

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL PROJECT QUALIFICATION

Paper 9980/01
Project

Key messages

Entries in this session saw a broad range of topics being enthusiastically explored by candidates.

It is important to submit the key documents in the correct format – these are a log, a bibliography, a research report and the Project Proposal Form. The research report must be submitted in MS Word format. It is not necessary for candidates to submit any other material, such as recordings or transcripts of interviews, or copies of questionnaires used.

Comments on specific assessment objectives

AO1 Research

Several projects used a statement rather than a question as their title; this had a tendency to lead to a narrative focus in the report. Using a question encourages a candidate to interrogate their research in pursuit of an answer; this tends to lead to a project which has a more analytical and evaluative flavour and opens up the full range of the assessment criteria. In the most successful projects, after the candidate had stated their question they justified it, often by linking it to their interest in the topic; doing so in some detail clarifies how the question has guided the candidate's research in their report and helps to explain their choice of research methods. Some projects did use appropriate methods, but without any reasoning for this decision they could not access the higher mark levels. Others used a wide variety of methods in the same project with some showing clear justification for their decisions and others being less explicit in this area. The most successful reports also demonstrated design and planning from the initial idea to the final report by, for example, including a helpful contents page. Design and planning can also be demonstrated in the log using a timeline to explain how the research conducted or sources read helped the project evolve. The most successful logs gave a clear picture of the candidate's journey; some were simply a list of dates and what was done, without any evidence of impact or development and were brief. Some logs gave extensive detail on the teaching and meetings which took place before the final question was established, but little on what happened after that. Others detailed many meetings between the candidate and the supervisor or subject specialists whose input seemed to be the key for whatever the candidate did next. Some logs provided extensive detail on sources; the best using this information to comment on the source's impact on the direction of the project.

AO1 Analysis

The best projects demonstrated excellent analysis of the candidate's sources and research findings in their own words. This approach also encouraged a consistent focus on the research question as they were able to link their analysis to logical conclusions and so build a clear argument. This was then drawn together in an answer to the question which was logical and reflective of the evidence used. Some projects were not so coherent and it was not always easy to pick out an overall answer or to be clear when the analysis was that of the candidate rather than the wording of a source; to reach the higher assessment levels there needs to be a clear distinction between the voice of the candidate and the text of sources used. In some projects there was extensive evidence of research but the content was presented in a narrative rather than an analytical way.

AO1 Evaluation

The best projects contained detailed and insightful discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the research methods used; a candidate might do this by giving examples of how their methods had supported

their research, or they might expose limitations caused by data gaps their research had revealed or inadequacies in their methods. To move up the assessment levels it is important to give detail on both strengths and limitations. It is also important to evaluate the sources used, perhaps by discussing their intellectual rigour or by commenting on the strengths and limitations of arguments made. In this session only very occasional evidence of evaluation of sources was seen.

AO2 Reflection

The best reports reflected on the overall strengths and limitations of the project; this might be linked to the impact of the range of evidence available and successes or challenges the candidate encountered. Again, to reach the higher assessment levels material on both strengths and limitations is needed. Reflection on the impact the project had on the candidate, in terms of their views at the start and end of their journey, is also important. Some reports gave insightful detail whilst others did not deal with this aspect at all or focused solely on the acquisition of skills. There is no requirement to explore what future research might focus on.

AO3 Communication

The most successful reports communicated well throughout by using a clear structure; this demonstrated the candidate's mastery of their topic as well as guiding the reader effectively, particularly in more technical projects. Most candidates used subject-specific terminology accurately and effectively in their report, enhancing its overall quality. A good number utilised appropriate methods to present data and then interpreted it in their own words; it is more than a repetition of the data which allows a candidate to move up the assessment levels. The most successful reports used an appropriate form of citation and referencing throughout to show the source of their ideas and information. This helped them make clear the difference between material taken from sources and their own analysis, and would allow the reader to find the source the candidate has referred to easily if they chose to do so. The best reports were accompanied by a bibliography which included all the sources used in an appropriate and consistent format; for web-based resources this would include an accurate and working hyperlink as well as the date on which the source was accessed. In some instances, there was no clear link between sources in the bibliography and report, in other instances the bibliography was brief and inconsistent in the amount of information it contained.