

NOTICE TO CENTRES

FAO: Examination Officer and Head of Science

Date: 30 March 2009

Subject: GCSE Twenty First Century Science Suite: Changes to assessment model from January 2010

Advance Notice to Teachers of Twenty First Century Science

Following a review of the Twenty First Century Science assessment model, changes have been made to the 'objective style' question papers. These changes have been approved by the QCA and will be applied to all objective style papers from, and including, **January 2010**:

- Science A: Unit 1 – A211; Unit 2 – A212; Unit 3 – A213
- Additional Science A: Unit 1 – A215; Unit 2 – A216; Unit 3 – A217
- Biology A: Unit 1 – A221; Unit 2 – A222
- Chemistry A: Unit 1 – A321; Unit 2 – A322
- Physics A: Unit 1 – A331; Unit 2 – A332.

The changes only affect the style of the questions included in these papers. There are no changes to:

- the units and modules assessed
- the balance of assessment between AO1, AO2, and AO3
- the balance between 'Ideas about Science' and 'Science Explanations'.

No changes are being made to the 'Ideas in Context' papers (Science A: Unit 4 – A214; Additional Science A: Unit 4 – A218; Biology A: Unit 3 – A223; Chemistry A: Unit 3 – A323; Physics A: Unit 3 – A333).

There are also no changes to the papers for Additional Applied Science A (J632).

NEW ASSESSMENT MODEL

Up to, and including, June 2009, the current model for the objective style question papers will continue to be used. In these papers, all questions currently require objective responses: candidates select from a defined set of alternative responses or provide a short answer which is expected to be clear and unambiguous.

From, and including, January 2010 a new style of question will be introduced to these papers. While the majority of questions will continue to be objective, following the current format, a number of questions on both Foundation and Higher tiers will be open-ended, requiring candidates to provide longer written answers without selecting from a set of alternatives. Each of these responses will be worth from 1 to 4 marks, providing candidates with opportunities to organise information, develop arguments, analyse and evaluate.

The papers affected all carry 42 marks. These open-ended questions will in total carry 12-14 marks of those available, with the remaining 28-30 marks continuing to be assessed with objective style questions.

New specimen assessment materials for these papers have been developed and are awaiting approval by QCA. As soon as they have been approved, centres will be informed with a further 'Notice to Centres' and the papers will be made available on the OCR website (www.ocr.org.uk). At the same time, revised specifications will be published to reflect these changes. No other significant changes have been made to the specifications, but a small number of minor corrections and clarifications will be included and highlighted at the time of publication.

Any enquiry about this notice should be referred to the OCR Customer Contact Centre, (01223 553998), OCR, 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU.