EPQ
Exam Board: AQA

Sixth Form

Where do I start from?

The Extended Project Qualification is an additional Level 3 qualification requiring significant independent study alongside a student's A Level programme. It is designed to complement, rather than negatively affect, progress in three A Level subjects.

Students wishing to undertake an EPQ at NSB must meet all of the following academic criteria:

- Grade 8 or above in both GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature.
- Grade 8 or above in GCSE Mathematics.
- Grade 8 or above in a Humanities subject.
- Grade 8 or above in a Science subject.
- An average GCSE grade of at least 7.5.
- Students studying Further Mathematics or four A Levels are not eligible because of the additional workload involved.

Places are limited by the number of trained supervisors available, so meeting the entry criteria does not automatically guarantee a place. Final eligibility and places will be confirmed once GCSE results and A Level timetables are known in Term 1.

What will I study in the EPQ?

You will choose a topic that extends beyond your normal A Level courses and develop it into a substantial independent project. The project may take the form of an extended written report or an artefact supported by a formal written record.

Throughout the qualification you will learn how to define a focused question, plan a long-term project, locate and evaluate sources, use academic reading effectively, reference evidence, reflect on progress and present your conclusions.

How will I be assessed?

Assessment is based on the complete project process, not simply the final outcome. Evidence will include your planning and project log, research and source evaluation, the completed product, written reflection and a presentation.

Your work will be assessed on your ability to:

- manage and organise an independent project;
- use a wide range of relevant resources critically;
- develop and realise a clear, well-supported outcome;
- review the project process and communicate your findings.

How will I study?

The EPQ combines taught skills sessions with substantial independent work. You will receive guidance in areas such as project planning, research methods, source reliability, academic writing, referencing, time management and presentation skills.

You will meet a trained supervisor at agreed points to discuss progress and next steps. The supervisor will guide the process but will not direct the content of the project. You must therefore be organised, self-motivated and able to sustain work over an extended period.

The workload includes planning, research, academic reading, extended writing and sustained project management. Careful use of study periods and meeting interim deadlines will be essential.

What does the subject combine well with?

The EPQ can complement any three-subject A Level programme because the project topic is chosen by the student. It is particularly valuable when it allows you to explore an academic interest, career area or question that is not fully covered within your A Level specifications.

It is not available to students taking Further Mathematics or four A Levels, as the qualification must not compromise progress, attainment or engagement in the core A Level programme.

What could this course lead to?

The EPQ develops skills valued in higher education and employment, including independent learning, critical thinking, research, academic writing, project management, problem-solving and presentation.

It can also provide useful evidence of wider academic engagement when discussing course choices, personal statements, applications and interviews, although individual universities and courses will apply their own admissions policies.

How are limited places allocated?

Where the number of eligible students exceeds the places available, places will be allocated using a random and transparent process. Eligible students who cannot initially be offered a place will join a waiting list. Any later vacancies will be allocated using the same transparent process.