Level One & Two Projects

FAQs

H854 Level One Foundation Project

H855 Level Two Higher Project

Contents

OCR Foundation and Higher Project FAQs

What are the OCR Foundation Project (Level 1) and Higher Project (Level 2)?

The OCR Foundation and Higher Project qualifications can be taken as a standalone or as a compulsory part of Generic Learning for a Diploma. Where the Project is part of a Diploma, it is recommended to follow the theme of the particular Line of Learning.

Assessment criteria are based on the processes of planning, researching, managing, developing and evaluating the Project, therefore the quality of the final outcome is not directly assessed. The Project can take a variety of forms, i.e. investigation, artefact, performance or design.

It is equivalent to a short course GCSE (Foundation is equivalent to short course GCSE grade D-G and Higher is equivalent to A*-C). The Foundation Project is worth up to 17 performance points in the achievement and attainment tables, and the Higher is worth up to 29 performance points. It is intended to be a one year course with 60 guided learning hours (GLH), offering a degree of flexibility in its delivery as there are two entries per academic year.

It is recommended that of the 60 GLH for the Foundation Project, 60% (35 hours) is used for the taught element and the remaining 40% (25 hours) for independent work.

It is recommended that of the 60 GLH for the Higher Project, 50% (30 hours) is used for the taught element and the remaining 50% (30 hours) for independent work.

For information about the Diploma please see:
http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/1419changes/diplomas/index.html#list2009.

Thinking about following the course

Curriculum manager

1. **What is this qualification worth?**

   There are OCR Project Qualifications at Level 1 and 2. These are equivalent to a short course GCSE. Foundation (Level 1) is equivalent to grades D-G short course GCSE and Higher (Level 2) A*-C short course GCSE.

   For more information on these qualifications please visit:

   http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/projects/foundation_project/documents.html

   http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/projects/higher_project/documents.html

2. **Are there any similar qualifications to the OCR Foundation and Higher Project?**

   There is the OCR Extended Project. This is a standalone qualification, which can also be delivered within the Advanced Diploma (Level 3). It is equivalent to an AS Level (worth up to 70 UCAS points when taken as a standalone qualification).

3. **What teaching requirements are there for delivering the Projects?**

    Both Level 1 and 2 are intended to be one-year qualifications made up of 60 guided learning hours.

4. **Are mentors needed during the delivery of this course?**

    You may choose to ask for volunteers to act as mentors for the learners throughout the course. This may be useful to the learner as they will have someone to discuss ideas and concerns with, and this can also help monitoring of the learners' progress.

5. **What subject will be replaced in the timetable?**

    This will be up to your centre to decide. You could choose to use OCR Project within a GCSE option block perhaps alongside another short course GCSE. However there are many possibilities for your centre to consider, including delivery outside the normal timetable, e.g. breakfast club, lunchtime or as an after-school enrichment activity.

6. **When do I offer this course?**

    This decision has to be made to fit in with your centre's timetable and with other qualifications on offer. It could be delivered in either Year 10 or Year 11, perhaps alongside another short course, or to fill the gap left in the timetable on completion of a short course in the previous year. Based on your cohort it could also be offered as an extra-curricular qualification or enrichment activity.

7. **Could the OCR Project be linked to other courses?**

    'Piggybacking; or double accreditation is discouraged; however there are a number of ways the OCR Project could link to other life experiences such as community service, enrichment courses, work experience, hobbies.

    Traditionally most schools complete work experience at the end of Year 9 or in Year 10 and then learners do not experience the world of work again until they actually enter the workforce. This qualification is flexible enough that a work placement can be incorporated within the course to support and enrich the learner's experience.

8. **How can OCR's Project qualifications support national requirements for PLTS?**

    Please see page 8 of the Projects handbook.

    http://www.ocr.org.uk/Data/publications/key_documents/Projects_L1_L2_Project_Handbook.pdf

9. **Are any other local centres delivering this qualification who we could work with?**

    You may want to talk to your local LA representatives, who may be able to suggest other local centres. Alternatively, you could contact your OCR Customer Support Manager who may be able to put you in touch with other centres.

10. **When can candidates be entered?**

    From September 2009, the January and June series will be available for all internally assessed candidates. The entry deadlines are 21 October and 21 March respectively; please liaise with your exams officer to ensure that you meet the deadlines.

CPD manager

1. **Do teachers need up skilling before they can deliver the course at the required standard?**

   Teachers should be 'up to speed' on the course requirements and have studied the specification carefully, perhaps with others who are also going to deliver the course. Production of the taught hours materials could be done collaboratively to ensure consistency within the centre. The teachers do not need to be from a particular subject area, but enthusiasm to try something new would be beneficial. It would perhaps be worth emphasising that teachers should be focused on the process, not the quality of the final outcome, when they are assessing the work.

   There will be training offered around the Foundation and Higher Projects by OCR should your school feel it beneficial for you to attend.

Teachers

1. **What resources will my centre need to provide or create?**

   Your centre may like to develop lesson plans, materials or activities for use during the taught hours of the course (60% for Foundation and 50% for Higher). Please refer to the assessment objectives to help you decide how you intend to deliver the taught element.

   The resources needed would depend on what types of projects your learners choose to do, but it may be worth considering whether access to the following is needed; internet or computers, D&T facilities/Art facilities, drama studio, food/textiles resources. A consideration of when in the year access is required may aid planning and delivery of this qualification.

2. **How are the OCR Projects graded?**

   The Foundation Project is graded on a scale of A*–B. The Higher Project is graded on a scale of A*–C. These grades match grade descriptors published by regulators. See http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_18464.aspx for grade descriptors of the Foundation Project and see http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_18463.aspx for the Higher Project.

3. **What is being assessed in this qualification?**

   There are four assessment objectives of varying weightings – Manage (12 marks – 20%), Use Resources (12 marks – 20%), Develop and Realise (24 marks – 40%) and Review and Communicate (12 marks – 20%). See http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_18464.aspx for Foundation Project grade descriptors and http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_18463.aspx for Higher Project grade descriptors.

   For guidance on marking the Foundation Project please see pages 12-21 in the Project handbook, and pages 22-33 for the Higher Project:

   http://www.ocr.org.uk/Data/publications/key_documents/Projects_L1_L2_Project_Handbook.pdf

4. **Does it matter what other courses the learner is taking?**

   No but it may be a good starting point for you as a class to consider the cross curricular skills, techniques and ideas that the learners have which can help them be successful in this qualification. 'Piggybacking' or double accreditation is discouraged.

5. **Are mentors needed during the delivery of this course?**

You may choose to ask for volunteers to act as mentors for the learners throughout the course. This may be useful to the learner as they will have someone to discuss ideas and concerns with, and this can also help monitoring of the learners progress.

6. **Can learners use materials from other qualifications and enter them for the Projects?**

Double accreditation is discouraged but they could use ideas from other qualifications as a starting point. Teachers should actively encourage learners to use skills developed in other qualifications. However work experience, community service or a competition could form the basis of the project particularly when taken as a standalone qualification.

Headteacher

1. **How much preparation time is needed before delivery of the course can begin?**

It is advisable to spend an approximately equal amount of time on preparation as you would for other GCSE short courses.

2. **How will parents be involved/ informed prior to options choices?**

You may wish to produce a leaflet or booklet outlining the qualification, or you could use the OCR FAQs leaflet available at
http://www.ocr.org.uk/Data/publications/key_documents/Projects_faqs.pdf

3. **What are the benefits to the learner of taking this qualification?**

The qualification can be personalised by the learner which may increase interest and motivation. It encourages creative thinking; rewards learners with a qualification and at the same time can develop independent learning skills. It may raise aspirations; whether the learner intends to enter the workplace or continue in education. The Project can also strengthen a learner's application to further education institutions.

4. **Which learners should the school target?**

You should consider offering the qualification to any interested learners that you think it would benefit. This project could be of interest to a whole variety of learners as it gives learners the chance to explore a topic of their own choice (perhaps away from the traditional curriculum) and present the findings in a unique way. The assessment of this qualification is not focused on the finished product but on the process the learner has worked through to get there (please refer to the assessment criteria).

Planning for delivery

Curriculum manager – Staffing

1. **How do I fit the OCR Project in to the timetable in terms of hours per week and staffing?**

The recommended delivery of the course is 60 hours over the year, of which 35 hours should be linked to teaching and 25 should be linked to assessment/individual work in the Foundation Project (30 hours for each in the Higher Project).

2. **Who is going to teach the course – what subject or are a variety of teachers required?**

   Who teaches the course is a matter for individual centres to decide. Supervisors can be drawn from any subject or combination of subjects.

3. **Do the teachers need clearly defined roles?**

   Your staff will need to have a clear understanding of the course and the requirements as they would with any new qualification.

4. **Are mentors needed during the delivery of this course?**

   You may choose to ask for volunteers to act as mentors for the learners throughout the course. This may be useful to the learner as they will have someone to discuss ideas and concerns with and help monitoring of the learners progress.

Preparation and planning for delivery

Line manager

1. **Will staff need time to work collaboratively on the preparation of materials?**

   This will be up to your centre to decide: however, it may be beneficial to work together to ensure consistency when delivering the taught element of the course, and to allow learners to see any of the staff who deliver the course if they have queries outside of the lesson or outside of their teacher's subject area. Your centre may like to organise volunteer mentors who have a broad understanding of the learner's topic of interest as expressed by the learner.

   A consistent approach at this stage will make internal standardisation easier for teachers' assessment of the work.

2. **How will we assess the learner over the course of the year in terms of current working grade?**

   Centres can assess against marking criteria set by the board. It may be appropriate to use selected criteria depending how far through the course you are at the time.

Curriculum manager

1. **What outside agencies/companies can we use to help you deliver the course successfully? Will staff and learners benefit?**

   This will depend on the nature of the projects chosen by learners, or staff could also consider how outside providers could contribute to the taught hours.

Teacher

1. **Why should I be interested in delivering this OCR's Project qualification?**

   You may think this is a lot of work for you and you may feel out of your 'comfort zone'. However, this may give you a chance to work in subjects other than your own specialism, see learners in a different light and broaden your own skills and knowledge. It is a student-centred qualification which focuses on process rather than final outcome.

2. **How will I plan my lessons over the year of delivery?**

You should refer to the specification. You may like to work with other colleagues also delivering the qualification; remembering to build in mentoring time with each learner. Flexible planning may be needed as you may need to adapt it based on learners' individual skills and needs.

3. **What do I do in the taught element of the course?**

The 35 hours Foundation/30 hours Higher are not solely teacher-led lessons, but can include mentoring, group discussion and feedback between peers.

For teacher-led lessons you should refer to the assessment criteria and focus on developing independent learning skills such as researching, planning, managing and evaluating.

4. **How many learners should I have in a class?**

There is no recommended class size, but your centre may choose to use your current GCSE class sizes as a guide.

5. **Do I need to organise classes of Project students by project type, theme or Level?**

As the qualification is not outcome assessed it is unlikely that you will have enough learners studying the same topic and outcome. Therefore, the teacher's focus should be on the skills the learners need to develop to meet the assessment criteria, so 'setting' of classes should not be needed. You may not decide the Level of entry for some learners until towards the end of the course and as the skills the learners will be taught or develop are very similar at both Level 1 & 2 they do not need to be in separate classes.

6. **What skills do the learners need to have?**

Your centre might decide to have an application process which is focussed on motivation, enthusiasm and willingness to work, not solely on academic ability.

7. **What skills may the learners develop?**

They may develop or learn independent research skills, time management, evaluation, problem solving, selection of appropriate research and presenting.

8. **Can learners have a free choice for the title of their project so they can work to their own strengths and interests?**

In principle, learners should have a free choice – at Level 1 it may be that learners will need additional help and guidance to arrive at a suitable topic and title. At Level 2, it is in the spirit of the qualification for learners to have a greater role in deciding on their choice of topic and title.

9. **Do project titles require approval by OCR before they are undertaken?**

OCR does not approve or require titles prior to the completion of projects. As such, the first time that OCR will be acquainted with project titles will be at the moderation stage. If you do have queries however, you can email projects@ocr.org.uk for some additional guidance.

10. **Learners are likely to choose different projects, how many can you realistically accommodate in one class?**

It is the process which is assessed, rather than the final outcome, so this should not be too much of a concern. You may need to arrange time with each learner individually to discuss their progress, however.

11. **Are learners able to manage their time? Or is this a skill which needs to be taught?**

   If you have identified this as an area for development with your learners you may like to include it within the taught element of the course.

12. **Can learners teach each other and draw on their own strengths?**

   This is possible, particularly where a learner may possess a good Level of knowledge in a topic being pursued by one of their peers. It is recommended that such peer-to-peer working is supervised/ guided by the teacher.

13. **What support is available from OCR?**

   You can email the OCR expert at projects@ocr.org.uk and there are documents available from the OCR website.

14. **Is there an e-community from which I could get support (from other schools), maybe a forum?**

   Yes, there is an e-community for posting questions and sharing experiences and good practice. The Foundation Project address is: http://community.ocr.org.uk/community/foundation_project_Level_1/home and the Higher Project address is: http://community.ocr.org.uk/community/higher_project_Level_2/home

15. **Is there a handbook we could give out to students?**

   Centres can design handbooks tailored to learner needs as you would with any short course GCSE.

16. **What recommended textbooks are there?**

   Hodder is working in partnership with OCR to produce a Level 1 & 2 Project book to support the qualification; this is due to be published in Autumn 2009.

   There are currently no endorsed textbooks. However, there are resources which may support the teaching of the Project; for example Project Management for Dummies by Stanley E Portny (ISBN 9780470049235) and Project Management Pocketbook by Applegarth, Posner and Hailstone (ISBN 9781870471633). Alternately you might find your centre library may have lots of valuable resources your learners could use.

17. **If learners work in a group how do I assess their work?**

   Learners must have clearly defined roles and make it clear how they personally have contributed towards the final outcome and be able to show evidence of fulfilling the assessment criteria. Learners should be encouraged to choose a theme independently that is of interest to them, with teacher guidance as necessary.

18. **Are there examples of "good" pieces of work?**

   Not yet, as this is the first year of the qualification. Exemplar material will be made available on the OCR website and at INSET after the first cohort has gone through the moderation process.

19. **If the final outcome of the Project is in the form of a presentation, do I need to record it in case that candidate's work is called for moderation?**

   Yes, a moderator will need to see this evidence. Please see the handbook for guidance on the forms that a presentation may take. Please note that if this is the final outcome of the Project, the learner will need to do a second presentation to meet the requirements of the review (Assessment Objective 4).

20. **What format can the final work be submitted in?**

Work can take a variety of formats, i.e. design, performance, report, dissertation, artefact. The final outcome needs to be accompanied by a written component and presentation.

21. **Is there a word count?**

For all formats, there must be a written element of project analysis and documentation which will be between 750 and 1500 words, details of which can be found on page 6 of the handbook.

Learners/Parents

Parents

1. **What do learners gain from a Project qualification?**

It is equivalent to a short course GCSE (Foundation is equivalent to short course GCSE grade D-G and Higher is equivalent to A*-C). The Foundation Project is worth up to 17 performance points in the achievement and attainment tables, and the Higher is worth up to 29 performance points.

2. **Is the Project suitable for my child?**

Please see your centre's admissions policy or talk to his/her tutor at open evening.

3. **What skills will my child develop?**

Your child will learn or develop many valuable skills, useful in higher education or in the work place. These include researching and selection of relevant information, time management, presentation skills and learning how to evaluate work.

4. **How will my child be taught?**

There is a taught element to the course (50-60%). This may be in a class situation, one-to-one mentoring and individual working with teacher supervision.

5. **What support can I give my child?**

As you would with any qualification you could ask how it is going, what the work is about and whether they need space to work at home or have any other requirements e.g. a computer.

6. **How much will the course cost me?**

Entry for the qualification will be paid for by the centre. For any re-sits you will need to refer to your centre's policy.

7. **What support is available from within the school?**

Your school/college may offer one to one mentoring and classroom support. Library and Internet resources may be available outside of normal school hours. There may be additional support available so check with your centre.

Learners

1. **Can I do a project on whatever I want?**

   Your topic title will be a decision made by you but then discussed with your teacher, as to the practicalities of completing the work.

2. **I want to do a project on a topic which is not related to school. Where can I get help and guidance?**

   Your centre will assist you in choosing a theme or title which will give you the opportunity to produce an appropriate piece of work and may be able to offer advice on who outside of school may be able to help you.

3. **How much work do I have to do?**

   This qualification is equivalent to a short course GCSE so the work required will be approximately equal. However different skills may be required – for example, motivation to work on your own will be very important.

4. **How much research do I have to do?**

   This will depend on the title/topic you have chosen, but you should expect to have to do some research as this forms part of the course requirement. Good research will also help you in completing your project.

5. **Where do I find my sources of information?**

   You will need to select information from a variety of places such as the Internet, books and primary and secondary data collection. This will depend on what your project is about.

6. **What help can my teacher give me?**

   You will have up to 35 taught hours in which you will be given guidance and help on getting the most out of your project. This may include advice on research, referencing, planning and evaluating.

Exams officer

1. **When do I have to submit final statements of entries?**

   January series – 21 October

   June series – 21 March

2. **When do I have to submit marks?**

   January series – 10 January

   June series – 15 May

3. **How do we send work for moderation?**

   Depending on which entry option you choose, there are two methods:

   i.   Repository – electronic submission of the requested sample.

   ii.   Postal moderation – posting the requested sample to the moderator.

4. **How do I query results?**

A re-moderation (Service 3 enquiry about results) can be requested after the publication of results. Enquiries about results should be submitted via Interchange.

During delivery

Exams officer

1. **What is the deadline for submitting the project?**

The moderator allocated to your centre will indicate when the portfolios are required.

2. **What happens in terms of learners who need extra time due to learning difficulties?**

The figure of 60 hours is only a guide. Depending on the cohort and the needs of particular learners, the taught and individual elements may take more or less time than this. This is, therefore, at your centre's discretion.

Teacher

1. **How do I manage a class of multiple projects?**

It may be a good idea to plan your lessons carefully to ensure that learners are given time to work on their project but also that you are able to mentor with each learner as needed. You may like to structure lessons weekly so that learners take time to review their progress and update their progression logs.

2. **How do I mark a diverse range of projects?**

Remember that it is the process which you are assessing rather than the final outcome, so you do not need to be an art specialist in order to assess an artefact. Refer carefully to the assessment criteria, and ensure that, if there is more than one teacher assessing work, you set aside time to moderate each other's work.

3. **How do I assess the work?**

There are four assessment objectives of varying weightings – Manage (12 marks - 20%), Use Resources (12 marks - 20%), Develop and Realise (24 marks – 40%) and Review and Communicate (12 marks – 20%).

Each of the criteria is banded (three bands) and the total mark is out of 60.

Please refer to the marks scheme/guidance in the Project Handbook
http://www.ocr.org.uk/Data/publications/key_documents/Projects_L1_L2_Project_Handbook.pdf

or in the Teacher's guide
http://www.ocr.org.uk/Data/publications/support_materials/Projects_L1_L2_Project_SM_Teacher_Guide.pdf

4. **How much support can I give my learners?**

Guidance is given on pages 5 and 6 of the Teacher's guide

http://www.ocr.org.uk/Data/publications/support_materials/Projects_L1_L2_Project_SM_Teacher_Guide.pdf