

Foundation & Higher Projects

OCR Level 1 and Level 2 Projects H854 H855

OCR Report to Centres

January 2013

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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

There were no entries for H854.

There was a small entry in January, but it was really encouraging to see the way in which candidates at both Level Two and Level Three were making good use of the opportunities provided by the qualification to extend their range of skills and utilise the Project in the way designed. The diversity and sheer originality of much that was seen was really refreshing and it is to be hoped that centres will continue to make use of the Projects to enable skill development to take place when there seems to be so much focus on 'content' elsewhere. It is worthwhile noting, however, that in both H855 and H856 that the principal cause of underachievement was not lack of candidate ability or effort, but misdirection and lack of centre awareness of exactly what the assessment criteria are. It was concerning to still see so much focus on content and irrelevant assessment criteria in H856 and on over direction in H855. There is still 'face to face' Inset provided for both qualifications and centres are strongly recommended to make use of it.

H855 01 & 02 Level 2 Higher Project

There was a small entry for this specification. Some of these were submitted as part of a Creative and Media Diploma, and had a very strong focus on Principal Learning. Centres which submit work for this qualification should note that the requirement for the project to have a Principal Learning focus is not absolute; any topic is acceptable as long as it enables the candidate to progress to the next level of education. Some centres may well be restricting candidate achievement by insisting on a link with Principal Learning.

It was pleasing to see some centres submitting projects which had an artefact as the outcome.

Evidence was submitted in a variety of formats, and it was encouraging to see some centres and candidates making excellent use of photographic evidence, particularly when large artefacts had been produced. Centres are reminded not to submit large artefacts for postal moderation as these can be badly compromised in transit.

One very positive feature of some entries this year was that supervisors had helpfully annotated candidate's work. This made the moderation process straightforward because moderators could see how and why marks had been awarded to candidates. The Unit Recording Sheets were also well completed, with precise signposting of evidence in some cases. Nevertheless, there was still evidence of supervisors simply recycling the bullet points on the Unit Recording Sheets. This is not helpful to moderators as it is impossible to see why marks have been awarded, not where the evidence is to justify the marks.

AO1: Planning evidence was significantly better in some projects, with detailed plans, including estimated completion dates, being produced at the start of the project. Some candidates had undertaken ongoing action planning during the process, and these projects had been highly and justifiably rewarded for this.

It was, however, very disappointing to see centres still giving candidates a task rather than allowing them to choose their own project. This practice always impacts on candidate achievement, and centres are once again advised not to continue with this.

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, and had taken the time to source some quite obscure and elusive sources. However, a number of candidates relied solely on the internet for their sources. Some had relied heavily and unquestioningly on secondary sources.

It was a matter of great concern to see course-books for other specifications listed in bibliographies, and in some cases, those produced by different awarding bodies. This is a dangerous practice, and centres are advised not to do this. These course-books will not help candidates meet all the assessment objectives for this specification, and in some cases, candidate achievement was severely compromised.

AO3: Higher achieving candidates made good use of their Project Progression Record, often demonstrating ongoing evaluation and revision of planning throughout the project. Some of these were meticulously kept and provided excellent evidence for this AO. Support from supervising staff in the form of monitoring comments also contributed to high achievement for some candidates. Some Project Progression records are used simply as checklists, often at the end of the process, and this approach resulted in relatively low marks for this assessment objective.

Some candidates had been given extremely detailed frameworks to use, which also restricted candidate achievement. This practice is discouraged by OCR and centres should under no circumstances tell candidates what to put on their project, nor give them a structure to follow. Candidates are assessed on their organisational skills, and should produce their own structures to work from. This practice has a considerable impact on marks for AO1, AO3 and AO4.

AO4: Evaluations were varied in quality, but there was evidence that this skill is much improved. A large number of candidates still write an account of what they did, rather than evaluating their project management skills. Sometimes the quality of the outcome was the sole focus for a written evaluation, and while there is scope for comment on the value and relevance of the outcome, it is not the only aspect which requires review and evaluation. Well used project Progression Records often produced good ongoing evaluative comment and there was evidence of real reflective learning taking place.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

Education and Learning

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

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OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553

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