

## Foundation & Higher Projects

OCR Level 1 and Level 2 Projects H854 H855

### **OCR Report to Centres**

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**June 2012**

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, OCR Nationals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support, which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

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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**Level 1 Foundation Project (H854)**

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## OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

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## **Moderation Report**

There was much to praise this year in the sheer variety of projects that we moderated and the huge commitment that had so obviously been put in by centres and their students. The growing awareness of the opportunity that the Project offers to students at all levels is becoming more apparent and the more centres train students first and then allowed them to follow their own interests, the better the results were. Centre standardisation is clearly developing well and there was much fuller and more helpful use of the URS sheets and the candidates' PPRs. Centres which did not train and tried to exercise too much control and direction tended to get disappointing results. The focus must always be on project management and not on content. We need to see ample evidence of individual planning and reflection and much greater awareness that there are other sources of information than the internet.

## H854 01 & 02 Level 1 Foundation Project

The entry for this specification this year was similar to last June with candidates taking a variety of approaches. Some centres still set a task for candidates to complete, and others give the same task to all entrants. Centres are reminded that this is not good practice and candidates should select their own topic and title.

There was a much stronger focus on project management, with timelines, planning, and conclusions, rather than "what has been found out", particularly at the higher levels. Many candidates chose quite demanding subjects and it was pleasing to see that these had, in the main been well handled. Nevertheless, there is still a strong focus on topic rather than title. It is worth noting that a PowerPoint presentation is often not a suitable outcome or method of presenting information. Many at the mid to lower mark range were short and struggled to meet the 750 words which the specification advises.

There was, however, with most candidates, a good awareness of what was required. Project Progression Records were generally well completed, and a number of candidates did some very good primary research, which is encouraging at this level. Secondary sources should be accurately referenced, and there should be a bibliography.

Candidates should be encouraged to seek out secondary sources elsewhere than online. There was still too much reliance on internet-based sources, particularly Wikipedia. Timelines should have the dates by which the candidate expects to have achieved their objectives. Some candidates used Gantt charts, some of which were quite detailed. Many were a little unclear.

There are still some issues with group projects. Centres are reminded that in such projects, there should be different outcomes and no shared documents. Grades are awarded on an individual basis and there must be clear evidence of individual achievement. Submissions for other specifications must not be entered for the Project.

A small number of projects arrived without the required documentation. The Project Progression Record is a compulsory part of the submission and is considered to be evidence of project management. This is particularly the case in projects which are a report or investigation. Unit Recording Sheets should have supervisor's comments indicating how and why marks have been awarded.

Centres are also reminded that it is not necessary to send large bulky packages of artwork or artefacts. Photographic evidence of such items is recommended to prevent damage in transit. Additionally, large lever arch files are also not recommended.

## H855 01 & 02 Level 2 Higher Project

Once more, there was a wide variety of topics produced for this specification, which were engaging and interesting to read. It was pleasing to see how well candidates had worked on their projects, and many achieved a high standard.

A significant number of the projects were submitted as part of a Diploma, and these usually had a link with principal learning. It was also pleasing to see a variety of types of outcome, although the investigation/report is still the most popular. Centres are requested to consider the value of photographic evidence in the case of large artefacts or artwork.

Many candidates who had submitted work as part of a Diploma had focused strongly on the outcome or content, and in some cases, this led to a degree of neglect regarding the project management evidence, although there is an increasing awareness of the need for this and there was increased use of project management techniques and tools, such as Gantt charts.

Some centres had helpfully annotated Unit Recording Sheets to show where evidence for the assessment objectives could be found, and made useful comments to indicate how and why marks had been awarded. Without these, it is difficult for moderators to see the rationale behind the marking. It is also recommended that the supervisors annotate the actual projects.

Evidence of planning was a little variable; the focus is still on initial planning. Action planning and ongoing planning are rather neglected and, at this level, it is expected that there should be more than a retrospective timeline plus a mindmap. There was also a lack of understanding about what a timeline is. Often these are written at the end (and are therefore evidence of AO3 rather than AO1), or are a timeline of the topic, especially if it links with childbirth (timeline of gestation) or history (historical timeline of events). Candidates should know that a timeline is a planning document and should be produced at the start. It should give all the agreed objectives, with the dates by which these should have been completed. It should not be a list of what the candidate did and when.

There is also a lack of understanding of how the Project Progression Record is to be used. It is clear that these are completed at the end, rather like a checklist, instead of as a log. Many of these were quite thin and undeveloped.

Evaluations were also limited in some cases: an account of what the candidate did with some comments on time management, followed by what the candidate could have/should have done (better) are unlikely to score above the middle mark band. The reliability of sources and effectiveness of planning are rarely considered.

Some candidates had produced quite detailed personal logs/action plans which provided excellent evidence for all of the assessment objectives. These were particularly effective if they had combined the timeline (planned dates) with the actual dates of completion, as well as a short written account of what was done and how effective/useful this was.

There is still a strong reliance on internet-based sources, and candidates should be encouraged to seek alternative avenues for secondary material. Primary research should also be used – there is a requirement for a variety of research methods. If candidates use only secondary sources, their conclusions will be a summary of what the secondary sources say or the candidate's opinion, neither of which are effective conclusions. If a title does not lend itself well to primary research, the candidate should rephrase the title or find an alternative focus which offers better opportunities.

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