

Important guidance on achieving better results with your GCE Biology

Welcome back! Last term, we sent you a letter entitled 'Let us help you get better results with your GCE Biology' with a copy of the GCE 2008 - Centre Guidance Document. We appreciate your completing the questionnaire and congratulations to the 4 lucky winners who received their £50 M&S vouchers just in time for Christmas.

If you did not receive a copy of the letter, you can access the letter via <http://www.edexcel.com/notices/Pages/let-bio.aspx>

Key Dates

Key dates for GCE Biology 2008/2009 have been extracted from the Edexcel Information Manual into a one page document that can be downloaded from the GCE Biology homepage.

Unit 3: Practical Biology and Research Skills

"Core Practical" Record Sheets

The centre guidance document we sent in November gives details of procedures to be followed for Unit 3 and Unit 6 for the new GCE Biology. If you've not received one, it can be downloaded from the GCE Biology homepage via <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gce/gce08/biology/Pages/default.aspx>

Please remember that a Record Sheet should be completed for each student. Record sheets can be downloaded from the GCE Biology homepage via <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gce/gce08/biology/Pages/default.aspx>. The document is called "Record Sheet for AS Biology Unit 3".

Some centres are planning to assess all six practical skills during each core practical. Other centres are planning to focus on observing only one skill for each core practical e.g. (a)(ii) when doing the *Daphnia* core practical: this is easier as teachers only have to observe one skill, rather than try and look out for all three! **Both approaches are acceptable** as long as you get at least one tick for each of the six practical skills.

The last three skills (b)(ii), (c)(i) and (c)(ii) can be assessed "at leisure" from the candidate's write-up, rather than from lesson observation.

Please remember that:

- (i) there are **no marks** available for the practical skills, the idea of this section being worth 6 marks disappeared after Issue 1 of the specification. (see information on 'Issue 3 Specification' below)
- (ii) the Record Sheets should be submitted with the Visit or Issue Report.
- (iii) **no** practical work should be submitted to Edexcel as evidence. Candidates should retain their practical write-ups to aid their revision.

The Visit or Issue Report

Please use the Tutor Support Materials on the GCE Biology homepage to help you prepare candidates for the Visit or Issue Report and to help you assess it. This includes a document aimed at students to help them understand the criteria on which they will be assessed.

Some of these documents (marked with an orange diamond) are secure documents - you need your Edexcel Online password to access these. If you're having difficulties accessing secure documents, there is help here: <http://www.edexcel.com/notices/Pages/securecontent-bcp.aspx>

Entry and Submission

Remember that there are two options for your Visit or Issue Reports:

- Option A: centre assessed, moderated by Edexcel (i.e. you mark it)
- Option B: externally assessed (i.e. we mark it).

Please make sure that you enter for the correct Option - the entry deadline is 21st March 2009.

Please note that - for **both entry Options** - the submission date for your moderation sample or complete sample for marking is 15th May 2009.

Consultancy Service

Don't forget that until 31st March you can submit up to three examples of your Visit or Issue Reports to us for comments. Details of this service are also on the GCE Biology homepage.

Issue 3 Specification /eSpec

It has come to our attention that a small number of centres are still using the original version of the specification (the original version has "September 2007" printed very clearly on the front). A copy of the new specification (Issue 3) was sent in the post in May 2008. Please check that you are using the most up-to-date version of the specification. You can download it from <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gce/gce08/biology/Pages/default.aspx>
The update of the eSpec was completed before Christmas and should be on the website very soon.

External Assessment

The January 2009 exam papers for 6BI01 and 6BI02 are now available on the website. June 2008 exam series past papers and mark schemes can be downloaded for FREE from the secure section of the website, using your Edexcel Online password via <http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/ms-summer08.aspx>. Older Past papers are usually available for free download via <http://www.edexcel.com/notices/Pages/pp3years.aspx>. Paper copies of all past papers and marks schemes are available through our Publications Department for a small fee. Examiners' reports are always posted on the website and may be downloaded free of charge.

If you have any questions relating to External Assessment, please email our Qualification Delivery and Award Manager ScienceSubjectAdvisor@edexcelexperts.co.uk who will be able to deal with your questions.

INSET Training

Due to high demand we have organised a series of additional training events for the spring term.

GCE 08 Biology: Internal Assessment in AS and A2

These events are full day events and will focus on the internal assessed unit 3 and 6 and can count as up to 5 hours of CPD. for more information and to book a place on the course, see on the website

Date	Course Code	Title	Location
03/03/2009	8NSP01/07	GCE 08 Biology: Internal Assessment in AS and A2	Leeds
24/02/2009	8NSP01/09	GCE 08 Biology: Internal Assessment in AS and A2	London
05/03/2009	8NSP01/10	GCE 08 Biology: Internal Assessment in AS and A2	Birmingham
03/03/2009	8NSP01/11	GCE 08 Biology: Internal Assessment in AS and A2	Bristol

We have also organised an online training event to help you prepare for and mark the Visit or Issue Report. The chief examiner for Biology who is also the principal examiner for unit 3, Dr John Dunkerton will be your trainer at this event.

Date and Time	Event	Code
Wed 25 th Feb 09 16:00 - 17.30	GCE 2008 Biology: Preparing students for Unit3 – Research Skills, the Visit/ Issue Report	8OSM08/01

For more details about this event visit www.edexcel.org.uk/training or to book a place, email trainingbookings@edexcel.org.uk

Great resources for AS and A2

Pearson Longman are gearing up to publish their new books (both the green concept approach and the orange context “SNAB” approach) to support A2, all A2 publications are on track for a May 2009 release; They are also working on a revision guide for AS Biology. Further updates will appear on their website: <http://www.longman.co.uk>.

If you’re looking for a question bank in order to set homework questions for your students, then try our new Exam Wizard for GCE Biology. You may have already had details of the new Exam Wizard last November. If not, please go to <http://examwizard.testbase.co.uk/sec/pindex.asp>, and look at the Issue 12 newsletter.

Centres teaching GCE Biology using the context led approach can access useful information and resources on the SNAB project website www.advancedbiology.org. You can also join the SNAB teachers google group via <http://groups.google.com/group/snab-teachers>, teachers using the concept approach can also find relevant information on the google group.

Support Services

Support	Description	Contact
Subject Advisor	Get your questions on implementing the specification answered by an Edexcel science specialist.	Call 0844 576 0037 or email ScienceSubjectAdvisor@edexcel.co.uk
Ask the Expert	Provides direct contact to a senior examiner for biology so you can ask questions on units and topics and get an authoritative answer. To get a fast response to your question, please identify the unit and topic in the subject box of your email.	Email gcebiology@edexcel.co.uk
Ask Edexcel	Queries on the general administration of the specification can be found on via Ask Edexcel this includes information on entries and submitting coursework	http://www.edexcel.com/askedexcel
SNAB Project Team	Teachers using the context led approach (SNAB) approach can find helpful guidance, resources and support on this website	www.advancedbiology.org
Edexcel Online Helpdesk	For help with enquires about online services including Edexcel online and Results plus	Call 0844 576 0024
Biology subject page on Edexcel.com	The new website www.edexcel.com have subject specific pages where you can access all the information you need to implement the specification	http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gce/gce08/biology/Pages/default.aspx