



# **Extended Project Qualification, Level 3 Pilot 9990**

## **Report on the Examination**

*2008 examination – May series*

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*Dr Michael Cresswell*, Director General.

## General Comments

It was pleasing to see a diverse and interesting range of work submitted in this final cohort of the qualification pilot. All centres involved had participated in centre coordinator training (and standardising) meetings.

The vast majority of candidates appeared to have received suitable supervision and moderators appreciated the care with which most centres had undertaken the assessment and standardising task. Candidates for this qualification were clearly able to develop and demonstrate their ability to work independently, research a variety of concepts, resolve methodological issues, manage their time and reflect critically upon their product and their own learning. The overall standard was encouragingly high.

The majority of projects submitted were in the form of a single written piece with the topic choices typically based upon a range of personal interests or in the intended field of study in higher education; although there were also many 'artefacts' of various types. Written artefacts should be presented in an authentic format (e.g. formal presentation of laboratory results or field investigation, or a piece of foreign language material) but should also be accompanied by a short written report that provided an analysis of content and a rationale for the work.

## Administration

Administration was generally good and supervisors provided helpful comments, either on the candidates' Production Log or the Candidate Record Form. Such comments were particularly helpful when they included comments on the presentation content and conduct and concluding comments relating to each assessment objective (rather than to the candidates' achievement of their own project objectives).

## Group Working

In a few cases, centres submitting projects by individual candidates that formed part of a group exercise failed to ensure that evidence adequately represented the work of each individual candidate or that each individual candidate clearly met all the qualification requirements. It was important to note that while it was permissible to submit work that has led to a group product, each individual project should be negotiated by each candidate so that their contribution to the group product formed an individual project that could be evidenced as such.

## Assessment Criteria

There were few serious misinterpretations of the assessment criteria but noticeable tendencies included over-rewarding of successful project realisation (AO3) when the written report contained little analysis. There was also some over-rewarding when subject mastery was clearly evidenced without similar evidence of use or development of the project skills that the qualification aims to encourage and reward (AO1, AO2). The better candidates fully used a recognised referencing format authentic to the field of study and additionally made a formal evaluation of sources used.

## Project Outcomes

Candidates who achieved good results had typically:

- Spent time and effort on the initial topic choice and formal proposal process in negotiation with their supervisor;
- Had supervision that challenged planning ideas at various stages;
- Responded to thorough questioning of ideas and approaches (in presentation and project reviews);
- Begun with a relatively wide approach but focussed clearly upon a final question/product in negotiation with their supervisor by the time of the mid-project review;
- Taken (creative) risks in tackling procedures or thinking 'outside their comfort zone';
- Thought through the appropriate form of their final product/report with supervisor guidance and encouragement and avoided rigid formats;
- Included some element of reflection throughout their production log entries that created depth and sense of development in their final reflection;
- Avoided the trap of making their report simply a descriptive outline of the process or a final evaluation (effectively simply expanding upon the production log) and ensured instead that their work was given a context and analytical rationale.
- Written their report to the appropriate length (in the range 1000 – 5000 words) to achieve their needs rather than just meeting a minimum (1000 words) or writing at considerable length (well over 5000 words) without regard for the need for selection of material.