

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2015

Project Qualification

Foundation Project (P101)
Higher Project (P201)

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Foundation Projects Qualification

Introduction

Projects follow the same processes as traditional GCSEs and GCEs. As with any GCSE or GCE, each unit is awarded to ensure that the standard is established and will be maintained.

It is necessary to ensure consistency of standard in each examination window and as a result of this, grade boundaries may be subject to change.

Suitability of Work Submitted

There were a small number of projects submitted this year for Level 1. All projects seen this year were completed as a standalone project. Many of the projects seen this series at this level were in the form of artefacts. All of the projects submitted were original and interesting and a variety of topics were investigated.

Learner Performance

In higher performing projects, students selected a research question or a design brief that generated the evidence requirements across all four assessment objectives. When students did not ask a question there was very little opportunity to carry out the research to generate the sufficient evidence to develop AO3. This also affected the extent to which the evidence requirements for AO2 were met. No group work projects were seen at this level.

Assessment

All the work sampled this series included a Project Proposal Form. However, it was noted that there is still an issue with section 3 of the form (activities and timescales), in that learners often complete this with limited information. Activity logs were in the main completed by all learners at this level. The quality ranged from very brief to fairly detailed. Evidence of problems encountered during the course of the project and solutions to overcome them were very limited.

Much of the AO2 work took the form of secondary research from the internet, including the use of newspaper websites. However, in some written projects, students used questionnaires and surveys to good effect. In a few cases Bibliographies were incomplete or missing.

There was some good evidence at this level for AO3. For the stronger performing projects, evidence was used that related appropriately to the objective and title of the project.

Some good reviews were seen this series, however some students submitted reviews with limited evidence of skills and knowledge gained or the actual objectives achieved. Some students were overly reliant on a generic review/evaluation which was not focussed on the assessment objectives.

Use of feedback from others was limited.

Centre Performance

In the main, centres demonstrated a good level of understanding of the assessment requirements, and the guidance given by centres to learners was clear and constructive.

This year there was improved evidence of internal verification and many centres were applying the assessment criteria accurately. However, in some cases centre assessment was deemed slightly lenient and several centres had more difficulty in interpreting the assessment objective for AO1. In particular, evidence for timescales and milestones was very limited and more leniently assessed.

Marks for independent work were better supported this series.

Higher Projects Qualification

Introduction

Projects follow the same processes as traditional GCSEs and GCEs. As with any GCSE or GCE, each unit is awarded to ensure that the standard is established and will be maintained.

It is necessary to ensure consistency of standard in each examination window and as a result of this, grade boundaries may be subject to change.

Suitability of Work Submitted

Generally, the project titles given did support the learners in fully addressing the assessment objectives, particularly with regard to AO3.

The most successful project titles are those that state a clear research question or design brief for the learner to investigate and ones that also lend themselves to having a counter argument given. The least successful titles at this level are those that give a statement to investigate that do not allow learners to focus their research skills on the development of an argument or opinion. Objectives for the project also need to be focussed; some were very broad or ambiguous in work sampled this series.

Fewer projects based around group work were seen in this series.

Learner Performance

In the majority of samples moderated, the learners had asked a clear question with relevant linked project objectives. Specific reasons were given for the choice of topics, mostly linked to personal interest in the subject and there were some comments concerning possible career choice. However, in some projects, the information was brief and the project objectives lacked focus or simply re-stated the project title. Additionally, in some work sampled the rationales given were simply a reworking of the project objectives.

Activity logs were also varied; some logs were comprehensive with descriptions of problems encountered and changes made; this was pleasing to see, but, in a number of cases, the log was simply a list of tasks carried out with no thought given to any problems encountered and no evidence of monitoring of the activities against the proposed timescales in section 3 of the project proposal form. This evidence for assessment objective 1 did not support the awarding of marks in mark band 2.

This series has seen an improvement in the completion of section 3 of the Project Proposal Form but timescales set are still not sufficiently focussed and sometimes

did not demonstrate that the required number of GLHs had been allocated to the Higher Project.

Additionally, the main activities given in section 3 of the project proposal form were often a list of generic activities such as 'research, discussion, evaluation'. These activities need to be specific to the actual project title; also, milestones were not always set or agreed.

Assessment

Centres are using the full range of marks available to them when assessing their students' work.

Some centres awarded marks rather leniently particularly with respect to assessment objectives 2 and 4 and, in some circumstances, across all the assessment objectives. Some centres are awarding marks for AO1 in mark band 2 when the project proposal forms are, at best, brief, and the activity logs do not demonstrate any monitoring of progress.

It was still not uncommon to see sections 3 and 4 of the proposal form completed generically and lacking relevant timescales as noted above.

Regarding AO2, most projects seen this series were submitted with clear bibliographies making it possible to retrieve the sources used. Also, most centres supported their learners in focussing on whether the sources used were fit for purpose. In some work, however, although it was clear that research must have been undertaken from a variety of sources, this was implicit and not fully referenced. Level 2 learners should be encouraged to comment on both the reliability and validity of their sources. This evidence was seen in most projects moderated although comments on reliability could be in greater depth.

Regarding AO3, all work seen by moderators did contain an attempt by students to develop and realise their project. However, work was of varying quality in this section. In the majority of samples moderated, students demonstrated a good understanding of the topic and their questions were answered with both supporting evidence and consideration of alternative viewpoints. Presentation was logical and professional. However, in a small number of samples, work in AO3 was limited. In some projects the evidence given for AO3 lacked any alternative views or counter-arguments making it difficult to justify marks awarded in mark band 2.

In most work seen by moderators the evidence for assessment objective 4 continued to show improvement on that seen in previous series. However, some reviews are still brief and do not address all the assessment objective requirements. Centres need to ensure that all learners are supported in providing a review of their project work that addresses all the requirements for AO4 and does not just focus on the actual project outcome. Students should review the project process, including a review of their own learning and performance, a statement as to which objectives

were or were not met and why, plus a description of skills and knowledge developed during the project and ideas for follow up work.

Centre Performance

It is still the case that some centres need to understand that the Level 2 Project is a qualification that attracts 60 GLH and that therefore students need to be given sufficient time to develop skills and knowledge relevant to their area of study. Some centres still appear to be giving their students only a shorter length of time to develop their projects leading to superficial development and realisation for AO3. Additionally, some centres are still not directing students to provide clear bibliographies of all sources used.

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

At level 2, assessors can award an extra mark for each assessment objective if the candidate has worked fairly independently. Centres are advised to ensure that justification is provided for the award of this mark, as the annotation of +1 alone is not sufficient.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

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