

The Extended Project Qualification

The EPQ is an opportunity for students to produce an extended piece of work of their own choice, with guidance from staff, which is assessed at school, and then moderated and graded by AQA. It is worth the same UCAS points as half an A level and is graded from A* to E .

It allows you to develop knowledge and expertise in an area that really interests you. It could follow on from work done in one of your subjects as long as it moves **well away** from the syllabus, or a combination of subjects, or in a completely different area.

The EPQ allows you to develop and demonstrate independent research and study skills which will be needed at university. It would be excellent to show or talk about at university interviews.

What sort of project could it be?

- **written report of approx. 5000 words**, e.g. extended essay, investigation of a hypothesis, or an academic report
- **Or, a written report, of between 1000 – 5000 words together with other evidence** of extended work such as a video, CD, DVD, model, performance etc.
- You can **work as a group** as long as each student's contribution is clearly identifiable as a separate element and recorded separately. (NB this option is not recommended and would need to be carefully discussed in advance)

What else is involved? The written report and / or other evidence of work must be accompanied by

- A completed project log, detailing your initial ideas, plans, research methods, resources used, record of advice from supervisor, development of ideas, record of the presentation and a reflection on the process of producing the project.
- A presentation which should be for a non-specialist audience and use media appropriate to the type of project. The presentation may involve the use of flipcharts, posters, OHP transparencies, PowerPoint or short excerpts of video material. **The presentation should include live response to questions from the supervisor.**
- AS and A2 examinations are restricted by detailed syllabus specifications. This is a chance to develop knowledge and expertise in an area that really interests you. It could follow on from work done in one of your subjects as long as it moves well away from the syllabus, or a combination of subjects, or in a completely different area.
- The EPQ allows you to develop and demonstrate independent research and study skills which will be needed at university. It would be excellent to show or talk about at university interviews.

Universities actively support applications from students who have completed the EPQ as it demonstrates a firm grounding in research methodology such as referencing and source validation. Some universities soften offers if students gain an A or better, often by a grade or two. For example an offer of ABB might become BBB with an EPQ at grade A.

Assessment Objectives

All candidates are required to meet the following Assessment Objectives, which are weighted as indicated below:

Project: Manage (20%) Identify, design, plan, and carry out a project, applying a range of skills, strategies and methods to achieve objectives. *To achieve high grades a project will demonstrate:* 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 objectives.

Use Resources (20%) Research, critically select, organise and use information, and select and use a range of resources. Analyse data, apply relevantly and demonstrate understanding of any links, connections and complexities of the topic. *To achieve high grades a project will demonstrate:* Evidence of detailed research involving the selection and evaluation of a wide range of relevant resources. Critical analysis and application of the resources with clear links made to appropriate theories and concepts.

Develop and Realise (40%) Select and use a range of skills, including, where appropriate, new technologies and problem-solving, to take decisions critically and achieve planned outcomes. *To achieve high grades a project will demonstrate that:* 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. There is clear evidence of appropriate changes to, or development of, the initial project plan or title or aims and objectives, with clear and appropriate reasons for any changes. 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.

Review (20%) Evaluate all aspects of the extended project, including outcomes in relation to stated objectives and own learning and performance. Select and use a range of communication skills and media to present evidenced project outcomes and conclusions in an appropriate format. *To achieve high grades a project will demonstrate:* 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. Material is consistently relevant, well- structured and appropriately presented. Candidates clearly communicate their findings and conclusions which are based on sound evidence and judgement.

A* Grade descriptor: Learners identify their project and produce an effective design and thorough plan. They carry out their project in a highly organised fashion, showing excellent **independent working skills** and clear evidence of responding very effectively to guidance given. They use a wide range of resources critically, **analyse** data effectively and apply findings to good effect. They show clear links between sources of information and the themes of their project and fully explore the complexities of the topic. Problems and/or issues are identified, fully explored and addressed. Learners select and use a range of skills including, where appropriate, new technologies, to achieve high quality outcomes that fully realise the intentions of the project **and to draw conclusions**. Learners carry out full, **in-depth evaluations**, showing a high level of insight into how they conducted their project and the limitations of the resources at their disposal. They select and use a

range of communication skills to present outcomes and conclusions clearly, in an appropriate format with excellent supporting evidence. Learners show a deep and extensive knowledge of the project area of study through their responses to questions.