



Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

January 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
Extended Projects Qualification
in Performance (P301) Paper 01

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Dissertation - January 2019

Student Performance

Many students chose relevant, thought-provoking subjects. The quality of work at the upper end of the range continued to show impressive maturity, and it was clear that the students had profited from the opportunity to engage in extended, independent research. Even at the lower end of the range, there was evidence that students understood what is expected in an academic dissertation, with appropriate techniques such as referencing and bibliography construction being attempted, albeit that the level of sophistication of the writing was not as high.

Suitability of work submitted

There continue to be encouraging signs, with separate written reviews of reasonable quality and presentation slides included as a matter of course, for example.

The most common problem remains the choice of question, with too many questions giving little chance of debate.

Students would benefit from knowing that the EPQ comes with a word length guide and, whilst this is not a limit, it is part of the skill of writing an EPQ to be able to summarise, edit and cut to present the argument accordingly.

Assessment Evidence

AO1

This section was generally well done although, as in previous years, there were large discrepancies in the amount of detail students included in the logs. The best were reflective and thoughtful but many students still wrote short, basic logs listing activities completed rather than reflecting on the problems encountered and solutions found. There has been an increase in the use of proformas to provide guidance to students and these can assist students in making more reflective entries.

The Project Proposal Form was generally well completed and in general this contained plenty of detail. There was again some tendency to use a 'to what extent...' approach, which may unhelpfully lessen the depth of participation in debate.

Some titles were too broad or overly ambitious, thus limiting the scope for the clear lines of reasoned debate expected in AO3. This was particularly apparent with students working at the lower grades who would have benefited from more guidance.

A02

Although many centres had clearly taught their students to reference properly and write thoughtful, considered Literature Reviews, there remained some confusion in this area. Some students did not present a Literature Review, although some attempt at source evaluation was common. Weaker projects explored the utility, rather than reliability, of sources. Only general comments were given, or extensive reasons for using resources without any reference to reliability.

Bibliographies were generally well done, although once again a surprisingly large number of students did not insert access dates and weaker projects simply listed website links. Research and referencing was sometimes non-standard. Students could be encouraged to look at the helpful computer packages and tools which will help them create Bibliographies. Alternatively, there is a 'quote' button on Google Scholar which automatically creates appropriate citations.

There were a number of different styles of bibliography, some of which did not appear to conform to academic standards. A common mistake was to number all references without the use of a footnote and then enter these in the bibliography, so although the student may only have used 6 resources, it appeared as 32 in the bibliography.

On the whole, there was limited synthesis of sources with students sometimes interpreting the literature review as an invitation to review sources one at a time. An integrated review, organised chronologically or thematically, is preferable.

A03

In general, this strand was undertaken well by most students and there were attempts made to develop lines of reasoned argument. The conclusion should be a summary rather than a continuation of the discussion as was seen in a number of scripts.

The length of the dissertations varied, some being overly long and others too short; it was useful when students were encouraged to show the word count.

As in previous years, some pieces were overly factual, being more of a report than a sustained defence of a point of view with consideration of counter-arguments.

A number did not really consider counter-arguments and others did not present a personal point of view. It may help to remind students that there should be a clearly discernible line of argument that runs through their dissertation.

Some mid-range projects proceeded by weighing pros and cons; this is a step forward from a merely narrative or descriptive response, but it still falls short of the development of a line of argument with systematic consideration of counter-argument that is expected in Mark Band 3.

AO4

Almost all students seemed to have delivered a Presentation, generally very well done by all accounts. Most Centres had included the slides. Sometimes the marks for the Presentations did not tally with the final AO4 grade. As in previous years, some students had merged their evaluation section with their conclusion or avoided a written section altogether and made some points on their slides but the majority produced separate evaluation sections.

Given the specificity of the AO4 criteria, it is difficult to justify the award of a high mark band 3 position without very extensive commentary from the teacher-assessor or a detailed written evaluation of the project process by the student.

In support of a position in Mark Band 3, review evidence should include detailed evaluation of aspects of the project process such as the extent to which aims were met, limitations, possible alterations and lessons learned from the research process.

Generic comments are not as effective as those which contain specific details about elements within the project that could have been improved.

Centre Performance

Most samples were well constructed and received on time. Some centres failed to include the top and bottom marked piece (these should always be sent, even if not requested as part of the specified sample).

Internal standardisation did not always take place. It is important that the process of internal standardization should lead to an understanding of the marking grids that is shared by all assessors.

