

Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

January 2012

Level 1 Foundation Project
Level 2 Higher Project
(P101 & P201)

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Level 1 Unit 1: Foundation Project

Suitability of Work Submitted

The majority of Level 1 projects were in the form of written reports, although several ephemeral and artefact projects were also seen. Projects that were submitted as part of the full Diploma qualification demonstrated good links to the Principal Learning of the relevant line of learning. All of the projects submitted this series were original, interesting and varied in topics investigated. Stand-alone projects were equally interesting and varied with a wide range of topics being covered by learners.

Guidance given by centers to learners was clear and constructive. Better Projects at Level 1 selected a research question or a design brief that generated the evidence requirements across all four assessment objectives.

Learner Performance

The Level 1 Foundation Project qualification requires learners to select and plan a project. Learners are required to record the activities that they undertake during the project, obtain information from a range of sources, apply the information to the project and present this information in an appropriate format. Learners also need to review their project and their own performance.

It was pleasing to see projects at this level were all submitted with a Project Proposal Form and an activity log. Some centres were awarding marks in the higher mark band where evidence was brief and not fully developed.

For Assessment Objective 1, all learners were able to select a project topic. Better projects identified a question or design brief and went on to plan the intended project outcomes. Centres are advised to ensure the timescale highlighted in the Project Proposal Form reflects the 60 Guided Learning Hours allocated to this qualification. In many of the projects sampled this series this aspect was very limited and hindered learners from accessing the higher mark band. The completion of mile stones was also limited; centre assessors are advised to ensure these sections of the Project Proposal Form are fully completed.

The majority of the projects seen this series provided a clear rationale for the choice of project. Learners should be encouraged to include a range of resources such as physical, technological, human or financial to support the project outcomes. Centre assessors should ensure the project is signed off confirming the scope of the project allows the learners to generate the evidence requirements across all of the assessment objectives.

For Assessment Objective 2, learners were able to demonstrate some ability to obtain information, although, in the weaker learners' work, this was not always relevant to the project title.

The marking grid distinguishes between the 'range of sources' and 'types of information'. This aspect was generously assessed by assessors and some learners were awarded marks in mark band 2 in the work seen this series whereas the evidence supported marks in mark band one. Centres are advised that the weaker learners are likely to rely on one type of information even if they use a range of sources and will, therefore attract marks in mark band one.

Assessment Objective 3 has the highest weighting of marks for the Foundation Project. Learners performed better compared to the last series. However, in some of the projects seen, assessors had awarded marks in mark band two where the evidence showed only limited understanding of the topic. Centres are advised to refer to the guidance given in the specification for this assessment objective

For Assessment Objective 4, learners are required to generate a review of the project. Performance in this assessment objective was limited. Overall, learners found it challenging to meet the requirements of the assessment grid fully. Generally, the evidence generated by learners was insufficient to meet the full requirements of mark band two. In many of the projects seen learners submitted a generic review on the outcome of the project and did not reflect on the process, the skills and knowledge developed or the overall success of the project objectives as required in the marking grid. Centres are advised to support and encourage learners to set realistic achievable objectives for their project in the Project Proposal Form. Learners need to be given scope to fully develop the review, including giving clear ideas for follow up work to access the full range of marks in the assessment grid.

Assessment

In the main, centres demonstrated a good level of understanding of the assessment requirements. However, the following assessment objectives were assessed generously AO1, AO3 and AO4. Centre Assessors are advised to check and refer to the assessment grid for the evidence requirements of each mark band before awarding marks based on the evidence submitted by each learner.

The majority of centres used the correct teacher assessment form to give feedback to the learners and to annotate the marks awarded for each assessment objective. However the annotation of the evidence was very limited. Centre assessors are advised to clearly indicate the achievement of evidence with the assessment objective and mark band.

Marks for independence for each assessment objective were not always apparent in the assessment by the assessors. Centres are advised to clearly indicate the independence mark for example 4+1 on the assessment form. Centres are advised to use the mark for independence and support the achievement of these marks by comments on how the learner worked independently.

Best assessment practice was evident where centres implemented internal verification of assessment to ensure that marks awarded to the learners were supported by the evidence provided by the learners. This was

particularly important where more than one assessor was involved in the delivery and assessment of the qualification. However, in a minority of cases internal verification processes failed to result in necessary changes being made to marks awarded by centres.

Centre Performance

The required number of project samples was submitted by centres in this series. However, there were two main issues with project samples. Firstly, some centres did not submit the highest and lowest scoring learners. More importantly, some centres did not include a completed EDI indicating the mark submitted for each learner. Centres are advised to ensure these issues are addressed before submitting projects for moderation otherwise the moderation process is delayed.

The majority of centres used the correct Project documentation. However, the details on the Project Proposal Forms need to be fully completed, in particular the time scale (60GLH) and milestones sections. Documentation for the projects is downloadable from the Edexcel Project website.

Annotation of the evidence submitted by learners was limited. Assessors are advised to annotate the evidence with the assessment objective and mark band.

Feedback to learners was comprehensive but marks for independence need to be justified by the assessor across all of the assessment objectives.

Level 2 Unit 2: Higher Project

Introduction

Over 100 centres submitted work for moderation in this series. Generally it is pleasing to report that the majority of the centres are supporting their learners in carrying out interesting and relevant research projects that support the ethos of the Higher Project qualification. The majority of centres are also submitting evidence for Assessment Objective 1 on the correct Edexcel paperwork. Where this was not the case learners were usually disadvantaged as they were unable to submit sufficient evidence to justify the awarding of marks in mark band 2 when their activity logs were submitted on centre based documentation such as Gantt charts.

Suitability of Work Submitted

Work submitted for this Level 2 qualification was either linked to the Diploma qualifications across all principal lines of learning or submitted as a stand-alone qualification. This series has seen a pleasing increase in the number of stand-alone projects submitted for moderation.

The Higher Project qualification requires that learners submit evidence for four assessment objectives. Learners need to select, plan and carry out a project that uses relevant skills and methods to reach their project objectives. During the development of their project they need to obtain, select and use relevant information sources from a range of sources and, where appropriate, from both primary and secondary sources.

The learners are given the best opportunity to produce relevant evidence for the qualification if they are supported in choosing a research question to address, or a design brief or commission, that requires research to take place that is relevant and then used to develop their project outcome.

For AO1, learners need to supply a completed project proposal form and activity log that is focused on the requirements to plan and manage the project. To access marks in mark band 2 the learners need to describe any problems encountered and how they were overcome. Both the project proposal form and the activity log should be supplied on the relevant Edexcel paperwork that is available to download from the Edexcel project website.

For AO2, learners need to demonstrate that they have gathered and used resources that are appropriate to the project title and these resources should be clearly identified in a bibliography that will allow the sources to be easily retrievable. Resources should be relevant to the project objectives. Learners should also comment on the reliability and validity of their sources. This evidence was not always seen in work submitted in this series and, therefore, prevented learners from accessing marks in mark band 2 for this assessment objective.

For AO3 the learners need to develop and realise their project. This can be done in the form of a written report, an investigation, an artefact or a performance. Ideas need to be developed that show understanding of the topic and some evidence of alternative points of view should be seen. The resultant work should be logically sequenced and show coherence. Marks for this assessment objective must be supported with evidence that shows the process of the learners' project and not just the outcome.

AO4 requires learners to review both the process and the outcome of their project showing what skills and knowledge were developed and ideas for follow up work. They should assess how well they managed and performed and these comments should incorporate feedback from others.

The most successful project titles were those that stated a clear research question for the learner to investigate or a clear design brief to follow and ones that also gave scope for argument and counter-argument in the case of the written report format or a discussion about the use of alternative designs in the case of the artefact. The least successful titles at this level were those that give a single statement to investigate, such as 'what skills and qualifications are needed for a career in computing'. Such titles did not allow learners to focus their research skills on the development of an argument or opinion and were generally too restrictive to access marks in mark band 2 across all the assessment objectives.

In future, in the case of projects that form part of the diploma, it would be pleasing to see learners focusing their project titles on work that extends their knowledge beyond that of the principal unit focus. Where learners were submitting work for the higher project as a standalone qualification, it is very pleasing to report that in this moderation series, following comments made in June 2011, a very interesting range of successful project titles were seen that spanned across numerous curriculum areas and areas of learners' interests.

Group work is often carried out for this qualification. This is acceptable but centres need to ensure that all learners can submit independent and individual evidence for each Assessment Objective. This can be achieved by each learner within a group having their own project objectives to research and develop. Group work can result in excellent evidence for AO4 where each learner can review not only their own project process and outcome but also the contributions of each member of the group.

Learner Performance

Regarding the written report format, this was seen to be most successful when learners chose a project title in the form of a question and then set out to gather relevant sources of data to address their chosen question. By posing a question to research learners can provide their own viewpoint and then look at a range of sources of information to prove or disprove their views. Conclusions can be drawn and comments made on the reliability and validity of both primary and secondary sources. The most successful written reports are those where the learner carries out a review of their research sources whether secondary, primary or a mixture of both, and then enters

into a discussion, using their sources, to report on their project question. It is highly appropriate if some sources of information found by learners are not used in the development of the project and learners should highlight this and discuss why the sources are not used. This demonstrates a learner's ability to manage their project successfully.

The most successful artefact projects were those in which the plans and designs were clearly relevant to the initial design brief given on the project proposal form. It can, however, be appropriate and relevant for learners to change their design during the course of their project in response to various results of research or design attempts, but this change must be fully documented and justified in both the activity log and in the written component of the report.

Less successful design projects contained information about the design process but did not show how this was relevant to the question posed at the outset. Also, learners need to show how their designs develop and why certain aspects of the design, such as choice of materials for example, are made. Artefact projects need to be supplied with information regarding relevant research sources and how these are used to develop the final outcome. Where projects were developed that resulted in a performance, the most successful were those where the final performance had developed from research into the way the performance would be carried out, highlighting influences from choreographers, musicians, various dance genres etc, and where the final performance was developed from documented rehearsals.

Regarding AO1, Project Proposal Forms and Activity Logs were completed with greater detail in this series. However, there is still an issue with section 3 of the PPF (activities and timescales). Learners often complete this section of the Project Proposal Form with limited information. This section should be used for the learners to demonstrate that they have thought through the main activities that they will need to carry out to submit a successful project. The timescales given should reflect most of the guided learning hours prescribed for the qualification. Generally, it is recommended that 20 hours of the total 60 guided learning hours make up the 'taught' element of the course and that the remainders – 40 guided learning hours – are used for the learners to carry out their projects. These 40 guided learning hours should be represented in section 3 of the PPF. In some learners work seen this series the time scales were often too short and / or vague such as 'a few weeks or a month' or, at the other extreme, given in very small chunks such as 'a couple of hours' or half a lesson. Learners should be encouraged to show that they have thought through how long the main activities need to be carried out and this time frame should allow learners sufficient time to develop the required skills and knowledge.

For AO2, most learners are now providing reasonable bibliographies and researching an appropriate number of secondary and or primary sources of data that are used to develop their projects. However, not all learners in this series made suitable comments on the reliability or validity of their research sources. Also, it was disappointing to see that some learners only used 1 or 2 sources of research information to inform their project process

and outcome. This was seen as insufficient to justify the awarding of marks in mark band 2 for Assessment Objectives 2 and 3. Centres are advised to support learners in developing this area more fully in future.

Regarding A03, much improved development and realisation of all forms of Higher Projects was seen in this series. However, in a minority of the work sampled, the evidence given for A03 was not always relevant to the project title or project objectives given in the project proposal form therefore making it difficult to agree marks awarded in mark band 2. Some learner evidence sampled lacked coherence and was restricted by numerous spelling and grammar errors. These should be edited out before the final project is assessed.

For A04, centres need to ensure that all learners are supported in providing a review of their project work that addresses all the requirements for A04 and does not just focus on the actual project outcome. Whilst more detailed reviews were seen in most of the projects submitted for this series, some reviews did not cover all the requirements as given in the assessment grid for A04. Level 2 projects do not have a mandatory requirement for an oral presentation to be carried out. However, many centres do carry these out. Where this does occur, the requirements of A04 cannot just be met by submitting an oral presentation witness statement unless it is fully mapped to the assessment grid requirements. The evidence should review the project process including a review of the learners own learning and performance, stating which objectives were or were not met and why, giving a description of skills and knowledge developed and learnt during the project and also giving ideas for follow up work in the same or associated areas.

General Comments

Centre assessment has improved in this series. However, assessors need to ensure that all learner evidence awarded is mapped to the relevant mark band of the relevant Assessment Objective. In some work moderated this series assessors were awarding marks in mark band 2 when the evidence supported marks in mark band 1.

Where centres award the extra mark for independent work, these marks need to be shown separately as a +1 mark in the assessment mark column and the assessor needs to justify this award in their assessor feedback for each Assessment Objective.

Most centres assessment would benefit from internal standardisation particularly where more than one assessor is involved in marking learner work.

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