

LEVEL 3

Specification

EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION

H857

For first assessment in 2018

Disclaimer

Specifications are updated over time. Whilst every effort is made to check all documents, there may be contradictions between published resources and the specification, therefore please use the information on the latest specification at all times. Where changes are made to specifications these will be indicated within the document, there will be a new version number indicated, and a summary of the changes. If you do notice a discrepancy between the specification and a resource please contact us at: resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk

We will inform centres about changes to specifications. We will also publish changes on our website. The latest version of our specifications will always be those on our website (ocr.org.uk) and these may differ from printed versions.

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Registered office:
The Triangle Building
Shaftesbury Road
Cambridge
CB2 8EA

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1 Why choose OCR's Level 3 Extended Project Qualification?

1a. Why choose an OCR Level 3 Extended Project Qualification?

OCR's Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) aims to inspire, enthuse, motivate and to allow learners to develop or extend a variety of skills through the completion of a free choice of project. This project allows learners to pursue a theme/topic based either on a subject they are already studying or in an area of particular personal interest or provides the opportunity to complete something entirely new. Learners are given responsibility for managing all stages of their project in a specified time period.

An EPQ is extremely accessible and suitable for Level 3 learners, and complements a programme of study, whether they are studying vocational or academic qualifications.

OCR's EPQ is designed to allow individual learners to showcase their creativity, talents and skills. The flexible approach that this specification has built, including the freedom of choice of project for learners, allows them to work individually or as part of a group.

Assessment is based predominantly on the process as well as the outcome; from decision making about choice and design of their project through planning and development, to presentation to an audience, reflection and critical evaluation of its success.

Learners can choose how they present their final outcome(s) and learners are encouraged to produce the outcome that is most appropriate to their chosen theme/topics and aims and objectives. This could be a performance/event, design, report, dissertation or artefact.

The EPQ provides potential for breadth of study and enrichment. It encourages learners to work independently, to develop their research and investigation skills, their ability to problem-solve and to critically engage with the theme/topic of their project. This qualification also encourages the development of both writing and technology skills

appropriate to a learner's choice of project. These key transferable skills are extremely valuable in supporting a learner's progression to Higher or Further Education, vocational qualifications or directly into employment, as well as supporting their study in other subjects. Learners with this qualification stand out from the crowd at interviews as they demonstrate their enthusiasm for (and knowledge of) their chosen theme/topics intellectual flexibility and project management skills.

Studies and research indicate that Further and Higher Education institutions, as well as employers, value the skills developed through this qualification, including those of project and time management, communication and teamwork. For further information about the research supporting the value of the EPQ, please see the [OCR website](#).

This qualification is easy to administer and can be taught alongside a learner's core programme of study. The taught component of core skills enables centres to deliver this requirement as flexibly as possible. As a centre, you can choose how and when you deliver the EPQ so it fits around timetabling requirements.

We provide a range of support services designed to help you at every stage, from preparation through to the delivery of our specifications. This includes a wide range of high-quality creative resources including Delivery Guides.

OCR's EPQ is a stand-alone qualification that is worth up to 28 [UCAS](#) points in the new tariff (equivalent to 70 UCAS points in the old tariff). This qualification encourages a 'can-do' attitude and provides learners with the opportunity to explore in-depth something that really interests them. This version of the EPQ specification is for use from the June 2018 assessment series onwards. This qualification is regulated by Ofqual, the Regulator for qualifications offered in England. The qualification number for OCR's Level 3 Extended Project is 603/2304/8.

Aims and learning outcomes

OCR's Extended Project will encourage learners to:

- make a significant contribution to the choice and design of an extended project and take responsibility either for an individual task or for a defined task within a group project
- develop and improve their own learning and performance as critical, reflective and independent learners
- develop and apply decision-making and, where appropriate, problem-solving skills
- extend their planning, research, critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, evaluation and presentation skills
- where appropriate, develop confidence in applying new technologies in their studies
- develop and apply skills creatively, demonstrating initiative and enterprise
- use their learning experiences to support their aspirations for higher education and/or career development
- transfer skills developed as part of their extended project to other areas of study.

1b. What are the key features of this specification?

The key features of OCR's Extended Project for you and your learners are:

- a specification that encourages creativity, innovation and taking risks
- a freedom of approach which gives learners flexibility and options in how they evidence and present developmental work and final outcome(s)
- that learners develop knowledge and experience of project management
- that learners are able to tailor their project to fit their individual interests, needs, choices and aspirations outside their chosen curriculum area
- that learners are complementing and developing their knowledge, understanding and skills from other subject areas
- straightforward administration for centres with easy-to-use project support material for learners on the [OCR website](#)
- flexibility for timetabling around a centre's core offer
- a flexible delivery programme with two assessment points every year that can fit into a range of different curriculum designs
- clear marking criteria which supports the assessment process
- an excellent range of resources including teaching guides and up-to-date exemplar material.

Creativity and flexibility in OCR's Extended Project Qualification

The flexibility of OCR's EPQ encourages learners to take a creative and innovative approach to their projects. Every year sees a diverse range of exciting 'artefact' projects. These are a powerful testament to how the artefact outcome gives learners the freedom and flexibility to really engage in a project they are passionate about. These projects often demonstrate the significant development of skills as learners choose to tackle ambitious projects using skills and knowledge that sit outside of their school curriculum.

Some of the more memorable projects where learners have demonstrated their creativity have been: building a boat; composing and performing music for Auschwitz Memorial Day; providing training materials for the NHS; publishing a cook book; rebuilding a motorbike; and creating a pop-up restaurant.

The success that learners have had when using these projects to gain a place at university dispels the myth that Higher Education is only interested in 'dissertation-style' EPQ projects. This is supported by a survey undertaken by OCR with 74 universities across the UK where 89% said that the format of the EPQ was irrelevant to its overarching value. For further information about the research supporting the value of the EPQ, please see the [OCR website](#).

Allowing learners the freedom to decide on the format of their project outcome(s) encourages them to explore more creative ways of expressing their ideas. This often results in a more rewarding experience for both teacher and learner.

What universities say about OCR's Extended Project Qualification

University of Southampton

"We were the first to introduce an alternative offer scheme for applicants who excel in EPQ. This reflects our confidence in the EPQ as an excellent preparation for the kinds of independent study necessary for students to succeed at a research intensive university such as Southampton."

University of Manchester

"The skills students develop through the Extended Project are directly relevant to and useful for university-level student. Students can refer to the Extended Project in their UCAS personal statement and at interview to demonstrate some of the qualities that universities are looking for."

University of 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."

University College London

"UCL continues to recognise EPQ's value as preparation for independent study which is key to university-level study."

University of Sheffield

"We encourage students to complete the EPQ where possible, as we value the development of skills in independent study and research that it can offer."

University of Edinburgh

"We welcome the use of the Extended Project Qualification as a means of challenging students and encouraging an interdisciplinary approach to learning."

University of Leeds

"We recognise the value, effort and enthusiasm applicants make in the Extended Project. Individual academic schools will decide whether they will be using the Extended Project in their offer making and we encourage you to provide further information on your project in your personal statement. In some cases admissions tutors may wish to make an alternative offer to applicants, one of which involves successful completion of the Extended Project."

1c. What is new in the OCR Extended Project Qualification?

1

This section highlights the differences between Extended Project Qualification (H856) and the new

version (H857) for first teaching from September 2017 and for first assessment in June 2018.

What stays the same?	What's changing?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The opportunity for learners to work in a creative and innovative way when selecting, planning and realising their project.• The assessment objectives and their weighting within the EPQ.• The easy to use Project Progression Record (PPR) to support learners in recording the progress, key milestones and outcome(s) of their project.• The administration of this qualification for centres remains straightforward and easy to manage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearer marking criteria, with the introduction of a new Band 4 to make marking this qualification more straightforward for centres.• A decrease in time required for the taught element of EPQ to 30 GLH to make manageability of this qualification easier for centres.• A reduction in the minimum word count for the extended piece of written work that accompanies a project to 1000 words to make the requirements more accessible for learners.

1d. How do I find out more information?

If you are already using OCR specifications you can contact us at: www.ocr.org.uk

If you are not already a registered OCR centre then you can find out more information on the benefits of becoming one at: www.ocr.org.uk

If you are not yet an approved centre and would like to become one go to: www.ocr.org.uk

Want to find out more?

Email: EPQ@ocr.org.uk

Telephone: 01223 553998

If you have any feedback or suggestions for the future development of this qualification, please contact: ProductDevelopment@ocr.org.uk

2 The specification overview

2a. OCR's Level 3 Extended Project Qualification (H857)

Learners must take one component to be awarded the OCR Level 3 Extended Project Qualification.

Content Overview

The Extended Project is entirely flexible in approach as each learner is able to tailor their project to fit their individual needs, choices and aspirations.

This qualification prescribes a clear structure comprising of two main parts that are closely intertwined.

A taught element that includes:

- project management
- choosing a theme/topic
- research techniques
- identifying skills needed to complete the project
- application of reflective learning
- presentation techniques
- effective writing skills.

This will support the learner to:

- choose a theme/topic and set their own aims and objectives
- produce a project plan on how to deliver the intended outcome(s)
- research and analyse sources of information relevant to their project
- choose tools and techniques to develop and realise their project
- analyse project outcomes and draw conclusions on their project
- present evidenced outcome(s) and evaluate the process of their chosen project.

Learners will produce a portfolio that contains supporting evidence for each of the four assessment objectives, which must include at least **one** piece of extended written evidence, as well as evidence supporting: project management, research and development of the project, the final outcome(s) and on-going reviews of the project.

Learners are required to produce a presentation at the end of their project.

The total number of marks for this qualification is: **60 marks**.

Assessment Overview

100%
of total
Extended
Project
Qualification

2

2b. Taught element of the Extended Project Qualification

Learners should be taught a generic programme of skills that supports the planning, development and realisation of their project. These skills are essential in enabling the learner to realise the full potential of their project and should be the same for all learners regardless of their chosen theme/topic.

The following are suggestions of what should typically be covered during taught sessions for learners to succeed:

- project management – *including: resources, people and task management*
- how to choose a theme/topic/title that will be of sufficient depth to produce a project at a Level 3 standard – *does the theme/topic offer enough scope to meet assessment criteria?*
- time management – *timelines, time plans, milestones, planning to achieve outcomes*
- referencing texts – *how to avoid plagiarism, referencing systems*
- research methods – *primary and secondary research methods from a selection of different resources*
- resource selection – *consider the range of resources that could be used, this could be a place, person or text*
- library resources – *how to effectively use a library*
- writing effectively – *how to write for different purposes and audiences; the format and structure of written ideas*
- critical thinking – *how to evaluate sources, read and research critically*
- reflection and evaluation – *how to use evaluative language, how to reflect on own aims and objectives*
- keeping a log/diary/blog – *what format to use? The purpose and how to use it*
- presentation skills – *different formats to present work, presenting to a non-specialist audience*
- ensuring the safety of learners and effective delivery of the project – *any health and safety requirements, ethical guidelines or professional codes of practice.*

EPQ offers the opportunity for teachers to tailor the teaching of skills to meet the appropriate needs of their cohort of learners.

Learners are required to provide an extended written response or evidence to support their project. Teachers must enable learners to fulfil this requirement.

Approximately 25% of the guided learning hours for this qualification (30 hours) should be spent on the taught element of the EPQ.

The [OCR website](https://www.ocr.org.uk) contains a number of resources to support teachers in their teaching of skills and supporting learners during their projects.

Visit www.ocr.org.uk for teaching guides that focus on each of the four Assessment Objectives - planning, researching and referencing, evaluation and critical thinking and presenting evidence. There are also a number of candidate exemplars with commentaries.

2c. Independent learning

The role of the teacher during this part of the project is that of a facilitator, mentor or supervisor. Regular one-to-one sessions should be arranged with learners. The frequency and number of these might vary according to the individual learner. Teachers should provide verbal feedback during a discussion about the learner's work.

Teachers **must not** provide written feedback to learners. Learners should set their own milestones and/or targets as a result of these meetings. Learners should be encouraged to seek peer or expert feedback during their project, this should be recorded as evidence in their PPR.

As part of their independent learning, learners must record evidence of their project in a log or diary. Any meetings held should be recorded fully in their log or diary.

The learner, with appropriate support from their teacher, will:

- choose a theme/topic for their project
- set their own aims and objectives
- produce a project plan on how to deliver the intended outcome(s)

- research and analyse information relevant to their project
- choose tools and techniques to develop and realise their project
- develop skills pertinent to the development and realisation of their project
- complete their Project Progression Record (PPR)
- analyse project outcomes and draw conclusions on their project
- present evidenced outcome(s) and evaluate the process of their chosen project
- produce a presentation at the end of their project.

Learners might find it useful to review some of the OCR resources available on the [OCR website](#). The [EPQ qualification page](#) contains links to a number of videos of learners talking about their experience of undertaking an Extended Project.

These and the exemplars available may help learners when choosing what theme/topic to undertake for their project.

There are also resources that look more specifically at different subject-based EPQs, including one for science and one for using museums and galleries.

Group projects

Learners may choose to work as a group for their EPQ and group projects are allowed as part of the OCR EPQ. If a group project is undertaken it is essential that each learner has their own specific role within the group and that each learner's individual contribution to the final outcome(s) is identified and fully recorded. The role the learner takes within the group must enable them to generate their own research and aims and objectives.

Learners working together in a project group must submit individual (specific to their role) and authentic evidence for assessment and complete an individual presentation at the end of their project. See Section 3c for further information.

2d. Prior knowledge, learning and progression

No prior qualification is required in order for learners to enter for an OCR Extended Project Qualification, nor is any prior knowledge or understanding required for entry on to this course.

Education. The project management skills, independent working and communication skills developed are appropriate for employment in a wide range of work environments.

2

OCR offer [Foundation](#) and [Higher](#) Project qualifications, in order to develop project skills, however, these are not required for entry onto the Extended Project.

The Extended Project has increasingly become an important component in a learner's university application. There are an increasing amount of Higher Education Institutions that include the Extended Project in their entry offers. Learners may use the Extended Project to help them stand out in either their personal statement or an interview situation.

The Extended Project is designed to enable learners to progress into employment or Further or Higher

3 Assessment of the Extended Project Qualification

3a. Forms of assessment

The Extended Project Qualification is a single component that is internally assessed and externally moderated.

Learners will be assessed on four areas:

- managing a project
- using resources
- developing and realising a project
- reviewing the project.

The project can have a number of different outcomes, including:

- a report, with findings from an investigation or study
- a dissertation (approximately 5000 words)
- an artefact
- a performance or event.

3b. Teaching time

Guided Learning Hours

The Extended Project is allocated 120 guided learning hours (GLH) in total. Guided learning indicates the approximate allocation of teaching time. The

approximate number of guided learning hours that should be spent on each element of the Extended Project are broken down below:

	Guided Learning Hours (%)
Taught element	30 hours (25%)
Independent learning	90 hours (75%)

Total Qualification Time

Total Qualification Time (TQT) is the total amount of time, in hours, expected to be spent by a learner to achieve a qualification. It includes both guided learning hours, listed above, and hours spent in

preparation, study and assessment. The Total Qualification Time for the OCR Extended Project Qualification is 120 hours.

Timeline for teaching

The EPQ can be taught at any time during Years 12 or 13. Centres can vary this according to their timetable and to suit their learners. It can be delivered over one academic year or delivery could begin in the summer term of Year 12, in order for learners to be given the

summer holidays between Years 12 and 13 to work on their project. There are two assessment opportunities each year, which offer maximum flexibility to centres in how to deliver and when to assess this qualification.

3c. Assessing the Extended Project Qualification

Setting the project

Learners must set their own project brief and choose a theme/topic/title that either complements or develops a subject they are studying or an area of individual personal interest. If the theme/topic chosen by a learner relates to a qualification they are already taking, then the learner must demonstrate that the project is an extension of the evidence generated for assessment in that subject.

Teachers can work with learners to facilitate their choice but **must not** suggest specific ideas or themes/topics. The title of the project should allow enough scope for the learner to meet all of the assessment objectives and should be open enough to offer stretch and challenge and allow a learner to realise the full potential of their project. Learners can create mind maps or complete a skills audit in order to help them choose a theme/topic.

The title of the project can evolve once a theme/topic has been decided on. The final outcome(s) of the project can also evolve once a theme/topic has been decided. Learners should be encouraged to consider which of the possible outcome(s) (for example, dissertation, performance/event, artefact, report) best achieves their aims and objectives.

Project titles **must** be approved by centres. Learners can complete the OCR Verification of Topic and Title (VTT) form to outline their proposed project or centres can use their own version of this documentation. This form should be submitted for approval to their teacher. The centre **must not** provide titles or themes/topics to the learner. The VTT form **must not** be submitted to OCR at any stage. See Section 4c for more information. The VTT form is available to download from the [OCR website](#).

Undertaking the project

Centres should provide a programme of taught lessons that cover the core skills needed to complete OCR's EPQ, see Section 2 for more details.

The Project Progression Record (PPR)

The Project Progression Record provides learners with a structured approach to managing their project, from initial planning to the end of project evaluation. This is available to download from the [OCR website](#).

The PPR must be submitted for moderation.

Setting aims and objectives

Learners should complete the first part of their PPR including the theme/topic of their project, aims and objectives and a rationale. Aims and objectives help to clarify exactly what needs to be achieved and also gives parameters for the learner to evaluate against. The aims and objectives might evolve as the project develops and can be revised during the course of the project. Any changes to aims and objectives should be documented in the PPR.

Research

Learners will undertake research that is relevant to the theme/topic they have chosen. Different projects will demand different types of research and the learner should identify what kind of research is best suited to their project. They should be encouraged to explore primary as well as secondary research. Primary research might take the form of consulting subject specialists, visiting museums or galleries, reading original texts, interviewing people, conducting questionnaires. Secondary research might take the form of gathering existing information that has already been produced, for example, research using the internet, newspapers or other people's commentaries about the theme/topic chosen.

All research should be documented and evaluated. It is up to the learner where and how they decide best to document this research. The learner should be able to demonstrate that they recognise the validity of different sources and their relevance to their project.

Developmental work

Learners will produce a portfolio of evidence detailing the creation and development of their project in accordance with the theme/topic they have chosen. Evidence of developmental work might take the form of drafts of dissertations, sketchbook work for artefacts, rehearsals for performances, scientific experiments – whatever is appropriate for their final outcome(s). This developmental work should form part of the final evaluation of the effectiveness of the final outcome(s) and project.

Final Outcome(s)

Final outcome(s) will vary from learner-to-learner, for example, a dissertation, an artefact, a performance/event or a report. Learners should produce the outcome that is most appropriate to their chosen theme/topic, and aims and objectives.

All outcomes, apart from the dissertation, must be supported by at least **one** piece of extended written work in addition to the supporting evidence, research or project log. Learners can choose how to present their written work. The extended piece of written work must be of sufficient length (approximately 1000 words) to explore the development of the project and to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured and use any appropriate and/or specialist terminology. The exact length of the written work will depend on the nature theme/topic of the project and the other evidence provided.

A final outcome of a project which consists solely of a written dissertation should be fit-for-purpose and as a guide, approximately 5000 words in length. A learner will not be specifically penalised for exceeding the word count.

Presentation

Learners **must** give a presentation on their project work. The purpose of the presentation is for the learner to review their performance against the aims and objectives. It should focus on the process and development of their project as well as the outcome, providing evidenced-based evaluation and

conclusions. The presentation can take any form the learner chooses, for example, an exhibition, formal talk or event. The presentation should use media appropriate to the project and may involve the use of flipcharts, PowerPoint, Prezi, video material, posters, but should be aimed at a non-subject specialist audience. Evidence of the presentation should be included in their portfolio along with any feedback or questions they have received from their audience.

In the instance of a group project, each individual in the group **must** complete their own presentation based on their involvement, engagement in and their evaluation of the group project.

Guidance and supervision requirements

The OCR EPQ assumes a medium level of control in relation to the setting of tasks. Teachers can work with learners to facilitate their choice but **must not** suggest specific ideas or themes/topics. Centres must verify the learner's choice of theme/topic or title through the completion of the VTT form.

Learners are expected work independently, and aspects of their work produced for assessment will be outside the direct supervision of the teacher. The teacher **must** be able to authenticate the work as the learner's own and insist on acknowledgement and referencing of any sources used.

The degree of teacher guidance will vary according to the individual learner's project. Learners are required to work independently, showing initiative and reaching their own judgements and conclusions. Teachers can give verbal guidance and support to the learner regarding the progress of their EPQ; however, they **must not** provide written feedback to learners. Learners should set their own milestones and/or targets.

Learners **must** complete and/or evidence all work individually. With reference to collaboration control, all assessment evidence will be provided by the individual learner. However, where group work is undertaken it is vital to be able to identify the individual's contribution, for example, by using personal log or peer evaluation. While larger group activities may be a vehicle for evidence, that evidence must demonstrate how the individual has met the assessment objectives and performance criteria.

Teacher marking and feedback

The teacher may discuss the learner's work with them but must not give any written feedback. Drafts of written work produced should not be 'marked' or annotated. The teacher will assess the project once all work has been completed.

Required Evidence

Learners should submit the following evidence for assessment:

- *the Project Progression Record*

The final draft of PPR should be completed by the learner and should be checked and signed by their teacher. The PPR contains a checklist where learners can signpost to where different forms of evidence can be found within the portfolio. The PPR **must** be submitted to OCR for moderation.

- *a portfolio of work*

A variety of evidence may be submitted as part of the portfolio of work. This may include:

- a CD, DVD or video of activities and/or performances
- audio recordings
- multi-media presentations
- a photographic record of the project
- journal or notebook of activities throughout the process.

All portfolios **must** have at least **one** piece of extended written work included except for the dissertation.

Evidence of the final presentation **must** be included in the portfolio.

Learners **must** ensure that they have evidence of:

- research undertaken; the sources and range of information used
- analysis of any data used and evaluation of research and how this was used to inform the project
- the range of skills used including, where appropriate, problem solving and the use of new technologies
- design, strategic planning and process of the project
- evaluation of project, own performance and decision making
- communicating outcomes, conclusions and evaluation.

- *a final outcome(s)*

Projects can have a number of different outcomes, including: a report, with findings from an investigation or study, a dissertation, an artefact or a performance/event. It is not necessary to include large artefacts themselves as evidence, photographs or other appropriate media records will suffice.

3d. Qualification availability outside of England

This qualification is available in England. For Wales and Northern Ireland please check the Qualifications in Wales Portal (QIW) or the Northern Ireland Department of Education Performance Measures /

Northern Ireland Entitlement Framework Qualifications Accreditation Number (NIEFQAN) list to see current availability.

3e. Language

This qualification is available in English only. All assessment materials are available in English only and all candidate work must be in English.

3f. Assessment objectives (AO)

There are four Assessment Objectives in OCR's Extended Project. These are detailed in the table below. Learners are expected to demonstrate their ability to:

Assessment Objectives	
AO1	Manage: Identify, design, plan and carry out a project, applying a range of skills, strategies and methods to achieve objectives.
AO2	Use resources: Research, critically select, organise and use information, and select and use a range of resources. Analyse data, apply relevantly and demonstrate understanding of any links, connections and complexities within the topic.
AO3	Develop and realise: Select and use a range of skills, including, where appropriate, new technologies and problem solving, to take decisions critically and achieve planned outcomes.
AO4	Review: Evaluate all aspects of the Extended Project, including outcomes in relation to stated objectives and own learning and performance. Select and use a range of communication skills and media to present evidenced project outcomes and conclusions in an appropriate format.

AO weightings in the Extended Project

The relationship between the assessment objectives and the unit is shown in the following table:

	% of OCR Level 3 Extended Project Qualification			
	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4
Extended Project	20%	20%	40%	20%

3g. Total qualification time

Total qualification time (TQT) is the total amount of time, in hours, expected to be spent by a learner to achieve a qualification. It includes both guided learning hours and hours spent in preparation, study,

and assessment. The total qualification time for Level 3 Extended Project is 120 hours. The total guided learning time is 120 hours.

3h. Assessment availability

There are **two** examination series available in January and June each year.

This specification will be certificated from the June 2018 examination series onwards.

The dates for submission of work can be found on the OCR website.

3i. Retaking the qualification

Learners can retake the qualification as many times as they wish.

They retake all components of the qualification.

3j. Internal assessment of the Extended Project Qualification

OCR's Extended Project Qualification is internally assessed and externally moderated.

Applying the assessment criteria

The starting point for assessing the project will be the marking criteria. The marking criteria contain levels of attainment for the knowledge, skills and understanding that the learner is required to demonstrate.

Use of 'best fit' approach to marking criteria

The assessment evidence and outcome(s) are marked by the teacher according to the given marking criteria using a 'best fit' approach.

Marking should be positive, rewarding achievement rather than penalising failure or omissions. The awarding of marks must be directly related to the marking criteria.

Teachers should use their professional judgement in selecting the band descriptors that best describes the work of the learner to place them in the appropriate band.

Teachers should use the full range of marks available to them and award all the marks in any mark band for which work fully meets that descriptor.

For each of the assessment objectives, the descriptors that most closely describe the quality of the work being marked should be chosen.

To select the most appropriate mark for each assessment objective (within the different mark bands), teachers, mentors or supervisors should use the following guidance:

- where the learner's work *convincingly* meets the descriptors, the highest mark should be awarded
- where the learner's work *adequately* meets the descriptors, the most appropriate mark in the middle range should be awarded
- where the learner's work *just* meets the descriptors, the lowest mark should be awarded.

The statements in each mark band are balanced in terms of their significance to help assessors judge the overall 'best-fit' within an assessment strand.

Centres should use the full range of marks available to them; centres must award full marks in any band for work which fully meets that descriptor. This is work which is the best that could be expected from learners working at that level.

There should be clear evidence that work has been attempted and some work produced. If a learner submits no work for the unit then the learner should be indicated as being absent. If a learner completes any work at all for the unit then the work should be assessed according to the marking criteria and the appropriate mark awarded, which may be zero.

Marking Criteria for AO1: Manage

AO1	Band 1 (1–3)	Band 2 (4–6)	Band 3 (7–9)	Band 4 (10–12)
<i>Theme/Topic selection and scope</i>	Identification and selection of a theme/topic which provides superficial or limited scope for project development.	Identification and selection of a theme/topic which provides some scope for project development.	Identification and selection of a theme/topic which is informed and provides appropriate scope for project development although one or two opportunities are missed.	Identification and selection of a theme/topic which is targeted and focused and provides extensive scope for project development.
<i>Project planning</i>	Limited project planning skills. Planning framework lacks structure and cohesion. Aims and objectives are identified but not always met. Techniques to monitor progress and manage risk are limited. Deadlines are set but frequently missed.	Adequate project planning skills. Planning framework has some structure and cohesion. Aims and objectives are described and support project direction. Some techniques to monitor progress and manage risk are used but not always consistently applied. Deadlines are set but not always consistently met.	Good and developed project planning skills. Planning framework is appropriately structured and cohesive. Aims and objectives are identified and met although one or two opportunities are missed. Techniques to monitor progress and manage risk are appropriately implemented. Deadlines are set and adhered to.	Excellent project planning skills. Planning framework is well-considered and fully cohesive. Aims and objectives are clearly identified and fully met and drive the project forward. Techniques to monitor progress and manage risk are well-considered and embedded throughout project implementation. Deadlines are set and adhered to.
<i>Applying a range of skills, strategies and methods</i>	Organisational, decision-making and problem-solving skills used to realise the project are limited. The range of skills, strategies and methods that have been applied are limited.	Organisational, decision-making and problem-solving skills used to realise the project are adequate. The range of skills, strategies and methods that have been applied are adequate.	Organisational, decision-making and problem-solving skills used to realise the project are good. The range of skills, strategies and methods that have been applied are good, although one or two opportunities are missed.	Organisational, decision-making and problem-solving skills used to realise the project are targeted and focused. The range of skills, strategies and methods that have been applied are sophisticated.
	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9	10 11 12

0 marks – No response or no response worthy of credit

Marking Criteria for AO2: Use Resources

AO2	Band 1 (1–3)	Band 2 (4–6)	Band 3 (7–9)	Band 4 (10–12)
Identification of resources and research methods	Resources and research methods identified are limited which results in a lack of project focus and direction.	Resources and research methods identified are adequate and provide some focus.	Resources and research methods identified are good and provide appropriate focus for the project although one or two opportunities are missed.	Resources and research methods identified are targeted and well-considered and provide clear focus for the project.
Collation of information from resources	Superficial selection of information from research outcomes which informs the project in a limited way. Limited links and connections between resources are made.	Some selection of information from research outcomes which adequately informs the project. Links and connections between resources are made but not always consistently applied.	Good and informed selection of information from research outcomes which appropriately informs the project. Good, informed links and connections between resources are made although one or two opportunities are missed.	Sophisticated selection of information from research outcomes which fully informs the project. Focused and well-considered links and connections between resources are made.
Analysis of resources used to collect information	Limited evidence of analysis of resources for their relevance or usefulness to the project.	Some evidence of analysis of resources for their relevance and usefulness to the project.	Good and informed evidence of analysis of resources for their relevance and usefulness to the project although one or two opportunities are missed.	Sophisticated and informed evidence of analysis of resources for their relevance and usefulness to the project.
	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9	10 11 12

0 marks – No response or no response worthy of credit

Marking Criteria for AO3: Develop and Realise

AO3	Band 1 (1–6)	Band 2 (7–12)	Band 3 (13–18)	Band 4 (19–24)
<i>Skill selection</i>	Range of skills identified is superficial and have limited relevance to the project in range.	Range of skills identified is adequate and have some relevance to the project.	Range of skills identified is good and have appropriate relevance to the project.	Range of skills identified is excellent and are fully relevant to the project.
<i>Skill development</i>	Evidence of limited skill development demonstrated throughout the project. Limited use of skills and/or technologies to solve problems and limited critical decision making in order to achieve planned outcomes.	Evidence of some skill development demonstrated throughout the project. Some use of skills and/or technologies to solve problems, and some critical decision making in order to achieve planned outcomes.	Evidence of good skill development demonstrated throughout the project. Good use of skills and/or technologies to solve problems and good critical decision making in order to achieve planned outcomes although one or two opportunities are missed.	Evidence of excellent skill development demonstrated throughout the project. Sophisticated use of skills and/or technologies to solve problems and excellent critical decision making in order to fully achieve planned outcomes.
<i>Skill application</i>	Limited application of skills, with little or no demonstration of initiative, creativity or enterprise in order to achieve planned outcomes.	Some application of skills, with some demonstration of initiative, creativity and/or enterprise in order to achieve planned outcomes.	Good application of skills, with demonstration of initiative, creativity and enterprise in order to achieve planned outcomes although one or two opportunities are missed.	Excellent application of skills, with full demonstration of initiative, creativity and enterprise in order to achieve planned outcomes.
<i>Project outcomes</i>	Superficial exploration of the theme/topic results in a project with limited planned outcomes that meet only a few of the aims and objectives.	Adequate exploration of the theme/topic results in a project with adequate planned outcomes that meet some of the aims and objectives.	Good exploration of the theme/topic results in a project with appropriate planned outcomes that meet the aims and objectives although one or two opportunities are missed.	Excellent exploration of the theme/topic results in a project with well-considered planned outcomes that fully meet the aims and objectives.
	1 2 3 4 5 6	7 8 9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16 17 18	19 20 21 22 23 24

0 marks – No response or no response worthy of credit

Marking Criteria for AO4: Review

AO4	Band 1 (1–3)	Band 2 (4–6)	Band 3 (7–9)	Band 4 (10–12)
<i>Communicating project outcomes and conclusions</i>	Limited range and use of media and communication skills to present project outcomes and conclusions that superficially engage the audience.	Adequate range and use of media and communication skills to present project outcomes and conclusions that engage the audience.	Good range and use of media and communication skills to present project outcomes and conclusions that mostly engage the audience although one or two opportunities are missed.	Excellent range and use of media and communication skills to present project outcomes and conclusions that fully engage the audience.
<i>Iterative review</i>	Evaluation of the project is superficial and has been used in a limited way to meet few aims and objectives of the project.	Some on-going evaluation of the project but is not always critical or reflective to adapt, develop and meet some of the aims and objectives of the project.	Good, informed on-going evaluation of the project. Critical and reflective evaluation has been used to adapt, develop and meet most of the aims and objectives of the project.	Sophisticated on-going evaluation of the project. Critical and extensive evaluation has been used to adapt, develop and meet the aims and objectives of the project.
<i>Evaluation of own learning and performance</i>	Limited attempt to evaluate their own work, learning and performance. Limited identification of issues, areas for improvement and transferable skills.	Some evaluation of their own work, learning and performance. Some identification of issues, areas for improvement and transferable skills.	Good, informed evaluation of their own work, learning and performance. Good identification of issues, areas for improvement and transferable skills.	Sophisticated evaluation of their own work, learning and performance. Excellent identification of issues, areas for improvement and transferable skills.
	1 2 3	4 5 6	7 8 9	10 11 12

0 marks – No response or no response worthy of credit

3k. Calculating qualification results

A learner's overall qualification grade for the EPQ will be calculated from the component taken.

This mark will then be compared to the qualification level grade boundaries for the qualification taken by the learner and for the relevant exam series to determine the learner's overall qualification grade.

4 Admin: what you need to know

The information in this section is designed to give an overview of the processes involved in administering this qualification so that you can speak to your exams officer. All of the following processes require you to submit something to OCR by a specific deadline. More information about the processes and deadlines

involved at each stage of the assessment cycle can be found in the Administration area of the OCR website.

OCR's *Admin overview* is available on the OCR website at <http://www.ocr.org.uk/administration>.

4a. Pre-assessment

Estimated entries

Estimated entries are your best projection of the number of learners who will be entered for a qualification in a particular series.

Estimated entries should be submitted to OCR by the specified deadline. They are free and do not commit your centre in any way.

Final entries

Final entries provide OCR with detailed data for each learner, showing each assessment to be taken. It is essential that you use the correct entry code, considering the relevant entry rules.

Final entries must be submitted to OCR by the published deadlines or late entry fees will apply.

All learners taking an Extended Project Qualification must be entered for H857.

Entry code	Title	Unit code	Unit title	Assessment type
H857A	Moderated upload	01	Moderated upload	Internally marked and externally moderated
H857B	Moderated postal	02	Moderated postal	Internally marked and externally moderated

Collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system

Regulators have published guidance on collecting evidence of student performance as part of long-term contingency arrangements to improve the resilience of the qualifications system. You should review and consider this guidance when delivering this qualification to students at your centre.

For more detailed information on collecting evidence of student performance please visit our website at: <https://www.ocr.org.uk/administration/general-qualifications/assessment/>

4b. Special consideration

Special consideration is a post–assessment adjustment to marks or grades to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time the assessment was taken.

Detailed information about eligibility for special consideration can be found in the JCQ publication *A guide to the special consideration process*.

4c. Admin of internal assessment

Approval of tasks

OCR does **not** approve project themes/topics or titles.

All learners undertaking an Extended Project can complete the OCR Verification of Topic/Title form (VTT) or centres can use their own version of this documentation. The theme/topic and title should be selected by the learner and negotiated with the centre.

The centre verifies that the theme/topic title is appropriate and agrees with the learner the range of acceptable evidence that will be used.

The form **must not** be submitted to OCR, and is **not** required by OCR at any stage.

The VTT form is available from the [OCR website](#).

Authentication of learners' work

Learners and centres must declare that the work is the learner's own.

Teachers must declare that the work submitted for internal assessment is the learner's own work by completing a centre authentication form (CCS160). This information must be retained at the centre and be available on request to either OCR or the JCQ centre inspection service.

It must be kept until the deadline has passed for centre's to submit a review of results (RoR). Once this deadline has passed and centres' have not requested a RoR, this evidence can be destroyed.

The Project Progression Record submitted by the learner for assessment **must** be submitted for moderation and therefore, must be kept safely within the centre, ideally stored electronically to minimise risk of physical loss.

Learners **must not** plagiarise. Plagiarism is considered to be malpractice and could lead to the learner being awarded the mark of zero. See Section 4f for further details.

Head of centre declaration

The Head of Centre is required to provide a declaration to the JCQ as part of the annual NCN update, conducted in the autumn term, to confirm that the centre is meeting all of the requirements detailed in the specification.

Any failure by a centre to provide the Head of Centre Annual Declaration will result in your centre status being suspended and could lead to the withdrawal of our approval for you to operate as a centre.

Private candidates

This specification is not available to private candidates.

Internal standardisation

Centres must carry out internal standardisation to ensure that marks awarded by different teachers are

accurate and consistent across all learners entered for the component from that centre.

Moderation

The purpose of moderation is to bring the marking of internally-assessed components in all participating centres to an agreed standard. This is achieved by checking a sample of each centre's marking of learners' work.

OCR offers **two** moderation periods within the year (January and June) and awarding will also be twice yearly. Further information on the availability of moderation and awarding can be found on the OCR website.

Following internal standardisation, centres submit marks to OCR and the moderator. If there are fewer than 10 learners, all the work should be submitted for moderation at the same time as marks are submitted.

Once marks have been submitted to OCR and your moderator, centres will receive a moderation sample request. Samples will include work from across the range of attainment of the learners' work.

There are two ways to submit a sample:

Moderated upload – Where you upload electronic copies of the work included in the sample using the Submit for Assessment service and your moderator accesses the work from there. Please refer to the Administration section of the [OCR website](#) for details about how to submit files using Submit for Assessment.

Moderated postal – Where you post the sample of work to the moderator.

The method that will be used to submit the moderation sample must be specified when making entries. The relevant entry codes are given in Section 4a.

All learners' work must be submitted using the same entry option. It is not possible for centres to offer both options within the same series.

All internal marking and standardisation procedures must be completed by the OCR deadline which will be notified to centres.

Centres will receive the outcome of moderation when the provisional results are issued. This will include:

Moderation Adjustments Report – Listing any scaling that has been applied to internally-assessed components.

Moderator Report to Centres – A brief report by the moderator on the internal assessment of learners' work.

Submission of required evidence

When submitting work for moderation please ensure that you include the following for each portfolio submitted:

- all candidate work that evidences the assessment outcomes
- candidate work/portfolios must be presented individually and be well-ordered
- the Unit Recording Sheet (Assessment grid) completed with teacher comments and marks awarded. This will offer centres an opportunity to justify how they arrived at the mark that was given and to add any additional evidence where learners' evidence is not sufficient in demonstrating the marks awarded. E.g. presentation/discussion etc.
- the Project Progression Record (PPR) **must** have been completed by the candidate and signed by the teacher. The last page of this document should be used to indicate where different pieces of evidence can be found in the learners portfolio. This can be used to aid the assessment and moderation processes

- the PPR submitted by the learner for assessment must be kept safely and securely within the centre, ideally electronically to minimise the risk of physical loss until submission to OCR
- centres must store any electronic files submitted for assessment of their learners' folders within a secure folder on their centre network
- all forms for submission are available to download on the subject page on the OCR website.

The centre **must** complete the centre authentication form (CCS160). This is not required for submission but **must** be retained by the centre.

After moderation has been completed, **all** evidence must be kept securely in the centre until the results have been published and until any Review of results have been concluded.

E- Portfolios

In order to minimise software and hardware compatibility issues it will be necessary to save learners' work using an appropriate file format.

Learners must use formats appropriate to the evidence they are providing and appropriate to viewing for assessment and moderation purposes.

Open file formats or proprietary formats for which a downloadable reader or player is available are acceptable. Where a downloadable version is not available, the file format is not acceptable.

Evidence submitted can be through one or more formats, but it is essential that all formats are clearly labelled and signposted to offer a straightforward review of the work.

Learners do not gain marks for using more sophisticated formats or for using a range of formats. All portfolio evidence should be appropriate to the activity being pursued. So long as evidence is clear, a learner who chooses or only has access to digital photography or word documents will not be disadvantaged by that choice.

To ensure compatibility, all files submitted must be in the formats listed in Appendix 5d. All evidence must be contained in a single digital folder for each learner, clearly labelled and signposted by the learner to indicate when evidence was completed and to ensure everything is easily identifiable through both internal marking and external moderation. Where new formats become available that might be accepted, OCR will provide further guidance on the subject

webpage. OCR advises against changing the file format that the document was originally created in. It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the electronic work submitted for moderation is accessible to the moderator and fully represents the evidence available for each learner.

If using Submit for Assessment service to submit the moderation sample, all work must be clearly documented and identified as the individual candidate's. The learner's evidence should be filed in a collection of folders and files which should be organised in a structured way so that the evidence can be accessed easily by a teacher or moderator. It

would be helpful if the location of particular evidence is made clear by naming each file and folder appropriately and by using an index.

There should be a top-level folder detailing the learner's centre number, unique learner number, surname and forename, together with the qualification code, so that the evidence is clearly identified as the work of one learner.

It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the electronic work submitted for moderation is accessible to the moderator and fully represents the evidence available for each learner.

4

4d. Results and certificates

Grade Scale

The Extended Project is graded on the scale: A*, A, B, C, D, E, where A* is the highest. Learners who fail to reach the minimum standard for E will be Unclassified (U).

Only subjects in which grades A* to E are attained will be recorded on certificates.

Results

Results are released to centres and learners for information and to allow any queries to be resolved before certificates are issued.

Centres will have access to the following results information for each learner:

- the grade for the qualification
- the raw mark for the component
- the total weighted mark for the qualification.

The following supporting information will be available:

- raw mark grade boundaries for the component.

Until certificates are issued, results are deemed to be provisional and may be subject to amendment.

A learner's final results will be recorded on an OCR certificate. The qualification title will be shown on the certificate as 'OCR Level 3 Extended Project Qualification'.

4e. Post-results services

A number of post-results services are available:

- **Review of results** – If you are not happy with the outcome of a learner’s results, centres may request a review of moderation.
- **Missing and incomplete results** – This service should be used if an individual subject result for a learner is missing, or the learner has been omitted entirely from the results supplied.

4f. Malpractice

Any breach of the regulations for the conduct of examinations and non-exam assessment work may constitute malpractice (which includes maladministration) and must be reported to OCR as soon as it is detected.

Detailed information on malpractice can be found in the JCQ publication *Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments: Policies and Procedures*.

5 Appendices

5a. Accessibility

Reasonable adjustments and access arrangements allow learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do, without changing the demands of the assessment. Applications for these should be made before the examination series. Detailed information about eligibility for access arrangements can be found in the *JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

The A level qualification and subject criteria have been reviewed in order to identify any feature which could disadvantage learners who share a protected Characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010. All reasonable steps have been taken to minimise any such disadvantage.

5b. Overlap with other qualifications

The Extended Project does not overlap with any other qualifications.

However, it can be used to extend the learners knowledge or skills in a subject they are already studying.

5c. Ethical and moral guidelines

Ethical issues should be considered at the planning stage of the project and teachers should advise appropriately and give consideration to any potential impact on individuals, the environment and/or society. This could form part of the evaluative process, e.g. when comparing government policies or considering new scientific developments.

Learners should:

- be encouraged to consider ethical implications if work is investigative, involves observation or touches on socially sensitive issues
- consider the ethics of conducting objective research and any issues that may result from making personal judgements or approaching research from a personal bias
- be aware of potential considerations and limitations of professional bodies, food associations, scientific organisations or religious groups
- be advised to conduct investigations only within their range of experience and expertise
- not subject themselves or their participants to any harm or risk either physical or emotional
- avoid deceiving or embarrassing their participants and allow them to withdraw themselves or their data from the project if they wish to do so at any stage
- maintain confidentiality of their participants
- where possible and appropriate, gain consent of any participants in their research, although it is acceptable to observe human behaviour in public areas without having to gain consent. If using film/recording obtain consent of the people involved
- be aware of copyright issues if considering using music/film made by others in a commercial capacity, however this may not always apply
- be advised against collecting primary data if it involves being in potentially dangerous situations
- produce risk assessments and learn/observe safety procedures when using potentially dangerous equipment especially where they are unfamiliar with usage.

5d. Accepted file formats

Movie formats for digital video evidence

MPEG (*.mpg)
 QuickTime movie (*.mov)
 Macromedia Shockwave (*.aam)
 Macromedia Shockwave (*.dcr)
 Flash (*.swf)
 Windows Media File (*.wmf)
 MPEG Video Layer 4 (*.mp4)

Audio or sound formats

MPEG Audio Layer 3 (*.mp3)

Graphics formats including:

JPEG (*.jpg)
 Graphics file (*.pcx) MS bitmap (*.bmp)
 GIF images (*.gif)

Animation formats

Macromedia Flash (*.fla)

Text formats

Comma Separated Values (.csv)
 PDF (.pdf)
 Rich text format (.rtf)
 Text document (.txt)

Microsoft Office suite

PowerPoint (.ppt) (.pptx)
 Word (.doc) (.docx)
 Excel (.xls) (.xlsx)
 Visio (.vsd) (.vsdx)
 Project (.mpp) (.mppx)

5e. Grade descriptors

Grade A*	Candidates identify their project and produce an effective design and thorough plan. They carry out their project in a highly organised fashion, showing excellent independent working skills and clear evidence of responding very effectively to guidance given. They use a wide range of resources critically, analyse data effectively and apply findings to good effect. They show clear links between sources of information and the themes of their project, and fully explore the complexities of the topic. Problems and/or issues are identified, fully explored and addressed. Candidates select and use a range of skills, including, where appropriate, new technologies, to achieve high-quality outcomes which fully realise the intentions of the project and to draw conclusions. Candidates carry out full, in-depth evaluations, showing a high level of insight into how they conducted their project and the limitations of the resources at their disposal. They select and use a range of communication skills to present outcomes and conclusions clearly, in an appropriate format with excellent supporting evidence. Candidates show a deep and extensive knowledge of the project area of study through their responses to questions.
Grade C	Candidates identify and design their project. They produce a plan which enables them to achieve the overall objectives and to demonstrate some higher level organisational skills. They are able to work independently in carrying out the project and respond to guidance given. Candidates use a range of resources, analyse data and apply findings. They show links between sources of information and the themes of the project and explore some complexities of the topic. Some problems and/or issues are identified and addressed. A range of skills is employed and the intended outcomes are generally achieved to a competent standard. In their evaluations, candidates reflect effectively on the final outcome and on their strengths and weaknesses in carrying out their project. They use a range of communication skills to present clearly the outcomes and conclusions in an appropriate format with sound supporting evidence. Candidates show a good knowledge of the project area of study through their responses to questions.
Grade E	Candidates identify their project and produce a workable plan. They show some organisational skills in completing the project. There is some evidence that they have responded to guidance given. Candidates use a limited range of resources, analyse some of the data and apply findings. Some links are made between the sources of information and the themes of the project. Candidates use a range of skills to realise partially the intended outcomes. They give some thought to the way the final outcomes have emerged and to their own strengths and weaknesses in carrying out their project. Communication skills are used to present outcomes and conclusions with some supporting evidence. Candidates demonstrate some knowledge of the project area through their responses to questions.

Summary of updates

Date	Version	Section	Title of section	Change
January 2020	1.1	i) 4c ii) 4e	i) Admin of internal assessment ii) Post-results services	i) Enquiry about results changed to Review of Results ii) Enquiry about results changed to Review of Results
February 2021	1.2			Update to specification covers to meet digital accessibility standards
June 2023	1.3	3 4a. 4c.	Assessment of the Extended Project Qualification Pre-assessment Admin of internal assessment	Insertion of new section 3e. Total qualification time. Update to the wording of moderation submission options.
January 2024	1.4	3d, 3e 4a Checklist	Qualification availability, Language Pre-assessment	Inclusion of disclaimer regarding language and availability Update to include resilience guidance Inclusion of Teach Cambridge



YOUR CHECKLIST

Our aim is to provide you with all the information and support you need to deliver our specifications.

- Bookmark [OCR website](#) for all the latest information and news on our Extended Project Qualification
 - Sign up for [Teach Cambridge](#): our personalised and secure website that provides teachers with access to all planning, teaching and assessment support materials
 - Be among the first to hear about support materials and resources as they become available – register for [Extended Project Qualification](#)
 - Find out about our [professional development](#)
 - View our range of [skills guides](#) for use across subjects and qualifications
 - Learn more about [Active Results](#)
 - Visit our [Online Support Centre](#)
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Download high-quality, exciting and innovative Extended Project Qualification resources from ocr.org.uk/extendedproject

Resources and support for our Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), developed through collaboration between our Extended Project Qualification Subject Advisors, teachers and other subject experts, are available from our website. You can also contact our Extended Project Qualification Subject Advisors who can give you specialist advice, guidance and support.

Contact the team at:

01223 553998

epq@ocr.org.uk

@OCRexams

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