

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2010

Extended Projects

Projects Level 3 Coursework

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Extended Projects Qualification

Level 3 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 could be subject to change.

Level 3 Unit 1: Dissertation

Learner Performance

Work across the full range of the available marks was seen. At the upper end, material of impressive maturity was in evidence. At the lower end, it was difficult to detect many elements that would warrant being recognised as work appropriate to a Level 3 qualification.

In general, the ability to use an appropriately academic style when writing remains a very good indicator of the quality of the work. Amongst weaker projects, the writing tended to be of a 'stream of consciousness' variety, showing little evidence of drafting or re-drafting, and little attempt at appropriate structure. In contrast, stronger pieces were marked by careful expression, a suitably formal style and had clearly been very carefully polished.

There was some evidence of repetition, typically amongst some of the weaker projects, where sections of the literature review were repeated in the discussion. There was also a trend towards very lengthy reports by some of the more able candidates. Here, it is crucial to remember that candidates are being assessed on the quality and relevance of their writing. Whilst highly technical topics may require a greater depth of discussion, many of the pieces of work seen would have been stronger had there been clear evidence of more ruthless editing.

Plagiarised material emerged this year as an element in a significant minority of cases. This was often, though not always, found in the lower marked pieces of work in a sample. It typically took the form of sections of material which had been taken from websites and pasted into projects in a context which made it appear that it was the candidate's own writing. It is clear that candidates need to be taught much more clearly about the appropriate use of source material and also that centres need to be more rigorous in checking candidate's work for obvious signs of plagiarism prior to submission. In many cases, plagiarised material stood out on account of the unusually sophisticated style of writing or referencing or sudden change in meaning from one section of the project to the next. These cases could be readily detected by typing in a few sample sentences to a search engine.

The quality of work at the upper end continues to impress. The quality of writing, depth of research and the level of sustained argument and counter-argument led to work of impressive maturity. Many candidates had clearly 'owned' their project and produced work which showed impressive dedication and made clear that they had had a very positive experience of the independent learning process. There was much highly original work, demonstrating the impressive potential the qualification has to enable able learners to escape from the confines of prescribed assignments, and pursue work which connects to their personal interests and aspirations in a way which demonstrates depth, creativity, academic rigour and a capacity to transcend individual subject boundaries.

Suitability of Work Submitted

The recommended length for dissertations is 5000-6000 words. They usually consist of a report containing abstract, introduction, literature review, discussion, conclusion, evaluation and bibliography. Candidates are also required to submit their project proposal forms and activity logs. Candidates should choose their own research

question, which can be on a topic of their own choosing, which should normally complement their other areas of study, and involve significant extension, either via development of new skills, or through broadening perspectives, or through deepening understanding.

Some centres allowed learners to follow titles that forced them down the road of producing essentially factual reports, which, no matter how well researched, prevented the higher AO3 marks being obtained. This tended to happen in cases where the question invited a descriptive answer, rather than an analytical response which included elements of judgement, argument and counter-argument. As a very rough rule, 'why?' is a better question than 'what?' or 'how?'

Centres which had more success in accessing the higher mark bands were those which encouraged candidates to select research questions that were appropriate in terms of the sophistication of the ideas being addressed (with a clear base of Level 3 material being used) and with scope for the development of argument and counter-argument. Often, this involved a philosophical or ethical exploration of a controversial issue, with the deeper aspects of the research question being probed using analysis and synthesis of different subject approaches.

Some project work seen had the feeling of being too similar to exercises which could have been done as a coursework assignment for a single subject (e.g. questions which could have been set as a history essay). In these cases, it is important that there is clear evidence that candidates have extended themselves outside the boundaries of a single subject, either by a more in-depth analysis than would be possible within the confines of the curriculum, or (a more fruitful route for many) by integrating material from other subject areas.

A small number of projects raised compliance issues as it appeared that the requirement that work is not submitted for another qualification had not been met.

Some topics, especially those around popular culture (e.g. the influence of The X Factor, media and football, body image etc) for which there tended to be less academic literature, were very dependent on internet sources of dubious reliability (e.g. social networking sites). This made it difficult for learners to access the range of sources expected for higher mark bands. In cases like these, learners showed very little awareness of the limitations of their research methodology.

Assessment Evidence

There was evidence of a generally better understanding of the requirements of the dissertation. This related both to the assessment evidence requirements and knowledge of how the marking grids should be applied. Many centres showed a grasp of the formal aspects of dissertation writing and there was an improvement in the submission of presentation evidence, with the vast majority centres now expecting candidates to present the findings of their research orally at the end of the project process.

There was, however, still a significant tendency towards leniency in marking. This tended to happen when initial research questions were unsuitable, or when the level of ideas and material explored in the project did not warrant marks in the mid or high mark bands for AO2 or AO3. Significant numbers of centres seem not to have

taken seriously the recommendation to provide teaching support for this qualification.

There was some improvement in the overall quality of AO2 material this year; most candidates attempted some form of research review. However, much of the research drew heavily on websites alone, rather than using a range of sources (e.g. books and articles). Many learners also failed to produce assessment of the reliability of source material.

In AO3, whilst stronger candidates demonstrated an impressive level of ability to marshal arguments in defence of their thesis, as well as to weigh and respond to counter-arguments, too many candidates did not engage in dialectical writing, preferring instead to continue to write in a discursive mode more appropriate to the review of literature than the discussion section. There was a tendency to leave the expression of their own point of view to the conclusion of the project, which of necessity meant that there was then limited scope for building up lines of argument to defend their point of view. In some centres, there was a sense that candidates were not being encouraged to think critically for themselves and produce defences of their own point of view, and were instead being steered towards reviewing source materials which were deemed 'acceptable'.

There was some improvement in the quality of evidence submitted for AO4. Most centres submitted oral presentation record sheets with at least a brief annotation. Written evaluations, however, tended to be weaker and many centres did not send in a summary of the presentation itself. Candidates need explicit direction to carry out a written evaluation of the project process, addressing strengths and weaknesses in their project methodology, exploring potential areas of extension, as well as discussing what has been learned about the research process.

Centre Performance

The Extended Project Dissertation is a qualification in which the objective of developing a personal response to a personally chosen research question is absolutely central. Centres are strongly advised to consider how best to facilitate the development of skills in critical thinking and logical analysis of arguments. This is a key area in which training as part of a 'skills acquisition' programme prior to the commencement of project work pays considerable dividends, not simply in enabling students to access the higher mark bands for AO2 and AO3, but also in terms of helping learners develop their capacity for autonomous thought, which will be of benefit to them in other areas of study, not to mention its importance for their personal intellectual development.

Many centres seemed to have neglected to consider the recommendation that 40 guided learning hours should be assigned to the taught-course basis for the Extended Project. This provides an essential platform for successful project work. In centres where this was used, it significantly enhanced the quality of the work which emerged at the end of the process, by ensuring that candidates understood academic conventions and research methods, knew what counts as an appropriately academic form of expression and were equipped with an understanding of the techniques of argument and counter-argument which the dissertation is expected to contain. It also went a long way towards ensuring that, when project proposals were written, they were suitable in terms of scope, focus and level of complexity.

In some cases, the amount of time spent on development of work seemed to be quite a lot less than the recommended 80 guided learning hours. Some dissertations were in reality closer to fairly brief essays. Centres should bear in mind that the Extended Project is assessed rigorously as a Level 3 qualification, and that, in size and level of demand of the work, it is comparable to half of an A level, and should therefore attract comparable teaching support.

In general, there was a sense that 'independence' was being prioritised over support. Facilitation of the process of research and the development of ideas is both acceptable and to be encouraged, as part of the process of ensuring that candidates are guided in sensible directions with their project work.

Training needs to be provided to teacher-assessors on the detection and management of plagiarism. There needs to be more systematic checking of work within centres. This should be taking place at an early stage in the project process, if at all possible, so that appropriate steps can be taken to address the problem.

There also needs to be stronger guidance to centres about their responsibility to standardise internally. Few centres showed effective evidence of internal moderation. This tended to be confined to a 'mark agreed' tick on the mark record sheet, with the occasional mark adjustment (which may subsequently have been ignored when the marks were entered). Covering letters with the moderation sample which explained the internal moderation process were very helpful.

Significant numbers of centres sent in samples of work which arrived after the May 15 deadline. In many cases too, administrative requirements were not well met. The centres' co-operation in administering the moderation process is appreciated. Careful checking of each of the sampled scripts to ensure that marks are added and entered correctly, and that the candidate authentication forms are signed by both candidate and assessor greatly assists the moderation process. Care also needs to be taken to ensure that the sample sent in for moderation contains both the highest and lowest marked piece of work.

Level 3 unit 2: Investigation

Learner Performance

A full range of marks was produced this summer. At the top end, a clear hypothesis was suggested and then fully tested with 50+ data points, results were then displayed graphically and statistical analysis was used to accept or reject the hypothesis. Often highly professional power point presentations were delivered and good evidence of this, through witness statements and copies of presentation slides, was given. Good projects also showed a deep and wide ranging research base from 20 + mixed media sources which put the research into context and showed the cross-curricula extension required at this level. However, at the lower end there was sometimes little to differentiate work from a single task piece of coursework, which might commonly be seen in a subject specific experiment or exercise, for example. The data resulting from questionnaires was often sparse and from as few as 10 or less respondents. Results were generally accepted at face value and little comment was made on the suitability of the sample selected. The time allowed for the development of the project was often insufficient to fulfil the development and iteration of ideas needed (e.g. in some cases, merely a few weeks). Few projects had really good abstracts and

clear focussed questions or numerically testable hypotheses. Evaluation was often brief and showed little grasp of statistical methods and significance. On the whole questionnaires (unless extensive) do not allow high band analysis in AO3. Few projects made use of data sets gathered through experiments or from publicly available published research. It should be made clear that, alongside their own data collection, it is acceptable for use to be made of data which has been gathered elsewhere (e.g. weather records, images, economic records etc) as long as original analysis is performed by the candidate.

Bibliography sources must be fully referenced in the text; too often sources were accepted without comment. A Literature Review is still expected in Unit 2, though its importance within the project is less than in the Dissertation and less argument and counterargument is expected given that the research instead should be based on data and finding (or failing to find) trends.

At the lower end, many pieces of work simply developed the learner's ideas without reflecting work done elsewhere. A significant number were not of A level standard in terms of the depth of data analysis, synthesis of ideas or the sophistication of argument used. Several projects were also very brief, with a small number below 1500 words.

In AO1, projects in general showed good structure, with headings and paragraphs being well used. Weaker projects showed little planning in timescale on the Proposal Forms and often were completed over a short time span. A thoughtful, iterative journey is expected at Level 3. Centre assessment of this assessment objective was in general accurate with only a small number of those moderated being slightly lenient. The criteria in this objective were seen to be well understood.

The interpretation of the AO2 requirements was the most variable, with the majority of centres underestimating the need for significant and wide ranging secondary research to back up the primary data gathered. References were confused with a Bibliography and only a few projects showed the depth of critical source selection and analysis required at level 3. Some centres seen were significantly generous in supplying marks within this assessment objective.

In AO3, the length and depth of projects often limited marks and work often lacked synthesis. Small primary data sample sizes mitigated any significance in findings and often analysis was simplistic, being restricted to basic bar charts or working out of a mean and percentages. Much was taken at face value and few projects showed an in-depth supported argument which allowed a narrow hypothesis to be either accepted or rejected. A small number of projects used statistical methods and tests and some really interesting innovative work was seen. It was good to see an increasing number of Risk Assessments being carried out showing an awareness of potential injury or dangers involved. Centres were seen to be generous in awarding marks within this objective.

In AO4, with a few exceptions, the attempts at evaluation were much improved. Presentations were accurately assessed, though copious and wordy slides were often over marked. Evidence has to be visible within the project itself and may come from a detailed Activity Log. The presentation can only give 50% of the marks in AO4. A few candidates still confuse a conclusion with a personal evaluation.

Where a Taught Course had been delivered and a centre had understood the structure of the Extended Project, there was a pleasing number of Centres where

marking was accurate. In a minority, however, there was a lack of understanding of the need to impart the skills expected of the candidates or realisation of the A level standard expected, with brief essay type work, backed up by a handful of websites, being marked in high Bands.

Suitability of Work Submitted

A word processed A4 document (approx 4500 words) is expected, accompanied by evidence of oral or other presentation. Topics should be individually chosen and research questions refined. The project should be dominated by primary research data, collected through experiment, field study or via questionnaires, along with use of previously unanalysed data sets as appropriate. Data should be selectively collected, presented graphically and analysed (especially for significance of any findings; this will normally involve statistical analysis). The project should also be backed up by extensive secondary source research to put the primary research in context. A detailed Project Proposal Form should be included and show evidence of a proposed timescale and research method; this should be signed off before the research period commences. An Activity Log detailing the reflective journey undertaken is also expected. An Oral Presentation Mark Sheet is also needed and ideally supported by witness statements to back up marks awarded. There is no requirement to include completed questionnaires, original data sets or other downloaded research material.

From an increasing number of both standalone and Diploma Centres a wide range of suitable topics were seen with larger data set sizes and generally a structure more in line with expectations at Level 3, though the level of source evaluation and understanding of the requirements of a Bibliography and referencing in the text was widely misunderstood. Projects with strong rationale, either through hobbies or personal motivation worked better than rather vague 'interest in future careers' or subjects being studied. Use of graphical display, mathematical analysis and the data sample sizes still often fell short of expectations at level 3. The Diploma SHD centres were particularly hindered by the lack of depth and spread of questionnaires used to back up rather predictable 'health' Topics. More variety was shown by Centres in the structure of the research and less Centre led work was evident. Often titles were very broad and there was an absence of a clear hypothesis which mitigated high AO1 marks. Many small (<20) data sets were submitted and gave little evidence from which to reach conclusions or identify trends (which were usually simplistic) and indeed little analysis was seen (simple graphical or pie chart display and the finding of percentages or a mean does not reach the level of band 2 in AO3). Questionnaire based data collection is popular but can easily be both too basic and the cohort questioned too narrow, e.g. friends or classmates. It is vital that the limitations are appreciated; this also applies to the limitations of a single piece of data collection taking place in one location or instant as may be the case in a Geography field trip or Science experiment; this does not lend itself well to the iterative journey expected.

Assessment Evidence

There was in general a good level of understanding of the assessment evidence requirements. The majority of Investigations were supported by detailed Project Proposal Forms giving a strong rationale for the work and Activity Logs which documented the decision journey undertaken. In many cases, there was also evidence of the final presentation in the form of Power Point summaries / handout

pages, this is needed to support marks awarded in AO4. The majority of Centres submitted completed and signed candidate mark record sheets and also detailed oral presentation record sheets often with witness statements and this was most useful. Most scripts were annotated, though it would have been very helpful to see more detailed annotations throughout the scripts to show evidence for the award of marks in each AO.

The submission of numbered pages and a Contents page was a good indicator of a structured project and high Band marks in AO1. Clear structuring of the written work by the use of paragraphs and illustrations was also seen. Extensive Data tables and questionnaire results should be put in an Appendix and the inclusion of all raw questionnaire responses is not expected and does not assist the communication of the project. Similarly research material itself should not be included in the submission.

Candidates should take responsibility for time management within the planning phase and project proposal forms often lacked clearly anticipated timescales. In a minority of cases the project proposal forms had been signed and perhaps completed retrospectively. The Proposal stage is critical in allowing the Centre and tutor to direct the candidate and research should not commence until this has been signed off. Final Logs should provide personalised accounts of this illustrating the thought process rather than being purely a factual diary. Independent organisation is expected at this level and centre produced grids and logs tend to restrict this. The Edexcel Forms are available via the website. There was greater evidence of consistent application of the marking grids so that the ranking of scripts was in good agreement with that of the moderator in most cases. However, in some cases a lack of annotation or evidence did not support the high marks awarded. There was a tendency at the lower end to apply the criteria to what were basically level 2 projects, which did not show the extension or skills required. Many Centres over marked AO2, considering 6 or so web references as sufficient, often included with no comment. Marks given in AO1 and AO4 were generally supported, though visual evidence, for example of PPT slides, was needed. The Proposal stage is critical to the pupil and it was disappointing to see that some project proposal forms were very incomplete with no planned timeline, minimal preliminary research and a sign off at the end rather than at the start of the Project.

Top performing candidate work was exciting, motivated and readable through the use of clear structure and illustration. Research was wide ranging, using different media and access several peripheral subject areas. Sources were critically selected and analysed and referencing done throughout the text. The whole work was extended in depth, skills learnt and wider contexts and driven by an enthusiasm and rationale from the start.

At the lower end, candidates showed some individual rationale and focus, recording primary data and extending the bounds of the topic through relevant secondary research. The data gathered was limited and the analysis lacking. Projects lacked structure and synthesis. Self-evaluation was superficial and the presentation lacked clarity in both content and delivery.

Centre Performance

The Unit had a significant entry this summer and both the range of titles and general administration by Centres was greatly improved. In too few cases however were all

documents requested received within a couple of days of the due date and a couple of Centres were over a month late. Some centres did not include visual evidence of presentations and one did not do a presentation at all. There were instances where high marks had been given on the oral mark sheet for succinct, clear and high audience impact presentations, though accompanying slides were monotone, lacking in images and packed with writing. The taught course should specifically cover construction of slides and effective presentation techniques.

A few large folders were received and many light folders or poly-pockets. No form of folder is expected. Simple A4 tagged sheets are preferred. However, most work submitted was well ordered with Edexcel forms present as expected. There were a number of centres which did not include a signed hard copy of the EIE form.

Though comments on the Mark Grids were most helpful, comments relating to the specific award of AO marks on the scripts would greatly assist the moderation process. If there was a weakness, in general it was the extent and analysis of Bibliography sources and referencing. It was disappointing that in all but a few centres the detail of mathematical analysis was also lacking and questionnaires, where used, still often rely on minimal sample sizes. For a statistically relevant result, one would expect 50 + data points and in the analysis some form of graphical representation is needed.

It was clear that internal standardisation was carried out in many centres before submitting marks to Edexcel, though in several cases, un-moderated marks were submitted.

It is disappointing that still, in a number of cases, it was clear that the time allocated to the project was short. Indeed some were started in April for the May 15th Edexcel hand-in deadline. This does not allow candidates to achieve the extension expected at Level 3. Centre marking did acknowledge the limitations of projects but a number of weaker candidates would have fared better at Level 2.

Material, data and formulae were often used from websites and books without attribution and too few projects showed an acceptable level of referencing. Plagiarism must be avoided and teaching of proper academic protocols for citation is required.

Wide ranging activities should be carried out over an extended period, facilitated by constant Centre monitoring. Short duration tasks, carried out unsupervised, lead to single data sets and closed projects.

Sample sizes must be large enough to allow mathematical analysis, as appropriate and some statistical significance of findings to be present. Presentation of data in bar graphs or pie charts alone is insufficient at this level; trend identification and correlations or testing must be carried out. The level of referencing and secondary source analysis expected is no less than in Unit 1.

Centres must prioritise Taught Course input to address potential confusion with references and bibliography, literature analysis and critical selection of sources, questionnaire design and mathematical methods needed. Centres where projects were started late in the year and where there was no evidence of skills teaching rarely produced high mark projects.

Topics with a clear testable hypothesis are ideal (as some conclusion can be reached) and if questionnaires are used the structure of questions and the 'population' questioned must be thought through.

Centres should consider carefully whether work is really suitable for level 3, if either timescales or data sizes are limited, or indeed whether a project might fit better into Unit 1 Dissertation (where limited supporting primary data is quite acceptable).

Level 3 unit 3: Performance

Learner Performance

The performance unit was accessible to the full range of candidate ability.

Examples of work seen in this award covered a wide range of performance outcomes. Dance, Drama and Music were the most popular areas however; some candidates submitted work from the broader area of performance including sports events and lesson delivery.

It is crucial to provide clear evidence of the development process to support marks. Where work is directly informed by findings from a relevant and rigorous research base it led to clearer reasons for selecting ideas, and this supported higher marks in AO3.

Candidates tended to understand the creative process but did not always appreciate the effect creative decisions would have on the outcome.

Written evaluations tended to be brief. It may be helpful for learners to work to focused commission briefs where sufficient opportunity can be given for learners to problem solve and fully interrogate performance opportunities. If appropriate Level 3 existing repertoire is used as source material, it could inform a more analytical development process which would in turn provide greater opportunity for review to be undertaken at the correct level.

Suitability of work submitted

Learners are required to plan, research, develop and evaluate the performance. Potential performance material, information and techniques should be researched and applied to the development process. Ideas should be refined as part of the rehearsal process. The work should be performed. The work should be evaluated and findings presented.

Learners are required to submit written evidence to support the planning, research, development and evaluation stages of the project. It is estimated that this will be between 1500 and 3000 words in length.

The performing arts discipline, style and genre, devised or from existing repertoire are all acceptable responses. The performance can be an event where non arts activities are performed, such as sport or a community event.

Centres selected events that were appropriate platforms for their learners' skills. Where performance work was intended to be performed live, the skills and

techniques were at times more appropriate than if performance work was created for camera.

Many performance projects which could have generated effective planning, research, development and evaluation opportunities were seen. However, it was felt that the important issue of the target audience was not fully considered. This should be identified in order to select appropriate skills and techniques throughout the development process.

Variety and talent shows were less effective as they were created from a general brief and research opportunities were often limited or overlooked.

Some centres would have benefited from commissioning learners so they could respond to a focused commission brief, rather than struggling to create a question to answer.

Assessment Evidence

There was a significant increase in the number of centres accurately applying the assessment criteria.

In some of the work seen, teacher assessor comments were not supported by the evidence put forward for moderation. In some cases the attitude and interest a learner showed was rewarded rather than aptitude and ability to deal with a creative process.

There was a mixture of consistent and lenient marking in the work seen. Clear evidence of the development process is vital to support the higher marks as is evidence of relevant research that in turn informs the creative decisions throughout the development of the piece.

Centre Performance

Internal centre standardisation was present in the majority of centres. There were some inconsistencies with which marks were then entered as final centre marks; if internal moderation has taken place, the internally moderated mark should be entered.

The projects that worked particularly well were the ones that took time to refine the title, question or commission brief. This in turn led to focused research that would have an impact on the practical development of the work. Clear and unambiguous objectives that could be reviewed were evident in the strongest responses. Rigorous rehearsal or preparations were detailed in the activity log for the candidates achieving high marks.

Group work was popular and this should be encouraged for this unit as the development process can be helped by learners focusing on how they communicate and develop ideas with other performers towards a shared goal. Some individual projects suffered from candidates not having the challenge of responding to the ideas of others.

Centres should consider the vast number of opportunities for performance projects. There are opportunities for production and administration aspects of the performing arts industry to be explored.

Level 3 unit 4: Artefact

Learner Performance

Artefact work was produced by learners across the full ability range. At the upper end, there was evidence of excellent project work, based around well considered objectives, a fully articulated research and development process, excellent technical realisation and in-depth evaluation.

The best work seen was done in response to a clear design brief, with a sensible set of objectives being selected by the learner. Less successful were projects based on a theoretical question which was unlikely to engender an artefact outcome. Research questions can be used effectively in this unit, but they should serve to help provide focus to the design brief, rather than being alternatives to it.

At the lower end, work was submitted which lacked the technical development which would be expected of a level 3 learner.

Some learners produced a successful final artefact, but still did not score well against the criteria because they did not provide sufficient evidence of the design process.

Suitability of Work Submitted

The unit requires learners to plan, research, develop and evaluate the production of an artefact.

The artefact may take many forms, including a finished working prototype, model, artwork or design. The way the artefact is presented will depend on the ideas and intentions of the learner and the form it takes: a sculpture may be intended for a specific site; an engineering model may require demonstration in action to highlight its function; a website's purpose may be reflected through its use of colour, layout and form of navigation.

A variety of interesting projects were in evidence, including websites, audio CD, art, movies, sculpture and engineering artefacts. Some, which proved harder to match to the marking grids, were purely written projects, such as lesson plans or pieces of creative writing.

It was still common for research to be interpreted in terms which would be more appropriate to an investigation or dissertation, with a focus on secondary literature, but a lack of visual research or research into techniques for design and manufacture.

Creative Arts projects tended to suffer from lack of refinement and development. Often developmental items such as (for example) sketchbooks, rushes, rough mixes where not included in the evidence.

Engineering and ICT based artefacts tended to evidence refinement and development more closely.

Some artefacts met, and in some cases exceeded, the original brief - whilst others were not completed or did not meet the brief due to a lack of focus in the original objectives.

Assessment Evidence

There was a significant tendency for centre marks to mark leniently. Very few centres marked too strictly.

Visual art (in particular) tended to be marked leniently against AO3, with very limited evidence of development and refinement being seen.

The majority of proposals showed evidence of checking. The level of focus within project titles was inconsistent. Some candidates produced extremely focussed proposals with clear objectives, whilst others gave rather vague objectives. It should be noted that there was clear evidence which implied that some learners had not decided which unit to enter prior to commencing work (e.g. the proposal was loose enough to be either a dissertation or an artefact). It was felt that this impacted negatively upon the focus of project in some cases.

Tasks and timescales were handled in some detail by many candidates whilst others merely listed broad tasks with loose timescales. In some cases timescales were unrealistically short - once again this tended to be reflected within the final outcome of the project.

Centres are misinterpreting the AO2 criteria "range" to mean number of textual sources, rather than types of research, especially visual and tactile. Effective use of research into materials and resources was generally lacking.

Research ranged from the very extensive to the cursory. Many candidates preferred to use web based sources. The quality of referencing was generally quite low. Some candidates did not reference sources at all, or produce a bibliography. It was common for weaker candidates to insert print outs from websites, with some highlighting or annotation. This provides evidence of low level 'collation' style research but it would be better for less material to be reproduced and for there to be more emphasis on the use of the source material and much more thought about how the material can be clearly linked to the project objectives.

In AO3, development was inconsistent. Some learners produced large amounts of relevant developmental evidence whilst others produced very limited evidence of development. In a large number of centres, the development of the outcome was simply not in evidence. This had a serious effect on the mark for AO3, tending to reduce marks down to the first mark band, or to a low position in mark band 2.

Centres tended to over-reward AO4, basing the mark on presentation performance and ignoring the written review element.

In some projects, evaluation was very well handled, with detailed, in-depth written reviews addressing the project process thoughtfully and comprehensively, whilst other learners evaluated their projects in a very limited sense. Some learners did not approach ideas for what they would do next time with any conviction. Some centres

provided video evidence of oral presentations which the moderator found very useful.

Centre Performance

Centres should be advised about the need for proper teaching of both research methods and suitable level 3 ideas and frameworks which can be used in candidates' projects. Candidates should be guided to conduct proper research into materials, techniques, media and processes, and to ensure that the design process is properly represented in the evidence submitted, with a particular focus on evidence of the reasoning which has gone into the design process.

Centres need to think carefully about the suitability of project objectives. These should address a clear need - either from a real or hypothetical client, and should be sufficiently demanding as to invite a genuinely Level 3 response.

The completion of the required documentary evidence (candidate name and number, centre name and number authentication and confirmation signatures etc) is an area that centres need to be more consistent with. There should be recognised quality control systems in place.

The use of DVD's that are not compatible with the moderator's software caused problems in moderation. Centres are referred to the documentation on the Edexcel Project website about the moderation process for guidance on this.

Centres need to be reminded about general issues around submission of artefacts - e.g. DO NOT send work itself but photos, sketchbooks etc. The assessment evidence guidelines on the Edexcel Project website should be noted and adhered to.

Statistics

Level 3 Unit 1 Dissertation

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	54	47	42	37	32	27	22
Points Score	28	24	20	16	12	8	4

Level 3 Unit 2 Investigation

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	54	47	42	37	32	27	22
Points Score	28	24	20	16	12	8	4

Level 3 Unit 3 Performance

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	54	47	41	36	31	26	21
Points Score	28	24	20	16	12	8	4

Level 3 Unit 4 Artefact

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	54	47	41	36	31	26	21
Points Score	28	24	20	16	12	8	4

Notes

Maximum Mark (raw): the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme or mark grids.

Raw boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a learner to qualify for a given grade.

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