

► Why Choose the Extended Project?

Your students may wonder why the Extended Project is the best option for them in preference to, say, General Studies. Studying the Extended Project has several advantages, many of which will be relevant to your students, their current studies and future plans. To reinforce these benefits, see below.

The Extended Project is a totally new and different kind of qualification through which students can learn and implement the skills required to manage a small-scale project.

- Provides an excellent and relevant preparation for the world of work
- Students can develop their research skills to enable the successful management of work or study-related Projects for the future.

The Extended Project provides students with opportunities for ‘ownership’, develop an area of personal interest, and acquire a recognised qualification, thus attracting invaluable UCAS points.

- Students will work on a topic personally chosen by themselves, carrying out the type of Project that they each feel most comfortable with, thus increasing their motivation and the chances of successful completion
- Being a topic of the student’s own personal choice, the Project will say a lot about the student as an individual
- Allows a student to demonstrate his or her capacity for skills acquisition, Project management, evaluation, reflective activities, seeking guidance, etc.

The Extended Project is flexible enough to be undertaken as an extension of some aspect of each student’s ‘other’ subjects or main curriculum, whether the Diploma/A-Levels, or NVQs, etc. For example:

- if studying biology, ecology or similar natural science subjects, the Project could take the form of an investigation and report on a particular area in which the student is interested.
- students thinking of a career in health & social care or youth work could investigate aspects of community work, the local provision of nurseries, or an issue relating to health care
- students studying engineering or construction and the built environment could research the life and times of a famous engineer, scientist architect or designer (dead or alive).

Note: if a student carries out an Extended Project that involves research in their own time or visiting employers or other places, it is essential that you ensure that any monitoring or supervision requirements of the specification are fully complied with.

So, what sort of topics could your students choose? Virtually anything—as long as they are sufficiently interested in it to complete it, and as long as it relates to their current studies or some progression intention.

As a tutor or supervisor, don't worry that some students may select a topic in which you do not have much confidence. Remember that you are not evaluating and assessing the content, but the **process** of Project planning, Project management and overall Project management skills.

When students are given the option to do an Extended Project, another AS or A-Level subject, or any one of a range of other qualifications, such as General Studies, the choice should be their own. But what information could you provide to help a student make an informed decision about which may be best for them? The Extended Project:

- has value across the whole range of universities and effectively provides a taste of HE study through research and independent thinking.
- can add value to a student's employability by being relevant to a particular type of work.
- provides skills which are valuable to employers and any area where research and 'finding out' are required.
- allows the student to produce a piece of work which is individual and says something unique about them as a person, a student, and a potential future employee.
- allows a student to demonstrate that they can develop new skills and do things on their own initiative; their portfolio provides authenticated evidence of these capabilities.
- allows a student to start thinking about their future and reflect on their personal development.