

Moderators' report

PROJECTS

EXTENDED PROJECT

OCR Level 3 Extended Project
Qualification

H857

For first teaching in 2017

H857/01/02 Summer 2025 series

Contents

Introduction	3
General overview	4
Achieving higher marks	7
Common misconceptions	7
Avoiding potential malpractice	8
Helpful resources	8
Additional comments	8

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Introduction

Our Moderators' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on centres' assessment of moderated work, based on what has been observed by the moderation team. These reports include a general commentary of accuracy of internal assessment judgements, identify good practice in relation to evidence collation and presentation, and comment on the quality of centre assessment decisions against individual Learning Objectives. The report also highlights areas where requirements have been misinterpreted and provides guidance to centre assessors on requirements for accessing higher mark bands. Where appropriate, the report will also signpost other sources of information that centre assessors will find helpful.

OCR completes moderation of centre-assessed work in order to quality assure the internal assessment judgements made by assessors within a centre. Where OCR cannot confirm the centre's marks, we may adjust them in order to align them to the national standard. Any adjustments to centre marks are detailed on the Moderation Adjustments report, which can be downloaded from Interchange when results are issued. Centres should also refer to their individual centre report provided after moderation has been completed. In combination, these centre-specific documents and this overall report should help to support centres' internal assessment and moderation practice for future series.

Online courses

We have created online courses to build your confidence in delivering, marking and administering internal assessment for our qualifications. Courses are available for Cambridge Nationals, GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Technicals (2016).

Cambridge Nationals

All teachers delivering our Cambridge Nationals suite are asked to complete the Essentials for the NEA course, which describes how to guide and support your students. You'll receive a certificate which you should retain.

Following this you can also complete a subject-specific Focus on Internal Assessment course for your individual Cambridge Nationals qualification, covering marking and delivery.

GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Technicals (2016)

We recommend all teachers complete the module on Online courses – NEA for their subject. These courses provide subject-specific information about course content; how to prepare for planning, marking and submitting; and support with understanding the marking criteria.

Accessing our online courses

You can access all our online courses from our teacher support website [Teach Cambridge](https://www.teachcambridge.org).

These free online courses currently cover the end-to-end NEA process for teachers. You'll find the link to the **Online courses** under the **Assessment** or **Training** tab – hover over **Assessment** or **Training** on the horizontal menu and select **Online courses** from the dropdown.

These self-paced online courses are intended for any teachers. During the course, you will engage with interactive content on subjects such as guidance on unit content, structure and administrative processes.

If you have any queries, please contact our Customer Support Centre on 01223 553998 or email support@ocr.org.uk.

General overview

More centres this year submitted work on Submit for Assessment – thank you. This supports OCR's internal processes. However, it does rely on files being organised into folders and effectively labelled.

Candidates overwhelmingly seemed enthusiastic about their projects and benefited from the EPQ process. Thank you for facilitating the EPQ and supporting candidates in their development of independence.

As in previous years, enthusiasm for the project was a key factor in helping candidates to stay motivated and to overcome difficulties of a project of this size.

On the other hand, when candidates weren't really interested, it was harder for them to stay motivated and bounce back from setbacks, which shows how important it is for them to get excited about shaping their own learning.

Low self-belief was the other key factor which limited resilience and the ability to deal with challenges. For some candidates, perhaps, the programme of taught skills might include the problem-solving and how to deal with this without doubting themselves too much.

Thank you to centres who made changes in response to feedback from previous years.

As ever, topic selection and refinement into a research question, or, for artefacts and performances, a brief, was key to the overall success of the projects.

Moderators noted some improvement overall in terms of long-term planning and effective use of planning and management tools, although there is work to be done in terms of breaking down tasks such as 'Research' into sections and then SMART tasks.

In some cases, planning was retrospective and journals heavily edited. Planning must, of course, happen up front and be ongoing throughout the project. Journals should be active documents showing candidates' thoughts as they happen and may be quite rough – they need not be edited, refined outcomes.

Research, skills development and evaluation/review were generally well supported. However, there could be more emphasis on the use of ideas, arguments and evidence from research materials and more emphasis on primary research being purposeful and well-constructed. Research methods should be appropriate to the project. In some cases, skills developed need to drive project outcomes more effectively.

Topic and outcome selection

Candidates should select a topic they are enthusiastic about.

Outcomes should be appropriate to the topic and to candidate aims.

Aims

It is essential for candidates to set clear aims and outcomes.

Aims should include both skills that will drive project outcomes and steps that it is necessary to take in order to achieve planned outcomes.

Curation

Portfolios should be curated so that every page helps the moderator to view the project journey and understand the marks given by the Centre. Key documents must be included – PPR, URS, outcome, presentation, evaluation. Supporting evidence should be carefully selected.

Teaching materials and photocopies of whole books do not help the moderator and can make it more challenging for the moderator to identify relevant supporting evidence.

Electronic submissions should be organised and well labelled. It must be easy for the moderator to find the URS. This can be done as:

- labelled folders for URS, PPR, Outcome, Presentation, Evaluation and Supporting Evidence
- labelled folders for AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4 and URS
- one document containing all documents with the URS and PPR at the top.

Independence and individuality

Candidates must be able to demonstrate independence and respond to the individual demands of their projects.

- Formulaic templates for dissertations and reports prevent candidates from producing work appropriate to their own subject. A literature essay is not the same as a social scientific report and should not be forced into the same template.
- Formulaic templates for project documents can limit independence and make it more challenging for candidates to respond to the requirements of their projects.

Candidates who did well generally:	Candidates who did less well generally:
- selected a topic which genuinely interested them - refined the topic into a targeted, focused research question or brief - set clear aims which related both to skills development and to the steps necessary to achieve their planned outcomes - engaged in long and short term planning, adjusting plans in the light of new experience of how long tasks took - updated plans as necessary - broke down major tasks such as, 'Research' into SMART tasks - used diaries/journals/logs as active management tools, demonstrating planning, problem solving and reflection on both management and project content - read and made effective use of a range of sources which included ideas, arguments and evidence - engaged in effective, purposeful primary research which served their project aims - referenced using an appropriate format and in-text citations - developed a range of skills which drove project outcomes - considered issues relating to their project thoughtfully - evaluated their work with insight into strengths and weaknesses relating to both project process and how well their outcome met initial project aims - used ongoing evaluation to keep the project on track.	- were unclear on the differences between artefacts and dissertations - selected a generic topic which did not interest them enough to support the EPQ over several months - kept their topic broad and covered too many subtopics too shallowly - used subtopics which did not help to answer the over-arching question - provided no long-term planning or decided they were failures (in candidates' words) because their initial time estimates were optimistic and then gave up or panicked - showed little evidence of a programme of taught skills - used generic proformas and templates which neither supported their specific project nor allowed them to demonstrate their own skills development - produced thin, descriptive or retrospective diaries / journals / logs - depended on a small number of sources, often unreliable sources or those offering only facts - reproduced information from sources without considering ideas, arguments and the overall context - developed skills which did not drive project outcomes or demonstrated only limited development in project-relevant skills - focused on facts and information rather than issues and concepts - tended to be either uncritical of their own work or overcritical. - tended to lose motivation in response to ongoing problems rather than evaluating to keep the project on track

Achieving higher marks

Common issues at centre-level included:

- a lack of evidence of a programme of taught skills, as required by the specification.
- projects that were too limited in scope and size for a L3 qualification with 120GLH.
- missing key documents. There must be a URS, a PPR, an outcome, a presentation (plus evidence that it took place) and supporting evidence.
- an excess of material, which made it harder for moderators to find key documents.
- generic or broad topics which covered too much too shallowly.

Common misconceptions

Misconceptions included confusion about the differences between outcome types and the requirement for primary research.

Misconception



“A dissertation is a report on the EPQ journey.”

Candidates should consider arguments, ideas, concepts and contexts in a dissertation. Comments on decision making and aims should be in the supporting material. Candidates producing artefacts, however, can best use their written report to demonstrate their EPQ journey.

Misconception



“Artefacts are of lesser value and difficulty than dissertations.”

Artefacts are of great value. They need to be planned for from the beginning of the project and cannot be substituted at the last minute without proper planning. For instance, artefacts need a clear brief rather than a research question. An artwork or literary piece can, of course, be inspired by and supported by complex concepts, but the focus of the project is on manifesting those concepts in the artwork rather than producing a shorter essay. Artefacts also need different planning and research – often visual, experimental and technical.

Misconception



“Every project must include a survey.”

Primary research is encouraged, but for many, if not most, candidates, an interview or a museum visit, for example, is more effective than a survey. Research methodologies should be appropriate to the project. If a candidate is making a garment or discussing medieval French poetry, the opinions of their classmates are irrelevant. An interview with a fashion designer or academic, or attendance at a symposium, seminar or conference, or visiting an exhibition would be relevant.

Avoiding potential malpractice

To avoid malpractice:

- teachers should not provide topics or research questions (although they may support candidate choice and refinement).
- teachers should not provide written feedback. This includes teachers who are not supervisors.
- candidates should cite and reference their sources.
- candidates should not use AI to complete work they wish to be credited for.

Helpful resources

Level 3 Extended Project Qualification page on [Teach Cambridge](#)

Additional comments

Thank you for supporting candidates in their EPQ journeys, which were clearly beneficial to them. There are a few administrative reminders this year:

- Please check that all documents are submitted for every candidate. There must be a URS, a PPR, an outcome, a presentation and supporting evidence for each candidate.
- Please check that each folder contains ALL the relevant work for each candidate and ONLY the work for that candidate. In some cases, in both physical and electronic submissions, candidate folders included work from more than one candidate, or parts of the work were missing and found in another candidate's folder.
- Please check that the marks given for each AO add up to the total on the URS and that this number is accurately entered into ModMan. Moderators understand that teacher-markers can make mistakes, but errors slow the moderation process.
- PPRs are a required document which must be completed, including dates and signatures for each section. The box for 'qualifications' must be completed with the candidate's other qualifications so that moderators can assess whether the EPQ goes beyond the candidate's A-Levels.

Supporting you

Teach Cambridge

Make sure you visit our secure website [Teach Cambridge](#) to find the full range of resources and support for the subjects you teach. This includes secure materials such as set assignments and exemplars, online and on-demand training.

Don't have access? If your school or college teaches any OCR qualifications, please contact your exams officer. You can [forward them this link](#) to help get you started.

Reviews of marking

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our post-results services. For full information about the options available visit the [OCR website](#).

Keep up-to-date

We send a monthly bulletin to tell you about important updates. You can also sign up for your subject specific updates. If you haven't already, [sign up here](#).

OCR Professional Development

Attend one of our popular CPD courses to hear directly from a senior assessor or drop in to a Q&A session. Most of our courses are delivered live via an online platform, so you can attend from any location.

Please find details for all our courses for your subject on **Teach Cambridge**. You'll also find links to our online courses on NEA marking and support.

Signed up for ExamBuilder?

ExamBuilder is the exam paper builder platform for a range of our qualifications. [Find out more](#).

Free for all OCR centres with an Interchange account, it allows unlimited users per centre. We require an [Interchange](#) username to verify your centre's users for ExamBuilder.

If you do not have an Interchange account, please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username.

Once you have an Interchange username, use the form on [this page](#) to sign up for ExamBuilder, or ask an existing user at your centre to create an ExamBuilder account for you.

Online courses

Enhance your skills and confidence in internal assessment

What are our online courses?

Our online courses are self-paced eLearning courses designed to help you deliver, mark and administer internal assessment for our qualifications. They are suitable for both new and experienced teachers who want to refresh their knowledge and practice.

Why should you use our online courses?

With these online courses you will:

- learn about the key principles and processes of internal assessment and standardisation
- gain a deeper understanding of the marking criteria and how to apply them consistently and accurately
- see examples of student work with commentary and feedback from OCR moderators
- have the opportunity to practise marking and compare your judgements with those of OCR moderators
- receive instant feedback and guidance on your marking and standardisation skills
- be able to track your progress and achievements through the courses.

How can you access our online courses?

Access courses from [Teach Cambridge](#). Teach Cambridge is our secure teacher website, where you'll find all teacher support for your subject.

If you already have a Teach Cambridge account, you'll find the link to the **Online courses** under the **Assessment** or **Training** tab – hover over **Assessment** or **Training** on the horizontal menu and select **Online courses** from the dropdown.

If you don't have a Teach Cambridge account yet, ask your exams officer to set you up – just send them this [link](#) and ask them to add you as a Teacher.

Access the courses **anytime, anywhere and at your own pace**. You can also revisit the courses as many times as you need.

Which courses are available?

We recommend all teachers complete the module on Online courses – NEA for their subject. These courses provide subject-specific information about course content; how to prepare for planning, marking and submitting; and support with understanding the marking criteria.

The subject-specific courses are tailored for each qualification that has non-exam assessment (NEA) units, except for AS Level and Entry Level. They cover the following topics:

- the structure and content of the NEA units
- the assessment objectives and marking criteria for the NEA units
- examples of student work with commentary and feedback for the NEA units
- interactive marking practice and feedback for the NEA units.

We are also developing courses for some of the examined units, which will be available soon.

How can you get support and feedback?

If you have any queries, please contact our Customer Support Centre on 01223 553998 or email support@ocr.org.uk.

We welcome your feedback and suggestions on how to improve the online courses and make them more useful and relevant for you. You can share your views by completing the evaluation form at the end of each course.

Tell us what you think

Your feedback plays an important role in how we develop, market, support and resource qualifications now and into the future. We want you and your students to enjoy and get the best out of our qualifications and resources, but to do that we need your honest opinions to tell us whether we're on the right track or not.

You can email your thoughts to resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk or visit our [feedback page](#) to learn more about how you can help us improve our resources.



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