



# Teacher Champions

2025-2026



# Unlocking skills and mobility through the EPQ

Emily Sharp, Senior Education Outreach Officer, University of Leeds  
Becky Naylor-Teece, Academic Skills Officer, University of Southampton



# Coming up

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What is the EPQ, and what are the benefits of completing one?

How the EPQ can help providers meet regulatory requirements

Barriers to offering the EPQ, and how you can overcome them

# What is the EPQ?

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**Do you currently offer  
the EPQ?**

**Why/Why not?**

# What is the EPQ?

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## The Extended Project Qualification is:

- A standalone level three qualification
- Worth half an A level (up to 28 UCAS points)
- Not a replacement for an A level
- An additional qualification that allows students to lead and manage their own independent research project by answering a self-set structured question, or producing an artefact

# EPQ Benefits

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# Benefits of the EPQ

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## Attainment and Progression

- EPQ students are more likely to enter higher education, achieve higher degree classifications and have lower non-continuation rates than their peers - even when controlling for prior attainment ([Gill, 2024](#); [Gill, 2025](#))
- Research shows a positive relationship between EPQ grade and A-level grades, suggesting EPQ enhances students' overall academic success ([Gill, 2022](#))

# Benefits of the EPQ

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## Social Mobility

- EPQ participation is linked with improved outcomes for underrepresented groups, 46% of IMD Q1 students with an EPQ achieved a First vs 34% without – representing a 12% uplift effect of completing the EPQ. The equivalent uplift for more affluent peers was only 7% ([Harrison Moore & Thompson, 2024](#))
- EPQ helps bridge equity gaps through skill-building: evidence suggests EPQ completion builds research, critical thinking, independence, and reflective skills - these skills directly support students to succeed in HE and can reduce disparities created by earlier educational experiences ([Harrison Moore & Thompson, 2024](#))
- EPQ provision is unevenly distributed in the UK, with significant geographical cold-spots in provision ([Brown & Walkington, 2024](#))

**46%**  
of IMD Q1 students  
with an EPQ achieved a  
First Class Degree  
outcome

**12%**  
...more likely to achieve a  
First Class degree  
outcome if you have  
completed an EPQ and  
live in an IMDQ1  
postcode

# Benefits of the EPQ

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## Sense of Belonging & Skills Development

- EPQ builds university-ready academic skills, with students reporting significant growth in:
  - Organisation
  - Confidence
  - research and presentation skills
  - problem-solving
  - motivation and resilience ([AQA, 2023](#))
- EPQ supports independent learning and student identity: students must manage a long-term project, engage critically with academic literature, and reflect on their learning. This mirrors HE study patterns and helps students feel academically prepared and “like a university student” before they arrive ([Harrison Moore, Thompson and Lueddeke, 2025](#))

# Benefits of the EPQ

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## Universities value the EPQ

- Universities, including Russell Group institutions, explicitly reduce offers when students achieve strong EPQ performance
- The EPQ is worth up to 28 UCAS points: UCAS tariff points can support students in meeting alternative offers, easing progression routes - an especially important factor for learners whose predicted A-level grades may underestimate potential ([AQA, 2023](#))

# Meeting regulatory requirements

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## Contribution to meeting skills needs

- This evaluation area considers:
  - how well leaders engage with employer, civic, community and education stakeholders to understand local, regional and/or national skills needs, and **offer curriculums that contribute to meeting these needs**
  - how effectively leaders **involve stakeholders** in designing and delivering curriculums at subject level
  - how well **skills-related aspects of curriculums** are planned and taught
  - how well leaders **develop partnerships** with stakeholders that make a positive contribution towards meeting local, regional and/or national skills needs
- Inspectors focus on the factors that statutory and non-statutory guidance, research and inspection evidence indicate contribute most strongly to meeting skills needs. These factors are:
  - **engaging with stakeholders** to understand skills needs and to build partnerships
  - **involving stakeholders in curriculum design and delivery**
  - planning and delivering the curriculum to **contribute to meeting skills needs**



- **The EPQ directly addresses skills needs.**
- **Universities like Leeds and Southampton can offer support and sessions to enhance your curriculum**
- **We can also provide OFSTED with evidence of our work with you**

- **Hills Road Sixth Form College, Ofsted Report, 2025**

“Leaders effectively use the EPQ to enable students to **develop high-level skills**, including digital skills such as the use of artificial intelligence

...leaders and teachers have developed curriculums that are of an exceptional quality and are highly ambitious. These **curriculums reflect leaders’ high expectations and vision for all students to reach their fullest potential**

...the EPQ allows [students] the opportunity to **showcase both their creative and academic potential**. Through studying this qualification, students develop a wide range of skills that **prepare them exceptionally well for university study”**

## Access and Participation Plans (APP) and the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR)

### A University's APP sets out:

- the **risks to equality of opportunity** that the provider has identified as relevant to their context, informed by a data dashboard and the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register
- intervention strategies, which detail the **actions providers will take** to challenge risks to equality of opportunity and the outcomes they expect to achieve
- how the provider plans to **evaluate the impact** of their work
- the **investment providers plan to make** on access and participation work.

Providers also publish a summary of their plan, which sets out key points in an accessible way.

# The Office for Students (OfS)

## University of Leeds' APP



### Intervention Strategy 2:

Leeds will increase the percentage of students from IMD Q1 attending the University.

### Target 1:

Leeds will increase the percentage of students from IMD Q1 attending the University to 16.1% by 2027/28 through attainment raising in schools, targeted outreach activity, and associated admissions strategy.

# The Office for Students (OfS)

## University of Southampton's APP



### Intervention Strategy 1:

Increase applications, offers and enrolments of students from low socio-economic groups to the University of Southampton

### Target 1:

To raise enrolments of entrants from IMD Q1 postcodes from 7% to 10.4% by 2027/28

### Target 2:

To increase enrolments of entrants eligible for FSM from 9% to 14.6% of the UG student population by 2027/28

# Meeting regulatory requirements

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## Working in partnership

- **Hannah Smith, EPQ Coordinator, Notre Dame Sixth Form College**
  - “The skills agenda is particularly important for sixth-form colleges, and our collaboration with external partners, like the University of Leeds and the University of Southampton, is a key part of that... It’s great that they get taught rather than just being lectured at [...] which helps them transition to university learning.”
- **Sophie Handler, Head of EPQ, Carmel College**
  - “Around 200 students attended the last workshop, which was incredibly valuable. [The EPQ] improves time management, research skills, and independent learning - all of which are invaluable for university and employment.”
- **Steven Gleadall, Educational Engagement Manager, University of Leeds**
  - “Our partnership provides students with additional perspectives and enriches their learning experience. It’s about working together to support and challenge students to reach their full potential.”

# Overcoming barriers to offering the EPQ

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# Common challenges faced

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**Resourcing, including timetabling**

**Inexperience of practitioners**

**Recruitment**

**Drop out**



**What challenges do you  
currently face with the  
EPQ?**



**How can we overcome  
these challenges?**

# Common challenge solutions

- **Resourcing, including timetabling**
  - SLT buy-in, achieved through
    - sharing EPQ benefits (e.g. these slides / our promotional materials)
    - asking SLT to supervise students
    - marketplace presentations with SLT invited
    - we can meet with your SLT members to discuss the benefits of the qualification
- **Inexperience of practitioners**
  - Collaboration between centres
  - Training from exam boards
  - Support from HE partners
  - Downloadable teaching resources including Schemes of Work, lesson plans

Scan the QR codes to access...

- **Downloadable teaching resources and promotional materials for the EPQ**



- **Interactive collaboration map – reach out to local centres offering the EPQ**



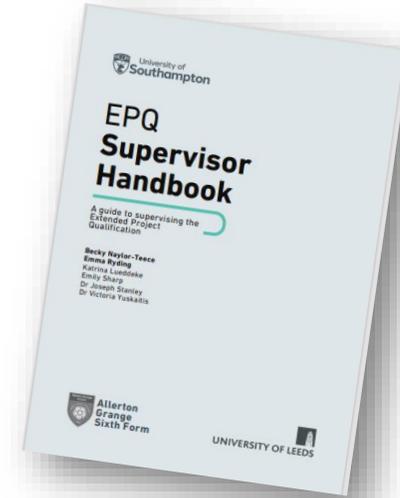
# Common challenge solutions

- **Recruitment**

- Culture of EPQ in the centre, developed through:
- Marketplace presentations which celebrate and publicise students' achievements
- FPQ and HPQ offered to lower years
- SLT involved in supervision

- **Dropout**

- Proactive support for project management
- Differentiated support
- Robust supervisor training (we can help!)
- Resources to support supervisors, e.g. our handbook
- Transparency in the student recruitment process



Our [EPQ supervisor handbook](#) can help to support you in supporting your supervisors and students

# Summary

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**The EPQ is a standalone research project offered at level 3**

**EPQ students develop skills valued by universities, making them more likely to progress to, and achieve highly at, HE**

**EPQ provision can help FE and HE institutions demonstrate excellence against regulatory standards**

**EPQ provision in the UK is inconsistent, with disadvantaged students less likely to access the qualification**

**Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are even more likely to benefit from the EPQ**

**The barriers to offering and delivering a strong EPQ curriculum can be overcome with help, including from HE partners such as the Universities of Leeds and Southampton**

# Questions?

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learnwithus@soton.ac.uk



<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/learnwithustransition/>



educationoutreach@leeds.ac.uk



<https://www.leeds.ac.uk/undergraduate-teachers-supporting-students/doc/research-study-skills>



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