

Principal Examiner Report

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Pearson Edexcel Extended Projects
Qualification
in Performance (P201) Paper 1

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Higher Projects Qualification (P201)

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 all of the assessment objectives.

The most successful project titles are those that state a clear research question or design brief for the learner to investigate and, where a written report is the outcome, 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 focused; 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. Also, 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 just 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 in a minority of cases are still not sufficiently focused 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 generously 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 or discussion of any problems encountered during the project process.

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 in this series were submitted with clear bibliographies making it possible to retrieve the sources used. Also, most centres supported their learners in focusing 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, a description of skills and knowledge developed during the project and ideas for follow up work.

Some centres are supporting students in carrying out an oral presentation for AO4. Where this is accompanied by written evidence of review by the student this adds to the marks that can be awarded for AO4.

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. Some centres are still not directing the learners to provide clear bibliographies of all sources used.

Only the minority of centres are internally standardising marks awarded by centre assessors.

At level 2 assessors can award an extra mark for each assessment objective if the learner has worked fairly independently. The best centres will justify the award of this mark; other centres just annotated +1 in the marks column.

Some centres include the +1 mark in the total mark for the assessment objective. This makes it difficult to ascertain why the mark was awarded.

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