

# Examiners' Report June 2009

## Projects

## Foundation and Higher Level 1 and Level 2

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## Contents

1.	Level 1 Introduction	5
2.	Level 1 Unit 1 Report	6
3.	Level 1 Unit 1 Statistics	10
4.	Level 2 Unit 1 Introduction	11
5.	Level 2 Unit 1 Report	12
6.	Level 2 Unit 1 Statistics	17

# Foundation Projects Qualification

## Level 1 Introduction

This is the first year of awarding for the Foundation Project live qualification.

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 may be subject to change.

## Level 1 Unit 1 Foundation

### Suitability of work submitted

Foundation projects submitted for moderation in this series were either carried out as part of a Foundation Diploma within one of the current 5 lines of learning or were submitted as a stand-alone qualification. Where projects were submitted as part of a learner's diploma programme, all the work moderated demonstrated clear links to the relevant diploma line. For example, learners provided projects on aspects of crime in their local area linked to the justice strand of a Society, Health and Development level 1 diploma or researched and created web sites to advertise local businesses as part of an ICT level 1 diploma. In all cases the actual evidence for the project had to be original work and not that already submitted for a level 1 diploma unit.

Where projects were submitted as stand-alone qualifications the range of topics covered was wide ranging. In a minority of cases some work was submitted by centres that was also being submitted as work for other unit qualifications such as work for BTEC units. Where this was seen to be the case learners were not accredited with the qualification unless it was clear that new evidence, specific to the level 1 project assessment requirements and not submitted as portfolio work for other qualifications, had been generated by the learners. Where learners just added a project proposal form and an activity log to existing work submitted for alternative qualifications accreditation for the project could not be given.

The best work generated by learners at level 1 was based on a research question or a design brief that supported the learners in fulfilling the requirements across the four assessment objectives for the level one project. It was clear that the majority of centres invested time in delivering clear guidance to their learners on the basic tools needed to conduct research such as the need to list sources of information in order for them to be retrieved and to report on their reliability and relevance to the topic area.

Where learners gave a project title with no aspect of research, such as 'family', there was limited ability to carry out research in order to prove or disprove a point or to give alternative viewpoints or to develop or realise the project in a relevant manner. In these cases the learners were restricted in the marks that could be agreed across all the assessment objectives. At this level the majority of projects were in the form of written reports, although several ICT projects (databases and websites) and the construction of CD covers (artefact) were also seen.

### Learner Performance

Most learners' work moderated demonstrated that learners had put a lot of hard work into the production of the main body of the report of their

research. This qualification requires that all learners choose and plan a project. Learners need to record the activities that they undertake during the project, obtain information from at least a few sources, apply the information to the project and present this information in an appropriate format. They need also to review their project and their own performance.

It is pleasing to state that this year the majority of projects were more focussed on the research process compared to work submitted last year during the pilot phase of the qualification. All projects seen at this level were submitted with a project proposal form and an activity log, although some centres were still using their own documentation for both the proposal form and activity log. It is recommended that all centres use the relevant documentation that can be downloaded from the Edexcel project qualification website. Some centres were seen to be awarding marks in the higher mark band where evidence was brief and not fully developed.

Regarding assessment objective 1, all learners were able to select a project topic. The best work identified a question or design brief and went on to plan the intended project outcomes. It is acceptable for learners to choose a working title, which can be adapted as the project progresses. Changes or adaptations to the title should be documented in the activity log. The project topic should be agreed with the tutor/assessor.

Several centres supported learners in working within a group to complete their project qualification. Whilst this is entirely acceptable, centres are asked to ensure that each learner has a clear role within the group to fulfil throughout the project and that each learner produces their own individual evidence that can be assessed independently of others' contributions across all four assessment objectives. Individual roles within a group should be clearly identified in the project proposal form. Where group projects worked well the learners were able to reflect and feedback on all individuals' contributions within the group for evidence in AO4 - Review- and this provided some excellent evidence for marks in this assessment objective.

All learners' work seen gave a rationale for their choice of project. In the best work, this went beyond the statements such as "I am interested in this" or "it links to my diploma course" and gave more detailed reasons for the choice such as links to progression to further study or future career aspirations. All learners demonstrated some ability to plan their projects in sections 3 and 4 of the project proposal form. However, milestones were often not completed and the information given regarding the main resources needed was often very basic. Learners should be supported in thinking of a range of resources such as physical, technological, human or financial and not just say books and the internet. The project must be signed off as appropriate and in doing so the centre is confirming that the project proposal will give the learner(s) scope to achieve all of the assessment objectives.

Regarding evidence seen for assessment objective 2, in the majority of learner work moderated, learners were able to demonstrate some ability to

obtain information, although, in the weaker learners' work, this was not always relevant to the project title. Learners find it challenging to comment on the reliability and relevance of secondary sources of data and need guidance to be able to achieve this. Some centres were crediting cut and paste resources without encouraging the learners to show how the information would be used or state the benefits and reliability of the sources to the development of their projects. At level 1 there is no requirement for independent research. What is required is 'obtaining information'. This means that reading lists, references and suggestions for information gathering can be supplied by the tutor assessor. As long as the learner then goes on to extract the relevant information for their project they can still be accredited with the extra mark for this assessment objective.

The marking grid distinguishes between the 'range of sources' and 'types of information'. Centres are advised that the weaker candidates are likely to rely on one type of information even if they use a range of sources and will, therefore attract marks in mark band one. Several learners were awarded marks in mark band 2 in the work seen in this series whereas the evidence supported marks in mark band one.

AO3 carries the highest weighting of marks for this qualification. Some learners' work seen was generously awarded here. To be awarded marks in mark band two learners need to develop their project based on what they have researched and show some understanding of the topic including an answer to the research question if appropriate. In several instances seen, centres awarded marks in mark band two where only limited understanding of the topic was evidenced. Centres are advised to refer to the guidance given in the specification for this assessment objective.

AO4 - Review, some centres were seen to be awarding in mark band two where learners only reviewed the outcome of the project and did not reflect on the process and the skills developed and knowledge learnt as required by the marking grid. Generally learners found AO4 to be the most challenging of the assessment objectives and this objective was seen to attract the least marks. It is very important that centres support their learners in setting realistic objectives for their project in the project proposal form so that these can be assessed as met or not for marks in AO4. Learners need to show that they can assess how successful their project has been and how well they have managed it. Comments on time management are useful here. Learners need to be encouraged to describe the skills and knowledge they have learnt and developed and give clear ideas for follow up work. In some of the work moderated in this series learners were awarded marks in mark band two for simply stating that they enjoyed their project.

## Assessment

Generally centres showed a good level of understanding of the assessment evidence requirements. Best practice was seen where assessors gave feedback to learners on a regular basis and reviewed learner progress setting

stepped objectives to be met across the course of the project. Where this feedback was documented learners could use this as part of their review process for A04.

Centres are advised to refer to the evidence requirements in the marking grid within the specification and to check that relevant requirements are met by the learner evidence before awarding marks, particularly where high marks are awarded in mark band two. The vast majority of centres used the correct teacher assessment sheet to give feedback to the learners and to annotate the marks awarded for each assessment objective. This documentation is available to download from the Edexcel Project website. A minority of centres unfortunately used the pilot project marking grid that was only valid for work submitted up to summer 2008. This resulted in the learners being awarded incorrect marks across the four project assessment objectives.

Best assessment practice was seen where centres carried out internal verification of assessment to ensure that marks awarded to the learners were supported by the evidence provided by the learners. This was particularly valuable where more than one assessor was involved in the delivery and assessment of the qualification. However, in a minority of cases internal verification processes failed to result in necessary changes being made to marks awarded by centres.

## Centre Performance

All centres that submitted work sent the required numbers of projects to make up the moderation sample but some centres did not submit the highest and lowest scoring candidates. Some centres did not include a completed EDI or the relevant candidate record sheets with the sample. When centres were contacted regarding these issues there was, generally, a rapid and obliging response.

The majority of centres used the correct teacher assessment sheet to give feedback to the learners and to annotate the marks awarded for each assessment objective. This documentation is available to download from the Project website.

In some work submitted or moderation in this series it appeared that the project was carried out over a very short period of time. This resulted in the learners providing only very limited evidence for both A03 and A04. Centres need to be reminded of the 60 GLH attached to this qualification.

Across all 4 assessment objectives at this level centre assessors can award an extra mark if the learners work fairly independently. Some centres highlighted the awarding of this mark as +1 on the teacher assessor sheet and justified this award. However, several centres just added this mark to the total for the assessment objective without giving reasons for its award. In future centre assessors must justify the awarding of the extra mark across all assessment objectives.

## Statistics

### Level 1 Unit 1 Foundation

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B
Raw boundary mark	40	33	24	16
Points Score	8	6	4	2

## Higher Projects Qualification

### Level 2 Introduction

This is the first year of awarding for the Higher Project live qualification.

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 may be subject to change.

## Level 2 Unit 1 Higher

### Suitability of work submitted

Higher projects submitted for moderation in this series were either carried out as part of a Higher Diploma within one of the current 5 lines of learning or were submitted as a stand-alone qualification.

Where projects were submitted as part of a learner's diploma programme, all the work moderated demonstrated clear links to the relevant diploma line. For example, learners provided projects on aspects of health care in their local area linked to the health strand of a Society, Health and Development level 2 diploma or researched various approaches to film making and created a relevant short film as part of a Creative and Media level 2 diploma. In all cases the actual evidence for the project had to be original work and not that already submitted for a level 2 diploma unit.

Where projects were submitted as stand-alone qualifications the range of topics covered was wide ranging. In a minority of cases some work was submitted by centres that was also being submitted as work for other qualifications such as work for BTEC First Diploma units. Where this was seen to be the case learners were not accredited with the qualification unless it was clear that new evidence, specific to the level 2 project assessment requirements and not submitted as portfolio work for other qualifications, had been generated by the learners. Where learners just added a project proposal form and an activity log to existing work submitted for alternative qualifications accreditation for the project could not be given.

The best work generated by learners at level 2 was based on a research question or a design brief that supported the learners in fulfilling the requirements across the four assessment objectives for the level one project. It was clear that the majority of centres invested time in delivering clear guidance to their learners on the basic tools needed to conduct research such as the need to list sources of information in order for them to be retrieved and to report on their reliability and relevance to the topic area.

Where learners just gave a project title with no aspect of research, there was limited ability to carry out research in order to prove or disprove a point or to give alternative viewpoints or to develop or realise the project in a relevant manner. In these cases the learners were restricted in the marks that could be agreed across all the assessment objectives.

### Learner Performance

Most learners' work moderated demonstrated that learners had put a lot of hard work into the production of the main body of the report of their research. Learners provided work across a range of project outcomes including performance and artefact.

This qualification requires that all learners choose and plan a project, including what could go wrong. Learners need to record the activities that they undertake during the project, and monitor the progress of the project against the original plan. Learners need to obtain information from a range of sources, using at least 2 different types of information, apply the information to the project and present this information in an appropriate format. They also need to review their project and their own performance, analysing information and drawing their own conclusions based on their project findings.

All projects seen at this level were submitted with a project proposal form and an activity log, although some centres were still using their own documentation for both the proposal form and activity log. It is recommended that all centres use the relevant documentation that can be downloaded from the Edexcel project qualification website.

Some centres were seen to be awarding marks in the higher mark band where evidence was brief and not fully developed.

A01, all learners were able to select a project topic. The best work identified a question or design brief and went on to plan the intended project outcomes. It is acceptable for learners to choose a working title, which can be adapted as the project progresses. Changes or adaptations to the title should be documented in the activity log. The project topic should be agreed with the tutor / assessor.

Several centres supported learners in working within a group to complete their project qualification. Whilst this is entirely acceptable, centres are asked to ensure that each learner has a clear role within the group to fulfil throughout the project and that each learner produces their own individual evidence that can be assessed independently of others' contributions across all four assessment objectives. Individuals should set their own objectives in their project proposal form. Individual roles within a group should be clearly identified in the project proposal form. Where group projects worked well the learners were able to reflect and feedback on all individuals' contributions within the group for evidence in A04.

All learners' work seen gave a rationale for their choice of project. In the best work seen this went beyond the statements such as 'I am interested in this' or 'it links to my diploma course' and gave more detailed reasons for the choice such as links to progression to further study, including progression to level 3 diploma courses or future career aspirations. All learners demonstrated some ability to plan their projects in sections 3 and 4 of the project proposal form. However, milestones were often not completed and the information given regarding the main resources needed was often very basic. Learners should be supported in thinking of a range of resources such as physical, technological, human or financial and not just state that they are going to use books from the library and the internet.

Very few Higher projects seen used the project plan to monitor the learners progress demonstrating adaptations to the plan where necessary. The project must be signed off as appropriate and in doing so the centre is confirming that the project proposal will give the learner(s) scope to achieve all of the assessment objectives.

AO2, in the majority of learner work moderated, learners were able to demonstrate some ability to obtain information, although, in the weaker learners' work, this was not always relevant to the project title. At level 2 learners must research rather than just obtain information, as is the case for level 1. To be awarded marks for research learners should choose the methods and locate sources for themselves although the tutor assessor can still offer suggestions and guidance - however, the learner needs to show some initiative in finding their own information.

Most learners at this level did comment on the reliability and relevance of secondary sources of data but how the information was going to be used to draw conclusions about the research topic was not always clear. Some centres were crediting cut and paste resources without encouraging the learners to show how the information would be used or state the benefits and reliability of the sources to the development of their projects.

In some work seen centres were awarding marks in mark band 2 for learners who only used 2 pieces of information of the same type. This restricted use of sources should only be awarded towards the lower end of mark band one. The marking grid distinguishes between a 'range of sources' for mark band one and 'a wide range of sources' for awarding in mark band two. Several centres were seen to be awarding mark band two for evidence that fitted into mark band one only. Also, in order to award marks in mark band two, the research must be consistently relevant to the project objectives. This was not always seen to be the case where learners' work was awarded in mark band 2. At this level all learners' work should contain a bibliography where sources used are identified. This was the case in most work moderated.

AO3 carries the highest weighting of marks for this qualification. Some learners' work seen was generously awarded here. To be awarded marks in mark band two or projects that are mainly written, learners need to develop their project in such a way as to demonstrate good understanding of their project with a clear answer to their question that is supported by some consideration of alternative viewpoints.

Work awarded in mark band two should have information presented in a logical order with only few errors in the use of language. Centres are advised to look clearly at the assessment requirements in the marking grid where guidance is given as to the learner evidence needed for a range of different project outcomes to have marks awarded across mark bands one and two.

AO4, some centres were seen to be awarding in mark band two where learners only reviewed the outcome of the project and did not reflect on the process and the skills developed and knowledge learnt as required by the marking grid. To be awarded marks in mark band 2 the learner work should show detailed conclusions with firm evidence to support them. Often work awarded in mark band two gave rather vague conclusions that were not supported by research undertaken during the project.

Generally learners found AO4 to be the most challenging of the assessment objectives and this objective was seen to attract the least marks. It is very important that centres support their learners in setting realistic objectives for their project in the project proposal form so that these can be assessed as met or not for marks in AO4. Learners need to show that they can assess how successful their project has been and how well they have managed it. Comments on time management are useful here. Learners need to be encouraged to describe the skills and knowledge they have learnt and developed and give clear and realistic ideas for follow up work. It is vital that learners are encouraged to be reflective practitioners and review the entire project process.

## Assessment

Generally centres showed a good level of understanding of the assessment evidence requirements. Best practice was seen where assessors gave feedback to learners on a regular basis and reviewed learner progress setting stepped objectives to be met across the course of the project. Where this feedback was documented learners could use this as part of their review process for AO4.

Centres are advised to refer to the evidence requirements in the marking grid within the specification and to check that relevant requirements are met by the learner evidence before awarding marks, particularly where high marks are awarded in mark band two.

The vast majority of centres used the correct teacher assessment sheet to give feedback to the learners and to annotate the marks awarded for each assessment objective. This documentation is available to download from the Edexcel Project website. A minority of centres unfortunately used the pilot project marking grid that was only valid for work submitted up to summer 2008. This resulted in the learners being awarded incorrect marks across the four project assessment objectives.

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## Centre Performance

All centres that submitted work sent the required numbers of projects to make up the moderation sample but some centres did not submit the highest and lowest scoring candidates. Some centres did not include a completed lists of candidate marks or the relevant individual candidate record sheets with the sample. When centres were contacted regarding these issues there was, generally, a rapid and obliging response. The majority of centres used the correct teacher assessment sheet to give feedback to the learners and to annotate the marks awarded for each assessment objective. This documentation is available to download from the Project website.

In some work submitted for moderation in this series it appeared that the project was carried out over a very short period of time. This resulted in the learners providing only very limited evidence for both A03 and A04. Centres need to be reminded of the 60 GLH attached to this qualification.

Across all 4 assessment objectives at this level centre assessors can award an extra mark if the learners work fairly independently. Some centres highlighted the awarding of this mark as +1 on the teacher assessor sheet and justified this award. However, several centres just added this mark to the total for the assessment objective with out giving reasons for its award. In future centre assessors must justify the awarding of the extra mark across all assessment objectives.

## Statistics

### Level 2 Unit 1 Higher

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C
Raw boundary mark	40	33	27	21	16
Points Score	10	8	6	4	2

## Notes

Centres are reminded that this is the first summer examination for this new specification and that boundaries may change in the following series

**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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