

GCSE  
Student Guide  
**Agriculture and Land Use**

For first teaching from September 2013

For first award in Summer 2014

For first overall award of GCSE in Summer 2015

agri  
culture  
and  
land use



# Student Guide: **Agriculture and Land Use**

Studying GCSE Agriculture and Land Use develops your knowledge, understanding and skills through practical demonstration. You don't need any previous experience in agriculture, but you may find such experience useful.

## Q. Why study Agriculture and Land Use?

Northern Ireland has a strong rural tradition. Almost 75 percent of land here is used for agricultural purposes. The agri-food industry contributes hugely to the local economy, representing employment for around 50,000 people in farms and factories and the agri-food sector.

Studying this course will help you to:

- develop your scientific knowledge in relevant, enjoyable and work-based contexts;
- appreciate how knowledge of science can enhance productivity in the land-based and agricultural sector;
- develop your awareness of complex relationships between humans and the environment in which they engage in agricultural activity;
- acquire core knowledge about the land-based and agricultural sector and the skills needed to work in it;
- develop a critical and analytical approach to problem solving in the context of work-related scenarios; and
- make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career choices in the land-based and agricultural sector.

## Q. What will I study?

This course has three units.

Unit	Areas of Study	Unit	Areas of Study
<b>Unit 1: Soils, Crops and Habitats</b>	In this unit, you will gain an understanding of plants and recognise their key role in the food chain. You will also explore the diverse types of farming employed across Northern Ireland and the impact that a range of factors has on the production systems used. Finally, you will analyse the impact agricultural practices have on the natural environment and consider how modern farming can limit this impact, while enhancing biodiversity and promoting sustainability. You will be able to apply your knowledge and understanding to a realistic context through practical work.	<b>Unit 2: Animals on the Land</b>	This unit focuses on the key aspects of cow, sheep, pig and poultry husbandry, including health, welfare and breeding. You will explore how decisions, for example about breeding and feeding, affect farm profitability. You will learn how farming is responding to increasing environmental concerns about land use and consider aspects of sustainability at farm level, including farm diversification.  Through practical work, you will be able to apply your knowledge and understanding to a realistic context.



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Unit	Areas of Study
<b>Unit 3: Controlled Assessment Contemporary Issues in Agriculture and Land Use</b>	<p>In this unit, you will carry out two tasks. Task 1 is a practical investigation. Task 2 is a research project into topics relevant to contemporary issues in Agriculture and Land Use.</p> <p>You must select one task from a choice of three Task 1 titles and one task from three Task 2 titles that we provide.</p> <p>We recommend that you spend no more than a total of 45 hours on the controlled assessment tasks.</p>

### Q. How will I be assessed?

Unit	Assessment	Weightings	Availability
<b>Unit 1: Soils, Crops and Habitats</b>	<p>This unit is a written examination that lasts 1 hr 15mins.</p> <p>The exam consists of a number of compulsory structured questions that give you opportunities to respond with short answers, extended writing and calculations.</p>	20%	Every Summer (beginning in 2014)
<b>Unit 2: Animals on the Land</b>	<p>This unit is a written examination that lasts 1 hr 15mins.</p> <p>The exam consists of a number of compulsory structured questions that give you opportunities to respond with short answers, extended writing and calculations. s.</p>	20%	Every Summer (beginning in 2014)
<b>Unit 3: Controlled Assessment Contemporary Issues in Agriculture and Land Use</b>	<p>This unit is a controlled assessment. It is worth 60% of the total marks.</p> <p>You complete <b>two</b> controlled assessment tasks that we set every year:</p> <p>Practical Investigation Task 20% and Research Project 40%</p> <p>Teachers mark the tasks and we moderate the results.</p> <p>You can only take this unit at the end of the course.</p>	60%	Every Summer (beginning in 2015)

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## How can I find out more?

There are a number of ways that you can find out more about studying Agriculture and Land Use.

These include:

- Teachers at your school or college
- Careers advisor
- UCAS ([www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)) or CAO ([www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)) for details on entry requirements for university courses.

To view the full specification and the full range of support material available for GCE Agriculture and Land Use, please visit the Agriculture and Land Use micro-site ([www.ccea.org.uk/agriculture\\_and\\_land\\_use](http://www.ccea.org.uk/agriculture_and_land_use))

