

1.3 What are the Learning Outcomes of the Extended Project Qualification?

The learner will:

- identify, design, plan and complete an individual project (or task within a group project), applying organisational skills and strategies to meet stated objectives
- obtain and select information from a range of sources, analyse data, apply relevantly and demonstrate understanding of any appropriate linkages, connections and complexities of the topic
- select and use a range of skills, including new technologies where appropriate, to solve problems, to take decisions critically, creatively and flexibly, and to achieve planned outcomes
- evaluate outcomes including own learning and performance and select and use a range of communication skills and media to convey and present evidenced outcomes and conclusions.

1.4 What might be involved in an Extended Project?

Learners think of a project they may wish to carry out and discuss their ideas with their centre supervisor. Learners initially carry out some research to enable them to answer the questions in the Project Proposal Form. Once they have firmed up their project idea and decided the best format in which to present their project, they complete the Project Proposal Form. This is signed by both the learner and the supervisor and forms part of the evidence for assessment and moderation.

The supervisor assesses the potential project against the following checklist.

1. Is the topic to be researched, or the activity or task to be carried out, suitable for the Extended Project?
2. Does the title of the project and proposed action allow the learner to investigate and to access the higher-level concepts and skills in the learning outcomes and assessment objectives, i.e. plan, research, analyse, evaluate and explain, rather than simply describe and narrate?
3. Are the title and proposed action clear and focused on an issue which can be managed within the timescale, available resources and word total?
4. Do the title and proposed action indicate that the learner will be capable of investigating and researching the topic or carrying out the activity or task independently?
5. Is there a danger that the learner will be unable to approach the project impartially and in a balanced way?
6. Is the learner likely to face difficulties understanding the themes and issues associated with the project topic?

7. If the Extended Project is part of a Diploma, does the project topic either complement and develop the Principal Learning component of the Diploma or support the learner's progression and development?

The Centre coordinator comments on the project proposal, approves the project without recommendations or makes recommendations or requests a resubmission of the Project Proposal Form. This form is then included in the Production Log.

The learners complete the Production Log as they carry out their projects. The Production Log records the following key information:

- initial planning meeting between the learner and the supervisor
- the learner's outline plan at the beginning of the project
- mid-project review with the supervisor
- end-of-project review with the supervisor
- summary
- a record of the presentation
- the learner's reflection on the project and presentation.

The learners must carry out a presentation which should be for a non-specialist audience using media appropriate to the type of project. This could take the form of a group presentation in the case of a group project or a one-to-one presentation to the supervisor. The presentation must be supported by a question and answer session which is recorded in the Production Log.

The completed Production Log, the written report, the evidence and the presentation are assessed together by the centre at the end of the process.

2 Teaching, Supervising and Assessing the Extended Project

The Extended Project will require the teaching of relevant planning, organisational, project management, study and presentation skills and a piece of independent work undertaken by the learner. This work will be guided and monitored by the learner's supervisor, monitored by the Centre coordinator and internally assessed by the centre.

2.1 Aims

The Extended Project offers opportunities for learners to:

- have a significant input into the choice and design of an Extended Project and take responsibility either for an individual task or for a defined task within a group project
- develop and improve their own learning and performance as critical, reflective and independent learners
- develop and apply decision making and, where appropriate, problem solving skills
- extend their planning, research, critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, evaluation and presentation skills
- develop, where appropriate, as e-confident learners and apply new technologies in their studies
- develop and apply skills creatively, demonstrating initiative and enterprise
- use their learning experiences to support their personal aspirations for higher education and career development.

2.2 Teaching the Extended Project

The Extended Project Qualification will require teaching of the necessary skills. It is expected that up to a quarter of the total available time i.e. 30 guided learning hours, will be spent on teaching. The remaining time is allocated for the learner's independent work and the individual supervision and guidance documented in the Production Log. Teaching of the skills for the Extended Project should be determined by the supervisor as appropriate to the needs of the learner and their chosen project. It is likely to include:

- any skills or techniques that will be required for the safe and effective execution of the project which are not part of the candidate's course of study. e.g. safe laboratory or workshop technique, professional codes of practice, ethical guidelines, research method
- ICT skills that will enhance the production of the report and/or the development of the project covering research, analysis and execution
- research skills including the ability to search for and identify suitable sources of information and prior research or relevant work already undertaken
- project management skills including time, resource and task management
- in the case of a performance, production or artefact, the format and content of rehearsal notes, initial sketches or other evidence to document the stages of production
- in the case of a written research report or investigation, the format and structure of accepted academic form to include abstract, introduction, background research, further research content with all sources cited, discussion, conclusion, references, including the evaluation of sources
- Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills, Functional Skills and Key Skills (see Section 3).

2.3 Supervising the Learners

The centre will allocate a supervisor to each learner. The number of learners allocated to each supervisor should take into account the supervisor's other commitments. The supervisor should normally undertake the following:

- agree the project title and proposal and complete the supervisor's section in the Project Proposal Form for each learner
- meet with each learner to discuss the learner's initial idea and how they intend to develop the project
- carry out a mid-term review with each learner
- carry out an end-of-project review with each learner
- confirm that a presentation by each learner took place
- endorse each learner's Production Log by signing the front page.

2.4 Assessing the Extended Project

2.4.1 Assessment Evidence

The evidence for assessment will comprise the following:

- the completed Production Log including the Project Proposal Form
- a written report
- evidence, as appropriate, depending on the topic or subject area chosen e.g. an artefact or recording of a performance
- the presentation.

Completed Production Log

The Production Log will document the planning and progress of the project, including decision-making and the learner's reflections on the process.

The Production Log will contain a record of the following:

- initial idea and outline plan for the project (completed by learner)
- record of research carried out and resources used (completed by learner with supervisor confirmation)
- record of advice and support offered (completed by supervisor) and action taken as a result (completed by learner)
- relationship of project to main areas of study (completed by learner with supervisor confirmation)
- note of any changes made to plan and reasons for the change (completed by learner)
- a record of the presentation completed by the learner with supervisor confirmation
- reflection on the process of producing the project (completed by learner).

All substantive advice given to the learners should be recorded in the Production Log.

Appropriate Evidence

Depending on the subject area or topic chosen, a variety of evidence may be submitted for assessment. Evidence can be provided in any form appropriate to the type of project chosen, and may include:

- an artefact, model or construction
- a CD/video/DVD of performances or activities
- an audiotape/multimedia presentation
- a journal of activities or events
- a slide or PowerPoint presentation
- a photographic record of the project.

Written Report

All learners must submit a written report for assessment of between 1000 and 5000 words. The exact length of each written report will depend on the nature of the project, the subject area or topic chosen and the other evidence provided.

A project which consists solely of written work should be approximately 5000 words, for example an investigation, exploration of a hypothesis or extended essay or academic report. Projects where the majority of the evidence is provided in other formats should include a report or record of work undertaken which is at least 1000 words.

The written report or record is likely to contain the following:

- sources of and range of information accessed
- details of the range of skills used including, where appropriate, new technologies and/or access to e-learning materials
- historical or other research
- details of the design, knowledge, understanding and skills used to complete the tasks or activities of the project, eg an experiment, a construction, a performance or research interviews
- a conclusion to include an evaluation of the outcomes of the project, an evaluation of own performance of learning and decision-making.

Any written record of the task or activities should be of sufficient length to explore the issues, use an appropriate terminology, style and form of writing.

Presentation

The presentation should be for a non-specialist audience and use media appropriate to the type of project. The presentation could take the form of a verbal or written presentation or may involve the use of flipcharts, posters, OHP transparencies, PowerPoint or short excerpts of video material. This could take the form of a group presentation, in the case of a group project, or a one-to-one presentation to the supervisor. The presentation should be supported by answers to any questions from supervisors.

Group Work

If a learner's project contributes to, or is part of, a group end product then the defined individual contribution must be pre-approved by the centre supervisor. Learners working as a group must submit individual written reports which detail their own contribution to the group project.

Evidence presented for assessment must show how individual learners have met the assessment objectives and performance criteria.

2.4.2 Marking Criteria

Assessment criteria statements are provided in three mark bands for each objective and should be regarded as hierarchical (i.e. each criterion assumes that any lower criteria are also met and that aspects of any higher criteria may be met in part).

When assessments are made, the criteria should be used to judge which mark best fits the candidate's work on their Extended Project.

The mark should be awarded on the basis of the general level of the candidate's work in relation to the criteria statements for each level (i.e. an isolated example of performance at a different level should not be used to raise or lower the overall assessment).

The work will clearly meet most of the criteria given in the appropriate level descriptor for the lowest available mark at that level. Higher marks at each level should be used where work is judged to meet the criteria readily, consistently and across different elements of the project.

For example a candidate who does not reach 3 marks but who has made a creditworthy attempt should be given 2 marks for that objective. The zero mark band should be awarded in the event of a candidate failing to demonstrate any achievement in the objective at Level 3.

2

Assessment Objectives	Mark band	Assessment Criteria
AO1 Manage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the topic identify project aims and objectives produce a project plan complete the work applying organisational skills and strategies to meet stated objectives 	7 – 10 marks	Clear identification of the topic to be investigated or researched and clear evidence of appropriate aims and objectives for the proposed project title. Detailed project plan, with clear evidence of monitoring progress of project work against the agreed project plan.
	4 – 6 marks	Some identification of the topic to be investigated or researched and some evidence of appropriate aims and objectives for the proposed project title. Project plan, with some evidence of monitoring progress of project work against the agreed project plan.
	1 – 3 marks	Limited identification of the topic to be investigated or researched and limited evidence of appropriate aims and objectives for the proposed project title. Brief project plan, with little evidence of monitoring progress of project work against the agreed project plan.
	0 marks	No relevant response.

Assessment Objectives	Mark band	Assessment Criteria
AO2 Use resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • obtain and select information from a variety of sources • analyse data • apply information relevantly • demonstrate understanding of appropriate links 	7 – 10 marks	<p>Evidence of detailed research involving the selection and evaluation of a wide range of relevant sources.</p> <p>Critical analysis and application of the research, with clear links made to appropriate theories and concepts.</p>
	4 – 6 marks	<p>Evidence of some research involving the selection and evaluation of a range of relevant sources.</p> <p>Some analysis and application of the research, with links made to appropriate theories and concepts.</p>
	1 – 3 marks	<p>Evidence of limited research involving limited selection and evaluation of sources.</p> <p>Little or no analysis and application of the research, with few links made to appropriate theories and concepts.</p>
	0 marks	No relevant response.

Assessment Objectives	Mark band	Assessment Criteria
AO3 Develop and Realise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • problem-solving • decision-making • creative thinking • to achieve planned outcomes 	14 – 20 marks	<p>Candidates take appropriate decisions and appropriate data is collected and thoroughly analysed. The project plan is fully implemented and the outcome is fully realised to a high standard and consistent with a candidate's finally agreed plan.</p> <p>There is clear evidence of changes to the initial project plan or title or aims and objectives, with clear and appropriate reasons for any changes.</p> <p>Candidates communicate their findings fluently in an appropriate format, synthesising information from a variety of sources and present them within a logical and coherent structure which addresses closely the nature of the task.</p>
	7 – 13 marks	<p>Candidates take decisions and some appropriate data is collected and adequately analysed. The project plan is implemented and the outcome is sufficiently realised to an acceptable standard and consistent with a candidate's finally agreed plan.</p> <p>There is some evidence of changes to the initial project plan or title or aims and objectives, with reasons for any changes.</p> <p>Candidates communicate clearly their findings, showing some ability to synthesise information from different sources and present them in a structured manner appropriate for the task.</p>
	1 – 6 marks	<p>Candidates take few decisions and a little data is insufficiently analysed. The project plan is implemented in a limited way and the outcome is realised in a limited manner and not always consistent with a candidate's finally agreed plan.</p> <p>There is little or no evidence of changes to the initial project plan or title or aims and objectives, with only limited reasons for any changes.</p> <p>Candidates communicate their findings by drawing on a limited number of sources and present them in a manner not always appropriate for the task.</p>
	0 marks	No relevant response.

Assessment Objectives	Mark band	Assessment Criteria
AO4 Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate own learning and performance • communication skills • convey and present evidenced outcomes and conclusions 	7 – 10 marks	<p>Detailed and careful evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the completed project in relation to the planning, implementation and outcomes, and the candidate's own learning during the project.</p> <p>Material is consistently relevant, well-structured and appropriately presented. Candidates clearly communicate their findings and conclusions which are based on sound evidence and judgement.</p>
	4 – 6 marks	<p>Some evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the completed project in relation to the planning, implementation and outcomes, and the candidate's own learning during the project.</p> <p>Material is sometimes relevant, well-structured and appropriately presented. Candidates communicate their findings and conclusions which are based on some evidence and judgement.</p>
	1 – 3 marks	<p>Limited evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the completed project in relation to the planning, implementation and outcomes, and the candidate's own learning during the project.</p> <p>Material is not always relevant, well-structured or appropriately presented. Candidates communicate some of their findings and conclusions which are based on little or no evidence and judgement.</p>
	0 marks	<p>No relevant response.</p>

2.4.3 Assessment Objectives (AOs)

All candidates are required to meet the following Assessment Objectives. The Assessment Objectives are weighted as indicated below:

	Assessment Objectives	Weighting
AO1	Manage Identify, design, plan, and complete the individual project, or task within a group project, applying organisational skills and strategies to meet stated objectives.	20%
AO2	Use Resources Obtain and select information from a range of sources, analyse data, apply relevantly and demonstrate understanding of any appropriate linkages, connections and complexities of their topic.	20%
AO3	Develop and Realise Select and use a range of skills, including new technologies, to solve problems, to take decisions critically, creatively and flexibly, and to achieve planned outcomes.	40%
AO4	Review Evaluate outcomes including own learning and performance. Select and use a range of communication skills and media to convey and present evidenced outcomes and conclusions.	20%

2.4.4 Standardisation

AQA will hold standardising meetings for teachers. Centres entering candidates for the first time must send a representative to the meetings. Attendance is also mandatory in the following cases:

- where there has been a serious misinterpretation of the specification requirements;
- where the nature of the projects agreed by a centre has been inappropriate;
- where a significant adjustment has been made to a centre's marks in the previous examination.

Otherwise attendance is at the discretion of centres. At these meetings AQA will provide support in developing appropriate projects and in using the marking criteria.

Centres must standardise marking within the centre to make sure that all candidates at the centre have been marked to the same standard. One person must be responsible for internal standardisation. This person should sign the Centre Declaration Sheet to confirm that internal standardisation has taken place.

Internal standardisation may involve:

- all teachers marking some trial pieces of work and identifying differences in marking standards;
- discussing any differences in marking at a training meeting for all teachers involved in the assessment;
- referring to reference and archive material such as previous work or examples from AQA's teacher standardising meetings;

but other valid approaches are permissible.

Appendices

A Grade Descriptions

The following award descriptions indicate the level of attainment characteristic of the given grade at Level 3. They give a general indication of the required learning outcomes at each specific grade. The descriptions should be interpreted in relation to the content outlined in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.

The award will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the Assessment Objectives (see Section 2.4.3) overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the project may be balanced by a better performance in other aspects.

Grade A

Candidates clearly plan and execute highly organised and independent extended projects. There is clear evidence of how the advice given by the supervisor has been used or interpreted. The candidates use a wide range of resources critically and to good effect and show a clear link between the sources and the themes of their projects. Problems and issues are identified and fully explored, with conclusions drawn and the intended outcomes of the projects are fully realised. The conclusions are clearly presented and well argued leaving no doubt in the audiences' minds of the success of the venture. In their evaluations, candidates show a high level of insight into how they conducted their projects.

Grade E

Candidates produce a workable plan, however there is little evidence of how they have used or interpreted the advice given by the supervisor. The candidates use a limited range of resources to enable the projects to be realised but there is no clear link between the resources and the themes of the projects. Appropriate use is made of resources but they are not greatly developed in the final projects. The final projects are adequate to communicate the intentions of the candidates but there is limited reflection on the way the final outcomes have emerged and their own strengths and weaknesses in carrying out their projects. Conclusions tend to be asserted rather than argued in the presentation.

Grade C

The plan is sufficient to enable the candidates to achieve the overall objectives but limited in terms of being able to demonstrate the higher level organisational skills. There is some evidence of how the advice given by the supervisor has been used or interpreted. A range of resources is used but the candidates do not fully exploit the material. The candidates have met the goal of producing a project but have missed opportunities to develop the material more fully. The projects are clearly expressed and the conclusions are well argued in the presentation. In their evaluations, candidates reflect effectively on their strengths and weaknesses in carrying out their projects.

A



Scaled mark component grade boundaries - November 2008 exams

Extended Project Qualification

Maximum Scaled Mark	Scaled Mark Grade Boundaries					
	A*	A	B	C	D	E
50	45	38	32	26	20	14

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