

Projects

Foundation and Higher

OCR Level 1 Foundation Project **H854**

OCR Level 2 Higher Project **H855**

OCR Report to Centres June 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.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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H854 Level 1 Foundation Project

There was a small entry for the specification this year. It is still a matter of concern that centres are setting the parameters for the project topic and not allowing candidates to have a completely free choice.

There is still a strong focus on topic rather than title and many candidates provided a collection of material on a topic rather than an investigation or report. Some centres seem to think that a PowerPoint presentation is a suitable outcome or method of presenting information. Many portfolios at the mid to lower mark range were short and struggled to meet the 750 word limit which is laid down in the specification..

Project Progression Records (PPRs) were not always well used and there is still 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.

Planning evidence was generally thin. Where there was evidence of planning taking place the emphasis tended to be on initial planning only. Action planning was rarely done.

A number of candidates attempted to undertake primary research, which is encouraging at this level. The use of secondary sources was a concern. There was an increased number of projects lacking bibliographies and referencing, with a substantial amount of unacknowledged material, mainly from online sources.

Candidates should be encouraged to seek out a variety of secondary sources. There was still too much reliance on Internet-based sources, particularly Wikipedia. Candidates should make the distinction between what is their own individual, authentic evidence and what has been taken from secondary sources. The latter should be accompanied by clear and unambiguous referencing.

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

There were a significant number of clerical errors in the internal assessment conducted this year and centres are reminded of the need to ensure accuracy in this respect. Unit Recording Sheets (URs) should always have internal assessor comments indicating how and why marks have been awarded. It is also permissible to annotate candidates' work. There was also an increase in the number of projects which did not have the required compulsory documentation, including the PPR.

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 also not recommended as these can easily be damaged in transit.

H855 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 some achieved a high standard.

There is still a concern about centres who restrict candidate choice for topics. This is not helpful and does not facilitate effective evidence generation.

There was, in some cases, a strong focus on the outcome or content. In some cases, this led to a degree of neglect regarding the project management evidence which should not be given any lesser importance. There was a good use of project management techniques and tools, such as Gantt charts. Some candidates still believe that the project is 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 (URSs) to show where evidence for the assessment objectives could be found. Useful comments were also included 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 internal assessors 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 and, at this level, it is expected that there should be more than a retrospective timeline plus a mindmap. 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 (PPR) 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.

The PPR is not a substitute for a timeline, which should show the dates by which the candidate reasonably expects to have completed all stages of the project. This timeline should be produced at the start of the project.

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 candidates 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. Referencing and bibliographies should be included as standard practice and there should be no secondary material which is unacknowledged. 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.

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