

OCR EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION (EPQ)

A Learning Adventure

Our Extended Project aims to inspire, enthuse and motivate students by giving them the freedom to do a project on a subject they're studying or explore an area of personal interest. When your students take an EPQ alongside other qualifications such as A Levels, it can bring an exciting new dimension to their study and provide them with skills that are useful if they're going on to further study.

We talked to a number of teaching professionals about the realities of offering our Extended Project qualification.

At Barton Peveril Sixth Form College in Hampshire, approximately 650 students are taking the EPQ with OCR. **Steph Cussen** is Centre Co-ordinator for the Extended Project, as well as having other responsibilities.

We asked Steph how the EPQ is helping to improve students' knowledge and skill. She told us: *"There is ample evidence that the EPQ enhances skills across a whole range of different areas. Students, at the end of the course, are better organised; have a better understanding of what it means to manage the development of a major project over time; they feel well prepared with regard to research skills for university and confident that they can now deliver an extended piece of work with a high degree of independence."*

Dan Taylor is a College High Achievement Manager at the Cardinal Newman College. At the time of the interview, there were 80 learners taking the EPQ at the college. We asked Dan whether learners were positive/enthusiastic about the course during classes and if it was helping to improve their knowledge and skills. He commented: *"Students are very positive and have produced an incredibly wide variety of interesting*

projects...EPQ has greatly enhanced their self management and research skills which are essential for success at university and in the world of work."

Jonathan Davies is an AST in Geography, Humanities at the Robert Smyth Academy in Market Harborough, Leicestershire where, at the time of the interview, they had 16 learners doing the EPQ. We asked him if the course was suitable for the range of levels required and how well the students participated. He said: *"The course was good as there is the ability to differentiate by outcome. Most of the students self select to complete it...The students do [participate actively] – the classes are not timetabled. The students start the programme at the end of Year 12, as it is part of an evolving 6th Form Programme."*

Mr Fryer is a teacher at Perry Beeches 2. We asked him for his opinion, including from the feedback he'd received, on the best/most beneficial aspects of the course and he mentioned: *"Encouraging independent study and developing project working skills."*

IT PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH THE SKILLS THAT HE'S LOOKING FOR

The EPQ encourages independent study, critical thinking and teamwork. It may also be useful when students are applying for university to help them 'stand out from the crowd.' Our interviewees told us more about this aspect of the EPQ.

Steph Cussen said: *"Students returning from Oxbridge, Medicine and Russell Group interviews for a range of courses are telling us that their EPQ has been discussed and the discussions positively received. There is some evidence that employers at interview are also taking it into account."*

Mr Fryer told us: *"The course equipped students with skills that will be very useful at University."*

Dan Taylor commented: *"[It's] very useful preparation for university, especially prestigious universities."*

CAREFULLY PLANNED SUPPORT

We've developed a suite of support and learning resources that are designed to save you time while you're preparing for the Extended Project, and to support you while you're teaching it.

When we asked **Jonathan Davies** about the most beneficial aspects of our courses, he said: *"I like the flexibility and all the support materials. The moderator's report was helpful."* He also enjoys working with us because, he told us: *"I didn't have to qualify myself to be a Project Moderator."*

Dan Taylor found it "Very easy" to work with us and mentioned that *"The EPQ is streamlined, flexible and with minimum administration."* He also commented that OCR is the *"Best of the exams boards offering the EPQ."*

To read more about EPQ, please go to www.ocr.org.uk/extendedproject or you can call our Customer Contact Centre about any questions on 01223 553998.