



Robert Swanton
Head of Science Faculty
15th May 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians of Year 9 students,

Re: GCSE Science courses in Year 9, 10 & 11 and expression of interest for Separate Sciences

You will be aware that GCSEs have changed to what might be described as the old 'O' level model. Your children will now **not** have any external GCSEs exams for Science in Year 10 and will **sit all of their exams at the end of Year 11**. This has removed the option to re-sit any exams unless the whole set of exams are sat again in the summer of year 12. There is also **no controlled assessment** element to the course, although there are required practicals, some of which will be assessed in the final exams.

There are two routes that students can follow:

- AQA Double Award called 'Trilogy' (specification code 8464)
- AQA separate sciences: Biology (8461), Chemistry (8462) and Physics (8463).

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/combined-science-trilogy-8464>

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/biology-8461>

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/chemistry-8462>

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/physics-8463>

Students are required to take either the double award course that will give two GCSE grades either the same or one grade apart e.g. 7/7 or 7/8 or to take all three of the Separate Sciences which will be awarded individual grades e.g. 7/8/9. All new GCSE courses are now to be graded from 9 to 1, with 9 being the highest grade. There is **no** option to take only one or two of the Separate courses nor is there a Single Science option, nor a BTEC qualification, or similar.

If students take the Trilogy route, they will have a total of **six** science exam papers to sit; each of one hour fifteen minutes (2 each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics). If they take the Separate Sciences route they will also have six papers but this time each will be one hour forty five minutes long.

Both routes allow access to A levels and University courses that need science as a qualification. The new grade 6 will be the minimum requirement to access Science A levels at Highlands. Any pupil may express a choice of either route though if choosing the Separate sciences they must be prepared for more work at a greater pace. Choosing the Separate sciences allows a pupil who is strong in two disciplines to excel there and not be pulled down by the third (note again however there is not an option to study only 2 of the subjects and exams must be sat in all three)

Pupils may study choose the Separate sciences even with a low target as a Foundation paper option is available.

There is a greatly increased maths content in all these qualifications making up 10% of the Biology, 20% of the Chemistry and 30% of the Physics GCSE in both the Double award and the Separate sciences. In Physics, students will be asked to learn and recall up to 22 formulae. The literacy demands are also much greater than previous GCSEs. As mentioned above pupils will also have to recall 8 practical tasks per qualification.

Pupils studying the Separate Sciences will have an extra 65 minute period a week in Science.

In order to get students onto the appropriate route I would ask that you complete the slip below **expressing interest at this stage in Double award or for the Separate sciences.** Please return to the Science office by Tuesday 4th June 3.30pm. Please note we require a return from all pupils to help us allocate pupils to a course as swiftly as possible. We will consider all expressions of interest and will respond with our professional guidance for your child if required. As such, your expression of interest is not a commitment to follow a certain course, nor is it a commitment from the school to provide both routes, since the Separate Science courses will only run if viable (in this instance this means at least 25 pupils on each year half block).

If you have any initial questions at this stage please email Mr Levinson, the Head of Key Stage 4 Science at levinsona@highlands.enfield.sch.uk.

Please do not rush out to buy text books or revision books. We will offer the opportunity to purchase suitable texts at cost price in the summer term, i.e. below what you will pay in shops.

Yours faithfully

Robert Swanton
Head of Science Faculty

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To be returned to the **Science office by 3.30pm Tuesday 4th June 2019**
I/We wish for

name(s).....

in form(s).....to be considered for (please tick)

i) The Separate Science route.

or

ii) The Combined Science route

We understand the criteria given above will be used to help inform the decision as to the chosen route.