



Projects

Foundation and Higher

OCR Level 1 Foundation **H854** and Level 2 Higher Project **H855**

OCR Report to Centres June 2016

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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H854 Level 1 Foundation Project

General Comments:

There was a small entry for this specification this year. Most candidates appear to have been entered appropriately, although some of the more able could have achieved a grade at Level 2 and centres should consider the higher level for these candidates.

Many topics were interesting, had clearly been chosen by the candidates and there was some evidence of good planning. Candidates had identified projected dates on their plans, although there was limited evidence in some cases of whether these were adhered to or missed. Projects were generally well focused although there were still some which tended to be a collection of information about a very broad topic. The more able candidates had refined their topic into a fairly manageable question which they then referred to in their conclusion, sometimes linking their findings to specific pieces of evidence.

The use of project management strategies at the planning stage, such as Gantt charts, was very valuable for candidates. There was also some evidence of action planning throughout some projects, which was also advantageous. Candidates have now started to identify their sources much more effectively, giving a clearer picture of how these have been used.

Project Progression Records were used much more effectively than in previous series, although candidate's comments were sometimes limited to what they had done. It is possible (and beneficial) if this document is used reflectively. An electronic version of this is available and will expand as it is completed. Candidates who chose this approach did produce some good evidence of Assessment Objectives (AOs) 3 and 4.

It is always encouraging to see primary research at this level and there was also some evidence of alternative research methods, such as interviews and contact with specialists, being used. The presentation of findings could be more neatly presented though, and candidates who produce graphs, charts and tables do need to recognise that labelling is helpful. Some good data had been generated by the use of questionnaires and surveys, but was not always used effectively. The use of secondary sources is still a concern. Referencing is often omitted from work and bibliographies are not well constructed, making it difficult to see how secondary material has been used. This is an area for development at this level.

Good reflection should focus primarily on the relevance and value of the process, which means some consideration should be given to all stages of development and not just on how good the outcome is. Comments such as what candidates would do given another chance are not really helpful although it does show some learning.

H855 Level 2 Higher Project

General Comments:

There was wide range of topics chosen by candidates this year and the evidence for their choices was generally good. While candidates often choose a topic which interests them, there is some evidence of candidates having a somewhat restricted choice, often where completion of the Project is linked to another subject area. Centres are reminded that there must be clear evidence that the candidates have been allowed a completely free choice.

Most candidates had done primary research as well as using secondary material and it is encouraging to see a wider variety of research methods. Good use was made of structured interviews and feedback from a range of sources. A number of questionnaires and surveys were poorly constructed and lacked profiling questions. There was also some evidence generated by such research which was not well used or, in some, cases, ignored.

There was some excellent use of project management techniques and tools, such as Gantt charts, which resulted in a clear focus on the process, but there are still candidates who focus too strongly on content/topic. There is still a misconception on the part of candidates and supervisors that the project is an 'essay' or 'coursework' and the resulting projects often have insufficient evidence to support marks in the highest mark band, particularly for AO3. There was also a significant number of centres who did not provide Project Progression Records and it must be noted that this document is a compulsory part of each individual submission.

Some centres had helpfully annotated Unit Recording Sheets to show where evidence for the AOs could be found and made useful comments which indicated how and why marks had been awarded. Without these, it is difficult for moderators to see the rationale behind the marking. It is also recommended that the supervisors annotate the actual projects. It is also helpful to see evidence of internal moderation.

Project Progression Records had generally been well used and the use of the electronic version was of benefit to candidates who had used this to record their reflections and next steps. Some centres encouraged the use of a reflective diary or project log which provided excellent evidence for AO3 and AO4.

Evaluation skills improve year on year. Many candidates commented on how well they had planned and managed the process and a number also carried out a skills audit which allowed them to explain which skills they felt had been enhanced by undertaking the project work. It would have been helpful if candidates had also evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of their research methods. There were still some very descriptive evaluations which gave an account of what was done and what would be done differently given a second chance.

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