



# **PRINCIPAL MODERATOR'S REPORT**

**EXTENDED PROJECT**

**June 2013**

## Extended Project

Summer 2013

*Principal Moderator:* Roger Lane

### Statistical Information

This booklet contains summary details for the Extended Project: number entered; maximum mark available; mean mark achieved; grade ranges.

### *Annual Statistical Report*

The annual *Statistical Report* gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

### Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the Extended Project.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
Extended Project	549	100	71.8

### Grade Ranges

A*	88
A	78
B	68
C	58
D	48
E	38

## Extended Project

### General Overview

The Extended Project again produced many high quality projects from candidates whose work would already grace Higher Education. As previously, many were overtly 'academic' studies, but others successfully pursued community and work-placed topics or personal interests – artefacts are on the increase, which is pleasing, and group projects are also starting to appear a little more often. Generally speaking, there is no need to list different types of projects, because there is absolutely no shortage of ideas from the candidates – one can imagine many a tentative approach from a candidate along the lines of 'Can I do a project on....?' and the answer ought to be Yes, but perhaps more usefully, Yes, *if...* . The negotiations should then begin.

### Project Title & Proposal

Topic areas and project titles definitely need refining into well-focused questions for written project outcomes (dissertations, field investigations), and the well-focused questions themselves may need to be refined further as the project unravels. Moderators reported quite often that sensible amendments along the way, often to questions that had been conditionally approved, made all the difference to the success of an Extended Project.

It was also reported by moderators that proposals and plans could have been much more detailed. Short-cutting is not a good idea per se, but when it actually prevents a candidate from exploring the project process, and gaining credit from so doing, it is actually counter-productive.

Furthermore, the proposal is in effect the planning of the outcome, which inevitably requires forethought and structure, so everything points to the need for a solid base of interaction between supervisor and candidate in the early stages of the project. Work done here is re-paid in full later.

Note the first of three top band descriptors of Assessment Objective 1, Managing:

- *Clearly identifies the topic to be researched or investigated and gives clear evidence of appropriate aims and objectives for the proposed project title.*  
***Produces an effectively designed and thorough project plan.***

It is difficult to express any advice more clearly than the words of the above descriptor itself; the emphasis being on thorough.

### Project Record

At Extended Project level there is a standard expectation that candidates should complete the documentation competently. Most candidates do, though some err on the side of un-expansive notes and headings. Currently few are grasping the nettle of describing how their individual projects have benefitted from what they have learned from the Taught Programme.

Thus there is a particular need for improved treatment of project forms 3a and 3b, which can provide a powerful document for illustrating modifications to the project and also response to targets and management of the project. In fact, this part of the documentation can be pivotal, when separate strands from AO1 Managing and AO4 Review are considered.

- *(AO1) Uses a range of sophisticated skills and techniques, including thorough **action planning and time management**. Approaches work efficiently, flexibly and creatively, setting SMART targets and prioritising goals.*
- *(AO4) Reviews work perceptively and thoroughly. Uses the process consistently and effectively to set clear and attainable goals and inform future progress.*

These are stern measures of the standards in the top band of the Extended Project Qualification, which clearly require candidates to be stretched beyond their existing knowledge and understanding.

### **Project Outcome**

In relation to the Project Outcome, some of the messages are unequivocal.

Written project outcomes (e.g. dissertations) must target the 5,000 minimum word limit. Outcomes that are significantly shorter are self-penalising, reflecting limitations of management, resourcing and review.

Project Outcome Notes should extend to 2000 words, in effect a substantial account of the project process of an artefact, design or performance. It may be a curse for a creative artist, but a written text brings understanding for the non-specialist.

Non-dissertation projects of any kind have to be substantial, and should fill in a complete picture for the reader/moderator. An 'event' of any kind has to be on record from beginning to end.

Some 'artefact' outcomes are also written, as in the case of anything from a website to a poem. Clearly, the 5000 word target would not operate as for a dissertation, but the 2000 words of Project Outcome Notes are required.

A group project has to have identifiable individual contributions and these have to be substantively independent of one another, while also hopefully showing the interaction between members of the group. Experience shows that small groups (even pairs) are the most manageable way forward in this area. Again, the individual candidate is expected to represent the experience – beyond the outcome – with 2000 words of Project Outcome Notes.

AO2 'Use Resources' can find many candidates wanting, because of the patience required. The best candidates appear to be naturally resourceful, but some seem to avoid or underestimate the 'hard work' of research. The 'personal interest' project demands of the candidate that they reach the end of the process better informed than when they started, their expertise honed by the experience. The evidence

should be present for the reader, obviously in the form of references and bibliographies, but also in the reading and understanding assimilated into the writing process. Top candidates need sound skills of proof-reading, but also secure style, and ability with persuasion and argument, and perhaps more obviously organisation, structure and purpose.

## **Project Presentation**

The most common comment in moderators' reports to individual centres was a reminder that the project presentation includes a requirement for the candidate to reflect upon and to evaluate their experience throughout the project. That certainly bears repetition here.

There are many very 'professional' presentations, but there is an irony in a good presentation, as teachers and supervisors will know well. A captivating speaker will make little or no reference to Powerpoint slides, and will have internalised his/her speaking notes to give the appearance of being almost spontaneous. As with negotiations and interviews earlier in the process, it remains frustrating that the personality of the candidate rarely comes through in the Extended Project, other than in occasional comments in the supervisor's notes. There is certainly scope for centres to step outside the Powerpoint evidence, excellent though it often is.

## **Assessment**

There are currently three imperatives for assessment by centres:

1. To raise candidate awareness of the assessment criteria (in detail) through the Taught Programme.
2. To supply full, best-fit, constructively critical commentaries in the Supervisor's Assessment Log.
3. To understand the overlapping qualities of AOs 1 - 4 in the awarding of marks.

In centres with entries in different subject areas, it is vital that there is effective internal standardisation of marking at the END of the course, but it is just as important that there is an effort to standardise approaches at the START of the course. These procedures should be tracked regularly throughout the course.

## **Administration**

A double-checking system is needed for all parts of the centre's administration to avoid the errors that can inadvertently cost a candidate their rightful award. WJEC is acutely aware of how stressful such mishaps can be.

In terms of packaging and despatch to WJEC, centres will find the following list useful:

- *Complete the Project Files as per the guidelines, to include a check of signatures on necessary forms.*
- *Please make sure that the Project Files are in correct order when submitting.*

- *Present projects in uncomplicated ways. Heavyweight ring-binders are not recommended, adding unnecessary cost for the centre, and likewise, plastic wallets are not necessary.*
- *Double-check all marks and aggregations.*
- *Artefacts should be represented sensibly, by photographic evidence if necessary. CDs/DVDs and ‘memory sticks’ should be labelled, secured properly and double-checked for easy use by the moderator.*
- *Large, bulky or fragile artefacts should not be sent – photographic evidence is sufficient.*



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