



# EPQ Course Information



**Qualification:** Level 3 Extended Project Qualification

**Exam Board:** AQA

**Subject Leader:** Mrs L. Peacey

## Why study Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)?

For many students, the EPQ represents a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate passion for a chosen subject or topic, alongside development of advanced learning skills.

The EPQ is characterised by independent learning, comprising a single piece of work which shows evidence of planning, preparation, research and autonomous working. It was developed with the intention of strengthening the programme of study for 16-19 year olds by testing a wider range of skills and providing a 'tool kit' of transferable skills that better prepares students for higher education and employment.

## What can I do with (EPQ) after Sixth Form?

Completing the EPQ helps students to develop and evidence a wealth of valuable skills including independent research, project planning, critical analysis, evaluation and presentation skills, all of which are highly valued by universities and employers. Students have used an EPQ to strengthen an application to a competitive university course, by using it as a mechanism of demonstrating their genuine interest in a particular subject area or career.

Some higher education institutions will reduce the wider entry requirements for students who attain a high grade in their EPQ.

## (EPQ) Extras

The EPQ gives students complete flexibility to research an area of their own interest and there is near limitless scope in terms of the opportunities this might offer. For example students have organised specific work experience, planned and conducted trips, interviewed experts, devised and administered questionnaires and learnt to use particular software in the process of conducting their EPQs.

## What will I study?

Students will be assisted to select a subject of interest into which they conduct independent research. Students work with a supervisor to devise an appropriate enquiry question and are mentored through the research process. There is a requirement for students to complete a taught-skills element, which covers a variety of research skills including project planning, ethical research methods, avoiding plagiarism, keeping a research log and referencing sources and effective presentation skills.

Students who begin an EPQ in Year 12 are assigned to a group in September which meets twice weekly at scheduled points on the timetable. Each group is led and overseen by a dedicated supervising member of staff who ensures that elements of the taught skills programme are delivered at appropriate intervals and to the appropriate audience: this will typically be the whole group but may sometimes be individual students, depending on the nature of the project, the specific considerations involved in the completion of each project and the rate of progress of the individual.

In the early stages of the process, the taught skills programme promotes faculties relating to effective project management, with sessions and activities devoted to time management, project planning and formulating an effective title/proposal.

At the planning review stage, students will also be shown how to keep an effective research journal, including web and literature reviews. This is complemented by activities designed to encourage students to interrogate and evaluate evidence and sources on the basis of their provenance and credibility, pushing them to reach a refined and reasoned judgement in the face of conflicting answers to seemingly straightforward questions (e.g. When was Shakespeare born?). At this point, supervisors are encouraged to utilise the expertise and assistance of the college librarians, who are able to highlight for students some more 'academic and scholarly' approaches to accessing high quality print and web-based research materials.

Guidelines relating to ethical research techniques and risk assessment are also covered in this phase, with particular emphasis placed on the importance of avoiding plagiarism through accurate use of referencing, citation and bibliographies.

As students approach the stage of writing up their projects, supervisors ensure that students are advised on techniques for producing reports in an appropriate academic style; they will also begin to look ahead to the presentation component of the process, for which a discrete session on presentation skills is also delivered.

EPQ surgeries, offered by the Centre Coordinator, are also available throughout the year for students to discuss any aspects of the process with which they may require additional support or guidance.