

Subject: Biology	Awarding Body: AQA
Head of Dept: Mr Murray-Smith	Teacher: Mr Murray-Smith

Preferred entry requirements:

Grade 6 or above in GCSE Biology or grade 6-6 or above in Combined Science, with a component breakdown in favour of Biology. A grade 5 in both GCSE Mathematics and English language is also a pre-requisite. Exceptional circumstances are always considered.

Specification Content

A level			
Year 1		Year 2	
1	Biological molecules	5	Energy transfers in and between organisms
2	Cells	6	Organisms respond to changes in their internal and external environments
3	Organisms exchange substances with their environment	7	Genetics, populations, evolution and ecosystems
4	Genetic information, variation and relationships between organisms	8	The control of gene expression

Structure of the course:

The A level qualification will involve the study of eight topics as outlined above. Topics 1-4 will be assessed during a two-hour written paper, which will include short and long answer questions. Topics 5-8 will also be assessed in a two-hour written paper with short and long answer questions and a comprehension question. A third written paper will assess any content from all eight topics and will include critical analysis of experimental data and an essay from a choice of two essay titles. As practical work is at the heart of Biology, students will have numerous opportunities to carry out practicals which support the theory. There are twelve required practical activities which will be assessed on the three written papers and there will also be an endorsement of practical skills, which will be teacher assessed throughout the course. The qualification is linear so students will sit all the A level examinations at the end of the two year course.

Method:

Many of the lessons will be structured with teacher-led discussion and note-taking, but a variety of other teaching methods will be used to ensure that students are actively involved in learning throughout the course and can work independently when required. A range of practical work will be carried out throughout the course to allow development of practical and investigative skills.

Strengths/Skills developed through studying this subject:

Throughout the A level course students learn skills that allow them to communicate using appropriate biological terminology, analyse, criticise, argue and discuss. Practical and investigative skills are developed including the ability to pose and define scientific problems, select appropriate apparatus and methods, analyse and interpret data and evaluate their methodology, evidence and data.

What students do with this qualification:

Many students who study A level Biology go on to study Biological science related courses at University including Medicine, Biochemistry, Biomedical Science, Dentistry, Pharmacology, Physiotherapy, and of course Biology. However, the skills learnt throughout the A level course mean that students tend to be numerate and literate and be able to present information in a variety of different formats. These are invaluable skills for any degree discipline or area of work.