

Foundation & Higher Projects

OCR Level 1 and Level 2 Projects H854 H855

OCR Report to Centres

January 2012

H854-5/R/12J

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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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Overview

It was good to note the increase in entry again, particularly at Level 3 and Level 2. A growing number of centres are clearly appreciating the value of the qualification and the variety of ways it can be adapted to suit the particular needs of their students. It was also good to note the increasing variety of outcomes and the delightful diversity of so many of the projects. The projects provide the opportunity to demonstrate enterprise and individuality and it is refreshing to see students doing just that. Supervisors should always make full use of the comments section on the URS sheets as this is invaluable in understanding the marks awarded. It is important to give the moderator as much indication as possible where key evidence lies.

There were still quite a few projects where it was very apparent that neither students nor supervisors were aware of the assessment criteria. Some had submitted a highly academic essay for Level Three, with no plan or evidence of independent research. There were also some examples of rebadged coursework for Level 2 with a focus purely on content. Students need careful training before embarking on a Project, so they are fully aware of what is going to be assessed. Comments by supervisors on the URS sheets also show a lack of awareness of the assessment criteria. There is detailed guidance for both students and supervisors in the student and teacher guides as well as at INSET.

H855 01 & 02 Level 2 Higher Project

General Comments

There was a similar entry for this series as in the previous January series. Many Projects were submitted as part of a Diploma, and a wide variety of topics chosen. It was also pleasing to see a variety of types of outcome, with a few candidates choosing quite original artefact projects. The report/investigation was still the most popular choice.

Use of documentation was varied. Some centres had helpfully annotated Unit Recording Sheets (URS) 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. Centres are reminded that the URS and Project Progression Record are a compulsory part of the submission.

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.

Centres are reminded that they must not attempt any kind of dual submission connected with the Project. Candidates may not use a unit of work or coursework done for a different specification, qualification or Diploma unit. Centres who do so risk penalising their candidates severely, since the assessment objectives will not match those for this qualification.

Comments on Individual Questions:

AO1. Some very interesting and engaging topics had been chosen, but there was only limited evidence of how these had been selected. Very few candidates appeared to give much thought to the scope of their projects, and this resulted in a loss of focus. 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 in the traditional sense and candidates should not be given a task to complete.

The quality of planning was also variable. Many candidates submitted timelines (required by the specification), 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.

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. However, a number of candidates relied solely on the internet for their sources, and a significant number referenced a coursebook from another GCSE subject which was loosely related to the topic. Some had relied heavily and unquestioningly on secondary sources.

AO3. Many candidates had submitted rough drafts of their projects in progress, but many candidates focus too 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 and that candidates complete these at the end of their project rather than during the process of development. Some are used simply as checklists, and this approach resulted in relatively low marks for this assessment objective.

Some candidates had been given extremely detailed frameworks to use, such as e-templates with guidance on content. Centres are advised that this is discouraged by OCR. This practice has a considerable impact on marks for AO1, AO3 and AO4. 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. Well used Project Progression Records often produced good ongoing evaluative comment.

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