



ISEB
Independent Schools
Examinations Board

CASE STUDY

iPQ AT SHREWSBURY HOUSE SCHOOL: CHALLENGING ACADEMIC SCHOLARS

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**Nick French, Director of Scholarship, Reporting and Assessment,
and Head of Geography at Shrewsbury House School**



A DISSERTATION AT THE AGE OF 13

Pupils are given total freedom to identify and explore an area of study they are interested in, focusing on developing crucial skills, such as self-direction and motivation, something Director of Scholarship, Reporting and Assessment, and Head of Geography at Shrewsbury House Nick French identifies as vital to a student's future, both in the classroom and working environment.

Mr French describes the iPQ as "almost like a university dissertation at the age of 13." Highlighting that the iPQ is a particularly "wonderful opportunity" as it enables students to utilise and develop skills that they may not have otherwise used before reaching higher education, including the ability to work independently, understand the importance of and how to correctly reference, conduct and review interviews and complete research, and exploring a topic with passion, curiosity and an open mind. "Intrinsic motivation" is exceptionally important at Shrewsbury House, states Mr French, and the level of satisfaction pupils gain from their research, presentation, and outcomes is exceptional, helping them build confidence before transitioning to senior school.

For Shrewsbury House scholarship applicants, the iPQ provides an opportunity to explore topics they are interested in while maintaining the high level of academic rigour needed to excel in their examinations in the summer. Projects from Shrewsbury House have included:

How is the microstructure of a bird's feather relative to its purpose?

What are the applications of quantum mechanics?

What is the foreseeable future of AI?

WHAT IS THE ISEB PROJECT QUALIFICATION (iPQ)?

The iPQ is a research-based project qualification that is carefully constructed to teach and assess essential independent learning skills for Years 5-8. It is divided into five sections: Define, Research and Review, Discuss and Develop, Reflect and Present.

THE iPQ AT SHREWSBURY HOUSE SCHOOL

Shrewsbury House has found an exceptional use of the iPQ in ensuring their scholarship pupils remain academically challenged and engaged following the conclusion of their senior school interviews in May.

Year 8 pupils who have followed an academic scholarship pathway to their senior school complete the iPQ in a four-week period during the summer term after their scholarship exams. As well as enjoying Science, games, and the creative arts during this period, pupils use all other lessons for independent study to research and design their interdisciplinary project.





One of the key benefits of the iPQ is its versatility in application and freedom for the school to identify the best way to incorporate the qualification into its curriculum. In Mr French's previous UK prep school, the whole year group completed an iPQ in Year 7, with lessons taking place once a week for the full year.

As a keen supporter of the iPQ, Mr French states, "I absolutely recommend the iPQ to all schools; the earlier students can learn and practice these high-level research, reporting and presentation skills, the better". He continues, "the iPQ is perfect for Year 8 pupils, especially academic scholars who show a natural curiosity and interest in learning".

THE FREEDOM TO EXPLORE

One particular student and project from Shrewsbury House that has stuck with Mr French is a recent project exploring how a democratic system, such as the electoral college in the USA, can be so undemocratic. The project explored the way in which representative democracy in the 21st century is built on a foundation of political equity and the idea that everybody's vote should count equally. However, during the research and analysis phase, this Shrewsbury House student discovered that in the case of the American electoral system, this idea of political equity was not the case. As a keen mathematician and scholar of the subject, the student calculated the relative value of 'Electoral Votes per Person' in the 2016 US presidential election, identifying that Americans in Wyoming actually had four times the voting power of those living in California. When conducting the research and analysis, the Shrewsbury House pupil completed interviews with school staff, including one who was from the USA, gaining their perspective and opinion and building an evidenced-based, succinct argument, in addition to tackling questions from the Head and Deputy Head, Academic, at the school during their presentation.



The iPQ continues not only to inspire the pupils involved at Shrewsbury House but also the staff, as Mr French suggested were he to complete a project, he would want to explore the question, 'What does it take to win in cricket?'. As a keen cricketer, Mr French went on to state, "I love cricket, and would love to be the person to discover some untapped golden element that would help a team to win, exploring the statistics, differences and key performance indicators of each team".



To find out more about the ISEB Project Qualification that is inspiring staff and pupils alike, visit the ISEB website, www.iseb.co.uk/iPQ

For the Shrewsbury House School website, visit: www.shrewsburyhouse.net

To read about the success of the iPQ at The Banda School, Kenya visit: iPQ Banda School