

Biology AS/A level

Introduction

Biology is a popular choice amongst students aiming for science based careers such as medicine, physiotherapy or pharmacy. Other students aim to specialise in biology at university or take the subject as a valuable complement to their other studies. Biologists are very employable as they develop many skills in practical work, numeracy and written communication.

Year 1

The AS qualification is divided into 3 units.

Unit 1 is examined in January and covers a range of topics including cell structure, cell division, tissues and organs, including the heart and lungs.

In the first term we also focus on developing the practical and numeracy skills that underpin the whole course.

Unit 2 is examined in June and topics include biological molecules, DNA, enzymes, diet and food production. You will also learn about the global impact of diseases such as HIV and malaria and how the body defends itself against disease.

Unit 3 covers the coursework component of the AS qualification and assesses practical and analytical skills. Coursework will be carried out in the Autumn and Spring terms.

After the June exams, students will return to college and begin A2 work.

Year 2

The A2 syllabus is again divided into 3 separate units.

Unit 4 will be examined in January and covers topics such as nerves, hormones and the biochemistry of photosynthesis and respiration. You will learn about blood glucose regulation and diabetes and explore the functions of the liver and kidney.

Unit 5 is examined in June and topic areas include protein synthesis, genetics, ecology, cloning in plants and animals, biotechnology, the brain and aspects of animal behaviour.

Unit 6 covers the A2 coursework requirement and assesses practical and analytical skills acquired during the A2 year.

Assessment

Year 1

The coursework counts for 20% of the AS award.

There is one 1hr exam in January and one 1³/₄hr exam in June

Year 2

The coursework counts for 10% of the A level grade.

There is one 1hr exam in January and one 1³/₄hr exam in June

Specific Entry Criteria

A minimum of a grade C in the Core and a grade B in the Additional Science or grade C in Biology and Chemistry.