



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Rewarding Learning

Draft framework and criteria for the extended project (level 3)

May 2006

QCA/06/2704

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1. Introduction to the criteria

1.1 The criteria for the extended project at level 3 set out the knowledge, understanding and skills that should be common to all extended project (level 3) specifications. They provide the framework within which the awarding body creates the detail of the specification. The extended project criteria at level 3 are intended to:

- describe the character and purpose of the extended project (level 3)
- ensure consistent and comparable standards across awarding bodies and other level 3 qualifications
- ensure that the rigour of extended projects (level 3) assessment is maintained
- help employers and higher education institutions know what has been studied when an extended project (level 3) has been completed and assessed.

2. Aims

2.1 The extended project at level 3 should offer opportunities for candidates to:

- have a significant input to the choice and design of an extended project (level 3) 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.

3. Relationship between the extended project (level 3) and other areas of study

3.1 The extended project (level 3) should:

- be of sufficient breadth and depth to allow candidates to address the broad aims listed above
- develop and extend from one or more of the candidate's study areas and/or from an area of personal interest or activity outside their main programme of study
- be supported by a taught element, mentoring and tutorials, and to e-learning materials
- require up to 180 guided learning hours.

4. The specification content

- 4.1 The extended project (level 3) should require candidates to:
- select, either individually or as part of a group, a topic/area of interest for an in-depth study that provides opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and understanding and negotiate with their mentor (teacher/employer/HE collaborator) the scope of that project
 - identify and draft one or more objective for their project (eg in the form of a question, hypothesis, problem, challenge, issue to be investigated or commissioned for a client) and provide a rationale for their choice(s)
 - plan, research and complete independently, or take an identified and individual role in, a project
 - provide evidence of planning, organisation, research, evaluation and outcomes of the project
 - produce a presentation on the completed project in an appropriate medium and designed for a specified audience.
- 4.2 The extended project (level 3) should provide opportunities for candidates to apply and develop knowledge and understanding by:
- drawing on, extending and applying their understanding of the key concepts and principles underlying their studies or areas of interest
 - making connections and identifying links and complexities, where appropriate, between areas of study and/or areas of interest.
- 4.3 The extended project (level 3) should provide opportunities for candidates to apply and develop skills by:
- identifying, planning, carrying out and completing an in-depth piece of work on a chosen topic
 - demonstrating skills of self-management through target setting, sequencing and allocation of tasks, establishing success criteria, adapting and responding to changed circumstances and meeting deadlines
 - collecting and collating data, and, where appropriate, analysing and synthesising information in a variety of forms and from a range of different sources
 - applying decision-making skills and, where appropriate, problem-solving skills to carry out tasks and activities and to draw conclusions
 - adopting a flexible, creative and individual approach to addressing tasks, activities and challenges
 - selecting and applying technology, where appropriate, to support the development of their project
 - reviewing and evaluating own learning and the quality of the outcomes of the project
 - producing for and, where appropriate, delivering to a non-specialist audience a presentation of outcomes.

5. Functional and key skills

5.1 Extended project (level 3) specifications should, where appropriate, provide candidates with opportunities for developing and generating evidence for assessing the key skills of:

- communication
- application of number
- ICT
- improving learning and performance
- working with others
- problem solving.

5.2 These opportunities should be directly cross-referenced, at specified level(s), to the criteria listed in key skills specifications.

The specifications should also provide candidates with opportunities for developing and generating evidence for assessing the functional skills of English, mathematics and ICT, once the new qualifications have been developed.

6. Assessment objectives

6.1 All candidates must be required to meet the following assessment objectives. The assessment objectives should be weighted in all specifications as indicated.

	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.	15–25%
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.	15–25%
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.	35–45%
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.	15–25%

7. Scheme of assessment

7.1 All schemes of assessment must require candidates to show their knowledge, understanding and skills in a variety of ways, but must include a specified written component. In planning the scheme of assessment to accompany the content, awarding bodies should be guided by the criteria given below.

- The assessment approach chosen must match the aims and content of the specification.
- The scheme of assessment must address the four assessment objectives as specified.
- The assessment of the project evidence, including the presentation will be through internal assessment.

- Awarding bodies must specify the type and format of evidence that is permissible as project evidence.
- The assessment outcomes are to be reported as Pass, Merit, Distinction.

7.2 The project should:

- be based on a topic chosen by the student(s) and agreed by the awarding body
- be based on a topic that has the potential to provide the student with opportunities to meet all the assessment objectives
- include tasks and/or activities through which to demonstrate project skills, which may be in any medium appropriate to the topic, for example:
 - data modelling research (eg into the relationship between obesity and life style)
 - experimental design (eg ICT system, a construction, art work)
 - building a performance (eg dance, music, demonstration)
 - a business, social or community venture or enterprise (eg mini-enterprise, awareness campaigns)
 - a local, regional or international team project (eg educational or construction activities).

7.3 The evidence for assessment for any part of the project, including its outcome, can be presented in any appropriate format. For example, written text, notes, journals, slides, CD-ROMs, videos/DVDs of performances and activities, audio tape, photographs, and artefacts.

The evidence for assessment should comprise:

- evidence of the strategic planning and progress of the project (eg a validated log documenting the progress of the project and the decision-making process) – this could be via a diary, IT logging system, staged reviews/ interviews
- sources of and range of information accessed
- evidence of the range of skills used including, where appropriate, new technologies and/or access to e-learning materials
- details of the design, knowledge, understanding and skills used to complete the tasks/activities of the project (eg an experiment, a construction, a performance or research interviews)
- a project conclusion to include an evaluation of the outcomes of the project, an evaluation of the individual's own performance of learning and decision-making and a presentation for a non-specialist audience, using media appropriate to the type of project
- evidence individual to the candidate. While larger group activities (eg an expedition or a performance) may be a vehicle for evidence, that evidence must demonstrate how the individual has met the assessment objectives and performance criteria.

Any written work submitted as evidence of the task/activities should be of sufficient length to explore the issues. It should show that the student is able to correctly structure the document, use an appropriate style and form of writing as well as relevant terminology. For example, a practical

project may have a relatively short documented process, while a dissertation project involves extensive writing. The length of written work will depend on the nature of the project and any accompanying materials.

The presentation should be supported by answers to any questions from assessors.

The outcome and the presentation should demonstrate the individual's knowledge, understanding and skills.

7.4 The assessment system must be sufficiently robust to ensure comparability and consistency, rigour and fairness between candidates, between centres and from year to year. The system should involve:

- approval by the awarding body of an appropriate topic for the individual/group project
- generic mark schemes that appropriately meet the requirements of the assessment objectives
- agreement on the range of acceptable evidence
- monitoring by teachers with supporting evidence
- clear protocols for provision of advice, guidance, interim reviews and redrafting opportunities
- training, verification and moderation of centres and centre staff.

7.5 The qualification must specify arrangements for grading and reporting of the extended project (level 3) so that:

- attainment that is sufficient to lead to the award of a certificate is reported on a three grade scale of Pass, Merit and Distinction, where Distinction is the highest
- attainment that is insufficient to lead to the award of a certificate is recorded as Unclassified or U
- the grades awarded match the performance descriptions published by the regulatory authorities.