

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

What an EPQ is

The EPQ is a stand-alone qualification that students complete alongside A Level or other Level 3 qualifications. It is graded A* - E and is equivalent to half an A Level in size (and UCAS points).

Who this course is for

The EPQ qualification helps develop skills and experience in independent research, time management, problem solving, academic writing and communication. Over the last few years, it has rapidly become an important part of an academic sixth form experience and for that reason all Dixons Sixth Form Academy students take an EPQ as part of their programme of study.

What the course covers

An EPQ is an independent research project which involves writing an essay of 5000 words (that's around 10 typed pages), or creating a product (artefact), which might be anything from an art object to an iPhone app. Students who produce an artefact then write a shortened report of approximately 2000 words.

As the project develops, you must complete a production log to record specific stages of the project and the decisions you are making, this also contributes to your project result. The third component is an oral presentation delivered at the end of the project.

The course has one taught lesson per week. In the lessons you will be taught the skills needed to successfully complete your EPQ. In addition, your teacher will act as your project supervisor and will discuss with you your individual project progress at regular intervals.

The EPQ is a fantastic opportunity for you to explore an academic area that is related to your future plans – the recent EPQ titles students have chosen listed below demonstrate the range and flexibility of this qualification.

To what extent does the Afghan legal system protect the rights of women in Afghanistan?

Are passwords an out-of-date technology for authentication?

To what extent can the genre of 'dark fiction' allow for an exploration of feminist concerns?

To what extent does the recent development of Bollywood mirror the initial development of Hollywood?

Is the payday loan market ethical and how should it be regulated?

Is it technically and economically feasible to construct a transatlantic tunnel capable of supporting a high-speed maglev transportation system?

Is hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") a good idea for the UK?

How important was Bletchley Park to the Allied Victory of WW2?

Does the freedom of the press outweigh the people's right to privacy?

Are alternative treatments a 'real' alternative to conventional drug treatments in the management of pain?

To what extent can current immunological research advance cancer treatments?

Could stem cell research lead to a viable cure for Alzheimer's disease?

Can Britain in the 21st Century still be regarded as a patriarchal society?

Should hypnotherapy be funded by the NHS?

Is there a case for regarding biofuels as the fuels of the future?

The complete specification can be viewed on the AQA website. www.aqa.org.uk

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What students can do with this course

Achieving an EPQ qualification is not only useful for the personal development of students, it is also highly valued by universities and employers as evidence of the ability of students to engage in research, independent learning and extended writing to explore an issue in some depth. In this way, EPQ can help students gain a competitive edge when applying to university.

“The skills that students develop through the Extended Project are directly relevant to and useful for university-level study. Students can refer to the Extended Project in their UCAS personal statements and at interview to demonstrate some of the qualities that universities are looking for.”

Manchester University

“If you have the opportunity, then undertaking an EPQ is a good idea. It develops your ability to study independently and make the transition from school to university. As not everyone has the opportunity to do this, we won’t make an EPQ part of a formal offer but it’s undoubtedly of general educational value. If you’re applying for a subject at Queens’ that you haven’t studied at school, an EPQ is a good way to demonstrate your interest and commitment.”

Queens College, Cambridge

How this course is assessed

Your completed project is assessed holistically – that means the final report, presentation and logbook are all used collectively to arrive at a final mark. Your project is assessed in the areas detailed below.

Area of assessment	Weighting / %
AO1: Manage Identify, design, plan, and carry out a project, applying a range of skills, strategies and methods to achieve objectives.	20
AO2: Use Resources 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.	20
AO3: Develop and Realise Select and use a range of skills, including, where appropriate, new technologies and problem-solving, to take decisions critically and achieve planned outcomes.	40
AO4: Review 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.	20

Entry requirements

All our course entry requirements are detailed in the Entry Requirements document located in the admissions section of our website.