

GCE



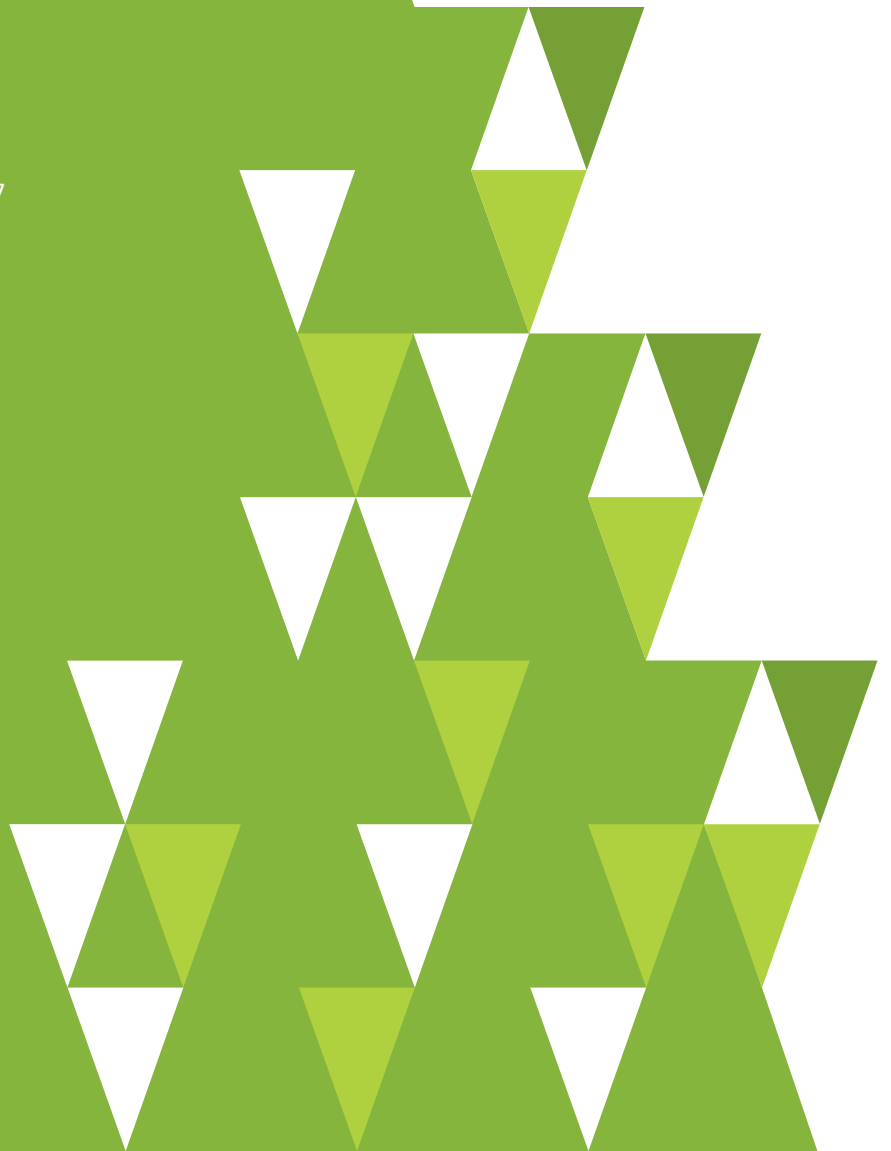
Rewarding Learning

Revised GCE
Biology

Student Guidance

AS Papers

For first teaching from September 2017



AS Papers:

Length of exams and total marks awarded in AS papers

The total length of and total marks awarded in each of the AS papers is shown in the table below:

	Total length	Total marks
AS1 Molecules and Cells	1 hour 30 mins	75 marks
AS2 Organisms and Biodiversity	1 hour 30 mins	75 marks
AS3 Practical Skills in AS Biology	1 hour	50 marks

AS Papers and Assessment Objectives

There are three assessment objectives that need to be assessed.

AO1 – demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures.

AO2 – apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures:

- 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:

- make judgements and reach conclusions; and
- develop and refine practical design and procedures.

The balance of AOs in the three AS papers is as shown in the table below.

	Marks			
	AO1	AO2	AO3	Total
AS1 Molecules and Cells	26-30	30-34	16-20	75
AS2 Organisms and Biodiversity	26-30	30-34	16-20	75
AS3 Practical Skills in AS Biology	17-20	20-22	9-11	50

How do examiners assess the three Assessment Objectives at AS?

AO1 (demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures)

- A variety of **question types** including table completion, completing a passage by inserting appropriate words in the blanks, definitions, describing practical techniques, labelling diagrams, essays and longer questions involving recall of required knowledge;
- Typical **command terms** for AO1 include; define, label, describe, identify, name, state.

AO2 (apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures)

- A variety of **question types** including comprehensions, calculations, interpreting photographs, drawing graphs and tables, drawing block diagrams, identifying variables to be controlled in investigations, applying biological knowledge and understanding in unfamiliar contexts;
- Typical **command terms** for AO2 include; explain, suggest, draw, discuss, compare and contrast, calculate, distinguish between, summarise.

AO3 (analyse, interpret and evaluate scientific information, ideas and evidence)

- A variety of **question types** including comprehensions, the interpretation of tabular and / or graphical data, analysing non-familiar scientific investigations, identifying trends, summarising information, suggesting improvements to practical and other investigations;
- Typical **command terms** for AO3 include; comment on, compare and contrast, analyse, evaluate, give arguments for and against.

The structure of AS papers

AS1 and AS2 – Six to eight structured questions (Section A) and an essay – question(s) requiring extended prose in which quality of written communication (QWC) will be assessed (Section B). The ‘essay’ can be set as one fifteen-mark question, or as one nine-mark question and one six-mark question.

AS3 – Seven to ten structured questions.

Other sources of information:

- The CCEA specification for GCE Biology – all students should be familiar with this document; this includes the course content but also other guidance including, for example, Section 4.7: Mathematical skills
- Glossary of terms in ‘A’ level Biology
- Graphical techniques
- Practical Guidance Booklet – Practical Skills in AS Biology AS3
- Past papers and mark schemes
- Chief Examiner’s reports
- Commentaries on exemplar answers in past AS papers Textbooks and Revision Guides linked to the specification
- CCEA E-books