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**Extended Project**

**Qualification**

**Candidate Assessment Pack**

**Contents**

1. What is the Extended Project Qualification?

* 1. Introduction
  2. Overview of the Qualification
  3. Extended Project and UCAS Offers

2. Assessment

2.1 What Can I Research?

2.2 No Double Counting

2.3 Role of supervisor

2.4 Process to carry out your Project

2.5 Stage 1 – Proposal

2.6 Stage 2 – Outcome

2.7 Stage 3 - Presentation

2.8 Assessment Grids

**1. What is the EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION?**

**1.1 Introduction**

The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is a Level 3 qualification that allows you to develop and demonstrate complex research skills.

The skill of conducting research is an extremely useful life skill that can **help you gather and analyse information, build knowledge, think critically, and draw well balanced opinions and judgements**. It is a skill that will benefit you both at university and understanding the world around you. It will show you are interested in more than just your sixth form studies.

Having a large number of qualifications such as GCSEs, A levels and a degree is only part of the story for employers. There are many other young people who will have the same qualifications as you and therefore applying for a job can be extremely competitive. Employers want both academic ability and research skills. Why? People with complex, well-developed research skills make reliable decisions, are fair minded, can plan ahead, solve problems, meet targets and timelines and manage resources- exactly what employers need.

You will have control and freedom with the Extended Project that you rarely get with other qualifications. Your choice, your initiative and your planning and impetus going forward will produce an original and exclusive piece of research totally your own. You will show that you have:

* developed **knowledge and understanding** of a specific topic through research
* developed as a **critical, independent, self-evaluative learner** by improving and reviewing your own learning and performance
* developed your **communication and presentation** skills
* demonstrated initiative creativity and flexibility in responding to challenges and in applying **digital skills** where appropriate

**1.2 Overview of the Qualification**

The qualification is 120 hours with 45 hours for you to develop the skills you need before undertaking your research project and ensure you are aware of how to maximise your achievement. You should log the skills you develop in your **Candidate Production Record**.

Some of the **skills** should be:

* organising and prioritising tasks/activities
* referencing sources and avoiding plagiarism
* how to research ethically
* problem-solving and decision making
* interpreting and analysing information and data
* writing styles
* conducting meetings and note taking
* effective presentations

The project can be an **Individual Project** or a **Group Project** **but with a clear individual role** for yourself e.g. you will be the *only* writer of the script for the sixth form pantomime whereas others in the group would have different roles such as set designer, costume designer, etc.

**Grading**: A\*- U, the same as A levels.

**1.3 Extended Project and UCAS Offers**

The Extended Project has the same UCAS tariff points attached as half an A level.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **UCAS Tariff points** |
| **A\*** | **28** |
| **A** | **24** |
| **B** | **20** |
| **C** | **16** |
| **D** | **12** |
| **E** | **8** |

Universities welcome the skills developed and demonstrated with the EPQ . The most competitive universities and courses (such as Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science) and others that interview for admission, will often use the EPQ as a focus for discussion. You can include the title of your project on your UCAS form.

Information on admissions for different universities and courses should always be sought and confirmed on the [UCAS website](https://www.ucas.com/).

The Extended Project Qualification may impact on an offer in the following way-

* accepted as part of a tariff offer
* as a fourth grade but with reduced A level grades offer e.g. Warwick and Bath
* form part of a holistic consideration, impact at interview or on selection for competitive courses e.g. Oxford and Cambridge

You should include information about the research and skills you have developed by doing the EPQ when writing their personal statement. You can refer to them at interview, even taking a copy of your Extended Project with you.

*‘UCL welcomes the introduction of the Extended Project into the curriculum, recognising that it will develop many of the skills necessary for successful study at university. For students presenting A levels, UCL will be accepting a pass in the Extended Project as an alternative to the need to offer a pass in a fourth AS level.*

[www.ucl.ac.uk](http://www.ucl.ac.uk)

*‘We value the skills of research and independent learning that the Extended Project is designed to develop. We welcome applications from students offering the Extended Project alongside A levels. As the Extended Project is optional it is not a requirement for application. If you offer the Extended Project your entry requirement may be varied as a result, in recognition of the level of study skills you will have developed’*

[www.newcastle.ac.uk](http://www.newcastle.ac.uk)

**2. Assessment**

**2.1 What Can I Research?**

You can choose your own topic, this may be something you wish to investigate in more depth from one of the courses you are studying, something you are passionate about, is related to a career path or university course. You could choose something totally different. It really is up to you.

The Extended Project is underpinned by research and would entail a piece of written work. You can choose to present your Project from a wide variety of outcomes:

* Option A – a written dissertation of approximately 5,000 words
* Option B – an artefact with a Research Report of approximately 1,500 words together with a Production Report that shows the development of the product you have created e.g. a new software package or app, a sculpture, a wooden bird house, a play script, an anthology of poems, a field investigation, a design, a performance.

**2.2 No Double Counting**

When undertaking this qualification, you will be committing to the following:

You may want to choose a topic that relates to one of the qualifications you are studying whether A level or vocational. However, **you must not** submit work that is already being used for another qualification. For example:

1. If you have produced a portfolio of paintings inspired by Gustav Klimt in you A level Art and Design, any of the portfolio’s work must not be used for the EPQ. However, you could write a dissertation about his use of colour or produce a sculpture or piece of clothing inspired by his work.
2. If you have carried out an experiment investigating osmotic pressure in root vegetables for your A level Biology coursework, that experiment must not be used for the EPQ. However, it could inspire you to write a dissertation looking at the use of hydroponics in crop production.
3. An A level History coursework essay into ‘The Causes Behind the Start of First World War must not be adapted and submitted for the EPQ. However, it could inspire the construction of a life-size mock-up of a WW1 trench to help teach Year 7 about the topic.

**2.3 Role of Supervisor**

Your supervisor will guide and support you through the production of your Project. This will take place during 3 formal meetings at key points in the process, but you can also have informal meetings depending on how much advice and guidance you need.

Your supervisor should be a **critical friend** who will pose questions to make you think, rather than just giving you the answers and providing too much direction. You may also approach subject staff or specialists if you have topic specific queries.

It is suggested that your three formal meetings with your supervisor take place at the following points in the process.

**Meeting 1** - when you have produced your proposed title, rationale, aims and objectives and the research plan.

**Meeting 2** - when your research has been gathered, analysed and connections have been made between the information.

**Meeting 3** - after you have completed your Extended Project and presented it to your supervisor to review your performance of the process and outcome.

You are responsible for evidencing these meetings using the forms in the **Candidate Production Record**. However, your response to feedback and how you wish to use it is up to you. The development of the Extended Project remains your responsibility.

**2.4 Process to carry out your Project**

**2.5 Stage 1 - Proposal**

The focus of the Extended Project is dependent upon you taking responsibility for the choice, design and completion of a research project. The first stage is to decide on a research topic. You will plan and carry out research on your chosen topic which will enable you to extend your knowledge and understanding.

It is important that you take time to make an informed decision when selecting your chosen topic. Carry out some initial research into a few potential topics as a starting point. It is important to be realistic in order to ensure a clear focus, manageability, and successful production of the Extended Project. This will help you to narrow down ideas and decide on the one that is most feasible. Think carefully about what will be required to achieve the Extended Project; you may wish to seek advice and guidance from a subject specialist.

You need to make sure you have the skills needed for the production of a successful Project. Complete the Proposal section of the **Candidate Production Record**.

Choose a **Project Title** that clearly states what you intend to research – it should not be too broad but focused on something that is feasible. It is best in the form of a question for a written project and a statement of intent for an artefact

Produce a **Rationale** of why the topic is of interest to you and provide a justification for your choice.

Produce **Aims and Objectives** that will structure your research and keep you on track. The aims are your strategy in answering your title. The objectives are what information and data you need to meet your aims.

Create a **Project Plan** that shows how you will conduct your research: resources, timescales, sources, etc. The methodology you follow will show you can:

* think critically about where you collect your sources and which you use
* collate and consider a wide range of opinions and facts selecting reliable information and data whilst understanding its shortcomings and strengths

**2.6 Stage 2 - Outcome**

**Option A – a Written Dissertation**

Produce a written research project (approximately 5,000 words) that would be enhanced by the inclusion of a variety of statistical diagrams, tables, and images. Your project should include the following:

* Title - a question or hypothesis
* Rationale – an introduction to the project including your reason for selecting the topic
* Aims - the strategies to address the title
* Objectives - the means to achieving the aims
* Research plan – outline and justify the research methods you will use to select a range of relevant and credible information
* Main body of project – analyse, synthesise, and reference the key information, concepts, and data

– generate own ideas and viewpoints

– make connections between the different information and data

– make valid judgements throughout

* Conclusion - reasoned conclusions explicitly linking to the project aims
* Appendix - including reference list, interview transcript, questionnaire responses, etc

When drawing the evidence together for the Extended Project outcome there should be consideration of the following:

* Content and meaning are clearly communicated
* Composition of material is clear, concise, and well-constructed with a logical connection of points and coherent order
* Coverage of content flows smoothly and lines of reasoning are easy to follow
* Presentation is in a consistent manner
* Presentation is enhanced by incorporating a variety of images e.g., tables, charts, diagrams, graphs, pictures, photos, etc.

**Option B – an Artefact**

Produce a **Research Report** of approximately 1,500 words and a **Production Record** that shows the development of your artefact.

You need to carry out research to inform the design and development of your intended artefact. Your project will be made up of two parts:

Part 1 - **Research Report** that outlines the strategy and research your will carry out. Including:

* Title - a statement of intent
* Rationale – an introduction to the project including your reason for selecting the topic
* Aims - the strategies to address the title
* Objectives - the means to achieving the aims
* Research plan – outline and justify the research methods you will use to select a range of relevant and credible information
* Conclusion - reasoned conclusions explicitly linking to the project aims
* Appendix - including reference list, minutes of supervisor meetings.

Part 2 - **Production Record** that outlines how the design of the artefact is closely determined from your research through the various stages of development to the final outcome. This may be produced in a variety of ways but will need to be a digital record for submission. The product outcome is not required for submission, photos are acceptable but must clear enough to demonstrate the standard.

Including the following:

* Design of artefact

– show development of ideas and consideration of alternative designs

– make informed and valid judgements on design

– acknowledge creative influences

– maintain a visual record of design process

* Development of artefact

– outline selection of appropriate materials, techniques, and processes to be used to create artefact

– make valid judgements on production process

– maintain a visual record of production process including the final artefact or prototype

When drawing the evidence together for the Extended Project outcome there should be consideration of the following:

* Content and meaning are clearly communicated
* Composition of material is clear, concise, and well-constructed with a logical connection of points and coherent order
* Coverage of content flows smoothly and lines of reasoning are easy to follow
* Presentation is in a consistent manner
* Presentation is enhanced by incorporating a variety of images e.g. diagrams, photos, etc.

**2.7 Stage 3 - Presentation**

You are required to make a **Project Presentation** to a non-specialist audience explaining your Project Outcome, reviewing the achievement of the outcome and your performance in carrying out the process of producing a research project. Your presentation is an ‘oral’ event in which you reflect on the outcome and your own achievements.

Demonstration of your understanding of the topic and the research process will be through a **Question-and-Answer session** that allows you to respond to challenging and supplementary questions.

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It is important to plan your presentation. Remember that the whole point of using PowerPoint slides should be to help engage your audience not for them to simply read rather than listen to you. Could you embed a relevant image or video clip to make it more engaging? Remember that for a 20-30 minute presentation, you should have no more than about 12 slides in total.

PowerPoint slides are not, on their own, significant evidence of quality. You should include speech notes or prompt cards, plus question-and-answer comments. Your teacher will also assess your presentation contribution.

**2.8 Assessment Grids**

Your Project is marked out of 100 using the following assessment grids. There are 8 Learning Outcomes, and each is allocated 10 or 20 marks.

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| **A01 MANAGE** | | | | |
| **Learning Outcomes** | **Mark Band 1**  **1-3 marks** | **Mark Band 2**  **4-7 marks** | **Mark Band 3**  **8-10 marks** | **Marks** |
| **LO1** Be able to identify a topic supported by a rationale and design a project. | Identifies a topic based on **simple** rationale with **limited** aims and objectives. | Makes an **informed** decision in the selection of a topic based on **sound** rationale with **coherent** aims and objectives. | Explores various options and makes an **informed** decision in the selection of a topic based on **solid** rationale with focused and **realistic** aims and objectives. | **10** |
| Negotiates and produces a **basic design** for a project. | Negotiates and produces a **coherent design** in a suitable format. | Negotiates and produces a **coherent and detailed design** in an appropriate format. |
| **LO2** Be able to produce a plan and carry out a project using a range of strategies and methods to achieve objectives. | Produces a **workable project plan**, setting **limited** targets and goals. | Produces a **detailed project plan**, setting **relevant** targets and goals, with **some details** of how the objectives will be met. | Produces an **effectively designed and thorough project plan**, setting **realistic** targets, prioritising goals with **detailed actions** on how objectives will be achieved. | **10** |
| Utilises project plan **adequately** with a limited range of strategies and methods.  **Limited responsibility** in putting plan into action, requiring **some support**. | Implements project plan using **some** organisational skills, setting **realistic** targets, meeting some deadlines.  **Takes responsibility** in putting plan into action, managing the tasks. | Implements project plan using **sophisticated** organisational skills, setting **SMART** targets and milestones, meeting deadlines.  **Takes full responsibility** and works **independently** in putting plan into action, **managing and prioritising** tasks and actions. |
| **Maximum marks** | | | | **20** |

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| **AO2 USE RESOURCES** | | | | |
| **Learning Outcomes** | **Mark Band 1**  **1-3 marks** | **Mark Band 2**  **4-7 marks** | **Mark Band 3**  **8-10 marks** | **Marks** |
| **LO3** Be able to conduct research using a range of resources, select and apply information/data relevant to the planned outcome. | Conducts research using a **limited** range of resources, selects and applies **some** information/data relevant to the planned outcome.  **Limited** use of referencing and **acknowledgement** of resources. | Conducts research using a **range of relevant resources**, selecting and applying information/data relevant to the planned outcome.  Resources are **mostly acknowledged** and referenced to a reasonable standard of competency. | Conducts research selecting from **a wide range of relevant resources**, including **complex material** and consistently applying information/data to the planned outcome.  **All resources are acknowledged** and referenced using a recognised form. | **10** |
| **LO4** Be able to interpret and analyse information/data showing understanding of links and connections within the complexities of the outcome. | Interprets information/data with **minimal analysis to support** the outcome and conclusion. | Interprets and **analyses the relevant information/ data to contribute** to the outcome and conclusion.  **Recognises** and **records** the **validity** and bias of resources. | Interprets and **analyses the relevant information/data to inform a cohesive** outcome and conclusion.  **Explores** and **confirms** the **validity** and bias of resources.  Demonstrates **ability to synthesise** complex information/data. | **10** |
| **Limited understanding** of links within the complexities of the topic, making **minimal** connections. | **Clear understanding** of links and **clearly articulates** connections within the complexities of the chosen outcome. | **Comprehensive understanding** of links, fully explores and establishes **sophisticated connections** and **fully appreciates** within the complexities of the chosen outcome. |
| **Maximum marks** | | | | **20** |

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| **AO3 DEVELOP AND REALISE** | | | |  |
| **Learning Outcomes** | **Mark Band 1**  **1-6 marks** | **Mark Band 2**  **7-15 marks** | **Mark Band 3**  **16-20 marks** | **Marks** |
| **LO5** Be able to select and use a range of skills, including new technologies, where appropriate, to reach critical decisions. | Selects and uses a **limited** **range of skills** relevant to the specific project.  **Limited** use of new technologies, where appropriate. | Selects and uses **a set of skills effectively** relevant to the specific project.  **Adequate** use of new technologies, where appropriate. | Critically selects and **effectively** applies **a range of skills with precision** relevant to the specific project.  **Embraces** new technologies, using them **creatively**, where appropriate. | **20** |
| **LO6** Be able to produce a planned outcome and realise the project in its entirety. | Produces a project outcome that is **fit for purpose** demonstrating **limited** knowledge and understanding of the topic.  Completes the entire project **adequately** including an outcome that is fit for purpose. | Produces a **coheren**t project outcome demonstrating **sound** knowledge and clear understanding of the topic.  Completes the entire project **purposefully** including a project outcome that is coherent. | Produces a **cohesive** project completed to a **high standard**, demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the topic **authoritatively**.  Completes the entire project to a **consistently high standard** including a cohesive project outcome. | **20** |
| **Maximum Marks** | | | | **40** |

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| **AO4 REVIEW AND COMMUNICATE** | | | |  |
| **Learning Outcomes** | **Mark Band 1**  **1-3 marks** | **Mark Band 2**  **4-7 marks** | **Mark Band 3**  **8-10 marks** | **Marks** |
| **LO7** Be able to make a presentation of its findings and conclusions by selecting and using a range of communication skills. | Makes a presentation of the findings and conclusions using **basic** techniques of presentations, **limited** response to questions. | Makes a **confident** and **effective** presentation of the findings and conclusions, showing **sound** knowledge of project with **adequate** responses to questions. | Makes an **authoritative** presentation of the findings and conclusions, showing **extensive** knowledge of project with **detailed** responses to questions. | **10** |
| **LO8** Be able to understand and apply the principles of evaluation and review in relation to the planned outcome and own learning and performance. | Understands the **requirements** of evaluation by commenting on the strengths and weaknesses of their planned outcome.  Reviews own work, **intermittently** during the project process.  Responds **briefly** to questions about own learning. | Understands **principles** of evaluation by **effectively** evaluating the planned outcome.  **Realistically** reviews own learning and performance, during the project process.  Responds **purposefully** to questions about own learning. | Understands the **principles** of evaluation by **comprehensively** evaluating the planned outcome against objectives.  **Effectively** reviews own learning and performance, **throughout** the project process.  Responds **with maturity** in a dialogue during the question and answer session. | **10** |
| **Maximum Marks** | | | | **20** |
| **TOTAL MAXIMUM MARKS** | | | | **100** |