

Typical performance in projects of candidates at the awarded grades



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1. Foundation projects

Grade A*/A boundary

Characteristics of performance at the grade A*/A boundary at level 1 are as follows.

AO1

- Project title is phrased as a question, hypothesis or brief.
- Candidate gives a reasonably clear rationale for the project.
- Good planning results in coherence to the activity.

AO2

- Candidate uses of a range of skills and knowledge.
- Candidate uses of a range of resources, including different types of information, not just websites, with identification of sources and their value.

AO3

- Candidate listens to and acts upon advice/feedback.
- Candidate identifies and achieves most of the planned outcomes, tasks and objectives.
- Candidate shows development of skills and understanding, providing basic explanations using technical language.

AO4

- Review refers back to the objectives, showing use of reflective skills, and to his or her own learning and performance.
- Candidate communicates the findings of outcomes of the project through the presentation.
- Candidate displays some knowledge and understanding of the topic area in his or her answers to questions.

Grade B/U boundary

Candidates at the B/U boundary tend to produce an uneven performance, with good performance on some aspects balanced by poor performance on others.

Characteristics of an 'even' performance at the grade B/U boundary at level 1 are as follows.

AO1

- Candidate gives a basic reason for doing the project, rather than a rationale.
- Candidate works to a brief given by the centre or prescribed by a tutor, but the submission is a project and not simply a series of tasks.
- Planning is basic and is presented as a description of what is to be done rather than as an explanation.
- Project lacks clear objectives.

AO2

- Candidate gives limited evidence of research.
- Candidate lists activities, rather than describing or explaining them, and lists resources, rather than evaluating or reviewing them.
- Candidate shows limited range of sources of information, although he or she may include various irrelevant or unrelated source materials.

AO3

- Candidate achieves some objectives.
- Candidate shows some ideas, but the project is generally brief and characterised by listing and some limited description.

AO4

- Review identifies some issues, but does not necessarily identify solutions or modifications.
- Presentation of the project is clear in places, but lacks overall focus.
- Responses to questions reveal a basic knowledge of the topic area.

2. Higher projects

Grade A*/A boundary

Characteristics of performance at the grade A*/A boundary at level 2 are as follows.

AO1

- Candidate phrases project title as a focused question, hypothesis or brief, and candidate gives a clear rationale for the project.
- Candidate identifies appropriate tasks and objectives and personally engages with them to plan the project.
- Project plans and work are well organised and coherent.

AO2

- Candidate uses an effective range of resources and sources of information.
- Candidate shows well-developed research skills and appropriate use of technical language and/or specialist vocabulary.

AO3

- Where appropriate, candidate responds to guidance and feedback and acts appropriately on advice.
- Candidate shows clear reference to problems encountered and how he or she addressed them.
- Candidate shows development of a range of skills and a good grasp of the research topic.
- Candidate writes a lot, showing understanding and use of technical language.
- Candidate identifies and achieves most of the planned outcomes, tasks and objectives.

AO4

- Review and evaluation refer back to objectives and to his or her own learning and performance. Candidate shows some recognition of what went well / not so well and why.
- Project presentation is well-communicated throughout.
- Candidate gives appropriate responses to questions, displaying knowledge and understanding of the topic area.

Grade C/U boundary

Candidates at the C/U boundary tend to produce an uneven performance, with good performance on some aspects balanced by poor performance on others.

Characteristics of an 'even' performance at the grade C/U boundary at level 2 are as follows.

AO1

- Candidate shows some personal choice and research into the project title (likely to be rather broad, lacking focus), and a basic rationale.
- Project lacks clear objectives.

AO2

- Project lacks coherent research.
- Candidate uses a range of resources, although not necessarily including the different types expected for the project.

AO3

- Candidate shows some skills development.
- Project has a logical structure, and candidate achieves some of the planned outcomes, but some errors in the use of technical language are likely.

AO4

- Candidate gives a broad set of conclusions, relating back to aims and objectives, but little in the way of analysis.
- Presentation is generally effective but lacks coherence and is perhaps not fully accurate.
- Responses to questions reveal a knowledge and understanding of the topic area.

3. Extended projects

Grade A*/A boundary

Characteristics of performance at the grade A*/A boundary at level 3 are as follows.

AO1

- Candidate personally develops the project title, phrases it as a clearly focused question, hypothesis or brief, and provides a clear rationale for the project.
- Candidate personally identifies appropriate strategies, tasks and objectives, justifies his or her choices and engages with them.
- Work is well-planned, well-organised, coherent and includes appropriate autonomous review and modification.

AO2

- Candidate uses a rich and varied range of sources of information critically and effectively, and candidate uses resources appropriately.
- Candidate shows evident and well developed research skills, technical language and/or specialist vocabulary.
- Candidate shows clear understanding of the complexities of the topic.
- Candidate shows evidence of synthesis through by making relevant links to related areas.

AO3

- Candidate gives considered response to guidance and shows evidence of critical reflection, plus appropriate action on advice.
- Candidate references problems encountered and justifies action taken to address these.
- Candidate shows evidence of the development of skills, including underpinning ideas and concepts where appropriate, and of clear understanding of the topic area.
- Candidate achieves a high quality and appropriate outcome that realises most of the intentions of the project.

AO4

- Candidate carries out an in-depth evaluation in relation to stated objectives and to his or her own learning and performance.

- Candidate identifies reasons for any non-realisation of objectives and any flaws in the original objectives.
- Candidate clearly presents the outcomes of the project, including explicit commentary on findings and conclusions clearly related to the original objectives.
- Candidate makes use of a range of appropriate presentation skills.
- Candidate responds well to questions and displays a clear and in-depth knowledge and understanding of the topic area.

Grade E/U boundary

Candidates at the E/U boundary tend to produce an uneven performance, with good performance on some aspects balanced by poor performance on others.

Characteristics of an 'even' performance at the grade E/U boundary at level 3 are as follows.

AO1

- Project shows limited evidence of personal choice and research into the project title (likely to be rather broad, lacking focus). Candidate gives a basic rationale with little real engagement.
- Candidate produces a workable plan, although the objectives lack clarity.

AO2

- Project lacks coherent research.
- Candidate uses a range of resources, although not necessarily including the different types expected for the project.
- Candidate makes some links and connections to related areas.

AO3

- Candidate shows some evidence of skills development and limited evidence of response to feedback or advice.
- Project generally has a logical structure, but some errors in the use of language are likely.
- Candidate partially realises the planned outcomes.
- Candidate gives a broad set of conclusions, but very little in the way of analysis.

AO4

- Candidate provides some review of the way the final outcomes emerged from the objectives and to his or her own learning and performance.
- Presentation is generally effective but may lack coherence and/or complete accuracy.
- Responses to questions reveal some knowledge and understanding of the topic area.

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