What do you particularly enjoy about studying this subject?

Through studying the EPQ, I have particularly enjoyed the independence that it has given me, not only in the way it has helped me to develop academically but also because it has taught me life skills that have been vital to my transition from a teenager into a young adult. The EPQ has given me a welcome break from the prescriptiveness of other subjects, allowing me independently to choose a theme I wanted to study rather than following a set curriculum and topic base. It has really allowed me to revel in my own interests while at the same time gaining an additional qualification. Not only has the subject been academically useful, it has also been extremely enjoyable and has helped me to broaden my horizons.

How much work is involved? (hours in lessons / outside of lessons)

The beauty of the EPQ is the independence of study, this includes managing your own time and developing your own set of personal deadlines to work to. We receive a 1 hour session per week with an EPQ tutor as well as support through email and additional 1-1 catch-up meetings with our tutor as needed. This combination of independent study and supervisory guidance makes it not only personally interesting and academically useful, but also less daunting as you feel more in control of your own time and always have the best support available from your tutors and peers.

If you studied the subject at GCSE how different is studying it at A Level/BTEC Level 3?

Unfortunately, studying an EPQ is not available at GCSE but the great thing about the subject is that you can study anything you want to which not only ties into GCSE study but A-level study too. Within my EPQ I studied the fabric of human attraction and interaction, focusing on the different aspects that make us hardwired to find a mate. Within this, I felt that my GCSE Biology massively came into play and so did my A Level History. Therefore, If looking at it from this perspective, the transition from GCSE to A Level has significantly helped my EPQ study. I find that studying an EPQ gives you the extra independence that is limited at GCSE level, making you feel much more mature and eager to learn.
How are you assessed and how regularly?
As the EPQ is marked holistically, typical notions of assessments aren’t involved as such. Yet, once we do a piece of work or a piece of research, the supervisors are more than happy to have a look and give you constructive feedback. Also, I have had weekly 1-1 meetings with my tutor which has not only boosted the teacher/student relationship, but also has helped keep me on track and reassured me that my learning has been heading in the right direction. Again, this combination of independent study and guidance from a tutor really is the perfect mix if you feel you want to academically develop but are daunted by the thought of complete independent and degree-style study.

What support have you received and is support available if you don’t understand something?
The support I have received throughout my studies has been fantastic. The level of communication you have with your tutor each week is vital to building up that student/teacher relationship that really does help you along the way. Given that the EPQ is largely independent, the support I received was beyond my expectations and the weekly 1-1 sessions gave me the extra boost and motivation I needed to complete the qualification. At every level of study, I always had any support I needed.

Have you received careers support and what are your future plans?
The best thing about studying the EPQ has been the skills I have taken from it that are critical to my future studies. Studying the EPQ alone has hugely supported my goals to progress onto higher education, as the degree style of learning will make the transition from sixth form to university much easier. Not only has the independence of the EPQ allowed me to develop the skills I will need for my future academic plans, it has also enhanced my knowledge as I enter into adulthood. Studying the topic I did, I have learned a lot about myself and my role as a human being in the world and in society. I have developed a mature and existential understanding of the world around me and my part in it and this will hugely aid my transition onto the next stage of my life once I leave college. Therefore, yes, I have received substantial careers support, even by studying the subject alone, both academic support for the future and the life skills I need going forward.

Visit our website to find more information about the Extended Project Qualification.