AQA

LEVEL 1/2
FOUNDATION/HIGHER PROJECT

7991-2: Level 1 & 2 Project
Report on the Examination

7991 and 7992
June 2019

Version: 1.0

Introduction

The entry numbers for both levels of the Project qualification were broadly similar to that for June 2018. The high percentage of entries involving students on courses below Key Stage 4, seen in previous series, was maintained in this series. Whilst most centres entering younger students recognised that the standard of work required was that for a candidate completing a GCSE course, in a few cases this was not appreciated with the projects submitted being over-marked by the centre. There still remain a few centres where students were entered for an inappropriate level of the Project qualification, most commonly at Level 2 but failing to achieve the marks necessary for a Grade C pass and, hence, not receiving an award.

Administration

In the great majority of cases centres submitted marks promptly via e-submissions, and in many cases, in advance of the May 15th 'deadline'. In a few cases, however, centres delayed submitting the required sample of their Projects until after May 15th. It is always helpful to the moderating team if samples of work can be submitted as soon as marks have been submitted to AQA.

Whilst in the majority of cases marking was accurate, moderators were concerned that in a few centres, large adjustments to centre marks were necessary. In the centres where this occurred it was usually the case that supporting comments on the Record of Marks sheets were cursory and there was an absence of evidence for the internal standardisation of marking. Where more than one person is involved in the marking of the projects, it is a requirement that the 'centre coordinator standardises marking within the centre to make sure that all students at the centre have been assessed to the same standard' (Specification Section 2.5.4). It is also a requirement that 'Supervisors … show clearly how the marks have been awarded in relation to the marking criteria defined in the specification' (Specification 2.5.4) with two approaches being permissible, either 'key pieces of evidence flagged throughout the work by annotation', or 'summative comments on the work, referencing precise sections of the work' (Specification 2.5.4). In signing the Centre Declaration Sheet, the centre coordinator is confirming that these processes are in place.

Centres should be aware that the completion of projects is covered by the requirements of the JCQ Instructions for conducting coursework document. Reference is made, below, to guidance relating to the need to avoid plagiarism, but centres should also be aware of the need to ensure that guidance to students is at a general level only. Instances were seen, in a small minority of cases, where this advice might not have been fully understood by centres. It is incumbent upon centres offering the Foundation and Higher Project qualifications to ensure that they are fully conversant with the JCQ regulations regarding the conduct of coursework.

Assessment Objectives

Most submissions evidenced a sound understanding of the Assessment Objectives. There were, however, a number of instances, and these were mostly centre specific, where some of the assessment objectives appeared not fully understood.

AO1 - Manage

Students who performed well in terms of this objective had fully understood the need for a carefully completed Log. Entries in these Logs were both detailed and reflective, and evidenced how students responded to Supervisor guidance. At the Initial Ideas stage, these projects evidenced the choice of topic and title, set out aims and considered a number of potential sources. At the

Planning Review stage a time-referenced plan was established showing how the candidate proposed both researching and producing the project outcome. The Mid Project Review, conducted at the completion of the research phase of the project, confirmed the agreed project title and product. In completing the Log, high-performing students evidenced how they responded to supervisor guidance, how their plan might have evolved in the light of the research carried out or problems they encountered. It is evident here that a well-completed Log also contributes to the evidencing of AO3 Develop & realise, as well as AO4 Review.

A number of Logs inspected contained only restricted entries. Little detail was provided relating to the choice of title, aims were poorly expressed or were absent, and entries beyond this point were brief. Moderators noted that restricted Logs of this type were common across a centre entry, indicating a misunderstanding by the centre of the importance of the Log. Sometimes centres appeared to have encouraged students to complete a 'diary' logging all project activities and seeing this as a 'replacement' for the Log. Such diaries are to be discouraged, leading as they do to the under-valuing of the Log.

AO2 - Use resources

Moderators expressed concern at the small, but significant, number of centres where students, whilst (usually) providing a bibliography, submitted reports either completely or largely without referencing. The JCQ Instructions for conducting coursework set out specific requirements for the referencing of material from both printed sources and the internet, and specify that a bibliography is required and that this must list the full details of publications used to research and support their coursework, even when these are not directly referred to in the report. Where such deficiencies are evident it is not possible for students to evidence satisfying the criteria for AO2. For students entered for the Level 2 Higher Project it is expected that they will also seek to evidence how they were able to evaluate the sources that they employed. Whilst, in previous series, there was an encouraging development of source evaluation grids, this was less evident for this series.

Specification requirements

Many sound artefact-based projects were submitted this series. However, in a few cases, it seemed to moderators that some students might have been encouraged to 'choose' an artefact-based project concentrating upon the 'making' or 'building' aspect of the undertaking to the detriment of the appropriate evidencing of the project process. These submissions often failed to evidence students recognising the need for their project to be research-based, with a clearly defined 'audience' and allowing for an independent assessment of the 'success' of the outcome.

Moderators were encouraged by the evidence showing a good understanding by students of the use of the presentation to 'tell the story' of their project, rather than just present information about what they had 'found out about', and by supervisors of the opportunity to ask focused questions of students to elicit additional evidence for assessment.

Conclusion

There were some exceptionally good projects seen in this series. Amongst many noteworthy titles were those dealing with Superfoods and ways these might be incorporated into our daily diet, geo-political lessons relating to WW2, privacy and terrorism, and diplomatic relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea. As ever, students' enthusiasm for their chosen topics was apparent and supervisors did an excellent job in encouraging and supporting such enthusiasm.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.