

GCSE BIOLOGY SNAPSHOT

OVERVIEW

The following are important features of this specification.

- It offers opportunities to build on the skills and capabilities developed through the delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum at Key Stage 3.
- The GCSE Biology specification is divided into three units.
- Units 1 and 2 contain prescribed practicals.
- Students carry out nine practicals over the two years of this course.
- Students carry out investigations to develop their skills and knowledge of practical science.

SPECIFICATION SUMMARY

This CCEA course in GCSE Biology provides a broad, coherent and practical course that develops a positive view of and confidence in science. It encourages learners to appreciate the value of biology in their lives and in the wider world around them.

BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

It provides a thorough preparation for the study of biology and related courses at GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level and Advanced Level. It allows students to develop transferable skills that will benefit them in vocational training and employment.

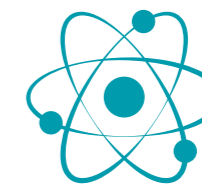
It also gives students the opportunity to develop the ability to apply skills to real-life contexts.

CROSS-CURRICULAR SKILLS, THINKING SKILLS AND PERSONAL CAPABILITIES THAT WILL BE DEVELOPED

This specification builds on the learning experiences from Key Stage 3 as required for the statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum. It also offers opportunities for students to contribute to the aim and objectives of the Curriculum at Key Stage 4, and to continue to develop the Cross-Curricular Skills and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities. The extent of the development of these skills and capabilities will depend on the teaching and learning methodology used.

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THIS SPECIFICATION/ IMPROVEMENTS MADE

Students carry out investigations to develop their skills and knowledge of practical science. Units 1 and 2 are each assessed by a written examination either at Foundation Tier (grades C–G) or Higher Tier (grades A*–D/E).



Unit 3 is an externally assessed practical skills unit in two parts: Booklet A and Booklet B. Booklet A has two practicals from the prescribed practical list. Booklet B is a timetabled, externally assessed exam taken at the end of final year of study. It consists of questions about planning and carrying out any of the prescribed practicals as well as more general questions about any practical situation that arises from the specification.

The following skills are assessed:

- planning an investigation;
- carrying out an investigation;
- analysing experimental data; and
- drawing conclusions from an experiment.

CONTENT AND ASSESSMENT*

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT	WEIGHTING	AVAILABILITY
Unit 1: Cells, Living Processes and Biodiversity	External written examination Students answer compulsory structured questions that require short responses, extended writing and calculations. Foundation Tier: 1 hour 15 mins Higher Tier: 1 hour 15 mins	35%	Summer from 2018
Unit 2: Body Systems, Genetics, Microorganisms and Health	Externally written examination Students answer compulsory structured questions that require short responses, extended writing and calculations. Foundation Tier: 1 hour 30 mins Higher Tier: 1 hour 30 mins	40%	Summer from 2019
Unit 3: Practical skills	Booklet A Externally Marked Students carry out two pre-release practicals in the final year of study. 2 hours for Foundation and Higher Tier. Booklet B External written examination Students answer compulsory structured questions that include short responses, extended writing and calculations, all set in a practical context. There are two tiers of entry: Foundation Tier: 1 hour Higher Tier: 1 hour	7.5% 17.5%	Between 1 January and 1 May each year (beginning in 2019) Every Summer (beginning in 2019)

*The information in this table is still subject to regulatory approval.

SUPPORTING YOU

We also intend to provide:

- past papers;
- Chief Examiner's reports;
- Principal Moderator's reports;
- guidance on progression from Key Stage 3;
- planning frameworks and fact files;
- practical manual;
- centre support visits; and
- support days for teachers.

CONTACT US

If you have a query or require advice or guidance, please contact:

Subject Officer with overall responsibility:

Edith Finlay

(028) 9026 1200 ext 2267

efinlay@ccea.org.uk

Specification Support Officer

Nuala Tierney

(028) 9026 1200 ext 2292

ntierney@ccea.org.uk

SPECIFICATION SNAPSHOT

For first teaching from September 2017

For first assessment in Summer 2018

For first award in Summer 2019

