



What's in it for them?

Parent guide to the Extended Project
Qualification (EPQ)

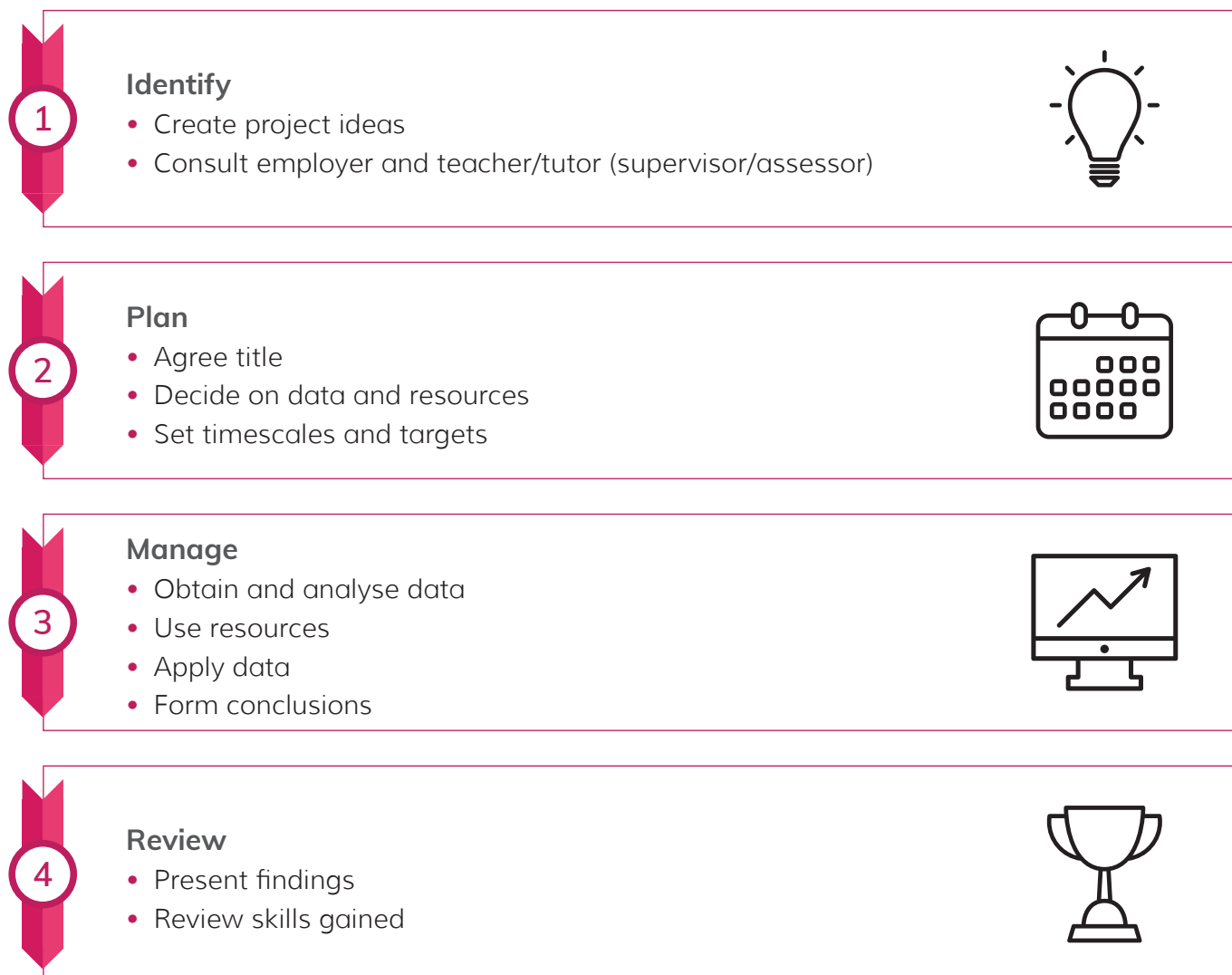
EPQ overview

The ASDAN Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is a flexible programme that will give your young person a set of skills that are valued by higher education and employers alike. It will help them to be more competitive when it comes to interviews, because they will be able to give evidence of having gained important study and work skills. It should therefore be viewed as an important part of their overall programme of study.

The core of the EPQ is a project that the young person designs and delivers. This project could be something that builds on their other study subjects (though it can't be anything that's already covered by those subjects) and can be conducted fully in their school or college.

Importantly it is also possible to build the ASDAN EPQ project around work experience. The unique benefit of this is that the young person will get more value from the experience and be able to demonstrate to future employers that they have gained real-world experience and the skills that employers value. The great news for learners that take this route is that, as their parent or carer, you will be able to support them directly. Your insights into the world of employment will help them to understand the kind of project that an organisation will value and you will be able to help them make contact with potential employers. This is a qualification that, as a parent or carer, you can make a real contribution to.

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 learners to apply the stages on page 2 and deliver something worthwhile.

Key features of the EPQ

- Before the project begins, the young person will be taught a range of study skills and transferable skills.
- With the support of their teacher/tutor and (if appropriate) an employer, the young person will identify a meaningful project.
- They will complete the project independently, either in school, college or in the workplace (if they are undertaking the EPQ around work experience). The teacher (and employer) will support them throughout the process.
- They will be assessed on completion of the project, and if successful will achieve 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 they achieve the highest grade).

Study skills

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

Study skills that will be taught and practised during the project

 <p>Project planning</p> <p>choosing their project, setting it up and managing it to ensure it achieves its desired outcomes</p>	 <p>Organisation</p> <p>establishing ways of working that ensure they have everything needed to complete the task</p>	
 <p>Data analysis</p> <p>understanding how to collate and organise data so that they are not distracted by irrelevant information</p>	 <p>Problem solving</p> <p>using techniques to help solve challenging problems</p>	 <p>Decision making</p> <p>making decisions based on sound evidence and logic</p>
 <p>Creativity</p> <p>using a range of techniques to help them find innovative solutions to problems</p>	 <p>Communication</p> <p>getting their ideas across efficiently and effectively; listening to the feedback of those around them and learning from it to adapt and improve their ideas</p>	

Work-related skills

If your young person undertakes their project as part of their work experience, they 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 they can show a potential employer that they have already gained some of them, they will be much more competitive at interviews.

Work-related skills that will be taught and practised during the 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 their dealings with all those around them



Self-awareness

reflecting on their 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 their own behaviour and performance

Why is all this so important?

Here are some recent headlines demonstrating why gaining transferable skills will be of tangible benefit to your young person:



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



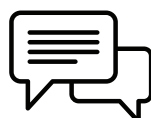
95 per cent of UK senior managers regard [transferable] skills as equally or more important than exam results alone

Business Matters Magazine, 2017



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 – how can I contribute?

Many parents and carers feel frustrated by not being able to support their young people while they are studying for qualifications. This is understandable – teaching methods have changed over the years, and of course the world has moved on quite a bit since they were at school or college themselves.

However with the EPQ you will be able to offer your young person practical support, because it is a project-based qualification and is intended to help them gain skills that are used by adults in the workplace. So, if you work in an organisation – any kind of organisation, including the community and voluntary sector – or if you know someone that does, then you will be able to help your young person to understand what employers need.

For learners who choose to complete the EPQ as part of their post-16 work experience, you might also be able to take that support a step further by using your own network in order to help them make contact with potential employers.

The school/college will work with learners to help them identify the sectors and types of working environment that will suit them, so they may already be able to tell you what kind of organisations they are interested in. Think about who you know, including friends and family, and find out where they work and what their current challenges are. This could help your young person to generate ideas and could open the door for them in making that critical first contact with an employer.

In summary, your young person can use the EPQ to gain important skills for higher education and take a crucial first step into the world of employment. With your support, they will maximise their chances of making it a real success.



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