

BCCS EPQ Handbook

2018





**AQA EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION - STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**CONTENTS**

1. Introduction: What is the EPQ?
2. Assessment: How will I be assessed?
3. EPQ Process: Choice, project approval, skills teaching, resources and research
4. Supervision: What support will I receive?

**1. WHAT IS THE EPQ?**

It is a free-standing level 3 project qualification and is equivalent to an AS Level. However, it is assessed at an A2 level.

You are required to:

* **Identify, design, plan and complete an individual project** applying organisational skills and strategies to meet stated objectives;
* **Obtain and select information from a range of sources**, analyse data, apply relevantly and demonstrate understanding of any appropriate linkages, connections and complexities of the topic;
* Select and use a range of skills, including new technologies where appropriate, to **solve problems, to take decisions critically, creatively and flexibly, and to achieve planned outcomes;**
* **Evaluate outcomes including own learning and performance** and select and use a range of communication skills and media to convey and **present evidenced outcomes and conclusions.**

**2. HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?**

You will be assessed on the following:

* A written **report of 5000 words** or an **artefact, recording or a performance with 1000 written report;**
* The completed **Production Log** including the Project Proposal Form;
* The **presentation.**

# Completed Production Log

The Production Log will document the planning and progress of the project, including **decision-making and your reflections** on the process.

The Production Log will contain a record of the following:

* **initial idea and outline plan for the project** (completed by learner)
* record of research carried out and resources used (completed by learner with supervisor confirmation)
* **record of advice and support offered (**completed by supervisor) and action taken as a result (completed by learner)
* **relationship of project to main areas of study** (completed by learner with supervisor confirmation)
* **note of any changes made to plan and reasons for the change** (completed by learner)
* a **record of the presentation** completed by the learner with supervisor confirmation
* **reflection on the process of producing the project** (completed by learner).

# Written Report

All learners must submit a written report for assessment of between 1000 and 5000 words. The exact length of each written report will depend on the nature of the project, the subject area or topic chosen and the other evidence provided.

A project which consists **solely of written work should be approximately 5000 words,** for example an investigation, exploration of a hypothesis or extended essay or academic report. Projects where the majority of the evidence is provided in **other formats should include a report or record of work undertaken which is at least 1000 words.**

The written report or record is likely to contain the following:

* sources of and range of information accessed;
* details of the range of skills used including, where appropriate, new technologies and/or access to
* e-learning materials;
* historical or other research;
* details of the design, knowledge, understanding and skills used to complete the tasks or activities of the project, e.g. an experiment, a construction, a performance or research interviews
* a conclusion to include an evaluation of the outcomes of the project, an evaluation of own performance of learning and decision-making.
* Any written record of the task or activities should be of sufficient length to explore the issues, use an appropriate terminology, style and form of writing.

# Presentation

The presentation should be for a **non-specialist audience** and use media appropriate to the type of project.

The presentation could take the form of a verbal or written presentation or may involve the use of flipcharts, posters, OHP transparencies, PowerPoint or short excerpts of video material.

The presentation should be supported by answers to any questions from supervisors.

**Marking Criteria**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| AO1 Manage | * identify project aims and objectives, * produce a project plan, * complete the work applying organisational skills and strategies to meet stated objectives | 10 marks  20% |
| AO2 Use resources | * obtain and select information from a variety of sources * analyse data * apply information relevantly * demonstrate understanding of appropriate links | 10 marks  20% |
| AO3 Develop and  Realise | * problem-solving * decision-making * creative thinking * to achieve planned outcomes | 20 marks  40% |
| AO4 Review | * evaluate own learning and performance * communication skills * convey and present evidenced outcomes and conclusions | 10 marks  20% |

**3. WHAT IS THE PROCESS?**

There are various stages of the EPQ process:

1. Choice of topic
2. Project approval
3. Skills teaching in the early stages
4. Resources and research
5. Mid-project review
6. Production
7. Presentation
8. Assessment
9. Final review and reflection
10. Regular review meetings throughout

***Rules regarding choice of topic and title:***

* *You may choose a topic that is an extension of your A Levels but it must not be a repeat of a topic on any of your A Level specifications.*
* *You may use the Extended Project Qualification to explore an area of personal interest or activity outside the main programme of study.*

**2. Project approval**

* Project approval is a required formal process.
* There are 3 stages A, B & C, each of which is recorded on a pro-forma that becomes part of your ‘Production Log and Assessment Record’.

**Part A – Project Proposal by the student**

* You must complete a Project proposal based upon the thinking that you have started in the choice stage.
* Your project proposal form must be submitted to your supervisor.
* It is not expected to be a fully formed description, but is expected to be clear enough for your supervisor to confirm that the project is suitable.
* You must sign a declaration at this point to say that you understand that all work submitted for assessment for the EPQ must be your own unless appropriate reference and acknowledgement is made. Hand this in to your supervisor at the same time as your project proposal form.

**Part B – Acceptance of the Project Proposal by the supervisor**

* You must submit your project proposal to your supervisor and then your subsequent meeting during **June** will involve a discussion of the proposal.
* You will be expected to amend the details as necessary in light of that discussion.
* When your supervisor is confident that the proposal meets all of the requirements, they complete Part B to confirm that the proposal is appropriate.
* Supervisors also have to sign a declaration that no part of the work is to be submitted for another accredited award, e.g. A Level coursework.

**Part C – Approval of the Project Proposal by the Centre Co-ordinator**

* Final approval of the project lies with the centre co-ordinator (Ms Hawthorn) following guidance from AQA.
* Ms Hawthorn may make comments or suggestions that are recorded and become part of your production log. If suggestions or additional requirements are put forward, they should be met and complied with by the student.

**IMPORTANT**

* It is important to remember the role of both the supervisor and co-ordinator is to support your project. **The work must be all your own**. The grade you receive will be a result of how well you have **managed your own time, problem solved, thought creatively, responded to feedback and evaluated your own learning and processes.**
* If AQA suspects you have had too much input from a supervisor, co-ordinator or subject mentor, they will adjust grades accordingly. For this reason, **in most cases your supervisor will not be a subject specialist in the area of your EPQ.**

**3. Skills teaching**

You will receive taught sessions on academic research skills. You will be taught skills such as:

* Devising an appropriate title
* Time management
* Research Methods
* Evaluation of sources
* Collecting and analysing material
* Effective report writing
* Referencing (including creating a bibliography)
* Avoiding plagiarism
* Presentation skills
* Reflection and evaluation

**4. Resources and research**

* With guidance from your supervisor, you can commence gathering background research in the area of your project over the summer.
* **You must make sure there are sufficient sources to make your study viable.**
* Consider finding an overview book as early as possible.
* Use both Central Library and university libraries. UWE and Bristol Universities have library websites and you can may be able to arrange visits to gather resources.
* Try to make contact with experts in the field. They can suggest books to read. ***But* be polite and patient.**
* **Use a variety of sources:** websites, videos, exhibitions, films, novels. However, do not rely on websites. It is often tempting to print off reams of information which has little or no analytical content. Their provenance can also be dubious.

**4. WHAT SUPPORT WILL I RECEIVE?**

* You will be given a named supervisor who will oversee you through the project process. You will have **regular meetings** with your supervisor throughout the period of your project. The day/time of your meetings will be a joint decision with you and your supervisor. However, it is **YOUR responsibility** to communicate/chase your supervisor.
* You should **keep your supervisor updated** with your research for your project and show him/her your production log at every meeting.
* You **may be assigned a subject specialist mentor** (teacher, academic or other) who can give you some support and guidance during your EPQ. However, we must ensure the level of support given is within the AQA rules.
* There will also be a **weekly drop in** slot to speak to the Centre Co-ordinator about your project.