

Examiners' Report June 2009

Projects

Foundation and Higher Level 1 and Level 2

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Foundation Projects Qualification

Level 1 Introduction

This is the first year of awarding for the Foundation Project live qualification.

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 consequence of this, grade boundaries may be subject to change.

Level 1 Unit 1 Foundation

Suitability of work submitted

Foundation projects submitted for moderation in this series were either carried out as part of a Foundation Diploma within one of the current 5 lines of learning or were submitted as a stand-alone qualification. Where projects were submitted as part of a learner's diploma programme, all the work moderated demonstrated clear links to the relevant diploma line. For example, learners provided projects on aspects of crime in their local area linked to the justice strand of a Society, Health and Development level 1 diploma or researched and created web sites to advertise local businesses as part of an ICT level 1 diploma. In all cases the actual evidence for the project had to be original work and not that already submitted for a level 1 diploma unit.

Where projects were submitted as stand-alone qualifications the range of topics covered was wide ranging. In a minority of cases some work was submitted by centres that was also being submitted as work for other unit qualifications such as work for BTEC units. Where this was seen to be the case learners were not accredited with the qualification unless it was clear that new evidence, specific to the level 1 project assessment requirements and not submitted as portfolio work for other qualifications, had been generated by the learners. Where learners just added a project proposal form and an activity log to existing work submitted for alternative qualifications accreditation for the project could not be given.

The best work generated by learners at level 1 was based on a research question or a design brief that supported the learners in fulfilling the requirements across the four assessment objectives for the level one project. It was clear that the majority of centres invested time in delivering clear guidance to their learners on the basic tools needed to conduct research such as the need to list sources of information in order for them to be retrieved and to report on their reliability and relevance to the topic area.

Where learners gave a project title with no aspect of research, such as 'family', there was limited ability to carry out research in order to prove or disprove a point or to give alternative viewpoints or to develop or realise the project in a relevant manner. In these cases the learners were restricted in the marks that could be agreed across all the assessment objectives. At this level the majority of projects were in the form of written reports, although several ICT projects (databases and websites) and the construction of CD covers (artefact) were also seen.

Learner Performance

Most learners' work moderated demonstrated that learners had put a lot of hard work into the production of the main body of the report of their

research. This qualification requires that all learners choose and plan a project. Learners need to record the activities that they undertake during the project, obtain information from at least a few sources, apply the information to the project and present this information in an appropriate format. They need also to review their project and their own performance.

It is pleasing to state that this year the majority of projects were more focussed on the research process compared to work submitted last year during the pilot phase of the qualification. All projects seen at this level were submitted with a project proposal form and an activity log, although some centres were still using their own documentation for both the proposal form and activity log. It is recommended that all centres use the relevant documentation that can be downloaded from the Edexcel project qualification website. Some centres were seen to be awarding marks in the higher mark band where evidence was brief and not fully developed.

Regarding assessment objective 1, all learners were able to select a project topic. The best work identified a question or design brief and went on to plan the intended project outcomes. It is acceptable for learners to choose a working title, which can be adapted as the project progresses. Changes or adaptations to the title should be documented in the activity log. The project topic should be agreed with the tutor/assessor.

Several centres supported learners in working within a group to complete their project qualification. Whilst this is entirely acceptable, centres are asked to ensure that each learner has a clear role within the group to fulfil throughout the project and that each learner produces their own individual evidence that can be assessed independently of others' contributions across all four assessment objectives. Individual roles within a group should be clearly identified in the project proposal form. Where group projects worked well the learners were able to reflect and feedback on all individuals' contributions within the group for evidence in AO4 - Review- and this provided some excellent evidence for marks in this assessment objective.

All learners' work seen gave a rationale for their choice of project. In the best work, this went beyond the statements such as "I am interested in this" or "it links to my diploma course" and gave more detailed reasons for the choice such as links to progression to further study or future career aspirations. All learners demonstrated some ability to plan their projects in sections 3 and 4 of the project proposal form. However, milestones were often not completed and the information given regarding the main resources needed was often very basic. Learners should be supported in thinking of a range of resources such as physical, technological, human or financial and not just say books and the internet. The project must be signed off as appropriate and in doing so the centre is confirming that the project proposal will give the learner(s) scope to achieve all of the assessment objectives.

Regarding evidence seen for assessment objective 2, in the majority of learner work moderated, learners were able to demonstrate some ability to

