

Level 3 Extended Project (CPJ3)

Summer 2008

Chief Moderator's
Report

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General Comments

Entry

The summer 2008 series was the second year of the qualification pilot and the first year in which internal moderation was implemented as the assessment method. A total of 38 centres and 828 candidates participated in the pilot, achieving an overall pass at E grade of 65.6%.

Learner Performance

The quality of projects submitted varied over a wide range. The best pieces were those in which candidates had made a clear, personal choice of project objectives. In the very best pieces of work, the objectives took the form of a research question or clearly defined practical brief. In centres where there was evidence that the objectives had been prescribed for the students (as when a large number of candidates all wrote projects a similar theme) there tended to be less evidence of personal development of ideas, and also less clarity in the way the projects were developed.

The Level 3 Extended Project contains four units: dissertation, investigation/ field study, performance and artefact. Each of these has its own, specific assessment evidence requirements. It is vitally important that centres understand and are guided by these requirements. It was very difficult to support the marks awarded in cases in which the piece had been entered into the wrong unit.

A number of projects suffered from a lack of focus. It is difficult, for example, for a project to work successfully if the candidate has simply taken exploration of a theme, rather than a specific question, as the basic objective. Some pieces of work that had been submitted for award at Level 3 looked out of place, having more in common with Level 2 outcomes, or even, in some extreme cases, Level 1.

In the best work, each learner made reference to the knowledge and skills that they hoped to improve throughout the duration of the project and the resultant written report, artefact or performance was developed in a manner that was clear for the moderator to follow. Where centres had carried out this qualification over a short period of time learners were less successful in demonstrating their development of relevant skills and knowledge. Centres are advised to implement the guided learning hours given for this qualification. In projects that demonstrated redrafting the development of the evidence for improvement of knowledge and skills was more obvious. Centres are advised to visit the Edexcel website at www.edexcel.org.uk to download the Teachers' Guide and review the options to attend INSET training.

The extended project level 3 qualification saw learners work submitted in each of the 4 units available. The standard of learner work seen was variable across all 4 units. Centres are advised to ensure that learners are supported in completing the relevant work for the selected specification.

Across all 4 units the following comments can be made for awards at the high and low grade boundaries:

In work awarded at the higher grades for level 3, learners submitted an effective and thorough research project that demonstrated highly organised and independent research skills using a wide range of critically analysed sources and analysing data effectively and applying it to good effect. Their research topic was fully explored and the complexities of it assessed. Potential problems were fully addressed and in-depth

discussion and evaluation of the project outcomes was seen. These outcomes and conclusions were clearly presented to a relevant audience and using a range of communication methods and the learners were able to demonstrate their extensive knowledge of the assessment objectives through their responses to problems and questions. The projects demonstrated that the learners had extended their knowledge in a relevant and valuable manner and the learners were able to fully justify their improvement in knowledge and skills. These learners concluded their work by giving careful thought to the original research proposal and evaluating it against a number of varied criteria.

In work awarded at the lower grades for level 3 the learners identified their project rationale and activities to be carried out in a workable plan demonstrating organisational skills and identifying possible problems and relevant solutions. They showed the ability to respond constructively to guidance given by the tutor / assessor. A range of relevant resources was used but this was limited and not always analysed for reliability and validity. Data was generated throughout the research process but the analysis was weak and not always relevant to the initial aims and objectives for the project. Bibliographies were not always submitted and if they were they showed an inconsistent approach to their referencing. Learners gave some review and reflection of the strengths and weaknesses of their research project but this was not explored in depth. The presentation of the outcomes was carried out but was not fully explained or assessed.

Again, some work submitted was evidence that was being used to fulfil assessment requirements for other specifications. Where this was the case it was often difficult to discern what evidence was actually relevant to the extended project criteria. Centre assessors are advised to fully annotate learners work to identify where evidence has been marked against specific extended project assessment objectives and mark bands.

Awarding

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.

The grade boundaries for the June 2008 Examination determined by the awarding committee for the series, together with a full listing of the unit results is reproduced in a Appendix to this report.

Administration

Most centres met the deadline for dispatch of candidates' work for moderation and supplied the necessary documentation. However some samples arrived well after the due date.

The availability of the online mark submission screens to selected centre administrators and the automated sample selection procedure, which did not request the highest and lowest samples, caused some difficulties. However, most centres were able to overcome these problems. Centres are reminded that mark submission for all Project Qualifications will be via Edexcel Online and not OPTEMs. Also, the highest and lowest candidates must always be provided along with a full sample of 10 candidates (if the entry volume is more than 10 candidates) even when these are not

identified online as part of the requested sample. Guidance on the submission of marks and samples for moderation can be found at www.edexcel.org.uk

Centres that submitted DVDs as learner evidence were most successful where the learner clearly identified themselves by candidate number at the beginning of the DVD and then outlined their individual roles in the overall project. Where learners were not clearly identified it was difficult to agree assessor marks. Most centres submitting DVDs or CDs used marker pens to identify them. A few centres submitted DVD/CDs in unlabelled boxes and did not identify clearly which candidates were performing/presenting at the start of each individual recording which caused problems during the moderation process. Centres are advised to use the IT programme applications listed on the 'moderators' toolkit' when making recordings or submitting work via DVD/CD which is available online.

Not all centres included copies of the Project Proposal Form. This form is intended to be used as a throughout the development of the project to record key stages in planning and development.

Where a group project was submitted as evidence, it was often difficult to ascertain the actual contribution of individual learners to the activity and more difficult to agree assessor marks throughout the moderation process and, therefore, these projects were intended to be awarded at the lower grades. It is essential that centres support learners in identifying individual roles within group projects. Learners can then be encouraged to identify their own role in group projects by setting individual aims and objectives that can then be commented on as successful or not. These need to be included in the learners Project Proposal Form.

Most centres included a completed Candidate Record Card for each of the candidates in the sample. However, candidate details were not always given in full and a breakdown of marks and comments were not always provided. These forms are available to download from the Edexcel website.

Internal Moderation

In some cases it was clear that internal moderation was not carried out effectively before submitting marks to Edexcel, where accuracy of internal assessment varied significantly between assessors within the same centre.

Unit P301: Dissertation

A total of 373 candidates were entered for this unit, achieving an overall pass at E grade of 77.7%.

Learner Performance

At Level 3, substantial independent student research should underpin the project process. A range of resources should be used - ideally, not all web-based. Weaker projects at Level 3 used a limited number (5 - 6 sources), whereas at the upper end there were projects containing extensive bibliographies listing upwards of 20 carefully selected sources. Occasionally, the bibliographies were so extensive that doubt was raised in the moderator's mind as to whether they had all been used. Here, it is worth noting that the AO2 criteria relate to *use* of resources.

There was room for improvement with the formatting of research material. Candidates should be encouraged to write *reviews* of their research, rather than simply to include pages of printed out source material. For learners unable to achieve this, highlighted comments in the source material did at least provide some evidence of an attempt to select relevant material. However, where many such pages were inserted, the project suffered from a lack of structure. Candidates should be encouraged to select *relevant* material.

Candidates who used secondary sources or data did not always show evidence either of having evaluated its reliability, or of being selective in picking the most relevant material. There some evidence of good practice with use of references and the construction of bibliographies although this is an area in which almost all candidates could improve.

Only at the upper end was evidence seen of analytical use of research material. Candidates should be encouraged to build arguments based on research material, especially in cases where the material addresses controversial themes. It is helpful for both the learner and the assessor if the project report contains a section of organised, reviewed source material following by a development section exploring the learner's own response to that material. The development section should be an account of the 'critical journey' the learner has followed whilst working on their project i.e. giving details of key arguments, ideas, or crucial decisions taken.

In the best projects seen, there was evidence of careful, independent, critical research using a range of sources and exploring a variety of perspectives. High quality research then served as a platform for informative, well structured, logically organised discussion, in which the learner's own point of view was put forward, supported by lines of argument, and defended against objections. High achieving learners almost always gave careful thought to the central research question in their project and often explored this in depth in an introductory section. They also rounded off their dissertations with conclusions which both recapped the main lines of argument and contained a reflective study of the learner's own journey of discovery.

Suitability of Work Submitted

In some cases, projects were submitted about which there was a question of overlap with other qualifications. In the most clear-cut cases, candidates themselves stated that the work had been done as part of another course. Whilst work done as part of other courses may serve as a foundation for the Project, at all levels, there were cases in which candidates whose work showed little evidence of having been done

specifically with the Project specification requirements in mind. These turned out to be of a low quality. Specifically, candidates who had not planned from the outset with the Project assessment objectives as a focus, produced work in which it was difficult for higher levels of attainment to be accessed.

Assessment Evidence

Remarks from centre assessors are most beneficial when closely linked to the marking criteria. In projects where extensive, wide-ranging material is included, centre assessors are encouraged to provide annotation locating key sections and justifying the award of marks.

Project proposal forms tended often to be very brief. Given the vital importance of a clear, well considered rationale and well defined project objectives, candidates should be encouraged to give more thought to this section of their work. Strong candidates often tended to include supplementary planning sheets as evidence of thought about project objectives.

Activity logs may also contain helpful indications of the development of the learner's thought processes. They need not be lengthy. The strongest seen this year gave clear indications of what activities were engaged in at which stages, and, most usefully, explained the reasons behind the decisions the learner had taken about the development of their project.

Marking should show when bonus marks for independent study have been awarded.

Formatting of Project Outcomes

Formatting of assessment evidence was variable. Good outcomes were well structured with clear demarcation of different sections which corresponded well with the assessment objectives. Some project work submitted had clearly been the work of able students, but they and their projects would have benefited from clear guidance about an appropriate format for a dissertation. In some cases, extremely lengthy extracts from sources were included without clear referencing. In cases like this, it is very hard to give the candidate credit, as the provenance of the material was in question.

Careful editing of project outcomes is beneficial to the moderation process, as well as beneficial to the learners' own evaluation process. The best projects were those in which there was a clear central idea which was explored throughout and in which all the written material remained relevant.

Submission in plastic folders is to be discouraged

Presentations

The evidence for presentations was very variable in quality. The best projects contained a signed mark sheet with comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the presentation. Less helpful were those mark sheets which simply made generic comments, not necessarily linked to the marking criteria, about the quality of the presentation. In some cases, doubt was raised in the moderator's mind as to whether a presentation had taken place. In this context, there is some value in the submission by candidates of their PowerPoint slides, though they should be encouraged to put 6 slides onto one page for reasons of economy. Centres should make use of a presentation assessment grid, such as the one in the Teacher's Guide, to provide both clear supporting evidence for the award of marks and the signatures of (ideally, 2) adults who had witnessed the presentation.

P302: Investigation/Field Study

A total of 37 candidates were entered for this unit, achieving an overall pass at E grade of 80.4%.

The number entries for this unit was relatively low; with the majority of these opting for Field Study/questionnaire based research rather than scientific investigation. Centres were clearly divided into those who had read and correctly interpreted the expectations and aims of the EP and those whose work submitted showed sparse evidence of the skills being assessed at this level. Several projects seen were not of 120gh and some work showed little evidence of centre support or skills teaching. The correct balance needs to be struck between directive and facilitative tutoring, but significant input is needed at the start of the process for all learners.

Unit 2 specifically demands primary research data acquisition and analysis, else there is little differentiation with the Dissertation. Where data was obtained, sample sizes were often minimal and analysis basic, with little or no evidence of reflection either on the process of collection or significance of results obtained. If only minimal data is collected and the emphasis of the research is in secondary sources, it may be better to enter work in Unit 1.

In AO2, secondary research and literature to support the primary data is also, expected in Unit 2 and bibliographies should contain a sizeable number of sources from a range of media (not just websites). Each source must be fully credited and some analysis of relevance credibility authenticity and usefulness to the project is needed. Sources should be fully referenced in the text, so that it is apparent where each image or piece of information has originated.

If practical work or surveys are undertaken, it is expected that some form of Risk Assessment (referring to equipment or even the safety aspects of working in isolated or 1:1 environments) should be included.

It would be good to see more evidence of the investigative process, in the form of images or notes from decision making meetings logged at various stages.

Projects completed over a short timescale (weeks rather than months) tended to be unable to show the development and iterative process in methods or ideas required at this level.

In general, unless a narrow, focused objective with clear rationale was chosen, learners tended to score poorly especially in AO3 and the consequent lack of structure impacted on AO1. The best projects seen were strongly personally motivated and highly focussed, perhaps in the form of a controversial question.

P303: Performance

A total of 81 candidates were entered for this unit, achieving an overall pass at E grade of 81 %.

Work presented for moderation covered a wide range of performance styles and art forms; there was a sense of balance between drama, music and dance. Only a few centres misinterpreted the requirement of the performance unit; offering PowerPoint presentations as a performance outcome.

There was an overall sense of the performance work being an extension to core learning programmes and covered areas of study across a range of subjects and curriculum areas. Some centres offered performance outcomes where the performing arts were the core subject areas. Both these options are viable, and the sample seen at moderation suggests it can be a successful outcome across the full extent of curriculum areas.

Where learners identified focused titles or research questions the performance work benefited from key performance related considerations being included in the early development of the work; offering greater opportunity for syntheses. Such considerations included target audience, genre and style of piece and clearer links to practitioners' rehearsal techniques.

Where centres submitted performance work on DVD there was mixed practice regarding candidate identification. Good practice included recordings having centre number and candidate numbers written on the DVD, and learners introducing themselves to camera at the start of the performance with name, candidate number and role played.

Group work and individual projects were offered. Where individuals had clear roles and responsibilities within group projects this was helpful and where projects had done this as a key part of completing the project proposal form it seemed to be a more meaningful division of labour; with all group members understanding how each role affected the other throughout the key stages of the work. Where the individual role was the key focus for the presentation this also offered clear opportunity for a teacher assessor to differentiate within a group project. Teacher witness statements were useful when used in this context. Where more general comments were used, for example, candidate X is a hard worker etc., this was less helpful to the moderation process.

Where developmental activity had practically taken place, as required by assessment objective 3, there was mixed practice as to how this was evidenced. Some candidates recorded it in their activity log, others described the activity as part of their written report and others did not refer to it directly; although it was evident from the work produced. For example there were projects that demonstrated thorough preparation and rehearsal by candidates although this may not be evident from the written work as clearly as by watching the work. This is a consideration for moderator training.

The referencing of sources used covered a range of attentiveness; however the majority of candidates did this effectively. The overall presentation of the work was also across a wide range, but again with the majority giving this due attention.

P304: Artefact

A total of 135 candidates were entered for this unit, achieving an overall pass at E grade of 45.3 %.

The remit of the Artefact unit is extremely broad and varied and the moderation team for the Level 3 Extended Project was drawn from a variety of disciplines and experience. The range of artefacts presented for moderation included work realised using traditional painting and fine art work, film making, illustration, photography, graphic design including computer generated and manipulated imagery, website design and computer programmes for stock control in the small business.

Suitability of approach/topic/titles

A large number of the projects submitted for moderation themes and proposals were inappropriate for the Extended Project at Level 3. These often used 'closed questions' that did not allow for critical or creative thinking or set scenarios that required minimal research and investigation. In a number of cases candidates had failed to produce a sufficiently detailed proposal to address the criteria and the person responsible for monitoring the project proposals in centres had not challenged these.

Some work seemed to have been produced for other qualifications so that while the production of work was at an acceptable standard, the fundamental criteria that distinguish the Extended Project were not addressed.

Where the objective of the project is to produce an artefact then a predominant feature of the work should be research and investigation of media, materials, techniques, technology or processes necessary to produce an appropriate artefact. In a significant number of the projects sampled, this was not the case. In many cases candidates appeared not to have adequate levels of skill or understanding to produce practical aspects of project work at Level 3 standard.

The strongest projects were often produced in response to an art commission or design brief. They demonstrated a clear understanding of what was required to meet the criteria for the Extended Project and an awareness of design constraints and vocational or professional context.

For future submissions, centres may wish to re-visit the specification to ascertain which is the most appropriate unit under which the projects should be submitted.

Centre performance

Project Design and Planning

In some centres, the rationale section of the project proposal was not well argued and this resulted in candidates not having the opportunity to develop or demonstrate clear objectives or present the underpinning reasons for the project.

There were instances where candidates had worked to a centre-devised brief that restricted opportunities for them to produce personal and individual work to match the higher mark band criteria. In some cases work was shared or common to groups of candidates indicating minimal individual involvement or decision-making.

In some projects candidates stated their intention to produce either an essay or short essay. This clearly did not meet the spirit or the criteria of the Extended Project.

Appendix I - June 2008 Grade Boundaries

Please note that the data in this document applies to the June 2008 examination only.

Unit P301: Dissertation

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	U
Mark Boundary	41	36	31	26	21	0
Cumulative % of Cands	18.2	30.6	46.6	61.4	77.7	100
UMS	20	16	12	8	4	1

Unit P302: Investigation/Field Study

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	U
Mark Boundary	41	36	31	26	22	0
Cumulative % of Cands	17.4	30.4	54.3	71.7	80.4	100
UMS	20	16	12	8	4	1

Unit P303: Performance

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	U
Mark Boundary	41	36	31	26	21	0
Cumulative % of Cands	4.5	17.1	29.7	49.5	73	100
UMS	20	16	12	8	4	1

Unit P304: Artefact

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	U
Mark Boundary	41	36	31	26	21	0
Cumulative % of Cands	6	11.4	16.8	29.9	45.3	100
UMS	20	16	12	8	4	1

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