

PROJECTS

Moderators' report

EXTENDED PROJECT

H857

For first teaching in 2017

H857/01/02 Summer 2022 series

Contents

Introduction	3
General overview	4
Most common causes of centres not passing.....	7
Common misconceptions	7
Avoiding potential malpractice.....	7
Helpful resources	7
Additional comments.....	7

Introduction

Our moderators' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

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General overview

There were some very impressive, individual, insightful and well-managed projects submitted, despite the difficult circumstances over the past two years.

OCR appreciates those centres who took the time to submit work electronically. This greatly facilitates OCR's internal procedures, including standardisation and quality assurance.

The strongest projects struck the right balance between documentation of an active planning and management process and the research and skills development necessary to meet their aims in the production of their dissertation, artefact, event or performance.

Plans were active documents with SMART tasks, which were referred to, updated and revised in the light of new information. Generally, strong candidates used diaries, to do lists, sequencing and prioritisation of tasks and made effective, proactive and reflective use of logbooks. Some of these candidates made effective use of updated Gantt charts while others decided that Gantt charts were not working for them and justified their use of alternative tools.

Topics were selected as part of an active process taking candidates' interests into consideration and refined as research took place. Aims were clearly stated and appropriate. Research was deepened as research questions were refined, and candidates who performed well generally mastered some complex materials.

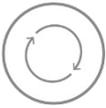
Skills were developed appropriate to the project. Candidates writing dissertations and scientific or social-scientific reports developed the academic skills of analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, developing their own lines of reasoning supported by the ideas, arguments and evidence from their research.

Candidates producing artefacts, events or performances developed high level skills relevant to their project. Review of project progress was ongoing, with constant minor adjustments to keep the project on track. Final presentations and evaluations were balanced between the candidate's project process and the ideas, arguments, evidence and/or creative projects they had been engaged with.

It was usual for candidates to have one aspect which was stronger, either the project management or the subject / artefact focus. There were some thoughtful, academic dissertations which were insufficiently supported by evidence of project management. There were also some submissions with painstaking project documentation which fell short in terms of relevant skills development in the dissertation or artefact.

At the lower end of the range, planning was not as in detail or depth. Some subject choices made it difficult for candidates to really engage in the project and therefore skills development was limited in achieving project aims. Evaluation for some candidates was expressed in general terms about the need for better planning.

Assessment for learning



Topic choice, title refinement and aim setting can have a significant effect on project success. For example, consider a candidate who is passionate about football and is determined that football will be their topic. Title refinement and aim setting can really make a difference.

Developing ball skills.

Aim 1: research best methods to develop ball skills (ask coaches, read sports science journals).

Aim 2: produce a monthly vlog demonstrating ball skills development.

This could work well. The broader topic of football has been narrowed and the aims are appropriate. The candidate would have to support their claims with evidence, and develop people management, photography, and video editing skills, all while focusing on their passion for football.

- Psychological pressures of competitive football.

Aim 1: educate people about the psychological pressures of elite football.

Aim 2: write a 5000 word dissertation.

What does the candidate want to say / ask/ investigate about the pressures of competitive / elite football? If education is an aim, then perhaps a learning resource, a documentary, a short story or a series of artworks might better meet the aim than a dissertation.

- Do footballers deserve their high pay?

Aim 1: decide if footballers deserve their high pay.

Aim 2: write 5000 words.

There is a lot to unpack in this question. How does the candidate define 'deserve'? Within what context are we setting 'deserve'? What will be considered 'high pay'? There are not many readily available academic resources available for this topic. There is, however, a great deal of opinion and outrage in the tabloid press which would not be appropriate for a study at Level 3.

For the second two examples 'write 5000 words' needs development. At Level 3, writing must have a purpose. Achieving a word count is not sufficient purpose.

Candidates who did well generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chose highly specific, individual titles or artefacts which allowed them to demonstrate appropriate Level 3 skills. • Broke down large tasks such as 'research' and 'writing' into smaller, manageable, SMART tasks. • Used a variety of tools to effectively plan and manage their projects. • Conducted research which moved from a broad, shallow base to a narrower, deeper focus as they refined their initial ideas. • Developed a range of skills related to their project aims. • Used ongoing review to adjust their project progress. • Effectively evaluated their project journeys • Communicated clearly and effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chose generic topics or descriptive titles which did not always allow for sufficient development at Level 3. • Did not produce detailed plans. • Did not actively manage their projects. • Conducted research from a narrow set of sources. • Did not link skills development effectively to project aims. • Did not use ongoing review. • Provided evaluations that sometimes focused only on the subject matter rather than also on the project management journey. • Prioritised presentation over content.

Assessment for learning



Research and skills development should be directed at achieving candidates' project aims. For example, a candidate writing a dissertation about forms of love in nineteenth Century French poetry is unlikely to find that primary research in the form of surveys will further their project aims.

Most common causes of centres not passing

Centres did not provide enough evidence of skills development appropriate to a Level 3 qualification.

Centres needed to provide more evidence to show that candidates had completed projects taking 120 guided learning hours.

Common misconceptions

There was some confusion about the specification requirements for producing artefacts.

An artefact, event or performance needs to be accompanied by a 1000 word report on the project process. In some cases, a separate dissertation relating to the project theme was submitted.

A presentation which reflects on the project is a requirement for all projects and cannot be considered an artefact.

Avoiding potential malpractice

In order to avoid plagiarism, it is important that candidates use quotation marks, citations and referencing when they use others' work. Paraphrased work should also be given credit.

In order to avoid malpractice, teachers should not give written feedback to candidates. This includes written feedback on post-it notes and emails. Verbal guidance on project direction is acceptable.

Detailed guidance on avoiding malpractice is available in the specification.

Helpful resources

The [specification](#) is extremely valuable. OCR has a wide range of support materials online, including teacher guides and a guide to mentoring and exemplar materials with marks and commentaries on the [planning and teaching section](#) of the qualification webpage.

Candidates should find their own resources, but a subscription to JSTOR can be useful, or use of Google Scholar.

Additional comments

Evidenced by their evaluations and skills development it is clear that many candidates have benefitted from their EPQ journeys.

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