been awarded. Centres are reminded that there should be some comment from staff which makes clear the awarding of marks. Comments should be meaningful, rather than a recycling of the assessment objectives.

There should also be evidence of internal standardisation.

### **AO1.**

Many candidates used mindmaps and moodboards as part of their planning, but often these appeared as 'add-ons' requiring the Moderator to work out how these linked to the completed project. Some explanation of the relevance of these would have been helpful. Many candidates met the requirement to provide a timeline but these occasionally were lacking dates.

In a number of cases, candidates had been given a brief by their mentor, and this considerably restricted what they achieved for this assessment objective. Centres should consider the appendix in the Specification for this qualification which identifies key features at the grade boundaries.

### **AO2.**

At this level, candidates relied heavily on internet sources, which restricted their achievement for this assessment objective. Centres should encourage the use of different types of sources, including virtual resources. Most candidates attempted to provide a record of sources used, but these were variable in quality. Some candidates had clearly used sources which were not identified.

### **AO3.**

Poor use of the Project Progression Record was a major factor in low achievement for this assessment objective. Many candidates still focus strongly on the outcome and fail to record or document progress throughout the stages of the project's development. A small number of candidates had provided photographic evidence of their project under construction, particularly for artefact projects, but there were also some who had not provided evidence of the artefact being completed.

### **AO4.**

Evaluations proved to be difficult for many candidates at this level. Most were little more than an account of what they did with some judgment as to how good/bad their outcome was. Some comments were made on what they found difficult, usually referring to time management. It was pleasing, however, to see candidates in the higher mark bands attempting analysis of their findings.

## H855 01 & 02 Level 2 Higher Project

There was a small but significant increase in the number of submissions for this series. The majority of these were submitted as part of a Diploma, and with more Diplomas now available, there was a wider variety of topics chosen. It was also pleasing to see a variety of types of outcome, with many candidates choosing quite original artefact projects. Many Diploma submissions were focused on the Principal Learning, although there was evidence of some excellent evidencing of the process, particularly in some Creative and Media submissions. It was clear that in a number of cases, the projects had been strongly controlled by supervisors, even to the point of giving a common format. Centres are reminded that the onus is on candidates to demonstrate organisational skills throughout the project, and that guidance rather than instruction should be given.

In some centres, a number of projects had the same, or similar, titles. Candidates had been given a task or brief, and this had restricted their achievement for AO1 as their choice was not individual. At least one centre adopts the practice of giving candidates a list to choose from, which also restricted their achievement for this AO. In some cases, the supervision had been delegated to external specialists, which resulted in some misunderstanding of what the project was. In a small number of cases, the supervisor had given the resources and solution to the problem to the candidates, which resulted in low achievement for AO2 and AO3. Some centres are still rewarding candidates for "beautiful magazines" or "working extremely hard".

Use of documentation was varied. Some centres had helpfully annotated Unit Recording Sheets to show where evidence for the assessment objectives could be found, and made helpful comments which indicated how and why marks had been awarded. However, a large number of supervisors had recycled the assessment objectives, or left the Comments section blank, which made it difficult for moderators to see the rationale behind the marking.

A small number of centres had their work returned for remarking as a result of rank order violations.

### **AO1.**

There was a wide variety of topics chosen with evidence of individual selection and input. However, some candidates had clearly been given a brief or chosen their title from a list. The appendix in the Specification indicates that this will result in low achievement for this assessment objective and centres are advised not to continue with this practice. It should also be pointed out that the project is not coursework and candidates should not be given a task to complete.

The quality of planning was also variable. Many candidates submitted timelines, often as Gantt charts, but in some cases, dates were vague or completely missing from these. Mindmaps and moodboards should have some explanation as to how they contribute to decision-making, and should be made relevant by candidate explanation. Projects in the lower mark bands suffered from being too broad in scope, with little awareness of this being shown by the candidate. Centres should also make clear to their candidates that 'planning' involves planning the project management as well as the outcome.

### **AO2.**

It was pleasing to see the majority of projects had a bibliography, with secondary sources appropriately referenced. Higher achieving candidates showed an awareness of the value of their sources, with some insight into bias. There was also some use made of feedback surveys once the project had been completed. Other candidates, often those producing artefacts, undertook surveys in order to narrow down intended readerships or audience preferences.

**AO3.**

Many candidates had submitted rough drafts or photographic evidence of their projects in progress. The use of screenshots was particularly good for evidencing this assessment objective. It is still the case, though, that many candidates focus heavily on the quality of their outcome, and allow their enthusiasm for this to overshadow their project management.

Higher achieving candidates made good use of their Project Progression Record, often demonstrating ongoing evaluation and revision of planning throughout the project. Support from supervising staff in the form of monitoring comments and encouraging target setting also contributed to high achievement in this assessment objective. It is disappointing to see that a large number of supervisors do not write comments on these documents.

It is also clear that some candidates had been given extremely detailed frameworks to use, and centres are advised that this practice is discouraged by OCR. Candidates are assessed on their organisational skills, and should produce their own structures to work from.

A small number of candidates struggled to meet the requirement for a written commentary of 750-1500 words.

**AO4.**

Evaluations were varied in quality. A large number of candidates still write an account of what they did, rather than evaluating their project management skills. Many candidates focused on how well they had met deadlines, but in order to do this effectively, they must identify their deadlines clearly in their timelines. Centres are also reminded that the absence of an evaluation does not mean that a candidate cannot be awarded marks for AO4, since there is a range of criteria within the assessment objective.

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