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International

# Extended Project Qualification

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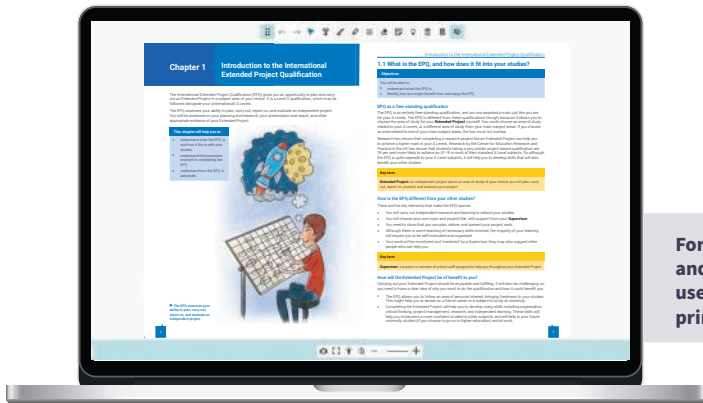
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# Chapter 1

## Introduction to the International Extended Project Qualification

The International Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) gives you an opportunity to plan and carry out an Extended Project in a subject area of your choice. It is a Level 3 qualification, which may be followed alongside your (international) A Levels.

The EPQ assesses your ability to plan, carry out, report on, and evaluate an independent project. You will be assessed on your planning and research, your presentation and report, and other appropriate evidence of your Extended Project.

### This chapter will help you to:

- understand what the EPQ is, and how it fits in with your studies
- understand the processes involved in completing the EPQ
- understand how the EPQ is assessed.



► The EPQ assesses your ability to plan, carry out, report on, and evaluate an independent project.

## 1.1 What is the EPQ, and how does it fit into your studies?

### Objectives

You will be able to:

- understand what the EPQ is
- identify how you might benefit from and enjoy the EPQ.

### EPQ as a free-standing qualification

The EPQ is an entirely free-standing qualification, and you are awarded a mark just like you are for your A Levels. The EPQ is different from these qualifications though, because it allows you to choose the area of study for your **Extended Project** yourself. You could choose an area of study related to your A Levels, or a different area of study from your main subject areas. If you choose an area related to one of your main subject areas, the two must not overlap.

Research has shown that completing a research project like an Extended Project can help you to achieve a higher mark in your A Levels. Research by the Centre for Education Research and Practice in the UK has shown that students taking a very similar project-based qualification are 29 per cent more likely to achieve an A\*-B in most of their standard A Level subjects. So although the EPQ is quite separate to your A Level subjects, it will help you to develop skills that will also benefit your other studies.

### Key term

**Extended Project:** an independent project about an area of study of your choice; you will plan, carry out, report on, present, and evaluate your project

### How is the EPQ different from your other studies?

There are five key elements that make the EPQ special.

- You will carry out independent research and learning to extend your studies.
- You will choose your own topic and project title, with support from your **Supervisor**.
- You need to show that you can plan, deliver, and present your project work.
- Although there is some teaching of necessary skills involved, the majority of your learning will require you to be self-motivated and organised.
- Your work will be monitored and 'mentored' by a Supervisor; they may also suggest other people who can help you.

### Key term

**Supervisor:** a teacher or member of school staff assigned to help you throughout your Extended Project

### How will the Extended Project be of benefit to you?

Carrying out your Extended Project should be enjoyable and fulfilling. It will also be challenging, so you need to have a clear idea of why you want to do the qualification and how it could benefit you.

- The EPQ allows you to follow an area of personal interest, bringing freshness to your studies. This might help you to decide on a future career or a subject to study at university.
- Completing the Extended Project will help you to develop many skills including organisation, critical thinking, project management, research, and independent learning. These skills will help you to become a more confident student in other subjects, and will help in your future university studies (if you choose to go on to higher education) and at work.

- If you apply to a UK university, the EPQ will be recognised as equivalent to half an A Level. This means that successfully completing the EPQ is likely to enhance your application to higher education. It will help you to stand out from other students, both in your personal statement and at interview. This is particularly important when applying for popular courses such as Medicine and Law, or if you are making an application to a top university anywhere in the world.

### Checklist: Do you understand what the EPQ is, and how it can benefit you?

Copy and complete this checklist to make sure you are clear about what the EPQ is and the benefits of this qualification.

	My notes
I understand what the EPQ is, and how it is different from my other areas of study.	
I can list five ways that the EPQ is special.	
I have a clear idea of why I want to do the qualification, and how it could benefit me.	

## 1.2 The process involved in the EPQ

### Objectives

You will be able to:

- understand the steps you will take to complete your Extended Project
- understand how your Supervisor will help you throughout your Extended Project.

### What will I be required to do?

The OxfordAQA International Extended Project Qualification has been independently validated by the UK examinations regulator Ofqual. It has specific requirements.

The following table outlines what you will be required to do.

Project steps (page numbers relate to the relevant sections in this book)	What you will do	What OxfordAQA requires you to do
Starting out on your Extended Project (see pages 18–27)	<p>Choose a topic for your Extended Project and develop some ideas.</p> <p>Choose which type of <b>Project Product</b> you will create: EITHER a 5,000-word report OR an artefact plus a minimum 1,000-word report.</p> <p>Draft a project title, <b>aims</b>, and <b>objectives</b>; these will be approved by your Supervisor and the <b>Centre Coordinator</b>.</p> <p>Carry out some initial research so that you can develop your aims and objectives, and finalise your project title and research plan.</p> <p>Agree your <b>working title</b> with your Supervisor.</p>	<p>Complete the Record of Initial Ideas Form in your <b>Production Log</b>.</p> <p>Complete Part A of the Candidate Proposal Form.</p>

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### Key terms

**Project Product:** for the purposes of EPQ, this is the product that you create by the end of your Extended Project; this will be EITHER a written report of 5,000 words OR an artefact plus a written report of a minimum of 1,000 words

**Aims:** broad, general statements about the purpose or intent of your Extended Project; together these are essentially the main goal that you want to achieve

**Objectives:** something you plan to do, usually a series of tasks to carry out, to achieve the aims of your Extended Project; they should contain action verbs such as 'identify', 'contrast', 'analyse', and 'construct'

**Centre Coordinator:** the person responsible for approving the suitability of all project proposals, and for quality assurance of internal assessment in a school

**Working title:** the title you start with, and which is agreed and approved as part of the Extended Project approval process. This is the title you will use during your research, and it may change or develop as a result of what you find out. You should aim to set your final title by the Mid-Project Review Meeting (see page 59) at the latest

**Production Log:** a document that you complete as you work through your Extended Project; it includes a Submission Checklist, Taught Skills Element, Record of Initial Ideas Form, Candidate Proposal Form, Planning Review Form, Mid-Project Review Form, Project Product Review Form, Presentation Record Form, and Summary and Reflection Form





Project steps	What you will do	What OxfordAQA requires you to do
Planning and researching your Extended Project (see pages 28–61)	<p>Plan and conduct research from a number of different sources to meet the aims and objectives you set yourself.</p> <p>Record your research and the resources that you use. Remember to evaluate each resource and consider its credibility.</p> <p>Meet with your Supervisor regularly to discuss the <b>project process</b> and any issues you face. Record any action you take as a result of their advice or guidance.</p> <p>Record any changes you make to your plan, and reasons for these changes.</p> <p>Finalise your project title, aims, and objectives.</p>	<p>Record your planning and research in your Production Log.</p> <p>Maintain and update your Production Log throughout your project, including the Planning Review Form and the Mid-Project Review Form.</p>
Producing your Project Product (see pages 62–79)	Produce your Project Product with relevant appendices. Remember, your Project Product will be EITHER a 5,000-word report OR an artefact plus a minimum 1,000-word report.	<p>Provide a 5,000-word written report, or an artefact plus a minimum 1,000-word written report. Your appendices should include a full bibliography and relevant references for your written report.</p> <p>Complete the Project Product Review Form in your Production Log.</p>
Presenting your Extended Project (see pages 80–90)	<p>Prepare and give a live oral presentation about your Extended Project and the process. Your presentation needs to be appropriate for a non-specialist audience, and needs to be in a form that is appropriate for your chosen topic.</p> <p>Be prepared to answer questions about your Extended Project in a question-and-answer session after the presentation.</p>	<p>Deliver your presentation, targeted at a non-specialist audience, and answer the questions you are asked.</p> <p>Complete the Presentation Record (Part A) in your Production Log.</p> <p>Your Supervisor also needs to complete the Presentation Record (Part B) in the Production Log to confirm that your live presentation took place, and to provide evidence of the questions you were asked and how you answered them.</p>
Reviewing, finalising, and submitting your Extended Project (see pages 91–96)	<p>Review and reflect on the process of planning, researching, writing up, and presenting your Extended Project.</p> <p>This includes assessing if your Extended Project fulfils the original aims, and reflecting on your own learning.</p>	Complete the Summary and Reflection Form in your Production Log, ensuring that you include your reflections on your project process, and the quality of your project outcome.

### Key term

**Project process:** for the purposes of EPQ, this refers to all the planning, research, and development that go into your Extended Project; it also includes the skills you develop and what you learn from completing your EPQ

Although your Extended Project is an independent project, you won't be doing it entirely on your own; you will have the help and support of a Supervisor. Your Supervisor will probably be a teacher in your school that you know already, or another member of staff.



Some students may also discuss their Extended Project with a **Specialist Consultant** and meet with them to discuss progress. If you would like to work with a Specialist Consultant, discuss this with your Supervisor. You should also check the exact requirements of your Extended Project with a current version of the EPQ specification.

### Key term

**Specialist Consultant:** someone who is an expert (or who 'specialises') in your subject area, with who you may choose to discuss your project ideas or progress (this person won't assess your work, nor should they make any decisions for you); you should record any comments or advice given by a Specialist Consultant in your Production Log

## Material required for assessment

You must submit the following as evidence for assessment:

- your completed Production Log: this document includes the Submission Checklist, Taught Skills Element, Record of Initial Ideas Form, Candidate Proposal Form, Planning Review Form, Mid-Project Review Form, Project Product Review Form, Presentation Record Form, and Summary and Reflection Form
- your Project Product: a 5,000-word written report or an artefact plus a minimum 1,000-word report, and any relevant **appendices**, depending on the topic you choose.

### Key term

**Appendices (plural for appendix):** additional material you may need to include with your Project Product, such as additional planning documents, a risk assessment, or survey data; these appendices are optional and are in addition to the Production Log

## Will there be any lessons?

Completing the EPQ is more about learning for yourself than being taught by your teachers. However, there is a taught element, and your teachers will explain the form this teaching will take at your school.

Although you and your peers will be working on very different topics, there will be some skills you can learn and develop as a group.

Here are some examples.

- There are accepted forms for academic writing that may be useful to you in structuring your written work. This will be important when you come to write up your report.
- You will develop important project management skills such as: how you manage your work within the time available, how you manage the resources you have access to, and how to search effectively for relevant information using libraries, the internet, and other sources.
- You will learn how to carry out your Extended Project safely and effectively. If you are carrying out some practical work, for example in a science laboratory, you will need to know about laboratory health and safety. For other types of research involving members of the public, you may need to adhere to certain professional codes of conduct.

## How will I work with my Supervisor?

A teacher or a member of staff at your school or college will be appointed as your Supervisor. This Supervisor will help you along the journey from project proposal through to **submission**, and will support you as you work independently and carry out your own research.

### Key term

**Submission:** the formal word that awarding bodies use to refer to 'giving in' or 'handing in' work or material to be assessed