



EPOQ

Extended Project Qualification
Teacher guide

EPQ overview

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

The core of the EPQ is a project that learners design, research and deliver. 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 school or college.

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

Key features of the ASDAN EPQ

- offers freedom for learners to choose the project they decide to undertake
- gives learners the opportunity to gain a range of skills including project management, research and presentation skills
- develops and improves learners' own learning and performance as critical, reflective and independent learners
- helps learners to develop and apply decision making and, where appropriate, problem solving skills
- extends learners' personal planning, critical thinking, analysis, synthesis and evaluation skills
- helps learners to develop and apply skills, creatively demonstrating initiative and enterprise
- helps learners to use their 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 learners to apply the stages on page 2 and deliver something worthwhile.

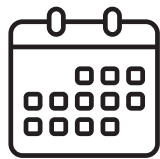
What learners will need to do

- Before learners begin their projects, they will need to be taught a range of study skills and transferable skills, to ensure they are prepared. This will involve around 30 hours of lesson time.
- The remainder of the project will be designed and led by the learner, and they must work independently (though they will need support from the teacher/tutor who supervises their work)
- Learners identify a meaningful project, which must be approved by their teacher/tutor and (if appropriate) an employer
- Learners will complete the project, either in school, college or in the workplace (if they are undertaking the EPQ around their work experience). Their teacher (and employer) will support them throughout the process.
- The outputs of their 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 learners choose a performance or artefact as their project then they 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 the EPQ
- Group projects will be allowed; however, each learner 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 other study subjects
- During the project learners will have access to a range of support resources to help with the planning and delivery phases
- Learners will be assessed on completion of the project, and if successful they 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 for the highest grade)

Study skills

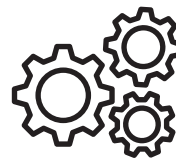
The EPQ will help learners to develop the study skills that will be essential if they choose to move on to higher education. At university it will only be possible for learners to achieve the highest grades if they master these skills; if learners can demonstrate that they have already obtained some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

Study skills that learners will learn and practise during their project



Project planning

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



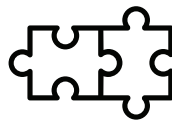
Organisation

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



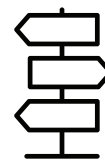
Data analysis

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



Problem solving

using techniques to help solve challenging problems



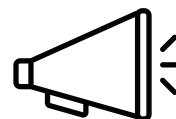
Decision making

making decisions based on sound evidence and logic



Creativity

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







Communication

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

Work-related skills

If learners undertake 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 learners 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 learners will learn and practise during their project

 <p>Teamwork</p> <p>working effectively in teams, respecting differences and recognising the strengths of others</p>	 <p>Customer awareness</p> <p>being focused on the needs of the customers/end users</p>	
 <p>Initiative</p> <p>being able to think and act independently, and having the motivation to get things done</p>	 <p>Honesty</p> <p>being open and honest in their dealings with all those around them</p>	 <p>Self-awareness</p> <p>reflecting on their own performance, listening to the feedback of others and adapting in order to improve</p>
 <p>Resilience</p> <p>having the ability to work through difficult problems and tough situations until the job is done</p>	 <p>Self-management</p> <p>taking responsibility for their own behaviour and performance</p>	

Why is all this so important?

So, why are the skills and experience learners will develop as part of the 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

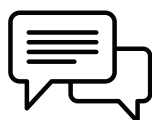
Business Matters Magazine, 2017



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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 learners will gain much more than an additional qualification and extra UCAS points. It will help to make them competitive when they come to applying for higher education and, critically, their first job. So, when your learners choose their projects, they should have an eye to their future and try to make it relevant to their long-term study and employment plans.

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

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

When learners attend an interview, they will be asked to give examples from their experience that demonstrate they have the skills required to do the job. Their EPQ experience will give them the evidence they need.



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