

Teaching guide: super curricular guide

7182 A-level Psychology

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Section A: What is super curricular activity?

Super curricular activity is focused on exploring a subject in more depth; it demonstrates commitment to the study of Psychology, expanding knowledge and understanding beyond the AQA Psychology specification. It can involve researching a topic in more depth or even looking at a new topic altogether.

Super curricular activity differs from extra-curricular activity, which is focused on activities unrelated to the study of Psychology ie activities outside of the curriculum (music, art, social and sporting activity etc).

Super curricular activities can:

- Help check if your choice of subject is the right one – do you have a deep interest in the subject of Psychology?
- Help prepare for the transition from study at A-level to undergraduate degree level.
- Prepare for the more academically challenging environment of university.
- Develop critical thinking skills and new ideas, in addition to demonstrating self-motivation and the ability to undertake independent research.
- Strengthen UCAS applications, particularly the personal statement, by evidencing commitment to the study of Psychology. Universities look for candidates with a genuine interest in the subject ([How To Write Your Undergraduate Personal Statement | Undergraduate | UCAS](#)).
- If a student is invited to an interview as part of their UCAS application, then super curricular activity will give them lots to talk about. For example, the UCAS guidance advises students to keep up to date with developments in their subject. Encourage students to maintain a record of their super curricular activity, and how their learning and understanding has been extended by it. You can find an example of a super curricular log in Section D of this booklet. ([University Interview - Find tips For Interviews & auditions \(ucas.com\)](#)).
- Super curricular activity is in itself important, it can foster a love of learning and the realisation that there is a world of knowledge to be discovered.

There are many ways in which students can explore Psychology in more depth, for example:

- completing and gaining certificates for additional courses, eg our AQA Unit Award Scheme units (UAS) or AQA Level 3 Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)
- wider reading, eg books, specialist magazines and journals
- visiting museums
- watching films and documentaries related to Psychology
- listening to Psychology podcasts
- attending online seminars and lectures
- entering academic competitions for A-level psychology students.

This resource aims to provide some ideas and resources to:

- discover Psychology in more depth
- undertake super curricular activity in Psychology.

Introducing students to super curricular activity resources

The following resources may be helpful when introducing students to super curricular activity resources.

Videos

- [Super Curricular Activities - YouTube](#) – the School's Liaison Officers from St John's College and Trinity Hall Colleges explain how to explore your subject outside of the classroom – 36 minutes.
- [Super curricular activities - YouTube](#) – Queens College, Cambridge – 6 minutes.
- [An introduction to supercurriculars - YouTube](#) – Worcester College, Oxford – 17 minutes.

Student guide

[Student Booklet: Super curricular Guide](#) – Worcester College, Oxford.

Resources

- [Advancing Access](#) – what are super curricular activities and how can your students use them.
- [Super curricular activities](#) – Cambridge University.
- [Exploring your subject](#) – University College, Oxford.
- [Lucy Cavendish College Academic Enrichment Programme](#) – the Supra-curricular Exploration Project.
- [The Super Academy](#) – subject [psychology](#).
- [PowerPoint presentation](#) showing how to link super curricular activity to personal statements – Wadham College, Oxford.
- [Guide to super curriculars](#) – Worcester College
- [PowerPoint: Have you ever wondered how to write about super curriculars in a personal statement?](#) – University of East Anglia.

Section B: Digging deeper – AQA qualifications

AQA Unit Award Scheme (UAS)

The [UAS](#) is a great way for A-level Psychology students to evidence their super curricular activity.

Our UAS inspires students to explore and succeed, allowing all students to engage with learning and have their achievements formally recognised. The scheme can boost confidence, increase engagement and improve motivation, helping students to progress on their lifelong learning journey.

We've organised the UAS Psychology units into categories relating to different career/degree pathways. Some of the categories include: Clinical Psychology, Education, Criminology, Sports Psychology, Research Methods, and topics in Psychology.

The units can be used to support a wide range of activities within your centre, including:

- Super-curricular activities
- UCAS and job applications
- Transition activities (supporting students as they prepare for the next step in their educational journey).

Students are rewarded with a certificate each time they successfully complete a unit of learning. They can build up a portfolio of certificates to evidence their skills, knowledge and experience. These can be included in their UCAS personal statement, job application or discussed at interview.

You can find our UAS Psychology units: [AQA | Unit Award Scheme | Units | Psychology](#)

Examples of Psychology units

Equality, diversity and inclusion:

- [Exploring culture bias in Psychology.](#)
- [Culture bias in Psychology: Examining APA's Apology.](#)
- [Gender bias in Psychology: Androcentrism awareness.](#)
- [Gender bias in Psychology: The importance of representation.](#)

Counselling Psychology:

- [The Fear Project: Building resilience to Psychological fear.](#)
- [The Fear Project: Learning resilience and self-monitoring.](#)
- [Alfred Adler: The Foundation of Psychotherapeutic mentoring.](#)

To find out more information about our UAS, organise a meeting or join, contact our team at USARegistration@aqa.org.uk

AQA Level 3 Extended Qualification Project (EPQ)

Undertaking an [EPQ](#) is an ideal activity for students wishing to extend and deepen their knowledge of Psychology. The EPQ presents an opportunity for students to create a project based on their personal interests, not those required by the A-level Psychology specification. Through the EPQ, students can go beyond the specification, preparing themselves for the academic demands of university.

The EPQ can show an interest and commitment to an area of study, both on a personal statement and at a university interview. For example, Oxford University state “Candidates are encouraged to draw upon their experience of undertaking the project when writing their personal statement, particularly if the topic is allied to their chosen degree course”.

Furthermore, the EPQ can support successful transition to study at undergraduate degree level. Universities recognise the value of an EPQ for preparing students for the demands of independent study and for supporting the development of the research and academic skills required by university courses. Indeed, Cambridge University state “We encourage applicants to take an EPQ. It will help to develop independent study and research skills, which are valuable for higher education.” Similarly, at the University of York they “recognise the benefits of the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) and its role in preparing students for success in higher education”.

What is the EPQ?

EPQ is an A-level standard standalone qualification designed to extend and develop your students' abilities beyond the A-level syllabus and prepare them for university or their future career:

- it can be taken as an extension of other Level 3 qualifications or vocational qualifications
- it's worth half an A-level (28 UCAS points)
- it's recognised by universities and employers
- many universities make lower A-level offers to students undertaking an EPQ.

How it works

The EPQ allows students to lead their own projects. Students get to plan and carry out research on a topic that they've chosen and isn't covered by their other qualifications. They can take inspiration from something mentioned in class or something personal and unrelated to their studies. They then use this research to produce a written report and, in the case of practical projects, an artefact or a production.

By taking responsibility for the choice, design and decision making of an individual project (or an individual role in a group project) students:

- become more critical, reflective and independent learners
- develop and apply decision-making and problem-solving skills
- increase their planning, research, analysis, synthesis, evaluation and presentation skills
- learn to apply technologies confidently
- demonstrate creativity, initiative and enterprise.

Undertaking an EPQ can also deliver other benefits for students and schools, such as:

- improved A-Level performance for students taking EPQ
- boosting student recruitment by making your curriculum more attractive
- increasing student motivation by allowing them to study topics of personal interest
- enabling students to apply their new skills to other areas of study.

Hear what universities are saying about the EPQ

Liverpool University

- “The University recognises that the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) will provide an applicant with the opportunity to develop research and academic skills relevant for study at the University of Liverpool. Candidates are encouraged to draw upon their experience of undertaking the project when writing their personal statement, particularly if the topic is allied to their chosen degree course. Many of our programmes will make an alternative offer for candidates who have undertaken an EPQ.”
- [Entry requirements and qualifications - Undergraduate - University of Liverpool](#)

Manchester University

- “The EPQ gives A-level students excellent preparation for university-level study and may help boost their UCAS application.”
- [Extended Project qualification at The University of Manchester.](#)

UCL

- “UCL recognises the value of EPQs as preparation for independent study, which is key to university-level study. If your EPQ topic is related to the UCL programme you are applying to, you may wish to discuss this in your personal statement.”
- [Entry requirements | Prospective Students Undergraduate - UCL – University College London.](#)

University of York

- “We recognise the benefits of the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) and its role in preparing students for success in higher education. In acknowledgement of this, some of our departments will make a reduced offer where the EPQ is taken alongside three A levels or equivalent.”
- [Entry requirements - Undergraduate, University of York.](#)

The EPQ carries a UCAS tariff of up to 28 points ([AQA | Level 3 Extended Project Qualification | Introduction | UCAS Tariff points](#)). In addition, some universities may give an alternative grade offer for those students studying the EPQ ([Search - UCAS](#)).

It's important when selecting their EPQ that students select a topic that is **not** part of the A-level Psychology specification content.

However, Psychology is a wide-ranging subject and there are many areas that students could explore further through a dissertation, for example:

- Anomalistic Psychology.
- Educational Psychology.
- Language and thought.
- Organisational Psychology.
- Perception.
- Positive Psychology.
- Prejudice and discrimination.
- Pro-social behaviour.
- Psychology's hidden figures
- Sports psychology.
- The Psychology of pain.
- Women in Psychology/Feminist Psychology.

The EPQ is also the perfect vehicle for a student to undertake practical work and produce a scientific report. This can also serve to deepen and consolidate their understanding of research methods.

We've put together a student recruitment pack for you to use in your school or college and at open evenings: [Student recruitment: how to use our recruitment resources for Project Qualifications \(aqa.org.uk\)](#).

Find out more about the EPQ: [AQA | Project qualifications | Level 3 Extended Project Qualification | Introduction](#).

AQA Level 3 Mathematical Studies (also known as Core Maths)

“We are seeing growth in the new Core Maths qualifications introduced in 2014, which are designed to prepare students for the mathematical demands of university study, employment and life. These have been endorsed by a large number of universities, including many in the Russell Group.” – [Industrial Strategy: building a Britain fit for the future \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/311203/Industrial-Strategy-building-a-Britain-fit-for-the-future.pdf).

[Core Maths](#) offers an opportunity for students not studying AS or A-level mathematics to study a Level 3 mathematics course alongside their main programme of study.

The key purpose is to widen participation in the study of mathematics from age 16 and to support the development of mathematical skills for progression to higher education and employment. Core Maths is recognised as being particularly useful for those progressing to higher education courses with a specific mathematical content such as psychology.

It can be studied in a single year or over a two-year period and can be taken alongside A-levels or other qualifications, including vocational courses.

Studying Core Maths helps students develop their quantitative and problem-solving skills. This is valuable preparation for the quantitative skills they will need for many Psychology degree courses.

Looking at the content of the Core Maths qualification, we can clearly see the relevance to those students who study A-level Psychology.

Core Maths qualifications include:

- interpreting solutions in the context of the problem
- understanding sources of error and bias when problem-solving
- working with data
- understanding risk and probability
- understanding variation in statistics
- using exponential functions to model growth and decay.

To read about our Level 3 Core Maths qualification visit our website: [AQA | Mathematics | AQA Certificate | Level 3 Mathematical Studies](#)

Connect with our team:

Tel: [0161 957 3852](tel:01619573852)

Email: maths@aqa.org.uk

For additional support, the Advanced Mathematics Support Programme (AMSP) offers advice and information about a full range of Level 3 maths pathways and increasing student participation. They also run student enrichment events for students ([Events - AMSP](#)) and provide resources ([Core Maths resources - AMSP](#)).

Section C: AQA super curricular resources

In this section you'll find a wide range of links to super curricular resources, including:

- associations, learned societies and organisations.
- blogs
- competitions
- glossaries
- magazines and journals
- museum visits
- online courses
- podcasts
- reading lists
- TedTalks
- university resources
- websites.

Associations, learned societies and organisations

- British Psychological Society – if you're an A-level student or have a general interest in psychology, you may be interested in [subscribing to the BPS](#). You get access to The Psychologist app (includes all the great articles from the magazine and Research Digest).
- [American Psychological Association](#).
- [Association of Black Psychologists UK](#).
- [Experimental Psychology Association](#).
- [International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology](#).
- [STEM learning](#).
- [The British Neuroscience Association](#).
- [The European Health Psychology Association](#).

Blogs

- [Notes from Two Scientific Psychologists](#).
- [Progress Focused](#).
- [PsyBlog – understand your mind with science of psychology](#).
- [PsychCentral – mental health blog](#).
- [Psychology Today – essential reads](#).
- [The Situationist \(social psychology\)](#).

Students may also consider creating their own Psychology blog.

Awards/Competitions

- [Oxford Unsung Heroes of Science Video Competition – Hertford College](#).
- [Crest gold award](#).
- [Minds Underground, Psychology Essay Competition](#).
- [National Psychology Competition – Royal Holloway University, London](#).
- [The APA: TOPSS Competition for High School Psychology Students](#).
- [The British Brain Bee Competition](#).
- [The International Psychology Olympiad](#).

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- [The John Locke Society Essay Competition.](#)
- [The Oxbridge Launchpad Essay Competition.](#)
- [The Oxford Scientist, Schools Competition.](#)
- [Tutor2U Student Essay Competition.](#)

Glossaries

- [The APA Dictionary of Psychology.](#)
- [The Mental Health Foundation A-Z.](#)

Magazines and journals

Many of the journals/magazines offer free access to past editions and free articles:

- [Google Scholar.](#)
- [Nature Human Behaviour.](#)
- [APA: American Psychologist.](#)
- [APA: Core of Psychology – Spotlights Articles.](#)
- [APA: Monitor on Psychology.](#)
- [APA: The Psychological Bulletin.](#)
- [Association of Psychological Science: Observer.](#)
- [Journal of Clinical Psychology.](#)
- [Nature Journal.](#)
- [Psychology Today.](#)
- [Scientific American: Mind and Brain.](#)
- [The British Psychological Society: Readers Digest.](#)
- [The Guardian: Psychology.](#)
- [The Psychology Review.](#)
- [The New Scientist.](#)
- [The American Journal of Psychology.](#)
- [The Science Daily.](#)
- [The Young Scientist.](#)

Museums and archives

- [A Clockwork Lavender: Sexology, Psychology and the LGBTQ+ Community:](#) online archive of scientific understandings about sexual orientation and gender identity over the course of the 20th century.
- [Cummings Center Artifacts:](#) archive of more than 1,000 instruments, apparatus, and other objects from the history of psychology and related sciences.
- [Institute of Psychoanalysis.](#)
- [Psychology's Feminist Voices :](#) multi-media digital archive of the presence of women and feminism in psychology.
- [Smithsonian I am Psyched virtual exhibit:](#) online exhibit.
- [The Foundling Museum.](#)
- [The Freud Museum.](#)
- [The Royal Pharmaceutical Museum](#) – the role of pharmacy in mental health and well-being.
- [The Royal Pharmaceutical Society Online Museum.](#)
- [The Royal Society of Medicine.](#)
- [The Science Museum.](#)

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- [The University of Akron: Cummings Center for the History of Psychology](#) (online).
- [The Virtual Psychology Museum](#) – online museum featuring famous studies, interactive content, videos, demonstrations and podcasts.
- [Wellcome Collection](#) – a free museum and library exploring health and human experience.

Online courses (free)

- [Alison](#) – range of courses for Psychology.
- [Coursera: Top Psychology Courses.](#)
- [Coursera: Autism.](#)
- [Coursera: Child Psychology.](#)
- [Coursera: Clinical Psychology.](#)
- [Coursera: Cognitive Science.](#)
- [Coursera: Emotional Intelligence.](#)
- [Coursera: Forensic Psychology.](#)
- [Coursera: Happiness.](#)
- [Coursera: Mental Health.](#)
- [Coursera: Mindfulness.](#)
- [Coursera: Psychiatry.](#)
- [Coursera: Research methods.](#)
- [Coursera: Therapy.](#)
- [EdX](#) – range of courses, useful for narrowing down your particular interests within a broader subject.
- [FutureLearn.](#)
- [Massive Open Online Course \(MOOC\)](#) – find here the list of Courses on topics of Psychology. These courses are collected on the web by My MOOC and are gathered here.
- [Open University](#) – Open Learn Psychology courses.
- [SmithsonianX Free online courses](#)
- [MIT](#) – Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) share a wide range of materials, including:
 - course materials
 - video lectures
 - lecture slides
 - notes.

Podcasts

- [APA: Speaking of Psychology.](#)
- [Association for Psychological Science: Under the Cortex.](#)
- [BBC Radio 4: All in the Mind.](#)
- [BBC Sounds: In the Psychiatrist's Chair.](#)
- [BBC Sounds: Psychologically Speaking.](#)
- [Brain Science.](#)
- [British Psychological Society's PsychCrunch.](#)
- [London School of Economics: The Department of Psychological and Behavioural Science.](#)
- [Psychology in everyday life: the Psych Files.](#)
- [Psychology in 10 Minutes.](#)
- [The American Psychological Society: Speaking of Psychology.](#)
- [The Hidden Brain.](#)

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- [The History of Psychology podcast series.](#)
- [The Positive Psychology Podcast.](#)
- [Two Guys on your Head.](#)
- [University of Oxford Podcasts.](#)

Reading lists

- [American Psychological Association Books.](#)
- [British Psychological Society: The Ultimate Psychology Reading List](#) – the Psychologist magazine has been asking what 'One book or journal article that all psychologists should read'. This is a collection of the answers.
- [British Psychological Society: "Off Piste" Reading.](#)
- [British Psychological Society: Further Reading.](#)
- [British Psychological Association \(Teachers Toolkit: Suggested reading to spark your students' interest.](#)
- [Cardiff University Psychology Year 1 Reading list.](#)
- [Christ's College, University of Cambridge. \(Psychological and Behavioural Sciences\).](#)
- [Kings College, Cambridge.](#)
- [Oxford University Psychology Reading List.](#)
- [St Hilda's College, Oxford.](#)
- [The Guardian: Top Ten Psychology.](#)

Summer schools/university access programmes

- [Access Manchester](#)
- [Apply Cambridge.](#)
- [Nuffield Foundation.](#)
- [Realising Opportunities Programme.](#)
- [Sutton Trust.](#)
- [Target Oxbridge](#) – a free programme that aims to help Black African and Caribbean students and students of mixed race with Black African and Caribbean heritage increase their chances of getting into the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge. The programme is open to UK-based students in Year 12. There's also a [programme for Year 10 students.](#)
- [University of York.](#)

Ted Talks

- [Ted Talks](#) – wide range of psychology focused talks.
- [Ted Talks: 45 TED Talks That Will Intrigue, Encourage, and Inspire Your Students](#)

University resources

- [Balliol College, Oxford](#) – range of resources for Psychology students.
- [Cambridge University Super curricular activities](#) open-access website for pre-degree students, providing access to super curricular resources written by Cambridge students/academics.
- [HE+ Psychology.](#)
- [Oxplore](#) – digital resource from the University of Oxford. Aims to go beyond what is covered in the classroom.
- [Royal Holloway University Resources.](#)

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- [Trinity College, Cambridge.](#)
- [UCL](#) – resources for A-level Psychology students.
- [University of Oxford Suggested Subject Resources.](#)
- [University of Cambridge Super-curricular suggestions.](#)
- [University of Oxford Digital Resource Hub](#) – compilation of digital resources to support and inspire learning.
- [University of York.](#)

Videos and recordings

- [Archives of the History of American Psychology](#): wide range of resources, including five minute history lessons eg [Robert Guthrie and the Search for Psychology's Hidden Figures; Ruth Howard](#).
- [Cummings Center for the History of Psychology: archival films and recordings](#) – wide range of resources, including Stanford Prison audio recording, Lewin Leadership study, conditioned emotional responses.
- [Cummings Center Sound Recordings](#): the collection includes radio talks by psychologists, in addition to cassettes, wire recordings and CDs from approximately 1919 to the present.
- [University of Oxford Staircase 12](#) – an online hub of resources and information for students thinking about applying to top universities. You'll find a Reading Bank, containing book recommendations and reviews by students and tutors, and a Resource Hub, with links to lectures, podcasts and recently published academic articles.

Websites

- [All About Psychology.](#)
- [AllPsych.](#)
- [Bethlem Museum of the Mind Resources.](#)
- [BF Skinner Foundation.](#)
- [CogPrints.](#)
- [Freud Museum Education Learning Resources.](#)
- [Harvard University: The Whole Brain.](#)
- [Oxford Academics: Very short introductions.](#)
- [Pavlov on the Internet Archives.](#)
- [Psych Classics.](#)
- [Social Psychology Network.](#)
- [University of Pennsylvania: Authentic Happiness.](#)

Section D: Logging super curricular activity

It's important that students do not simply complete a super curricular activity but reflect on the activity, for example:

- What they've learned from the activity.
- How the activity challenged what they thought they knew about a topic/made them think about a topic from a different perspective.
- Did the activity lead you to wanting to learn more about the topic; what did you do next?
- What skills they've developed through the activity.
- What it made them think/or changed how they think. This is good evidence of critical thinking.
- How the activity relates to their chosen career/degree.

Encourage students to keep a detailed record of all their super curricular activity and their reflections on them, this will prove invaluable when writing a personal statement etc.

The University of Cambridge provides the following [super curricular log](#) that students may wish to use to log their activity.