

## Foundation & Higher Projects

OCR Level 1 and Level 2 Projects H854 H855

### OCR Report to Centres

**June 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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## Projects

Level 1 Foundation (H854)

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## OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

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## Overview

Moderating the Projects this year was a very positive experience. Not only was there a substantial increase in numbers at Level 3 but there was also much greater awareness of the potential of the Projects as a way in which skills, which are valued by both Higher Education and the workplace, can be acquired and developed. The sheer diversity of projects that landed on the desks of the moderators continues to delight and the evidence provided of the ability and enterprise of today's students impressed us all. Successful centres were invariably those who were aware that it is project management skills that we are looking for, not just content, and that investment in initial training was vital if students were to succeed. It was also interesting to note how some centres were successfully using Level 2 as an adjunct to GCSE, particularly for the able, and also as a preparation for Level 3. We also noted with some concern the lack of success where there was an attempt to combine A Level coursework or another qualification with the Project. So often the assessment criteria are very different and it rarely works.

## H854 Level 1 Foundation Project

There was a small entry for this specification this year with a variety of approaches. Some centres still set a task for candidates to complete, and others gave the same task to all entrants. Centres are reminded that this is not good practice and candidates should select their own topic and title.

There was also a much stronger focus on project management, with timelines, planning, and conclusions, rather than "what has been found out", particularly at the higher levels. Many candidates chose quite demanding subjects and it was pleasing to see that these had, in the main, been well-handled. Nevertheless, there is still a strong focus on topic rather than title, and some centres seem to think that a PowerPoint presentation is a suitable outcome or method of presenting information. Many at the mid to lower mark range were short and struggled to meet the 750 word count which the specification advises.

Project Progression Records were reasonably well completed, although there is some evidence of a checklist approach. Some candidates appear to be completing this at the end of their project rather than using this as a working document throughout the process.

A number of candidates attempted to undertake primary research, which is encouraging at this level. Secondary sources should be accurately referenced and there should be a bibliography.

Candidates should be encouraged to seek out secondary sources elsewhere than online. There was still too much reliance on internet-based sources, particularly Wikipedia. Candidates should also make clear what they have produced, and what has been taken from a secondary source accompanied by clear and unambiguous referencing.

Timelines should have the dates by which the candidate expects to have achieved their objectives. Some candidates used Gantt charts, some of which were quite detailed; many were a little unclear.

There was a significant number of clerical errors in the marking this year and centres are reminded of the need to ensure accuracy in this respect. Unit Recording Sheets should also have supervisor's comments indicating how and why marks have been awarded. It is also permissible to annotate students' work.

Centres are also reminded that it is not necessary to send large bulky packages of artwork or artefacts. Photographic evidence of such items is recommended to prevent damage in transit. Additionally, large lever arch files are not recommended, as these can easily be compromised in transit.

## H855 01 & 02 Level 2 Higher Project

Once more, there was a wide variety of topics produced for this specification which were engaging and interesting to read. It was pleasing to see how well candidates had worked on their projects, and many achieving a high standard.

There was a variety of types of outcome, including some imaginative and original artefacts. Centres are requested to consider the value of photographic evidence in the case of large artefacts or artwork.

There was, in some cases, a strong focus on the outcome or content. Occasionally, this led to a degree of neglect regarding the project management evidence, although there is an increasing awareness of the need for this. There was also increased use of project management techniques and tools, such as Gantt charts. Some candidates appeared to believe that the project was an “essay” or “coursework” and followed an approach more suitable to this type of outcome. What was submitted was a refined, polished piece of work with minimal evidence of how this had been achieved. The requirement to provide evidence of realisation and development must be made clear at the start of the course.

Some centres had helpfully annotated Unit Recording Sheets to show where evidence for the assessment objectives could be found, and made useful comments which indicated how and why marks had been awarded. Without these, it is difficult for moderators to see the rationale behind the marking. It is also recommended that the supervisors annotate the actual projects.

Evidence of planning has improved, although the focus is still on initial planning. There is sometimes limited evidence of action planning and ongoing planning; at this level, it is expected that there should be more than a retrospective timeline plus a mind map. There was also a lack of understanding about what a timeline is. Candidates should know that a timeline is a planning document and should be produced at the start. It should give all the agreed objectives, with the dates by which these will be completed, rather than a retrospective log.

There is also a lack of understanding of how the Project Progression Record is to be used. It is clear that these are completed at the end, rather like a checklist, instead of being used as a working document.

Evaluation skills have improved. Some candidates did focus on how well they had planned and managed the process. Others described how good they thought their outcome was, with an account of what they had done. Such evaluations are unlikely to achieve the highest mark band. There was some consideration of the reliability of sources, mainly secondary. There was limited assessment of the effectiveness of primary research.

Some candidates had produced quite detailed personal logs/action plans which provided excellent evidence for all of the assessment objectives. These were particularly effective if they had combined the timeline (planned dates) with the actual dates of completion, as well as a short written account of what was done and how effective/useful this was.

There is still a strong reliance on internet-based sources and candidates should be encouraged to seek alternative avenues for secondary material. Primary research should also be used – there is a requirement for a variety of research methods and it was encouraging to see some creativity in this area with the increased use of interviews and focus groups.

**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](mailto:general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk)

**[www.ocr.org.uk](http://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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