

Teachers, headteachers, senior managers, local authorities, learners

# Extended project



## Challenging advanced students with the new extended project

The extended project is a single piece of work of a student's choosing that requires evidence of planning, preparation, research and autonomous working. It will be available as a stand-alone qualification for A level students and as a qualification that will be taken as part of a Diploma. An extended project is about the size of half an A level and will be offered from September 2008.

The aim of the extended project is to strengthen programmes of study for 16- to 19-year-olds, testing a wider range of skills. It will provide continuity between A levels and Diplomas at level 3 as it can be part of both a traditional A level study programme and a compulsory part of the Diploma programme. An extended project could be, for example:

- a design
- a report with findings from an investigation or study
- a dissertation presenting an argument
- an artefact
- a performance.

Students might use their project at interview stage for higher education and/or in their personal statement on the UCAS form.

Specifications for the extended project will be available to centres from

September 2008, and the first awards will be made in August 2009.

### Why do an extended project?

The extended project offers opportunities for learners to:

- have significant input into the choice and design of an extended piece of work
- develop and apply decision-making and problem-solving skills, initiative and enterprise
- extend their planning, research, critical thinking, analytical, synthesis, evaluation and presentation skills
- use their learning experiences to support their personal aspirations for higher education and/or career development.

Ideally, learners will acquire a 'tool kit' of skills, knowledge and understanding which they will be able to use when tackling similar projects in the future.

### Grading

Achievement is reported on a scale of six grades, from A\* to E, where A\* is the highest. Achievement that is insufficient to lead to the award of a certificate is reported as unclassified (or U).

### Extended project and A levels

A level students may add the extended project to their A level study programme. Students will be able to carry out a

project on a topic of their own choosing, which may or may not be linked to their A level subjects.

Students will be encouraged to take the extended project since it will develop research and independent learning skills, which will be of benefit to them when they progress to higher education or employment.

### The extended project and Diplomas

Although the extended project is a freestanding qualification it is also a compulsory constituent qualification of the level 3 Diploma.

Diploma learners' project topics must be relevant to principal learning in the Diploma in either or both of the following ways:

- the project topic complements and develops the themes and topics for learners' principal learning, as set out in the relevant Line of Learning criteria
- it supports learner progression to higher education or employment.

### Pilot

Two awarding bodies, Edexcel and AQA (in collaboration with City & Guilds) developed level 3 extended project pilot qualifications based on draft criteria developed by QCA and are piloting these with a number of different learning centres between autumn 2006 and summer 2008.

#### Contact information

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#### Further information

Information about the pilot:  
Edexcel – [www.edexcel.org.uk](http://www.edexcel.org.uk) or  
AQA – [www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)

Teacher assessment materials on the  
QCA website: [www.qca.org.uk/taa/](http://www.qca.org.uk/taa/)

Delivering the 14–19  
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