



MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE

The Extended Project

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Extended Project?

Piloted at Marlborough and launched nationally in 2008, the Extended Project is an option for College pupils who wish to undertake a self-motivated project and develop learning skills for tertiary level and beyond. It is very different in nature to the other A level and Pre-U qualifications we offer; an awareness of the basic ethos and structure of the Extended Project is essential.

How many pupils take it?

The Extended Project is a standalone qualification. The College is currently running the EP with some 60 pupils per year across unlimited subject areas. The project can be taken in either year of the Sixth Form but Lower Sixth completion is recommended.

Who offers it?

All exam boards offer an Extended Project qualification, though given our connections with Edexcel, this is the course we run here. Course code: ZPJ30.

What restrictions are there in terms of topic?

None. It is totally generic and pupil motivated.

What level is it?

It is at A level standard (known as Level 3), graded A* to E, and is worth one half of the UCAS points of a full A level.

What is an Extended Project?

It is an iterative journey. It is *not a single task or essay*. A diary of thoughts, decisions and problems encountered and overcome is kept from the start. It has to be completed over an extended period as the process is as important as the outcome. The title can, and usually does, evolve.

It is not the final product which carries the marks, although this may illustrate a good 'journey'; it is rather the path taken and the way the pupil has carried out the research that is critical. More than just representing the pupil's own opinions supported by evidence, the Extended Project is based on extensive secondary (or primary) source research which is then fully referenced, analysed and synthesised, with new links or trends being identified by the pupil.

Along the way, skills are taught and then broadened; understanding is deepened by narrow title choice; the project should ideally aim to be cross discipline and whatever the subject, appropriate consideration of ethical, moral, religious, philosophical, economic, historical, mathematical, scientific, artistic and literary ideas should be included.

When does it run?

It is a two term project. Starting in September with a 7-week taught course (5 lessons per fortnight), it then runs via weekly one-to-one tutorials with a beak who acts as a tutor-assessor, until Lent half-term. At this point, taught lessons commence again for two weeks and the project is completed with an assessed oral presentation to a small audience, followed by hand-in at the end of the Lent term.

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What is the role of the tutor?

Each project is allocated a tutor and a pupil has tutor sessions in a regular, mutually agreed slot. Initially, the pupil may be directed to ensure a successful outcome; thereafter, the tutor will purely facilitate the pupil's research through the suggestion of appropriate contacts, lines of enquiry, and references. Finally, the tutor will mark the project over Easter using a carefully worded generic mark scheme which assesses a) self-management skills, b) research skills, c) synthesis and analysis skills and d) evaluation and communication skills.

What form does the outcome take?

It can be a written, illustrated dissertation, or a statistically analysed investigation/field study, or a performance, or an artifact – in fact anything! – a computer programme, composition, poem, film, exhibition, business plan, teaching scheme...

How long is it?

There is a word guide of 6,000 words but this is not important other than to set the scale. A 5,000 succinct project would be better than a rambling 9,000 word effort. Pupils are likely to write 10,000 words pre the final draft and then edit. Ephemeral non-dissertation outcomes have a lower word expectation.

Who can take it?

Strictly anyone, though only Upper School can be timetabled. We highly recommend the EPQ to all Lower Sixth pupils, showing as it does, independence of thought and work, resilience and multiple transferrable skills, all of which are valued by universities.

Who should take it?

Anyone with genuine academic interest and ambition. High motivation levels are key too, as organisation and self-discipline are needed to see it through. The Extended Project suits the pupil who enjoys choosing their own direction rather than simply following, who is prepared to communicate proactively, willing to identify problems and learn from them.

Who marks it?

It is internally marked by a tutor-assessor, then internally moderated by the Centre Supervisor, before external moderation by the board of a sample of our projects.

What do pupils get?

They get an Extended Project Qualification Level 3 certificate, grade A* to E, with other GCE A level grades in August. *There is no individual access to remarks.*

What do Universities think of it?

They love it. It addresses all the motivation and research skills that a successful undergraduate should have. Some universities are beginning to include the Extended Project Qualification in offers, in that required grades may be shaded e.g. from AAA to AAB and an Extended Project. The majority of Admissions tutors see it as a 'balance tipper' between two similar entrants.

What support exists?

There is a dedicated Student Book (for the taught course) and the dedicated webpage on the Edexcel website: <https://www.edexcel.com/quals1/project/level3/Pages/default.aspx>