

GCSE DOUBLE AWARD SCIENCE 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 specification is unitised and includes seven units.
- Units B1, C1 and P1 are available for assessment in the first year of teaching.
- All units are assessed through a written examination, either at Foundation Tier (grades C*–G) or Higher Tier (grades A*–D/E).
- Unit 7 is a practical skills unit that replaces the controlled assessment tasks:
 - Booklet A contains three practicals based on the prescribed practicals listed in the specification; and
 - Booklet B is a timetabled written examination, taken at the end of the final year of teaching. It includes questions about planning and carrying out any of the prescribed practical activities and general questions about any practical situation that arises from the specification.
- Students will be able to receive two different grades in their Double Award Science qualification, such as AB or BC.

SPECIFICATION SUMMARY

The specification supports the aim of the Northern Ireland Curriculum to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives, as well as its objectives:

- to develop the young person as an individual;
- to develop the young person as a contributor to society; and
- to develop the young person as a contributor to the economy and environment.

This qualification is designed specifically for Northern Ireland students.

BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

The specification encourages students to develop transferable skills that will benefit them in vocational training and employment. It also enables them to progress to studying science and related courses at GCE.

The specification aims to encourage students to:

- develop their understanding of the relationships between hypotheses, evidence, theories and explanations;
- develop and apply their observational, practical, modelling, enquiry and problem-solving skills and understanding in laboratory, field and other learning environments; and
- develop their ability to evaluate claims based on science through critical analysis of the methodology, evidence and conclusions both qualitatively and quantitatively.

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

The specification encourages students to develop transferable skills that will benefit them in vocational training and employment. It also enables them to progress to studying science and related courses at GCE.



The 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 the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities. The extent of the development of these skills and capabilities will be dependent on the teaching and learning methodology used. More information is available in Section 7 of the specification.

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THIS SPECIFICATION/ IMPROVEMENTS MADE

Unit 7 is a practical skills unit that replaces the controlled assessment tasks. This qualification is designed specifically for Northern Ireland students. This qualification includes practical skills assessment.

CONTENT AND ASSESSMENT*

CONTENT	ASSESSMENT
Biology Unit B1: Cells, Living Processes and Biodiversity	External written examination Students answer compulsory structured questions that include short responses, extended writing and calculations. There are two tiers of entry. Foundation and Higher Tiers: 1 hour
Chemistry Unit C1: Structures, Trends, Chemical Reactions, Quantitative Chemistry and Analysis	Externally written examination Students answer compulsory structured questions that include short responses, extended writing and calculations. There are two tiers of entry. Foundation and Higher Tiers: 1 hour
Physics Unit P1: Motion, Force, Moments, Energy, Density, Kinetic Theory, Radioactivity, Nuclear Fission and Fusion	External written examination Students answer compulsory structured questions that include short responses, extended writing and calculations. There are two tiers of entry. Foundation and Higher Tiers: 1 hour
Biology Unit B2: Body Systems, Genetics, Microorganisms and Health	External written examination Students answer compulsory structured questions that include short responses, extended writing and calculations. There are two tiers of entry. Foundation and Higher Tiers: 1 hour 15 mins

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For first teaching from September 2017
For first assessment in November 2018
For first award in Summer 2019

Chemistry Unit C2: Further Chemical Reactions, Rates and Equilibrium, Calculations and Organic Chemistry	External written examination Students answer compulsory structured questions that include short responses, extended writing and calculations. There are two tiers of entry. Foundation and Higher Tiers: 1 hour 15 mins
Physics Unit P2: Waves, Light, Electricity, Magnetism, Electromagnetism and Space Physics	External written examination Students answer compulsory structured questions that include short responses, extended writing and calculations. There are two tiers of entry. Foundation and Higher Tiers: 1 hour 15 mins
Unit 7: Practical Skills	Booklet A Externally marked Students carry out three pre-release practicals in the final year of study. There are two tiers of entry. Foundation and Higher Tiers: 3 hours (Biology 1 hour, Chemistry 1 hour and Physics 1 hour) Booklet B External written examination Students answer compulsory structured questions that include short responses, extended writing and calculations, all set in a practical context for Biology, Chemistry and Physics. There are two tiers of entry. Foundation and Higher Tiers: 1 hour 30 mins (Biology 30 mins, Chemistry 30 mins and Physics 30 mins)

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

SUPPORTING YOU

We also intend to provide:

- past papers;
- mark schemes;
- Chief Examiner's reports;
- Principal Moderator's reports;
- guidance on progression from Key Stage 3;
- planning frameworks;
- centre support visits;
- support days for teachers; and
- a resource list.

CONTACT US

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

Subject Officer with overall responsibility:

Elaine Lennox
(028) 9026 1200 ext 2320
elennox@ccea.org.uk

Specification Support Officer:

Nuala Tierney
(028) 9026 1200 ext 2292
ntierney@ccea.org.uk