University of Sheffield Higher Education Preparation Programme

Supporting the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

The University of Sheffield is just one of many universities that offer outreach and access activities to schools and their pupils in relation to their widening participation portfolio. As one of the strands of its Higher Education Preparation Programme (HEPP), funded by Aimhigher, the University held a full day event in March 2010 for a small cohort of young people from a local school. The event focussed on the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) and how the skills introduced and tested through the completion of this qualification can be applied and developed in the Higher Education setting. During the event students presented their final project to a small number of academic and support staff as well as university students.

“This was the first time we had worked with an Extended Project group. It’s clear that the EPQ enables students to develop research, writing, presentation and independent study skills, along with the ability to reflect on their own work. These are all vital skills for university level study and we hope, through the HE Preparation Programme, to help bridge the gap between Further and Higher Education.” Jo Laycock, Outreach Officer at the University of Sheffield.

The event and the broader programme of guidance and support offered as part of the HEPP comprised the following:

- a study skills workshop delivered in the school at the outset of the EPQ
- a full day research visit to the university libraries
- ongoing IAG support
- a practical workshop delivered by a PhD student on research and presenting skills
- an EPQ presentation and study skills day held at the University.

‘[Being able to do this at a university]...really did help to demonstrate the close relationship between study skills learnt from the EPQ and those required at university...[it] added significant weight to what [the students] were doing.’ Graham Green, McAuley Catholic High School, Extended Projects teacher

‘The feedback you gave me really helped and gave me a confidence boost. Overall, the experience was beneficial in preparing me for university...I feel privileged to have been given the opportunity to undergo the Project.’

Student, McAuley Catholic High School

If you would like to learn more about the HEPP, please contact Denise Brooks, Outreach Officer at the University of Sheffield, email d.m.brooks@sheffield.ac.uk or
call 0114 222 1383. Alternatively, you can find more information at: www.shef.ac.uk/schools/outreach-programmes/he-preparation