



What's in it for me?

Learner guide to the Extended Project
Qualification (EPQ)

EPQ overview

The ASDAN Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is a flexible qualification that will give you skills and experience that are valued by higher education and employers alike. It will really help you to show them that you are ready to take that next step.

The core of your EPQ is a project that you design, research and deliver. This project could be something that builds on your other study subjects (though it can't be anything that's already covered by those subjects) and can be conducted fully in your school or college.

Importantly it is also possible to build the ASDAN EPQ project around your work experience. The unique benefit of this is that you will get more value from your work experience and be able to demonstrate to future employers that you have gained real-world experience and the skills that they need, like teamwork and good customer awareness.

Key features of the ASDAN EPQ

- offers freedom for you to choose the project you decide to undertake
- gives you the opportunity to gain a range of skills including project management, research and presentation skills
- develops and improves your own learning and performance as a critical, reflective and independent learner
- develops and helps you to apply decision making and, where appropriate, problem solving skills
- extends your personal planning, critical thinking, analysis, synthesis and evaluation skills
- develops and helps you to apply skills, creatively demonstrating initiative and enterprise
- helps you to use the learning experiences to support personal aspirations for further education and career development
- provides UCAS points

Stages of the EPQ



EPQ overview

There is a great deal of flexibility in the choice of the project itself. It could be a piece of research or analysis, the development of a business proposal, the design and production of a physical or digital artefact – anything that allows you to apply the stages on page 2 and deliver something worthwhile.

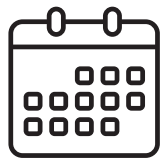
What you will need to do

- Before your project begins, you will be taught a range of study skills and transferable skills, to ensure you are prepared. This will involve around 30 hours of lesson time.
- The remainder of the project will be designed and led by you, and you must work independently (though you will have support from the teacher/tutor who supervises your work)
- You will identify a meaningful project, which must be approved by your teacher/tutor and (if appropriate) an employer
- You will complete the project, either in your school, college or in the workplace (if you are undertaking the EPQ around your work experience). Your teacher (and employer) will support you throughout the process.
- The outputs of your project will be one of the following:
 - a dissertation: a research-based written report of 5,000 words
 - a performance: the development of practical skills, eg music, drama or sport
 - an artefact: a physical or digital outcome, eg designing a piece of furniture or a garment, creating a website, solving a problem, producing a piece of graphic design
 - if you choose a performance or artefact as your project, you will also need to produce a written report of 1,000 words
- The project will conclude with a presentation to an audience that will provide feedback as part of the assessment of your EPQ
- Group projects will be allowed; however, you must contribute at all stages of the project including:
 - submitting an individual written report
 - taking a significant role in a group presentation or delivering an individual presentation on the group project
 - achieving every stage of the project (see diagram on page 2)
- The length of the project is not fixed, but it is likely that it will take several months from start to finish, depending on the timetabling of your other study subjects
- During the project you will have access to a range of support resources to help with the planning and delivery phases – ask your teacher/tutor to give you access to these resources
- You will be assessed on completion of the project, and if successful you will receive a nationally recognised Level 3 qualification (ie A-level standard), graded A*–E.
- The EPQ carries UCAS points and is worth the same as half an A-level (up to 28 UCAS points if you achieve the highest grade)

Study skills

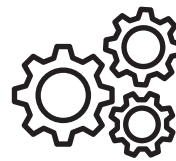
The EPQ will help you to develop the study skills that will be essential if you choose to move on to higher education. At university it will only be possible to achieve the highest grades if you master these skills; if you can demonstrate that you have already obtained some of them through your EPQ, your application to university or college will be much stronger.

Study skills that you will learn and practise during your project



Project planning

choosing your project, setting it up and managing it to ensure it achieves its desired outcomes



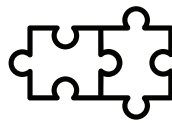
Organisation

establishing ways of working that ensure you have everything needed to complete the task



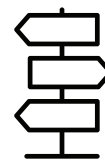
Data analysis

understanding how to collate and organise data so that you are not distracted by irrelevant information



Problem solving

using techniques to help solve challenging problems



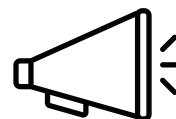
Decision making

making decisions based on sound evidence and logic



Creativity

using a range of techniques to help you find innovative solutions to problems



Communication

getting your ideas across efficiently and effectively; listening to the feedback of those around you and learning from it to adapt and improve your ideas

Work-related skills

If you undertake your project as part of your work experience, you will also be able to develop and evidence work-related skills (also known as transferable skills or work skills). These skills are often cited by employers as lacking in job applicants, so if you can show a potential employer that you have already gained some of them, you will be much more competitive at interviews.

Work-related skills that you will learn and practise during your project



Teamwork

working effectively in teams, respecting differences and recognising the strengths of others



Customer awareness

being focused on the needs of the customers/end users



Initiative

being able to think and act independently, and having the motivation to get things done



Honesty

being open and honest in your dealings with all those around you



Self-awareness

reflecting on your own performance, listening to the feedback of others and adapting in order to improve



Resilience

having the ability to work through difficult problems and tough situations until the job is done



Self-management

taking responsibility for your own behaviour and performance

Why is all this so important?

So, why are the skills and experience you will develop as part of your EPQ study important? Here are some recent headlines:

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Only half of young British adults aged 18–30 believe their education adequately prepares them for adulthood and the world of work

Next Generation Research, Demos and British Council, 2017

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95 per cent of UK senior managers regard [transferable] skills as equally or more important than exam results alone

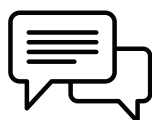
Business Matters Magazine, 2017



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Skills such as communicating, working in a team and solving problems are essential in the 21st century workplace

Post-16 Skills Plan, 2016



“

43 per cent of young people told us that they feel ill-prepared for work, and that they lack the soft skills and the confidence necessary to prosper in employment

Results for Life Research Report, The Prince's Trust, 2017



Making the most of the opportunity

With the EPQ you will gain much more than an additional qualification and extra UCAS points. It will help to make you competitive when you come to applying for higher education and, critically, your first job. So, when you choose your project, have an eye to the future and try to make it relevant to your long-term study and employment plans.

With the outcomes and learning from the EPQ you will have a story to tell – how you planned and independently completed a real project, applying a broad range of study and transferable skills.

What's more, it doesn't matter if you didn't achieve everything you set out to through the project. Many projects fail in the workplace; what's important is to show that you have learned from what went well and what didn't – this learning will be valued by a prospective employer.

When you attend an interview, you will be asked to give examples from your experience that demonstrate you have the skills required to do the job. Your EPQ experience will give you the evidence you need.

And if your next step is university, your project experience will also help you prepare a stand-out personal statement, because you can prove you already have the study skills that will help you to make your academic study a success.



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