



New GCSE Science A Guide for Parents

Choosing your Options

To support a revised Key Stage 4 (14-16) programme of study, there will be a new range of GCSE Science courses and qualifications starting from September 2006.

These place more emphasis on 'How Science Works', which means not just learning theory but understanding the practical side of science and its relation to the world in which we live.

AQA has developed a suite of GCSE qualifications which provides students with a choice of routes, depending on their abilities, their intended post-GCSE choices and their preference for vocational or academic study.



For more information visit the AQA Website at www.aqa.org.uk and click on the New GCSE Science Curriculum link.

GCSE SCIENCE ROUTES

Key Stage 3

GCSE Science:

- A (multiple-choice papers)
- B (written papers)

Covers the science core of biology, chemistry and physics

GCSE Additional Science

More biology, chemistry and physics
Makes up a second GCSE in Science

GCSE Additional Applied Science

The vocational option for a second GCSE in Science
Covers content such as food, forensics, sport

GCSE(s) Biology, Chemistry, Physics

GCSE Biology

Covers the science core in biology, then builds on more depth and breadth

GCSE Chemistry

Covers the science core in chemistry, then builds on more depth and breadth

GCSE Physics

Covers the science core in physics, then builds on more depth and breadth

GCSE Applied Science (double award)

Two GCSEs

A vocational option

Covers the science core and extends into practical applications of science, relating to society and to the workplace

Post-GCSE courses, including A Levels and vocational qualifications

'Questions you may have'

What benefits will the new courses offer?

Whatever your son or daughter wants to do post-GCSE, AQA's new science specifications are designed so that all students, regardless of ability, gain a good grounding in science. They are also an excellent preparation for A Level work.



Which science qualifications will my son/daughter's school offer?

AQA now has a wide range of GCSE science qualifications available to schools. This will allow every school to offer those courses and qualifications which suit its resources as well as the abilities/preferences of its students. Your son/daughter's school will be able to advise you on the most suitable courses from those available.



What about coursework?

The coursework in AQA's science qualifications is changing. New arrangements will allow practical and investigative work to be more stimulating, absorbing and creative. In some routes, this will be assessed by a classroom test set by AQA. In others, students will produce a report on a major investigation they have carried out. New guidelines on how much support parents may give their son or daughter will be available later this year.



Can students re-sit an exam, to try to get a better result?

Yes, there is no AQA limit on the number of re-sits.



What learning resources are available?

Various publishers are developing resources for AQA's GCSE sciences. The AQA science team has worked closely with one of them, Nelson Thornes, who are producing a range of printed and electronic materials. These will be of high quality and an excellent match to AQA's qualifications. They are available from April 2006.