

## BACKGROUND TO THE REVISION PROCESS

During the Revision of Specifications process, we consulted our stakeholders through:

- Questionnaires
- Focus Group meetings
- Subject Advisory Team meetings.

We have drawn up this revised specification with the help of:

- Teachers and Heads of Departments in post-primary schools;
- Lecturers in Institutes of Further and Higher Education;
- Representatives from Employer Committees;
- Members of Subject Associations;
- Subject experts from Education and Library Boards; and
- Specialists from our Curriculum Development Teams.



Go to [www.ccea.org.uk/specifications](http://www.ccea.org.uk/specifications) to download the full GCE Biology AS & A2 Specification

# biology

## GETTING STARTED

Whether you already teach our existing GCE Biology specification, teach a similar specification with another awarding body, or are considering offering this for the first time, getting started with our revised specification really couldn't be easier:



Visit [www.ccea.org.uk/specifications](http://www.ccea.org.uk/specifications) to view the full revised specification for your subject.



Attend the next available support event. Go online for our up-to-date events schedule.

Go to [www.ccea.org.uk/specifications](http://www.ccea.org.uk/specifications) to download the full GCE Biology AS & A2 Specification

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## CONTACT US NOW

### Subject Officer

**Dr Robert Maguire**

Tel: (028) 9026 1433

Email: [rmaguire@ccea.org.uk](mailto:rmaguire@ccea.org.uk)

### For queries in relation to:

Specification content

Subject-specific issues

Interpretation of exemplar

papers & other materials

### Specification Support Officer

**Catriona Skelton**

Tel: (028) 9026 1200 ext 2292

Email: [cskelton@ccea.org.uk](mailto:cskelton@ccea.org.uk)

### For queries in relation to:

Requesting a meeting

Requesting further support

General subject-specific

queries

### Entries, Results and Certification Team

**Nicola Laight**

Tel: (028) 9026 1262 or ext 2392

Email: [nlaight@ccea.org.uk](mailto:nlaight@ccea.org.uk)

### For queries in relation to:

Entries

Results

### Distribution Team

**Bernard Trainor**

Tel: (028) 9026 1200 ext 2168

Email: [btrainor@ccea.org.uk](mailto:btrainor@ccea.org.uk)

### For queries in relation to:

Requesting materials



**WHATEVER YOUR QUERY, WE GUARANTEE YOU A PROMPT, FRIENDLY AND EFFICIENT SERVICE WHEN YOU CONTACT US**

Check out our online leaflet *Customer Charter – Putting You First* at [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk) to view our service targets and our commitment to you.

"I'm really pleased to introduce this revised specification. We have designed it to meet the needs of learners in Northern Ireland whilst also providing a qualification that has international currency. We're proud to be your local awarding body. It is my priority to ensure that our dedicated subject team listens, responds and provides you with a first-class service."

**Anne Marie Duffy – Examinations Manager, CCEA**

"I'm delighted to provide robust operational systems that support all aspects of examination administration. Whether you are making entries, have a query about examinations or require assistance in relation to results, I can assure you that our specialised systems and customer-focused teams will provide you with the top-class level of service you expect."

**Martin Quinn – Business Manager, Examination and Assessment Administration, CCEA**

## WHAT TEACHERS SAY ABOUT OUR EXAMINATIONS SERVICE...

**98.9%** of teachers are satisfied with the support and helpfulness of our staff.

**95.5%** of teachers are satisfied with the reliability and appropriateness of the materials we dispatch.

**98.9%** of teachers are satisfied with our administration of examinations.

\* Source: CCEA's 2006 Post-Primary Customer Satisfaction Research



## REVISED GCE AS & A2 SPECIFICATION SNAPSHOT FOR BIOLOGY

For first teaching from September 2008

For first award of AS Level in Summer 2009

For first award of A Level in Summer 2010

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## SUMMARY

- AS 1: **Molecules and Cells** – 1hr 30mins written external exam, 40% of AS, 20% of A Level, available January and Summer
- AS 2: **Organisms and Biodiversity** – 1hr 30mins external exam, 40% of AS, 20% of A Level, available January and Summer
- AS 3: **Assessment of Practical Skills in AS Biology** – 20% of AS, 10% of A Level, available Summer only
- A2 1: **Physiology and Ecosystems** – 2hr written external exam, 40% of A2, 20% of A Level, available January and Summer
- A2 2: **Biochemistry, Genetics and Evolutionary Trends** – 2hr written external exam, 40% of A2, 20% of A Level, available Summer only
- A2 3: **Assessment of Investigation and Practical Skills in Biology** – 20% of A2, 10% of A Level, available Summer only

## KEY FEATURES

- Requires that students spend only 7 hours total in written examinations
- Stretches and challenges A2 students through more testing and less-structured questions
- Offers valuable preparation for entering higher education courses in Biology and related subjects
- Provides a Northern Ireland perspective

## BENEFITS TO LEARNERS

We have designed this specification to help learners develop:

- Interest in and enthusiasm for the subject and for further study and careers in related areas;
- An appreciation of how scientific decisions are made and how the sciences contribute to the success of the economy and society;
- A deeper understanding of how science works; and
- Knowledge and understanding of different areas of the subject and how they relate to each other.

CURRENT		NEW		WHAT HAS CHANGED AND WHY?	
MODULE	TITLE	UNIT	TITLE	WHAT HAS CHANGED?	WHY HAS IT CHANGED?
AS 1	Cell Biology	AS 1	Molecules and Cells	Mitosis and meiosis are now both in AS 1.  We've increased the time permitted for the external assessment from 1 hour to 1 ½ hours. The unit is now worth 40% of the AS award and 20% of the A Level award.	To provide students with a clearer understanding of the differences between the two  To allow students more time during the exam to answer questions that cover the required content within the unit
AS 2	Physiology and Ecology	AS 2	Organisms and Biodiversity	Along with The Adaptation of Organisms, AS 2 now covers The Variety of Life and the Human Impact on Biodiversity.  We've increased the time permitted for the external assessment from 1 hour to 1½ hours. The unit is now worth 40% of the AS award and 20% of the A Level award.	To give pupils a more contained and fluid learning experience of the concepts of species and taxonomy in biodiversity  To allow students more time during the exam to answer questions that cover the required content within the unit
AS 3 A	Practical Processes	AS 3	Assessment of Practical Skills in AS Biology	The written test is no longer an option in AS 3. Only an internal assessment consisting of two practical tasks is offered in this unit. The assessment is worth 20% of the AS award and 10% of the A Level award.	To fulfil subject criteria requirements, which do not allow for a split unit and also require an internally assessed unit at AS
AS 3 B	Teacher-Assessed Coursework			There is no longer an AS 3 B unit. The practical tasks from this unit are now part of the new AS 3 as noted above.  It has been agreed that the current method of assessing practical skills needs no changes.	To fulfil subject criteria requirements, which do not allow for a split unit and also require an internally assessed unit at AS
A2 1	Co-ordination, Biochemistry and Environment	A2 1	Physiology and Ecosystems	As part of the Ecosystems topic students can now study the Adverse Affect of Human Activity on the Environment, which includes Northern Ireland perspectives.  We've increased the time permitted for the external assessment from 1½ hours to 2 hours. The unit is now worth 20% of the A Level award.	To provide students with a local awareness of the issues and an appreciation of their own environment  To allow students more time during the exam to answer questions that cover the required content within the unit
A2 2	Reproduction, Genetics and Taxonomic Diversity	A2 2	Biochemistry, Genetics and Evolutionary Trends	We have removed Reproductive Technology and included DNA as the genetic code.  We've increased the time permitted for the external assessment from 1½ hours to 2 hours. The unit is now worth 20% of the A Level award.	To provide students with a greater understanding and appreciation of Genetics  To allow students more time during the exam to answer questions that cover the required content within the unit
A2 3 A	Synoptic Paper	A2 3	Assessment of Investigation and Practical Skills in Biology	The written test is no longer an option in A2 3. Only an internal assessment consisting a practical investigation is offered in this unit. The assessment is worth 10% of the A Level award.	To fulfil subject criteria requirements, which do not allow for a split unit and also require an internally assessed unit at A2
A2 3 B	Teacher-Assessed Practical Investigation			There is no longer an A2 3 B unit. The practical investigation from this unit is now part of the new A2 3 as noted above.  It has been agreed that the practical investigation will remain with no changes to expectations.	To fulfil subject criteria requirements, which do not allow for a split unit and also require an internally assessed unit at A2

## COUNT ON US FOR SUPPORT...

### LOCAL SUPPORT > IN PERSON

- We are your **local awarding body**, so we can provide personalised support and visits to you and your centre upon request. Contact the Specification Support Officer named overleaf if you would like to arrange for us to visit you, your department or your students.
- If you have a query or require advice/guidance, please contact the relevant person listed overleaf.

### LOCAL SUPPORT > AT TEACHER-FOCUSED EVENTS

We provide a comprehensive programme of events to support this specification which includes:

- FREE launch events** to introduce you to the revised specification; and
- FREE seminars** to support its teaching and assessment and to assist you with subject-specific issues.

We will mail invitations to Heads of Department at least three weeks in advance of each event. Alternatively, check out our full list of support events online at [www.ccea.org.uk/spec-changes](http://www.ccea.org.uk/spec-changes)

### SUPPORT > ONLINE

Most of the support we provide will be available on your subject microsite. The site will contain:

- The latest version of the GCE Biology specification;
- Schemes of Work;
- Chief Examiner's Reports with top tips for improving examination performance;
- Exemplar Papers and Mark Schemes; and
- Exemplification of Standards (available after the first examination series).

Visit your subject microsite by logging on to [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk) and selecting it from the dropdown menu.

### SUPPORT > IN PRINT

Some of the materials listed above are also available in print. To find out which materials and publications are currently available for your subject:

- Contact Bernard Trainor in our Distribution Team on (028) 9026 1200 ext 2168; or
- Go to [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk) to view our *Examination and Assessment Sales Catalogue*.

**CONTACT US IF YOU DON'T FIND WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR**

