

VERY IMPORTANT – PLEASE RETAIN

15th September 2021

Dear Y10 Parent/Carer,

I am writing to provide you with key information regarding your child's double science GCSE. I know that parents want to support their children but sometimes feel left out of the loop. Hopefully this communication will assist you in that process.

Double Award Science

The specification (what many parents would call the 'syllabus') lists all the topics and learning objectives that a student must cover during their entire GCSE course. The new 9-1 specification has been updated substantially and includes more content and more challenging subject content than the old specification. Simply put, the GCSEs are more demanding than before. As a result the grade boundaries are lower than previously, which means that students can get a high grade with a relatively modest percentage mark.

Double Award Science (also known as '**Combined Science**') is where students study all three sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) but end up with *two* GCSEs. Many GCSE students in England follow the Double Award course, which covers approximately two thirds of the content covered by Triple Science students. They are awarded *two* GCSE grades based on their overall performance across *all three* science subjects.

This system was introduced in 2006. It can cause confusion because, when parents were at school, "Double Science" meant two of the three science subjects. The exam board is AQA and *they* call the Combined Science – GCSE Combined Science Trilogy (not to be confused with triple science!). The code is 8464.

Exam papers, duration, content

All Combined Science GCSE students take a total of **six** papers, two for each subject, as follows:

- Biology (*Paper 1*) Summer 2023
- Biology (*Paper 2*) Summer 2023
- Chemistry (*Paper 1*) Summer 2023
- Chemistry (*Paper 2*) Summer 2023
- Physics (*Paper 1*) Summer 2023
- Physics (*Paper 2*) Summer 2023

All exam dates are still to be confirmed. Each Combined Science paper will have a duration of 1h 15m.

Paper 1 and Paper 2 each cover half the content for the subject, with certain topics assigned to each paper.

Paper 1 includes topics studied in Year 10:

Biology (B1 to B9)

Chemistry (C1 to C7)

Physics (P1 to P7)

Paper 2 includes topics studied in Year 11:

Biology (B10-B17)

Chemistry (C8-C12)

Physics (P8-P13)

Highgate Wood School Student Council supports individual action to address the issues of Climate Change and promotes the United Nations top 10 recommendations.



5-minute
showers



Drive
less



Lights
off



Local
produce



Recycle



Meat-free
meals



Zero-waste
fashion



Unplug



Refill and
reuse



Bring your
own bag

The exams will consist of a mix of question types including multiple choice questions requiring short answers and questions requiring longer, more complex answers. The questions get progressively more difficult as the student works through the exam.

Grade system

Since 2019, the old A*-G scale has been replaced by a new '9-1' scale. A grade 9 is the highest available (and is equivalent to a *high A**). The new "good pass" is considered now to be a grade 5. The graphic below, published by exam regulator Ofqual, compares the old and the new grade scales.

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; text-align: center; margin: 0 20px;"> 4 = C <small>and above</small> </div> <div style="text-align: left;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 4 and above as currently achieve a grade C and above. ■ Broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 7 and above as achieve an A and above. ■ The bottom of grade 1 will be aligned with the bottom of grade G. </div> </div>									
A*		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U

There are two different levels or Tiers of exams students can take, **Foundation** and **Higher**. GCSE Double Award Science students will receive a double grade on a 17-point scale, from 9-9 to 1-1. The grades available for Foundation are 1-1 to 5-5 and the grades for Higher are 4-3 to 9-9. If a student fails to attain the lowest grade, a U is awarded. It is easier to attain a grade 5-5 in the Foundation Tier so, if that is your child's target, then it is likely he/she will be entered for the Foundation Tier. This is generally agreed by the teacher and the student.

In preparation for their GCSE Science exams, Year 10 students will be set a mock paper in June 2022, covering the contents studied in Year 10 (Paper 1), and two mock papers in Year 11 - before the Christmas holidays on Paper 1 content & some Paper 2, and in March on Paper 2 content. Please help your child to prepare for this as though it were the real exam. We will also be setting other exam questions and using our extensive range of revision activities.

Resources

The Textbooks that we use are published by Oxford University Press and have been approved by AQA for use with our qualification. The textbooks can be access electronically at: www.kerboodle.com

Kerboodle provides:

- A range of assessment materials including auto-marked tests, self-assessment checklists and a variety of support materials.
- An extensive bank of learning resources including videos, animations, podcasts, worksheets and digital versions of the textbooks.

Students are provided with Kerboodle login details in Year 9. If there is a problem with login, students are encouraged to contact their science teachers.

Revision guides and workbooks from the publisher can be bought from Dr Ramon, our Lead Science Technician. Workbooks provide a wealth of questions that you can set at home.

Students are expected to use Tassomai (www.tassomai.com) regularly and complete 5 daily goals per week as a part of their science homework. Students will also be set questions from the Kerboodle textbook regularly. Tassomai is an excellent revision tool that enables students to boost their knowledge in areas where they need it most. The algorithm identifies any knowledge gaps and creates a personalised program of content for the student. Regular use of Tassomai greatly reduces the stress of last-minute revision. Instructions of how to log in are uploaded on SMHW.

Here is the link to all documents from the AQA exam board relating to the GCSE:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse>

If you find yourself a bit confused by the many changes to education, this is an excellent general guide to qualifications: <https://www.my-gcsescience.com/9-1-gsce-science-a-guide-for-parents/>

This document provides very useful practical advice on how to support your child through their exams:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/student-and-parent-support/managing-stress>

I hope that this letter has been of use and clarified some questions or concerns you may have. If you need to know anything else, please email me on sst@hws.haringey.sch.uk

Thank you for your time and support

Yours faithfully,

Mira Stoyanova

Mira Stoyanova

Deputy Head of Science