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Advancing Access Physical CPD Conference  
Wednesday 27th November 2019

# **Delivering the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)**

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## Our workshop will cover:

- Why Universities love the EPQ
- What makes a 'good' EPQ
- Supporting students doing the EPQ
- Widening Participation Schemes
- How can we help
- Table discussion

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# Why Universities love the EPQ

- Stronger applications!
- Demonstrates key skills that are fundamental for success at University:
  - Independence of thought – autonomy, decision making.
  - Research
  - Critical thinking
  - Referencing
- Demonstrates enthusiasm, resilience, motivation and commitment
- Helps us judge students' potential in UCAS/Interview. May make a difference at confirmation.

# Why Universities love the EPQ

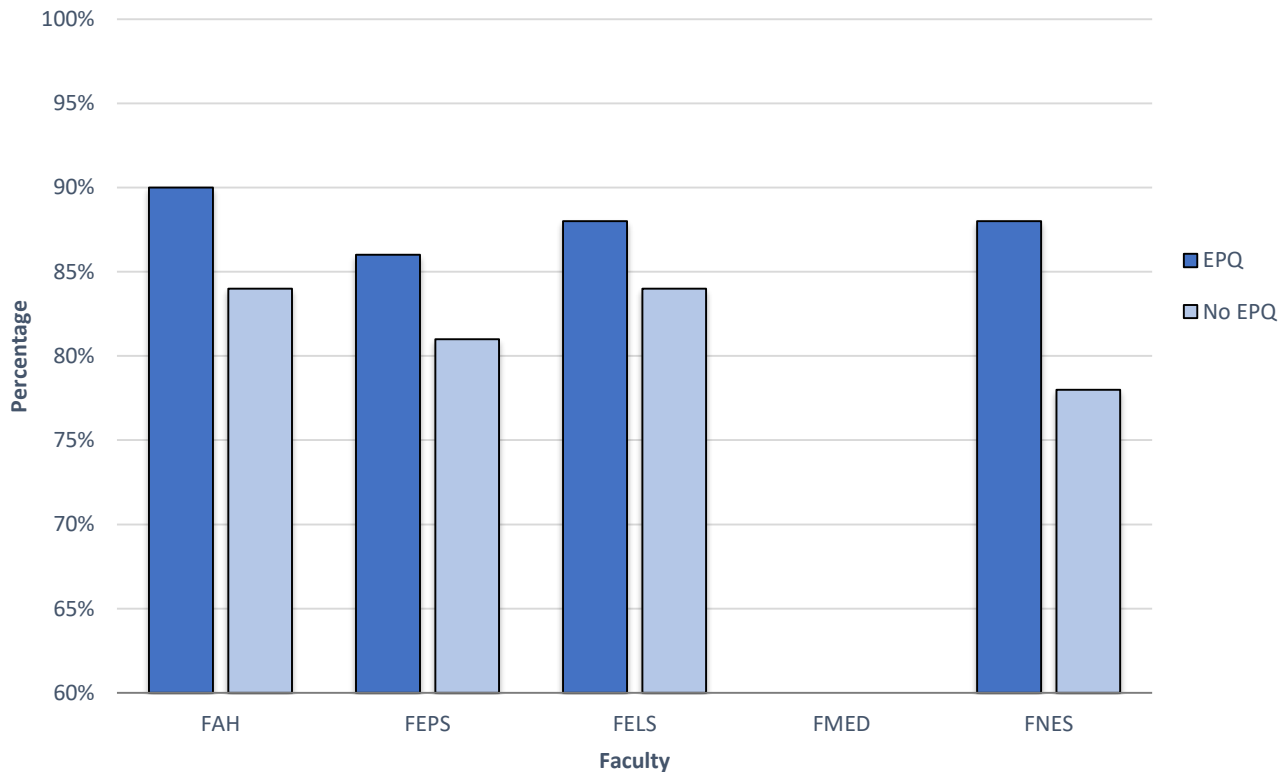
Manchester	The EPQ gives A-level students excellent preparation for university-level study and may help boost their UCAS application. The University is also supportive of students undertaking other research projects or qualifications, such as: HPQs; Welsh Baccalaureates; international EPQs; and extended A-level essays.
Southampton	On a majority of our courses applicants offering an EPQ will be made two offers – our typical offer based on 3 A levels, and an alternative where, in exchange for an A or A* in the EPQ we will reduce the A level requirements by one grade.
Oxford	Where applicants have undertaken the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), this will not be a condition of any offer but the University recognises that the EPQ will provide an applicant with the opportunity to develop research and academic skills relevant for study at Oxford. Candidates are encouraged to draw upon relevant EPQ experience when writing their personal statement.
Cambridge	We welcome the Extended Project and would encourage applicants to undertake one as it will help to develop independent study and research skills valuable for higher education. However, we recognise that not all students have equal access to them and so completion of an Extended Project won't normally be a requirement of any offer made.
Liverpool	For certain courses, applicants who offer the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) and meet our offer criteria will be made the standard offer, plus an alternative offer. This will be at one A Level grade lower plus a grade A in the EPQ, for example the offer would be AAA or AAB plus A in the EPQ.
Newcastle	We value the skills of research and independent learning that the Extended Project is designed to develop. We welcome applications from students offering an Extended Project alongside A levels. If you offer an Extended Project, it will be taken into account as part of your application profile.
UCL	Although the Extended Project Qualification does not form part of our standard entrance requirements, UCL continues to recognise its value as preparation for independent study, which is key to university-level study.
Leeds	In some cases admissions tutors may wish to make an alternative offer to applicants, one of which involves successful completion of the Extended Project (eg. AAA at A level or AAB plus the Extended Project).



# Student Success – University of Southampton

Degree Performance by Faculty  
Student population  
2013/14 - 2017/18

Percentage of UoS Students Achieving First Class Honours or Upper Second Class Honours by Faculty



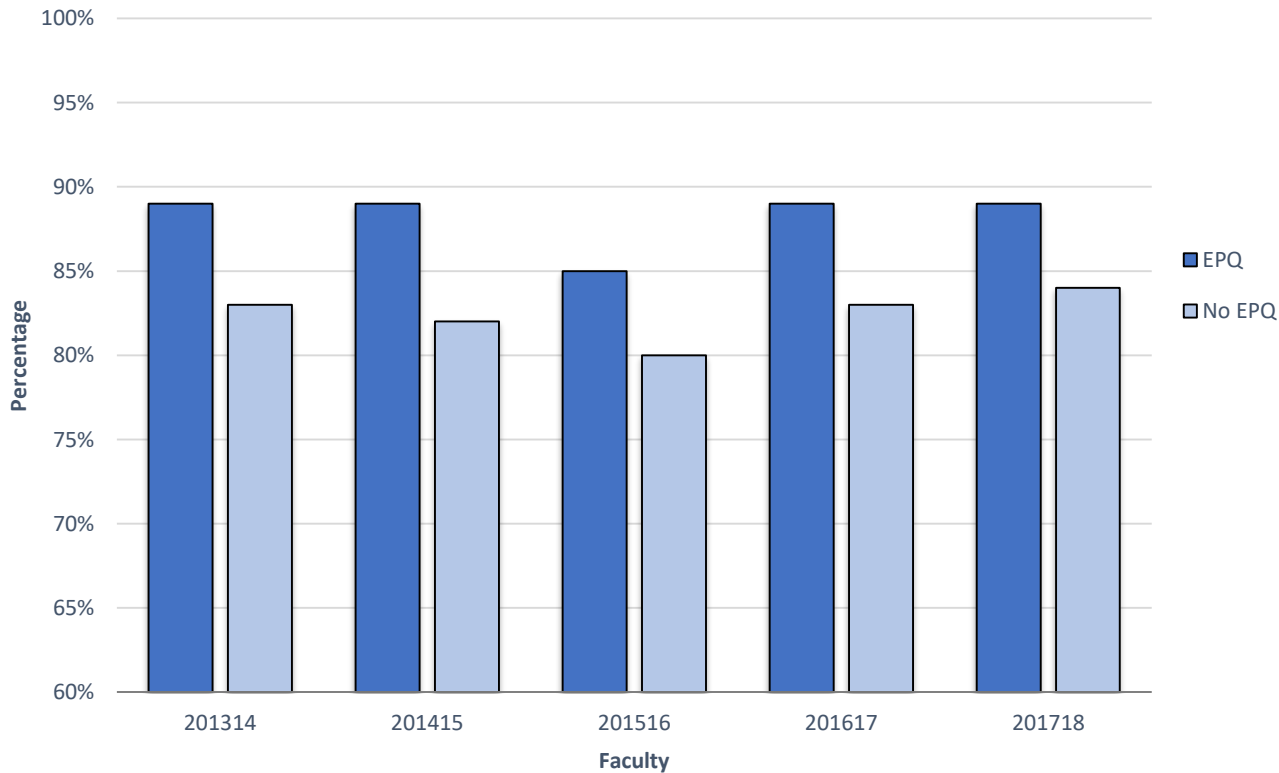
UoS and Thompson, 2018



# Student Success – University of Southampton

Degree Performance  
Year on Year  
Student population  
2013/14 - 2017/18

Percentage of UoS EPQ Students Achieving First Class Honours or Upper Second Class Honours – Year on Year



UoS and Thompson, 2018

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# Supporting students taking the EPQ

1) Ensure students understand the expectations of the EPQ:

- Commitment
- Independence
- Passion
- *A process* qualification; skills-focused

2) Don't teach, coach:

- Don't advise, question
- Facilitate students' own decision making
- Non-subject specialist supervisors

3) Take advantage of free support!

Supervisors will:	Supervisors will not:
Provide general advice	Propose or develop the topic or interfere with the content
Be available for discussion	Structure the essay
Give general feedback on drafts	Signpost to specific texts/provide books or bibliographies
Comment on progress	Proofread the final essay/dissertation or annotate/edit the piece at any stage. This includes proof reading of drafts.



## Widening Participation (WP) Programmes

# REALISING OPPORTUNITIES

Working Together | Supporting Talent

“In my first year of university, I had to complete a small project which had a very similar style to the academic assignment, so I felt very well prepared for it!”

Kymrun Dhami, past R.O. student at Warwick University  
(R.O. Impact Report, December 2016)

Summer Schools offered to R.O. students

Programme intensively teaches academic research and writing skills

Students benefit from a development of their environment of familiarity

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

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# Widening Participation (WP) Programmes

“...[the programme] helped us with giving us a bit of guidance on how to conduct independent research, so when we got to university we weren’t just left to fend for ourselves and develop all these new skills because we’d already developed them.”

Abbie H, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Psychology BSc student, University of Liverpool

...lent students  
background. The  
e chance to take  
y into higher  
lication guidance  
ops. These activities  
aduates and the wider

University, culminating in Scholars completing an academic assignment. Through the Liverpool Scholars programme, we aim to nurture well informed, confident applicants who are well equipped for their University experience.

They’re comfortable with the university environment (they get a student pass)

Students write an academic assignment using same skills as EPQ

Lectures and workshops on academic skills





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# Widening Participation (WP) Programmes – A2L



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- Opportunity to receive an A2L course offer
- Take part in the A2L module
- Helps students with the transition to university
- Gain university tuition before the start of your course
- Participate in on-campus events
- Additional consideration for scholarships
- On course support, including careers guidance and opportunities

All home UK students are eligible

Students write an assignment using skills linked to the EPQ

Lectures and workshops on academic skills

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# How can we help – University of Leeds

	Online	On-campus	Off-campus
For Students	Study Skills Guides MOOCs	Research Skills Days Library visits	In school student workshops
For Teachers	Lesson Plans Project Q	Teacher Conferences	In school teacher CPD

Matt Elliott

[m.elliott2@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:m.elliott2@leeds.ac.uk) to discuss support available

# How can we help – University of Liverpool



Jamie Graney  
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0151 795 8156

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# How can we help

Assessment Objectives	Mark band	Assessment Criteria	Assessment Objectives	Mark band	Assessment Criteria
<b>AO1 Manage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify the topic</li> <li>identify project aims and objectives</li> <li>produce a project plan</li> <li>complete the work applying organisational skills and strategies to meet stated objectives</li> </ul>	7–10 marks	<p>Clear identification of the topic to be investigated or researched and clear evidence of appropriate aims and objectives for the proposed project title.</p> <p>Detailed project plan, with clear evidence of monitoring progress of project work against the agreed objectives.</p>	<b>Assessment Objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evaluate own learning and performance</li> </ul>	14–20 marks	<p>Candidates take appropriate decisions and appropriate data is collected and thoroughly analysed. The project plan is fully implemented and the outcome is fully realised to a high standard and consistent with a candidate's finally agreed plan.</p> <p>There is clear evidence of appropriate changes to or development of the initial project plan or title or aims and objectives, with clear and appropriate reasons for any changes.</p> <p>Candidates communicate their findings fluently in appropriate format, synthesising information.</p>
	4–6 marks	<p>Some identification of the topic to be investigated or researched and some evidence of appropriate aims and objectives for the proposed project title.</p> <p>Project plan, with some evidence of monitoring progress of project work against the agreed objectives.</p>			
	1–3 marks	<p>Limited identification of the topic to be investigated or researched and limited evidence of appropriate aims and objectives for the proposed project title.</p> <p>Brief project plan, with little evidence of monitoring progress of project work against the agreed objectives.</p>			
	0 marks	No relevant response.			
				7–10 marks	<p>Detailed and careful evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the completed project in relation to the planning, implementation and outcomes, and the candidate's own learning during the project.</p> <p>Material is consistently relevant, well-structured and appropriately presented. Candidates clearly communicate their findings and conclusions which are based on sound evidence and judgement.</p>

## Case study into partnerships with universities



# RESEARCH FOR ALL

Cripps, E., Anderson, C., Strauss, P. and Wheeler, R. (2018) **‘Fostering independent research skills and critical enquiry among school students: A case study of a school–university partnership to support the Extended Project Qualification’**. *Research for All*, 2 (2): 323–334. DOI <https://doi.org/10.18546/RFA.02.2.10>

“Outcomes of the EPQ Support Programme include that students reported gaining skills in research, independent learning and critical enquiry, as well as familiarity with the university environment. The case study also explores longer-term impacts in preparing students for university and changing their attitudes to research, including the perspective from university researchers.”

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# Table discussion

- How do you use your 30 hours?
- What are the main limitations for school staff and students whilst doing the EPQ?
  - What are the benefits/positives you have seen from being involved in the EPQ?
    - What are your action points going forward after this session and why?
- What else can universities or external bodies do to assist you and your students in delivering the EPQ?
  - Is the EPQ worth doing? What are the main pros and cons?
  - What advice would you offer fellow teachers & advisers delivering the EPQ?
    - Are you being offered TOO MUCH support? i.e. being mithered
  - Is it only the high achievers in your school/college that (are able to) do the EPQ?



## What to do next:

- Head back to the fair and ask about WP progression programmes similar to Liverpool Scholars and Access to Leeds
- Look into how the EPQ influences admissions at your local university or the universities your students choose the most
- Contact local universities to see if they offer academic skills sessions and/or campus visits for EPQ students
- Write a blanket permission letter for students wanting to use university libraries for their research, which they can take with them
- Look into programmes like Project Q, skills4uni and other tech that may help yourself and your students
- Read through the Research for All 2018 Report into school-university partnerships
- Contact us!

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