

EPQ – Extension subject at 6th form at Beauchamp College

What is EPQ?

Extended Project is a Level 3 qualification which was first assessed in November 2008. Beauchamp College has been involved in the delivery of the qualification for a number of years and have been selected as a centre of excellence by the AQA exam board.

The Extended Project is an A level qualification (A* - U) worth half an A Level available to all Key Stage 5 students at Beauchamp, with classes starting early in September. It is listed as a Year 12 enrichment option but is also available to particularly motivated Year 13 students who want to strengthen their university application or study a topic in great depth.

The project involves producing a single piece of work, with an almost completely free choice of topic, requiring a high degree of planning, preparation and independent learning.

The qualification is flexible enough to appeal to all students, enabling the exploration of any subject independently in real depth through an element of 'taught' skills:

- research skills
- decision-making
- problem-solving
- critical thinking
- presentation
- extended writing and referencing

The extended project is not solely an academic option and could equally well be a practical activity such as a musical performance, sculpture or collage (artefact).

The outcome will be dependent on students' persistence over time and level of dedication and enthusiasm. It is necessary to plan the project, carry out research, select and use resources, develop the project, carry out a full evaluation and present findings and respond to any questions.

Why do it?

The extended project offers an opportunity to:

- explore personal interests as part of a formal qualification
- develop self-motivation and confidence through working autonomously
- use the project on the UCAS form and at interview stage for higher education
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Assessment is holistic and final. Students submit their completed Projects, Production Logs and Presentations for internal marking. A sample of Projects is moderated externally by AQA.

Extended Project at Beauchamp College 2018 – 2019

- Taught element of the qualification is delivered in 7 classes, timetabled a double lesson per week.
- Students are able to use PCs, textbooks, library and Silent Study to carry out the other minimum of 90 hrs of independent study.
- Each student is assigned to a supervisor who also delivers the taught element and oversees students' work, research, Production Logs, Presentations and eventually marks their Project.
- EPQ Coordinator oversees a successful delivery of the qualification and is also a Supervisor to a class of students
- 2017/2018 cohort attained 0.34 VA score.

Who chooses to study for EPQ at Beauchamp College?

- The qualification is open to all students, no entry requirements
- 10 Pupil Premium students (in Y12) in the cohort who are all set to complete the project
- Most students are in Y12, with some in Y13 in mixed ability classes (approx. 140 in total)
- A large number of students are more and most able / STEM / Oxbridge / Russell group applicants
- Very popular extension course – just over 140 students started in Sept 2018

Quality assurance

- Project Q – online platform enabling students more effective completion of their Production Logs, planning, research, project and time management, reflection on progress, evidence and final delivery of their Project
Project Q has also proven to be invaluable time saver for Project Supervisors and the course Coordinator as students' work can be checked, guided and tailored to their individual needs and progress at any time.
It also allows for more effective, timely responses between supervisors, coordinator and students.
Students' progress can be more effectively monitored.
- Current 2018/2019 cohort has been offered an extended deadline for project submission to allow sufficient time for Y12 students to complete the Projects and fully benefit from this qualification (which has been originally designed for Y13 A level students). Due to changes regarding JCQ challenge and NEA, we felt that the qualification needs more than 6.5 months and so moved to submit students' Projects in the November entry, thus allowing enough time for initial research, write up, presentations and completion of students' Production Logs by late May (as opposed to mid-March).

This has been welcomed by students as it relieves them of unnecessary pressure during peak exam / trial exam time and allows students to work at their pace and to their best ability also fulfilling one of the core principles of the examination: personal academic development, which needs time and unrushed opportunities for reflection. Many universities put an increased emphasis on EPQ qualification achieved by their prospective students so we felt that we needed to give students the best possible conditions and enough time to attain to their best ability in order to boost their UCAS application

"We welcome the introduction of the Extended Project and would encourage you to undertake one as it will help you develop independent study and research skills and ease the transition from school/college to higher education." *University of Cambridge*

"The University recognises that some A level students may also choose to offer the Extended Project. In such cases, some admissions tutors may make two alternative offers, one of which involves success in the Extended Project (for example, either AAA at A level or AAB at A level plus Extended Project)." *University of Bristol*

"We have an increasingly compelling evidence base that students who did well at the EPQ settle in well to their undergraduate study at a research-intensive university like ours, and so are keen to see more of them in our lecture theatres and seminar rooms." *University of Southampton*

- Parent Forum – The course coordinator has organised and delivered a parent forum for students and parents to explain why and how EPQ qualification may benefit students' future, the proposed changes to the delivery framework of the course at Beauchamp College and how to best support students throughout.
- Taught element – is delivered in a double lesson, weekly. Most resources have been designed, revised and updated by the course coordinator. All resources are available to all parties via Project Q.
- Meeting time to carry out the necessary marking moderation has been planned and incorporated into staff's directed time
- More regular meetings to support staff in their 'taught element' knowledge and CPD

Points to consider

- Review point by end of Term 1 to discuss students' progress and explore other options (e.g. carry at slower pace into Y13; interrupt and pick up in Y13)
- Consistent EPQ staff team
- EPQ across Lionheart Academy Trust (marking moderation, students supervision, CPD)