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Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

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Level 1 Foundation Project (P101/01)

Level 2 Higher Project (P201/01)

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Level 1: Foundation Project

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

Suitability of work submitted

Level 1 Foundation projects moderated this series were linked to Principal Learning for the current diploma lines of learning or were completed as a stand-alone project. Within the stand-alone element several projects were extensions of other routes of study such as BTECs.

At this level, the majority of projects were in the form of written reports, although several centres supported their candidates to provide artefact projects such as producing logos for music bands. It is clear from the work submitted that this type of project is very motivating for level 1 candidates.

Projects that were submitted as part of the full Diploma qualification demonstrated good links to the Principal Learning of the relevant line of learning. Most of the projects submitted this series were original, interesting and varied in terms of topic investigated. Stand-alone projects were equally interesting and varied with a wide range of topics being covered by candidates.

Generally, the guidance given by centres to candidates was seen to be clear and constructive.

The most successful projects at level 1 were based on the selection of a research question, commission or a design brief that generated the evidence requirements across all four assessment objectives. In projects that did not ask a question and gave a title, for example "What qualifications do I need to be a nursery nurse?", there was very little opportunity to carry out the research that resulted in any alternative views being brought forward to generate sufficient evidence to develop AO3; this also impacted on the evidence requirements for AO2.

Very few centres provided group projects in this series at level 1.Where group projects were submitted the best projects gave individual responsibilities for candidates within a group such as ownership of specific project objectives that sat underneath the main project title, commission or design brief. This ensured that each candidate within a group could provide their own individual evidence within their group project.

For some group work there were issues for candidates regarding accessing the full range of marks across all assessment objectives. Group projects need to have sufficient scope to allow all group members to generate the required evidence to meet the assessment criteria for each assessment objective. Assessors marking group work must ensure that the objectives for each candidate's project are linked to their role and research should be focused on their particular task, allowing the candidate to generate sufficient evidence across all assessment objectives.

Candidate Performance

The Level 1 Foundation Project qualification requires candidates to select and plan a Project. Candidates 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. The candidates need to ensure they review their project and their own performance.

It was pleasing to see that most projects at this level were all submitted with a project proposal form and an activity log on the appropriate Edexcel paperwork. However, some centres were awarding marks in the higher mark bands where evidence was brief and not fully developed. Centres that demonstrated some internal standardisation of assessor marks tended to show more accurate assessment strategies.

For AO1, all candidates were able to select a project topic. Better projects identified a question, commission 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 in section 3 reflects the 60 Guided Learning Hours allocated to this qualification. In many of the projects sampled this series this aspect was very limited and this hindered candidates from accessing the higher mark band. The completion of milestones was also limited; centre assessors are advised to ensure these sections of the project proposal form are fully completed. It is necessary for centres to support candidates in thinking through section 3 on their project proposal form and then completing this appropriately in order to be able to demonstrate that they have attempted to follow their agreed plan for their project completion making justifiable changes where necessary.

A small number of group work projects were seen this series. Whilst this is entirely acceptable, centres are advised to ensure that each candidate has a clear role within the group to fulfill throughout the project and that each candidate 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. The objectives should be set in accordance to the task the individual is undertaking within the project.

The majority of the projects seen this series provided a rationale for the choice of their project although this could have been in greater depth in some instances. Candidates should be encouraged to include a range of resources such as physical, technological, human or financial required to support the project outcomes. Centre assessors should ensure the project is signed off confirming that the scope of the project allows the candidates to generate the evidence requirements across all of the assessment objectives.

For AO2, candidates were able to demonstrate some ability to obtain information, although, in the weaker candidates' work, this was not always relevant to the project title. Candidates need to be supported at this level in choosing appropriate evidence to complete their intended project outcomes. In the main, evidence of the relevance of secondary sources of data was limited. Candidates found it challenging to comment on this aspect.

Further support and guidance needs to be given to candidates to enable them to achieve this. This can be done by showing how the information would be relevant to the project title or by stating the benefit of the sources to the development of their projects.
The marking grid distinguishes between the 'range of sources' and 'types of information'. This aspect was leniently assessed by centres and some candidates were awarded marks in mark band 2 whereas the evidence supported marks in mark band 1. Centres are advised that the weaker candidates 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 1. In this series, level 1 candidates showed less ability to use primary data. Centres need to consider supporting candidates to do this as it can support marks awarded for AO2.

AO3 has the highest weighting of marks for the Foundation Project. Some candidates performed poorly in light of the evidence submitted for this assessment objective. In order to award marks in mark band 2, candidates are required to develop their project based on the research findings and show some understanding of the topic, concluding with their answer to the research question. In many of the projects seen, assessors had awarded marks in mark band 2 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. Where candidates choose Artefact as their intended project outcome most work seen would benefit from clearer and more specific evidence that shows how the final artefact was developed and reasons for choice of, for example, materials, colours and designs. The best Artefact projects gave solid reasons for the final design choice and evidence that alternative designs were considered.

For AO4, candidates are required to generate a review of the project. Performance in the assessment objective was limited. Overall, all candidates found it challenging to meet the requirements of the assessment grid fully. In the main, the evidence generated by candidates was insufficient to meet the full requirements of the mark

band 2. In many of the projects seen candidates 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 candidates to set realistic achievable objectives for their project in the project proposal form, giving them scope to fully develop the review, including giving clear ideas for follow up work to access the full range of marks in the marking grid.

Assessment

Generally, centres demonstrated a good level of understanding of the assessment requirements. However, there were examples in this series of all the assessment objectives being awarded marks generously. Centre assessors are advised to check and refer to the marking grid in the foundation project specification for the evidence requirements of each mark band before awarding marks against the evidence submitted by each candidate.

The majority of centres used the correct teacher assessment form to give feedback to the candidates 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 mark for independent learning; for example, "4 + 1" on the candidate record sheet.

Best assessment practice was evident where centres implemented internal standardisation of assessment awards to ensure that marks awarded were supported by the candidate evidence seen. This is particularly important where more than one assessor was involved in the delivery and assessment of the qualification. However, in a minority of cases internal moderation processes failed to result in necessary changes being made to marks awarded by centres.

Centre Performance

The required number of project samples needed for moderation was submitted by most centres in this series. However, there were some issues with project samples. Firstly, some centres did not submit the highest and lowest scoring candidates work. More importantly, some centres did not include a completed Edexcel Online Mark Submission Screen print out (EDI) indicating the mark submitted for each candidate by the centre assessor. Centres are advised to ensure these issues are addressed before submitting projects for moderation, to avoid the delay in the moderation process.

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 timescales and milestones sections. Documentation for the projects is downloadable from the Project website. Centres are asked to ensure that both the candidate and the centre assessor sign the candidate record sheet at the front of the candidate work. Annotation of the evidence submitted by candidates was limited. Assessors are advised to annotate the evidence with the assessment objective and mark band. Feedback to candidates was comprehensive; however marks for independence need to be justified by the assessor across all of the assessment objectives.

Level 2: Higher Project

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

Suitability of work submitted

The Higher Project qualification requires that candidates submit evidence for four assessment objectives. Candidates 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 in order to complete their project outcome. The candidates 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 to complete that requires research to take place that is relevant to the project outcome.

For AO1 candidates 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 candidates 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 candidates need to demonstrate that they have gathered and used resources that are appropriate to their project title and these resources should be clearly identified in a bibliography that would allow the sources to be fully retrievable. Resources should be relevant to the project objectives. Candidates should be encouraged to comment on the reliability of their sources.

For AO3 the candidates need to develop and realise their intended project outcome. 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 some understanding of the topic and some evidence of alternative points of view / design should be seen. The resultant work should be logically sequenced and show coherence.

AO4 requires candidates 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 / design brief / commission for the candidate to investigate and or make and ones that also gave scope for argument and counter-argument or discussion of choices for designs / scenery / performances. The least successful titles at this level were those that give a statement to investigate, such as 'what qualifications do I need to work in IT?' Such titles did not allow candidates to focus their research skills on the development of an alternative argument or opinion. In some centres' work, the project titles given prohibited the candidates from fully addressing the assessment objectives, particularly with regard to AO3.

Many candidates that are submitting their project work alongside Diploma studies tend to be rather restrictive in their project title choices, staying safely within the scope of subject matter directly relevant to their principal learning units. However, it is pleasing to report that in this moderation series, where candidates were submitting work for the higher project as a stand-alone qualification, a very interesting range of successful project titles were seen that spanned across numerous curriculum areas and areas of candidates interests.

It is particularly worth noting that there was an increase this series in the use of artefact and performance project outcomes that have obviously motivated and engaged candidates throughout.

Where candidates carried out their project as part of group work, although some projects did demonstrate individual development, the majority did not have sufficient individual responsibilities in the process to provide evidence that allowed them to access the highest marks in mark band 2. Some design project work contained evidence that gave account of the design process but did not address the actual research project outcome as given in the project proposal form.

Candidate Performance

As at all levels with the Project qualifications, regarding the written report format, this was seen to be most successful when candidates 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, candidates 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 candidate carries out a review of their research sources and then enters into a discussion, using their sources, to report on their project question.

The most successful artefact projects were those in which the plans and design were clearly relevant to the initial question and objectives on the project proposal form. Also, where candidates took time to consider and document ideas for alternative design choices and reasons why these were not carried forward to the final project outcome.

Less successful design projects contained information about the design process but did not show how this was relevant to the brief posed at the outset. Artefact Projects need to be supplied with information regarding relevant research sources and how these are used to develop the final outcome.

Also, regarding the choice of a performance outcome, this outcome needs to be supported by candidate evidence that demonstrates how the final piece has been developed, possibly through evidence of rehearsals and why decisions are made for changes to the original ideas or for refinements for the final performances.

Assessment

Although most centre assessment practices are sound, some centres were seen to be awarding marks rather leniently across all four assessment objectives.

As with the Level 1 projects, some centres are awarding marks for AO1 in mark band 2 when the project proposal forms were very brief. Also, more detail is often seen to be needed in sections 3 and 4 of the project proposal form for marks in mark band 2 for AO1. Many instances were seen where sections 3 and 4 of the project proposal form were completed generically. Information about activities, timescales and resources required for the project should be relevant to the candidate's choice of project and not just lists of requirements such as 'access to the internet'.

The project proposal form is an important part of the assessment evidence and should not be completed hastily. It is recommended, where possible, that it is typed on computer, allowing the proposal form to evolve with the project. Section 3, where candidates need to give thoughtful ideas for the main activities that they need to carry out to complete their project outcome and relevant timescales, is of particular importance. Where this is completed in a non-specific and hurried manner it is not possible for the candidate to show how they have followed their agreed plan for their activities to complete their project therefore restricting access to marks in mark band 2 for AO1.

This also restricts in-depth comments being made for parts of AO4. In some proposal forms seen in his series the objectives were not always clear and measurable. Some candidates seemed unclear as to the meaning of an objective and candidates would benefit from some further guidance here before completing their proposal form.

Regarding AO2, several projects were submitted without clear bibliographies making it difficult to check and to retrieve the sources used. Where a bibliography was included it did not always contain all of the references used within the project. Some of the references included Wikipedia or search engines rather than authentic web pages, journals or books. Some of the candidates used referencing within the project and downloaded web pages that they had used instead. Most of the candidates used primary and secondary research, and where primary was used it was mainly demonstrated by the use of a questionnaire. Some candidates had written 'had a chat with …..' or 'a relative / friend told me…' rather than more solid evidence of face to face interviews such as written or recorded transcripts.

Some good practice included candidates that had included a reference table. The table format gave one column that listed the type of resources e.g. webpage, a second column that gave the full reference, a third column discussed what information had been retrieved and used within the project and a fourth column that discussed the reliability and relevance of the information.

Regarding AO3, all candidates' work seen did attempt to develop and realise their Projects. Some centres submitted extremely well thought out projects that were interesting and informative. This is to be commended.

However, in some work sampled, the evidence given for AO3 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 candidate evidence sampled lacked coherence and was restricted by numerous spelling and grammatical errors. Where candidates are working towards a design brief or commission it is important that the evidence submitted shows how the final artefact was developed and reasons for choice of, for example, materials, colours and designs is included to demonstrate the development of the outcome. The best artefact projects gave solid reasons for the final design choice and evidence that alternative designs were considered. Equally, where performance outcomes are presented, the evidence should include why the performance evolved as it did giving reasons for changes made in rehearsals, for example, and how these changes benefited the final piece.

In most candidates work seen the evidence for AO4 was seen to sit in across both mark bands. Centres need to ensure that all candidates 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. This evidence should review the project process including a review of the candidates own learning and performance, stating which objectives were or were not met and why, giving a description of skills and knowledge developed and learned during the project and also giving ideas for follow up work. Full reviews were seldom seen. Reviews can be supported by peer review where appropriate.

Centre Performance

The Level 2 Project is a qualification that attracts 60 GLH and candidates need to be given a sufficient amount of time (at least 20GLH) to develop their skills and knowledge relevant to their area of study. It is recommended that centres use at least this number of guided learning hours to actually teach the relevant research skills that the candidates will need to develop their project successfully. Some centres are still not directing the candidates to provide clear bibliographies of all sources used.

Only the minority of centres were seen to be internally standardising marks awarded by centre assessors.

There are still issues surrounding group work. Where candidates research the same project title centres must ensure that all candidates have their own individual roles and responsibilities so that they can provide individual evidence for their project process and outcome. These roles and responsibilities can be clearly demonstrated in the individual's project proposal form as discrete project objectives that sit underneath the overall group project title.

Evidence for AO4 is still seen to be weak in most cases. Although many level 2 centres do support their candidates in carrying out an oral presentation (e.g. to their peer group to tell them about their project), only a minority of centres support their candidates in using peer evaluation for some evidence towards AO4 – this is a lost opportunity.

Although an oral presentation is not a mandatory requirement for AO4 at level 2, it does provide information that can very usefully be used by the candidates in judging their own performance and how well they have managed. Where this is not conducted candidates would still benefit from a discussion with the tutor / assessor about how well they have conducted their project and, again, this information could be used for evidence towards AO4.

Best assessment practice was evident where centres implemented internal verification of assessment to ensure that marks awarded to the candidates were supported by the evidence provided by the candidates. This was particularly important where more than one assessor was involved in the delivery and assessment of the qualification or where more than 1 type of outcome was being submitted across a cohort of candidates. However, in a minority of cases, internal verification processes failed to result in necessary changes being made to marks awarded by centres although the moderation process demonstrated that these changes were necessary.

At level 2 assessors can award an extra mark for each assessment objective if the candidate has worked fairly independently. Centres are advised to justify the award of this mark; some centres just annotated +1 in the marks column.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:
http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx