

Commentary on candidate evidence

Project title: An investigation into herbal ley as an alternative way to feed livestock

Proposal

This is a project proposal firmly rooted in the candidate's local environment and personal interest. It is unusual in terms of the potential to bring about significant change to local habits.

The project outline begins with a clear aim, immediately explained, and justified in terms of the candidate's personal interest. The aim is amplified, and sufficient background is given to suggest that the candidate has put considerable thought into their choice of project. A variety of external learning environments – including the local community, academic experts and business contacts are identified. The methods suggested, including experimental work, are varied, relevant, feasible and likely to allow project aims to be met while providing ample opportunity for challenge and development of skills.

The choice of project is justified by personal interest, future career plans and potential importance in terms of local development of sustainable farming practices. The candidate details relevant specific knowledge gained from study of Biology and Chemistry at Higher level.

Broad contexts covered are identified and their relevance robustly justified with supporting paragraphs.

The candidate's learning environments section demonstrates, by identifying specific companies and individuals, the planning that has already taken place. Having a clear idea of who to contact/involve at this early stage is likely to be beneficial to implementation of the project. The candidate makes it clear that they have thought about some of the challenges involved and how they will record progress – both could contribute to the holistic assessment of the project.

Considerable detail is provided as to how the candidate will use knowledge of their chosen subject area, again demonstrating the degree of planning that has already taken place. In this section it becomes clear that the candidate has carefully thought through how to meet their aims, some of the challenges that they will have to overcome and the sequencing of tasks.

The skills development section gives a very clear and detailed account of strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for development of each skill listed. The candidate is meticulous (as in all evidence pieces) in following the italicised prompts given in the SQA templates. This is likely to be very helpful in meeting assessment criteria.

All A and C grade assessment criteria for the project proposal are met.

Plan

A detailed timescale for the entire project is given. While sufficient detail is provided to allow the award of the relevant assessment criteria, the inclusion of a Gantt chart (submitted with the original evidence) fully supports the timescales, reinforcing meeting this criterion.

The planning section is exemplary – elaborating how each objective will be met. This section demonstrates again the candidate's careful consideration of exactly how the project will be implemented, including possible challenges which also strengthens the contingencies and dependencies sections.

Resources, including a wide variety of people, places, and materials, were specifically identified.

Research methods specify exactly who will be contacted, how and what is hoped to be gained from each contact or activity. The layout of this section shows again that the candidate has developed a very clear idea of the sequencing of activities required. Contingencies are identified and solutions suggested.

The candidate gives very reasonable justification for the project product being a report and has clearly thought about their target audience.

Dependencies identified are highly specific to this project and further show a clear sense of the sequence of activities necessary for project implementation.

Contingencies and their solutions are included as well as some that might be broadly applicable, for example, the possibility of COVID restrictions having an impact, and other demands on time. They have also included some highly project specific contingencies, for example, soil samples not arriving on time.

The candidate's methods for recording their skills development and areas for improvement are logical and likely to be very helpful in completing the project evaluation and self-evaluation of skills development sections.

All A and C grade assessment criteria for the plan are met.

Presentation of project findings/product

The candidate gives a clear, detailed description of their report and strong justification for choice of content and how this content was presented. The distribution of their report in person to local farmers allowed the candidate to disseminate their findings more widely and to gain feedback from those who would be expected to be most interested in the results.

Candidate evidence, supported by the assessor report, clearly indicates that the A and C criteria for this section have been met.

Evaluation of project

Once more the candidate follows the guidance given in italics and gives a clear detailed evaluation of strengths and weaknesses supported by well-chosen examples. Discussion is honest, insightful and gives clear evidence of the candidate's development over the course of their project.

It is obvious that communication methods were successful, again the candidate gives ample and varied exemplification to support their assertions of skills development in this respect.

The next steps identified are unusual in combining the very personal with some far more broadly applicable possibilities involving initially the candidate's local community but ultimately farming communities world-wide. It is also notable that the candidate intends to continue their study when at university.

All A and C grade criteria are met.

Self-evaluation

The candidate gives detailed, comprehensive accounts of development of each listed skill using the prompts contained in the template as a starting point. Writing is clear, logical, balanced and very insightful without being repetitive.

All A and C grade criteria are clearly met.

Overview

This exceptional project shows the value of careful detailed planning at the proposal and plan stage which makes successful implementation more likely.

The candidate was well supported at every stage by their assessor. Assessor feedback comments were not included in the candidate evidence. These can be helpful when considering a candidate's development during the implementation of their project.

The candidate gained considerably from undertaking this project, which they were passionate about from the outset. Their work seems likely to be of benefit not only to their own flock but to the local and possibly wider farming community.

The detailed assessor comments, provided as part of the assessor report, justifies the award criteria (it should be noted that to award an A grade, all A criteria must be met, and therefore ticked in the assessor report. The A grade criterion for careful selection and effective use of research methods has clearly been met – demonstrated in planning, presentation and evaluation sections and therefore should have been ticked).