

Summer 2021



Summer 2021

Alternative Arrangements: AS and A level

Biology Subject Guidance



Introduction

On 6 January 2021, the Minister of Education, Peter Weir MLA, cancelled all CCEA GCSE, AS and A2 examinations scheduled for January, February, May and June 2021. Instead, the approach to awarding grades in Summer 2021 will be based on teacher professional judgements, with moderation. CCEA has published *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2021 Alternative Arrangements – Process for Heads of Centre* to support teachers and school leaders in determining the appropriate Centre Determined Grades for each student.

In 2021, centres are asked to use a range of evidence to arrive at a professional and academic judgement of the standard at which each student is performing in the context of the specification for which they are entered and from this provide a grade to CCEA. This is different from 2020, when centres were asked to supply a centre assessment grade based on their judgement of the grade a student would likely have achieved if they had been able to complete examinations. It will require centres and CCEA to develop and use different processes from those used last year.

This document follows on from CCEA's *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2021 Alternative Arrangements – Process for Heads of Centre* and aims to provide further guidance to support teachers and Heads of Department in determining the appropriate Centre Determined Grade for each student entered for GCE AS or A level Biology.

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1. Overview

Each Centre Determined Grade is a judgement of the final grade for a qualification. It must be based on a holistic review of a student's performance as indicated by assessment evidence, gathered and retained at centre level. In the interests of fairness within and across centres, each Centre Determined Grade must be a realistic, evidence-based judgement of the standard at which a student is performing, i.e. their demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills in the content of the specification they have covered. This means students **do not** need to have completed a specified amount of content, or demonstrate skills, knowledge and understanding across every area of the specification, as they would normally. In this way, disruption to teaching and learning can be taken into account.

We must also acknowledge the decision taken in December 2020 by the Education Minister in respect of reducing the assessment burden in GCE AS and A level qualifications. The details in the table below will still be applicable in forming a Centre Determined Grade in Summer 2021. For example, for AS Biology, teachers can consider evidence for either: AS Units 1 and 2; AS Units 1 and 3; AS Units 2 and 3 or all three AS units.

Subject	Current Arrangements	GCE Unit Omissions	Specification Adaptations
AS Biology	<p>Unit 1 external assessment (37.5% of AS)</p> <p>Unit 2 external assessment (37.5% of AS)</p> <p>Unit 3 external/internal assessment (25% of AS)</p>	<p>AS Students could choose to sit Units 1 and 2 (30%); Units 2 and 3 (25%); or Units 1 and 3 (25%)</p>	Remove requirement that candidates carry out practical work in order to collect evidence for AS internal assessment. Teachers can provide experimental data which candidates use to write-up their internal assessment (lab-book). This will facilitate completion of the lab-book over the full academic year if practical work cannot be carried out due to public health.
A2 Biology	<p>Unit 1 external assessment (24% of A level)</p> <p>Unit 2 external assessment (24% of A level)</p> <p>Unit 3 external/internal assessment (12% of A level)</p>	<p>A2 Students could choose to sit Unit 1 (24%); Unit 2 (24%); Units 1 and 3 (36%); Units 2 and 3 (36%); or Units 1 and 2 (48%)</p>	Remove requirement that candidates complete the internal assessment (lab-book) element of A2 Unit 3

2. Preliminary Considerations

In arriving at a Centre Determined Grade for a student, it is not necessary to assess every aspect of the specification exhaustively. A selection of key tasks or assessments carried out under appropriate conditions and with a suitable level of demand, which allows you to authenticate the work as the student's own, will give a good indication of the standard at which the student is performing in the qualification.

To make accurate judgements, you must have a clear understanding of:

- the range of skills, knowledge and understanding covered by the specification;
- the assessment requirements and the structure of the specification;
- the grade descriptions at key grades (see Section 5 and Appendix 1 and 2 in this document);
- the level of demand of the qualification assessments; and
- the weighting of each component/unit and the type of assessment.

For GCE Biology, information on these aspects can be found in the specification and further illustrated in the specimen assessment materials and past papers¹ which are available on the CCEA website at www.ccea.org.uk

A piece of evidence has high validity and reliability if a student who performs well in the task would reasonably be expected to perform equally well in the qualification as a whole. Some considerations that may impact on evidence are noted below.

- **Specification Coverage**

A piece of evidence that covers a greater breadth of the specification content, knowledge, understanding and skills from a unit (or units) with a higher weighting may give a better indication of a student's standard of performance than a piece with lesser breadth or with a lower weighting. Evidence does not need to cover the entire specification content.

- **Similarity to Actual Qualification Assessments**

Evidence that is similar to a CCEA assessment for the qualification will be more useful in determining a student's grade than evidence that is considerably different from the qualification assessment in terms of question structure, content and/or assessment arrangements.

- **Controls**

If evidence is generated under less controlled conditions than a qualification assessment, its value may be less than a piece generated under conditions that are similar. Centres should keep a record of the conditions under which an assessment was completed, i.e. high, medium or limited levels of control – see **Appendix 3** for definitions.

¹ Past papers and mark schemes will be available for all CCEA GCSE, AS and A level qualifications subject to copyright clearance.

However, CCEA understands the difficult public health context in which schools have been working since March 2020, which has included two extended periods of remote learning. Schools may, therefore, need to utilise evidence generated within more limited levels of control, where they can authenticate this as the student's own.

- **Level of Demand**

The evidence you gather must be set at an appropriate level of demand for it to be a good indicator of a student's standard of performance.

- **When Evidence Is Generated**

It should be borne in mind that a student's knowledge, understanding and skills may develop over the period of a course of study; you should consider when any piece of evidence was generated and ensure, if possible, that evidence generated recently is taken into account.

3. Evidence to Inform Centre Determined Grades

This section provides guidance on the information that centres should use in confirming Centre Determined Grades.

You should consider all the key evidence you have for each student and reflect on how much it tells you about the student's standard of performance, as measured against the requirements of the relevant specification. For example, this could be, but is not limited to:

- the consistency of a student's practical or performance evidence;
- their depth or breadth of knowledge and understanding in relation to questions on key topics;
- their degree of analytical or evaluative skills demonstrated on key topics; and/or
- quality of student responses to discriminating questions or tasks.

Centres should be clear in their Centre Determined Grades policy what types of evidence will be used in determining the grade. Centres should also be clear with students the evidence that will be used to determine their grades. Where possible, centres should aim to use consistent sources of evidence for a qualification cohort. Some examples of evidence suitable for GCE AS and A level Biology you may choose to use are included in the following table:

Evidence
<p>CCEA assessment resources for AS Unit 1, AS Unit 2, AS Unit 3, A2 Unit 1, A2 Unit 2 and A2 Unit 3 – When taken under high control conditions, where the public health situation allows, these assessments will be a good indicator of the standard of student performance as they are fully aligned to specification content and the level of demand of past papers. See Section 4 for more details.</p>
<p>Performance in any mock examinations taken – These are likely to be a good indicator of performance, particularly if they are taken under high control conditions and assess the skills, knowledge and understanding required by the CCEA specification or are similar to CCEA question papers.</p>
<p>Performance in CCEA past paper questions and mark schemes – These assessments are in the public domain and can be readily accessed by students. Therefore, in their entirety, they do not form strong evidence. However, elements of these can be incorporated into mock exams or class tests. You may wish to access grade boundaries and/or Chief Examiner’s reports which relate to these papers, available at www.ccea.org.uk. If the examinations in the qualifications you deliver are marked online, you can also avail of the data held in the CCEA Analytics application. Further information can be obtained by contacting CCEA at CCEA.Analytics@ccea.org.uk</p>
<p>Performance in class tests – If class tests only assess specific content, you should use a series of marked class tests. A series of such assessments, done under high control conditions and sampling the key aspects of the specification, should provide good evidence of student performance. Many class tests will be recorded as a mark or percentage, and centres should ensure there is a consistent approach in mapping these to a grade.</p>
<p>Records of each student’s performance throughout their study – This includes, for example, progress review/tracking data, classwork, and bookwork.</p>
<p>Performance in internally assessed units – AS3 lab-book. This could be used to supplement other evidence types even if it has not been fully completed.</p>
<p>Performance in any class assessments taken throughout their study of the GCE Biology specification – This may consist of a variety of evidence types, produced under different conditions. Evidence of this kind is unlikely to form a strong evidence base on its own, but it may supplement other evidence types.</p>
<p>For resitting students, prioritise evidence generated during the 2020/21 academic year.</p>

Assessment Objectives

Assessment objectives are the skills that are normally assessed through the completion of examinations or internally assessed tasks. They are the foundations on which a specification is developed, and a weighting is applied to each individual assessment objective to show the weighting of assessment associated with it. They may also prove to be a useful indicator of the level of demand of a task or assessment. As such, you should consider the assessment objectives that will be assessed when selecting evidence to form a holistic judgement of a student's performance. This information will be recorded in the Departmental Assessment Evidence Grid which is set out in Appendix 6 of CCEA's *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2021 Alternative Arrangements – Process for Heads of Centre*.

The assessment objectives for GCE Biology are:

AO1	demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures
AO2	apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – in a theoretical context; – in a practical context; – when handling qualitative data; and – when handling quantitative data
AO3	analyse, interpret and evaluate scientific information, ideas and evidence to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – make judgements and reach conclusions; and – develop and refine practical design and procedures

Further information on assessment objectives, including weightings associated with individual units, can be found in Section 4: Scheme of Assessment in the subject specification.

Please note that where a unit omission has impacted on an assessment objective, it is *not necessary* to consider evidence for this objective; however, where reliable evidence exists, centres may still wish to consider it in forming a holistic judgement.

Using AS Evidence at A Level

For A level, AS evidence may be considered alongside A2 evidence; however, the differences between AS and A2 should be borne in mind. For example, the AS qualification is weighted at 40% of the overall A level and has different grade descriptions. There is also no A* grade at AS. If AS evidence is used, it must be assessed against the grade descriptions at A2 (see Appendix 2 for more details). If you do decide to use AS evidence to support judgements at A2, this should be reflected in the Centre Determined Grades policy for your centre and in the Candidate Assessment Record, and it should be included in evidence submitted to CCEA for sampling in the CCEA review stage.

4. Support

A range of subject-specific support is available on the CCEA website and can assist teachers in arriving at a fair and consistent judgement for students.

CCEA 2021 Assessment Resources

In 2020, many students seeking a GCSE or GCE qualification grade had been awarded notional unit grades or uniform mark scores in previous examination series, to use as evidence in determining centre assessment grades; however, this is not the case in 2021. In the absence of this information, CCEA will supply assessment resources to your centre. These will be quality assured question papers and mark schemes for **all** units that normally have examinations. They will contain new questions and tasks not previously released to centres and must therefore be stored securely. These materials are not to be seen as high stakes assessments but rather viewed as materials which could form part of the evidence used to inform Centre Determined Grades. Centres do not have to use all the assessment resources, but we advise centres to use at least one per qualification. We would encourage centres to use the assessment resources under high control conditions, where it is safe to do so, to ensure they have the greatest value.

CCEA will provide mark schemes to centres. To support a standardised approach in the use of the assessment resources, we will provide guidance to accompany the mark schemes. Expanded mark schemes have been provided for each AS and A2 assessment resource. The comments (where applicable) on each question part are included to help teachers in their application of the mark scheme.

We appreciate that decisions were taken in December 2020 in respect of unit omissions in AS and A level qualifications. We also acknowledge disruption to teaching and learning may mean that even in the context of these omissions, certain content may not have been covered. In such cases, the assessment resources may be adapted accordingly. In this way, it can be taken into account that some students have suffered more disruption to their learning than others. For example:

A centre decided to omit A2 Units 2 and 3 in line with the Education Minister's announcement in December 2020. Therefore, Centre Determined Grades may be based on evidence for Unit 1 only.

- *Student A has missed a significant amount of learning due to COVID self-isolation and disruptions and has not covered all of the content for Unit 1.*
- *Student A's Centre Determined Grade should be based on assessment of only the content they have covered.*

Assessments adapted/Evidence gathered and reviewed based on A2 Unit 1 Biology Content	
All Students	Student A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeostasis • Immunity • Co-ordination and control in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – plants; and – animals • Ecosystems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – populations; – communities; – ecological energetics; and – nutrient cycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeostasis • Immunity • Co-ordination and control in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – plants; and – animals • Ecosystems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – populations

Summer 2021 Support Webinar

We will produce subject-specific support webinars for teachers to accompany this guidance document. These will include an overview of arriving at a Centre Determined Grade and additional guidance in using the CCEA assessment resources and existing support materials. Subject-specific webinars will be uploaded to the CCEA website from 26 March 2021.

Specimen Assessment Materials and Past Papers

Specimen assessment materials and past papers are available in the Support section of the qualification web page and are provided to give centres guidance on the structure and character of CCEA examination papers and assessments. Please note that if a past paper or mark scheme does not appear in this section, it is for copyright reasons.

You may also wish to create a question paper that is of a similar standard to a CCEA GCE question paper. In doing so, you should refer to the specimen question paper and mark schemes, and the past papers and mark schemes, available on the CCEA qualification web page. These illustrate the standard, structure and requirements of the question paper.

You can generate the most valid evidence by using assessments that replicate, as far as possible, the standard, duration, format and security of CCEA question papers.

Exemplification of Examination Performance (EEP)

EEP booklets are available in the Support section of the qualification web page and include exam questions from the Summer 2017 and 2018 papers, exemplar answers by students and a senior examiner commentary on the answers.

Agreement Trial

Agreements trials for AS Biology internal assessment (lab-book) were held in November 2020. Please note these agreement trials took place before the cancellation of examinations for 2021. However, they will still be useful in providing guidance on the requirements of internally assessed units and the CCEA standard to be applied in marking them.

Chief Examiner/Principal Moderator Reports

The reports for 2017–2019 Summer series are available in the Reports section of the qualification web page and outline the performance of students in all aspects of this qualification.

CCEA Grade Boundaries

Raw to uniform mark boundaries for past Summer series are available in the Support section of the qualification web page and may provide a reference point to support Centre Determined Grades.

CCEA Analytics

You can also avail of the data held in the CCEA Analytics application. Further information can be obtained by contacting CCEA at CCEA.Analytics@ccea.org.uk

5. Making Decisions about Centre Determined Grades

Before deciding Centre Determined Grades you should agree as a department the evidence you will review (see Section 3 for some examples). Once the decision has been made, this should be set out in your centre's Centre Determined Grades policy and be included in the Departmental Assessment Evidence Grid, referenced in Section 3, that will form part of the evidence base.

When making decisions, take into consideration the amount of specification coverage and if this applies to all students. Adapt as necessary for individual students the evidence you will review, to account for those students who may have encountered more significant disruption. Evidence does not have to be in the same format for every student, but teachers should be satisfied that the evidence is reliable to make an informed holistic judgement of that student's attainment.

Internal Standardisation

In subjects where there is more than one teacher and/or class in the department, it is a requirement to carry out internal standardisation. The purpose of internal standardisation is to provide teachers with confidence in the Centre Determined Grades they have assigned, to ensure fairness and objectivity of decisions, and to ensure consistency in the application of assessment criteria and standards.

Where more than one teacher is involved in marking the assessment, the application of the mark scheme must be agreed before marking begins.

When marking is complete, internal standardisation must be conducted to ensure all markers have applied the mark scheme consistently and accurately.

Internal standardisation should include cross-marking samples of work across the full range of attainment and include students' work from each class **to ensure a common standard within a department is applied.**

Grade Descriptions

Grade descriptions set out the characteristics of performance at key grades in the grade range for a qualification, in terms of both content covered and the skills developed (assessment objectives) over the course of study. These should be used to form the basis of your decisions on the Centre Determined Grades that will be awarded to your students in Summer 2021.

Grade descriptions are provided at Grades **A** and **E** in the GCE specification for both AS and A2 level, to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by students awarded these grades. To support teachers in Summer 2021, we are providing an additional grade description at Grade C. Teachers should refer to these descriptions to support their judgements when arriving at their Centre Determined Grades for students.

Please note that shortcomings in some aspects of students' performance in assessments may be balanced by better performances in others.

Please see Appendices 1 and 2 for the Grade Descriptions at A, C and E for both AS and A level. These also include the type of assessment objective evidence you may wish to use and the key features associated with each grade.

Practical Application of Grade Descriptions

To select the most appropriate grade for a student, teachers may use the following approach:

1. Familiarise yourself with the grade descriptions for the subject.
2. Consider support materials such as those set out in Section 4 of this document.
3. Before you arrive at a holistic grade for a student's performance, review the evidence available. At this stage you may wish to make notes to record the qualities that are being looked for.
4. Consider the positive features of the evidence, based on the key features described in the Appendix.
5. Using the descriptions for Grades A, C and E, based on the principle of 'best fit', select the grade you believe comes closest to encapsulating the overall achievement of the student as demonstrated by the evidence. Using this grade as a benchmark, work **either up or down** using the table below to find the final grade.

For example: – A student has demonstrated a reasonable level of knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures (C grade standard). They describe significant trends and patterns shown by complex data presented in tabular or graphical form (above C grade standard). The student's analysis, interpretation and evaluation of scientific information, ideas and evidence are limited (below C grade standard).

- a) *if you are of the view that the candidate's evidence meets the description for grade C, consider this first; if the supporting evidence is strong, you may then wish to go up to the grade above and decide if the evidence meets this, and so on, until you have a best fit between the grade description and the student's work; or*
- b) *if you are of the view that the candidate's evidence does not meet the description for grade C, then go down to the grade below and decide if it meets this, and so on, until you have a best fit between the grade description and the student's work.*

The table below summarises this approach:

Grade	Description/Advice
A* <i>(A2 only)</i>	Candidates at grade A* clearly demonstrate all of the features associated with performance at 'A' but in many areas elements of the evidence presented are exceptional, i.e. beyond that which would reasonably be expected of a candidate working at grade 'A'.
A	See Grade A Description.
B	Candidates at grade 'B' may demonstrate some elements of grade 'A' performance in the evidence presented but, because of limitations in other aspects of their work, not to the extent that an assessor could confidently award a grade 'A'.
C	See Grade C Description.
D	Candidates at grade 'D' may demonstrate some elements of grade 'C' performance in the evidence presented but, because of limitations in other aspects of their work, not to the extent that an assessor could confidently award a grade 'C'.
E	See Grade E Description.

6. Further Advice and Information

Summer 2021 presents us with significant challenges, particularly teachers and students, and we hope the information set out in this document supports you through the process of awarding Centre Determined Grades this year. The information in this document will be supplemented with a webinar, which amongst other things will provide additional guidance on how to apply grade descriptions to the process of arriving at Centre Determined Grades for each of your students.

If in the interim you require further information, please contact:

CCEA Helpline	<p><u>Email: helpline@ccea.org.uk</u></p> <p>Telephone: 028 9026 1220. The helpline is operational each day from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, for centres with queries in relation to Summer 2021.</p> <p>All other queries should be directed to <u>centresupport@ccea.org.uk</u></p>
CCEA Entries	<u>entriesandresults@ccea.org.uk</u>
Subject Officer	Gareth Wilson <u>gwilson@ccea.org.uk</u>
Specification Support Officer	Nola Fitzsimons <u>nfitzsimons@ccea.org.uk</u>

Appendix 1

AS Grade Descriptions and Key Features – Biology

Assessment Objective	AO1		
Grade Descriptions	A	C	E
	<p>For AO1, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of a range of biological concepts and processes; demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of subject-specific material; and select, organise and present information in a variety of forms using scientific terminology. 	<p>For AO1, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of biological concepts and processes; demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of subject-specific material; and select, organise and present information using scientific terminology. 	<p>For AO1, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of some biological concepts and processes; show basic knowledge and understanding of subject-specific material with significant omissions; and demonstrate some organisational skills and present information using basic terminology.
AO1 Evidence	Grade A Key Features	Grade C Key Features	Grade E Key Features
<p>AO1 is assessed in all AS assessment units. AO1 questions are typically recall type questions that require knowledge and understanding. Command terms such as 'define', 'state' or 'describe' often identify AO1 questions.</p> <p>Labelling familiar diagrams and the description of practical procedures identified in the specification can also be AO1.</p> <p>Sources of AO1 evidence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCEA Assessment resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures. Candidates' use of scientific terminology is excellent. Candidates' responses are presented and organised with a high degree of clarity and coherence. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a sufficiently high standard and they use a form and style of writing that is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates demonstrate a reasonable level of knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures. Candidates' use of scientific terminology is generally good. Candidates' responses are presented and organised with a satisfactory degree of clarity and coherence. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a satisfactory standard and they use a form and style of writing that is often 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates demonstrate limited knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures. Candidates' use of scientific terminology is limited. Candidates' responses are presented and organised with a limited degree of clarity and coherence. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a limited standard and they use a basic form and style of writing that is

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CCEA past paper questions on all units• Mock examinations• Class tests, homework and other appropriate evidence	appropriate to the complex subject matter.	appropriate to the complex subject matter.	sometimes appropriate to the complex subject matter.
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Assessment Objective	AO2		
Grade Descriptions	A	C	E
	<p>For AO2, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate understanding of the range of biological processes; • apply skills, knowledge and understanding of processes, techniques and equipment to design an appropriate scientific investigation; • demonstrate safe and skilful practical techniques; • make observations with appropriate precision and record these methodically; • research and communicate ideas clearly and logically; • describe significant trends and patterns shown by data presented in tabular or graphical form; • explain and interpret phenomena with few errors and present arguments and evaluations clearly; • apply principles and concepts in familiar and new contexts; and • carry out structured calculations with few errors and demonstrate good understanding of underlying relationships. 	<p>For AO2, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate understanding of a range of biological processes; • apply skills, knowledge and understanding of processes, techniques and equipment to design a scientific investigation; • demonstrate safe and mostly skilful practical techniques; • make observations with appropriate precision and record them; • research and communicate most ideas clearly and logically; • describe most trends and patterns shown by data presented in tabular or graphical form; • explain and interpret phenomena with minor errors and present arguments and evaluations with some degree of clarity; • apply principles and concepts in familiar and some new contexts; and • carry out structured calculations with minor errors and demonstrate some understanding of underlying relationships. 	<p>For AO2, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate some understanding of biological processes; • apply skills, knowledge and understanding of process, techniques and equipment to devise and plan some aspects of a scientific investigation; • demonstrate safe practical techniques; • make observations and measurements and record them; • research and communicate ideas appropriately; • describe some trends or patterns shown by data presented in tabular or graphical form; • provide basic explanations and interpretations of some phenomena, presenting very limited evaluations; • apply a given principle to material presented in familiar or closely related contexts involving only a few steps in the argument; and carry out some steps in calculations.

AO2 Evidence	Grade A Key Features	Grade C Key Features	Grade E Key Features
<p>AO2 is assessed in all AS assessment units. AO2 questions typically involve the application of knowledge and understanding. Applied knowledge involves using knowledge and understanding to answer questions set in an unfamiliar context. Calculations and other mathematical skills such as reading graph values are AO2 as is the carrying out of practical work (including the interpretation of photographs). Command terms such as 'explain' and 'suggest' are often used in AO2 questions.</p> <p>Sources of AO2 evidence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCEA Assessment resource • CCEA past paper questions on all units • Mock examinations • Class tests, homework and other appropriate evidence • AS lab-book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates demonstrate excellent application of knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures in a theoretical context, a practical context and when handling quantitative and qualitative data. • Candidates demonstrate a high level of competence when handling and recording data and can describe and explain fully, trends and patterns shown by data in graphs and tables. • Candidates' use of scientific terminology and their application of concepts and principles in an unfamiliar context is excellent. • Candidates demonstrate excellent mathematical skills. • Calculations are performed with minimal errors and correct notations are used. • Candidates' responses are presented and organised with a high degree of clarity and coherence. • Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a sufficiently high standard and they use a form and style of writing that is appropriate to the complex subject matter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates demonstrate reasonable application of knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures in a theoretical context, a practical context and when handling quantitative and qualitative data. • Candidates demonstrate a satisfactory level of competence when handling and recording data and can describe and explain trends and patterns shown by data in graphs and tables. • Candidates' use of scientific terminology and their application of concepts and principles in an unfamiliar context is satisfactory. • Candidates demonstrate reasonable mathematical skills. • Calculations are performed with some errors on occasion, with correct notations used. • Candidates' responses are presented and organised with a satisfactory degree of clarity and coherence. • Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a satisfactory standard and they use a form and style of writing that is appropriate to the complex subject matter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates demonstrate a limited application of knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures in a theoretical context, a practical context and when handling quantitative and qualitative data. • Candidates demonstrate limited competence when handling and recording data and can partially describe and explain trends and patterns shown by data in graphs and tables. • Candidates' use of scientific terminology and their application of concepts and principles in an unfamiliar context is limited. • Candidates demonstrate limited mathematical skills. • Calculations can be incomplete with errors, and correct notations are not always used. • Candidates' responses are presented and organised with limited clarity and coherence. • Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a limited standard and they use a basic form and style of writing that is sometimes appropriate to the complex subject matter.

Assessment Objective	AO3		
Grade Descriptions	A	C	E
	<p>For AO3, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyse and offer a valid evaluation of biological information, issues and viewpoints; interpret, explain, evaluate and communicate the results of their own experimental and investigative activities in appropriate contexts; and reach valid conclusions and communicate findings clearly in a structured manner appropriate to the task. 	<p>For AO3, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyse and offer an evaluation of biological information, issues and viewpoints; interpret, explain, evaluate and communicate most aspects of the results of their own experimental and investigative activities in appropriate contexts; and reach conclusions and communicate findings in a manner appropriate to the task. 	<p>For AO3, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> offer some limited evaluation of biological information, issues and viewpoints; interpret, explain and communicate some aspects of the results of experimental and investigative activities in appropriate contexts; and draw some limited conclusions and communicate findings.
AO3 Evidence	Grade A Key Features	Grade C Key Features	Grade E Key Features
<p>AO3 is assessed in all AS assessment units. AO3 questions typically require analysis, interpretation and/or evaluation of biological information. Students can be asked to analyse, interpret or evaluate information provided in tabular, graphical or text form and make judgements and/or reach conclusions.</p> <p>AO3 also includes the interpretation or refinement of practical activities. Command terms such as 'analyse', 'summarise', 'compare and contrast' and 'evaluate' are often used in AO3 questions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates' analysis, interpretation and evaluation of scientific information, ideas and evidence are excellent and allow them to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> make judgements and reach valid conclusions; refine practical design and procedures. Candidates' responses are presented and organised with a high degree of clarity and coherence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates' analysis, interpretation and evaluation of scientific information, ideas and evidence are reasonable and allow them to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> make some judgements and reach conclusions; refine some aspects of practical design and procedures. Candidates' responses are presented and organised with a satisfactory degree of clarity and coherence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates' analysis, interpretation and evaluation of scientific information, ideas and evidence are limited and allow them to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> make basic judgements and conclusions; make basic refinements to practical design and procedures. Candidates' responses are presented and organised with limited clarity and coherence.

<p>Sources of AO3 evidence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCEA Assessment resource • CCEA past paper questions on all units • Mock examinations • Class tests, homework and other appropriate evidence • AS lab-book <p>(Less evidence of AO3 in associated past paper questions/ resources for AS3, compared to AS1 and AS2)</p>			
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Appendix 2

A2 Grade Descriptions and Key Features – Biology

Assessment Objective	AO1		
	A	C	E
Grade Descriptions	<p>For AO1, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate thorough knowledge and understanding of a wide range of biological concepts and processes; show thorough knowledge and understanding of subject-specific material; and select, organise and present information clearly in appropriate forms using scientific terminology. 	<p>For AO1, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of a range of biological concepts and processes; show sound knowledge and understanding of subject-specific material; and select, organise and present information in appropriate forms using scientific terminology. 	<p>For AO1, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of the main biological concepts and processes; show some knowledge and understanding of subject-specific material with significant omissions; and select, organise and present information using basic scientific terminology.
AO1 Evidence	Grade A Key Features	Grade C Key Features	Grade E Key Features
<p>AO1 is assessed in all A2 assessment units. AO1 questions are typically recall type questions that require knowledge and understanding. Command terms such as 'define', 'state' or 'describe' often identify AO1 questions.</p> <p>Labelling familiar diagrams and the description of practical procedures identified in the specification can also be AO1.</p> <p>Sources of AO1 evidence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCEA Assessment resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures. Candidates' use of scientific terminology is excellent. Candidates' responses are presented and organised with a high degree of clarity and coherence. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a sufficiently high standard and they use a form and style of writing that is appropriate to the complex subject matter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates demonstrate a reasonable level of knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures. Candidates' use of scientific terminology is generally good. Candidates' responses are presented and organised with a satisfactory degree of clarity and coherence. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a satisfactory standard and they use a form and style of writing that is mostly appropriate to the complex subject matter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates demonstrate limited knowledge and understanding of some scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures. Candidates' use of scientific terminology is limited at times. Candidates' responses are presented and organised with a limited degree of clarity and coherence. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a limited standard at times and they use a relatively basic form and style of writing that is sometimes appropriate to the complex subject matter.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CCEA past paper questions on all units• Mock examinations• Class tests, homework and other appropriate evidence			
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Assessment Objective	AO2		
Grade Descriptions	A	C	E
	<p>For AO2, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate thorough understanding of a range of biological processes and concepts; • describe significant trends and patterns shown by complex data presented in tabular or graphical form; • demonstrate safe and skilful practical techniques; • make observations with appropriate precision and record these methodically; • explain and interpret phenomena with few errors and present arguments and evaluations clearly and logically; • apply principles and concepts in familiar and new contexts; • carry out structured calculations with little or no guidance and demonstrate good understanding of the underlying relationships; and • link together appropriate facts, principles and concepts from different areas of the specification. 	<p>For AO2, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate sound understanding of a range of biological processes and concepts; • describe most trends and patterns shown by complex data presented in tabular or graphical form; • demonstrate safe and mostly skilful practical techniques; • make observations with appropriate precision and record them; • explain and interpret phenomena with minor errors and present arguments and evaluations; • apply principles and concepts in familiar and some new contexts; • carry out structured calculations with minimal guidance and demonstrate some understanding of the underlying relationships; and • link together some facts, principles and concepts from different areas of the specification. 	<p>For AO2, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate some understanding of the main biological processes and concepts; • describe and provide a limited explanation of trends or patterns shown by complex data presented in tabular or graphical form; • demonstrate safe practical techniques; • make observations and measurements and record them; • provide basic explanations and interpretations of some phenomena, presenting very limited arguments and evaluations; • apply given principles or concepts in familiar and new contexts involving some steps in the argument; • carry out routine calculations where help is given; and • collate some facts, principles and concepts from different areas of the specification.

Assessment Objective	AO2		
AO2 Evidence	Grade A Key Features	Grade C Key Features	Grade E Key Features
<p>AO2 is assessed in all A2 assessment units. AO2 questions typically involve the application of knowledge and understanding. Applied knowledge involves using knowledge and understanding to answer questions set in an unfamiliar context. Calculations, the use of statistics and other mathematical skills such as reading graph values are AO2, as is the carrying out of practical work (including the interpretation of photographs). Command terms such as 'explain' and 'suggest' are often used in AO2 questions.</p> <p>Sources of AO2 evidence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCEA Assessment resource • CCEA past paper questions on all units • Mock examinations • Class tests, homework and other appropriate evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates demonstrate excellent application of knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures in a theoretical context, a practical context and when handling quantitative and qualitative data. • Candidates demonstrate a high level of competence when handling and recording data and can describe and explain fully, trends and patterns shown by data in graphs and tables. • Candidates' use of scientific terminology and their application of concepts and principles in an unfamiliar context is excellent. • Candidates demonstrate excellent mathematical skills, including the selection and use of appropriate statistical tests. • Calculations are performed with minimal errors and correct notations are used. • Candidates demonstrate a high level of competence and understanding when bringing together and making connections between areas of knowledge and skills they have explored throughout the course. • Candidates' responses are presented and organised with a high degree of clarity and coherence. • Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a sufficiently high standard and they use a form and style of writing that is appropriate to the complex subject matter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates demonstrate reasonable application of knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures in a theoretical context, a practical context and when handling quantitative and qualitative data. • Candidates demonstrate a satisfactory level of competence when handling and recording data and can describe and explain trends and patterns shown by data in graphs and tables. • Candidates' use of scientific terminology and their application of concepts and principles in an unfamiliar context is satisfactory. • Candidates demonstrate reasonable mathematical skills, including the selection and use of statistical tests. • Calculations are performed with some errors on occasion, with correct notations used. • Candidates demonstrate a reasonable level of competence and understanding when bringing together and making connections between areas of knowledge and skills they have explored throughout the course. • Candidates' responses are presented and organised with a satisfactory degree of clarity and coherence. • Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a satisfactory standard and they use a form and style of writing that is appropriate to the complex subject matter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates demonstrate limited application of knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures in a theoretical context, a practical context and when handling quantitative and qualitative data. • Candidates demonstrate limited competence when handling and recording data and can partially describe and explain trends and patterns shown by data in graphs and tables. • Candidates' use of scientific terminology and their application of concepts and principles in an unfamiliar context is limited. • Candidates demonstrate limited mathematical skills and their use of statistical tests is basic. • Calculations can be incomplete with errors, and correct notations are not always used. • Candidates demonstrate a limited level of competence and understanding when bringing together and making connections between areas of knowledge and skills they have explored throughout the course. • Candidates' responses are presented and organised with a limited clarity and coherence. • Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a limited standard and they use a basic form and style of writing that is sometimes appropriate to the complex subject matter.

Assessment Objective	AO3		
Grade Descriptions	A	C	E
		<p>For AO3, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurately and competently analyse and interpret biological information, issues and viewpoints; • interpret, explain, evaluate and communicate the results of experimental and investigative activities in appropriate contexts; and • reach substantiated and valid conclusions and communicate findings accurately and appropriately to the task. 	<p>For AO3, candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyse and interpret biological information, issues and viewpoints with some degree of accuracy and competence; • interpret, explain, evaluate and communicate the results of experimental and investigative activities in some contexts; and • reach mostly valid conclusions and communicate findings relating to the task.
AO3 Evidence	Grade A Key Features	Grade C Key Features	Grade E Key Features
<p>AO3 is assessed in all A2 assessment units. AO3 questions typically require analysis, interpretation and/or evaluation of biological information. Students can be asked to analyse, interpret or evaluate information provided in tabular, graphical or text form and make judgements and/or reach conclusions.</p> <p>AO3 also includes the interpretation or refinement of practical activities. Command terms such as 'analyse', 'summarise', 'compare and contrast' and 'evaluate' are often</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates' analysis, interpretation and evaluation of scientific information, ideas and evidence are excellent and allow them to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – make judgements and reach valid conclusions; – refine practical design and procedures. • Candidates' responses are presented and organised with a high degree of clarity and coherence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates' analysis, interpretation and evaluation of scientific information, ideas and evidence are reasonable and allow them to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – make some judgements and reach some valid conclusions; – refine some aspects of practical design and procedures. • Candidates' responses are presented and organised with a satisfactory degree of clarity and coherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates' analysis, interpretation and evaluation of scientific information, ideas and evidence are limited and allow them to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – make basic judgements and conclusions; – make basic refinements to practical design and procedures. • Candidates' responses are presented and organised with limited clarity and coherence.

<p>used in AO3 questions.</p> <p>Sources of AO3 evidence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCEA Assessment resource • CCEA past paper questions on all units • Mock examinations • Class tests, homework and other appropriate evidence <p>(Less evidence of AO3 in associated past paper questions/ resources for A23, compared to A21 and A22)</p>			
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Appendix 3

Definitions of Levels of Control

Levels of control for the conditions under which students have completed assessments that are internally marked in school are defined as High, Medium and Limited at GCSE. These definitions also align with the conditions of control for GCE and other CCEA qualifications. In recording the levels of control for evidence to be used in Centre Determined Grades for Summer 2021, the following should be used.

High	<p>The use of resources is tightly prescribed. The centre must ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all students are within direct sight of the teacher/supervisor throughout the session(s); • display materials which might provide assistance are removed or covered; • there is no access to email, the internet or mobile phones; • students complete their work independently; • interaction with other students does not occur; and • no assistance of any description is provided.
Medium	<p>Students do not need to be directly supervised at all times. The use of resources, including the internet, is not tightly prescribed. Centres should ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is sufficient evidence to ensure that the individual work can be authenticated; and • the work an individual student submits for assessment is their own. <p>If work has been completed in groups, teachers must ensure that they can determine and assess the individual student's contribution to the work.</p> <p>If work has been completed remotely, it may be useful to ask questions about what they did and how/why they did it, to help authenticate the work.</p>
Limited	<p>Work is completed without any direct supervision and would not normally contribute to assessable outcomes.</p>



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