

Projects

Extended Project

OCR Level 3 **H856**

OCR Report to Centres for January 2014

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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.

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H856 Level 3 Extended Project

Introduction

Although entries were received for the Level 1 Foundation Project (H854) and Level 2 Higher Project (H855) they were not significant enough to merit a post-series written report. As a result the following feedback relates to the Level 3 Extended Project (H856) only.

General Comments

As always it was encouraging to see a very diverse and interesting range of Projects. The quality of documentation was particularly good with very informative Unit Recording Sheets (URS's). For the first time ever moderators did not have to get back to centres for Project Projection Records (PPR's) or Authentication forms. Where the URS sheets were particularly helpful was when they kept a sharp focus on the specific requirements for each Assessment Objective (AOP); project management skills in AO1, independent research in AO2 and skills development/progression in AO3, for example. It also assists moderators if centre provide as much information as is possible about the nature of the 'journey' the learner has undertaken, particularly if a learner has moved well outside their 'comfort zone' of A Level. If the finished Project looks as if it might prove challenging for moderators to find the relevant evidence to back up the marks awarded, then some signposting would help. The hallmarks of the best Projects seen this series were:

- excellent project management skills demonstrated from the start;
- real challenges being overcome in genuinely independent research;
- lots of evidence of skills development;
- ample reflection on the whole learning process.

Problems in the application of assessment criteria were noted where there was a real lack of awareness of what was expected at Level Three and a serious lack of evidence to justify the marks awarded. It is worth stressing that in the specification, at the top of each of the assessment criteria details, it says 'The learner will provide evidence of....'

AO1

The key to success here always lay with ample evidence provision. The more able learners made it clear that it was very much their own choice of topic, did not worry too much about the title and showed lots of evidence that they knew it was all about project management. Approaches that really stood out were portfolios where it was clear there had been a very comprehensive training programme before learners set out on their Extended Project, following the guidelines set out in the Teacher Guide. From some of the PPRs seen it was clear that preparation was limited to one very brief session and, as a result, many of the finished projects had only a limited grasp of what the Extended Project was all about and tended to just replicate A Level work.

AO2

There was some very impressive independent research seen and it is really good to see the way in which some learners really went out of their way to gather information and then review it intelligently and critically. Again this seems to be an area where the well trained and briefed learners know how to attain high marks and ensure that their work is both well evidenced and reflective. Moderators are still, however, getting some Projects where the only research done seems to be a brief look at some 'googled' sites and the AS textbook. Comments in the PPR like 'I went to the College Library and they had no books on the subject....' to justify this sort of

'research' do not impress. Learners really need to know what a 'wide' range of resources looks like at Level Three, as well as what is looked for in resource evaluation.

AO3

The best evidence here showed evidence of learners taking the opportunity provided by the Project to develop a new range of skills. They had either moved right away from their A Level work or they had taken very great care to ensure that they demonstrated substantial progress in skills (as opposed to just knowledge) if they were staying close to an A level or other course being studied. Detailed evidence of skills acquired or developed is vital here. Too often there was too much focus on content and moderators tended to find that when the URS comments for AO3 simply replicated comments made for AO1 and AO2, there simply had been no 'skills' progress or development.

AO4

Presentation evidence was often very good indeed. It was encouraging to note that presentations had much less focus on content and much more on skills acquired and developed; in fact real awareness of what the project really involved and what had been learned from the process. Centres which took care to ensure that learners were aware of how the presentation process could be utilised to give evidence of all the AOs did well. Well evidenced questioning which had the right focus was good to see in the evidence provided. There was still a tendency to give too much emphasis on the outcome, and too little on the process. Without exception the very best approaches had a really comprehensive and highly reflective diary/log from the outset, which had ample evidence that the learner had really learned a lot about learning during the process.

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