



FAQs for AS and A level Sciences (Biology A, Biology B, Chemistry & Physics)

Summer 2022 exam series

Ofqual have recently published the results of their consultation on the Summer 2022 exam series: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-changes-to-the-assessment-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2022>

The changes that have been made only apply to the Summer 2022 examination series.

Here are some frequently asked questions that should help you understand these changes.

Q1. What changes are taking place for AS and A level Biology A, Biology B, Chemistry & Physics in summer 2022?

- ❖ Written examinations will take place as normal
- ❖ There will be no changes to examination papers, either in content or in duration
- ❖ Advance Information will help support students to target revision for examinations
- ❖ The Practical Endorsement (A level only) will be awarded as normal, but the evidence required to support the award of a Pass grade has been modified.
- ❖ Results will be issued on Thursday 18th August 2022 for AS / A level.

Q2. What are the new requirements for the Practical Endorsement?

To award a Pass for the Practical Endorsement, a student must have:

- ❖ completed sufficient practical activities to have been assessed on all CPAC statements,
- ❖ demonstrated competence routinely and consistently for each CPAC statement.

Note that the requirement for competence to be demonstrated “routinely and consistently” has been reinstated this year. However, students do not have to complete a minimum of 12 practical activities if they can show this competence on a smaller number of activities.

As far as is possible, students should have covered all the techniques and apparatus listed in Appendix 5c of the specification, however a Pass should not be withheld from candidates who narrowly miss out on this requirement.

Q3. What about students who do not meet the new requirements for the Practical Endorsement?

Across the Awarding Bodies, we believe that students who complete a reasonable number of practical activities this year can meet the new requirements, even if very little practical work was undertaken last academic year. You can, of course, supplement the Year 13 practical activities with some from Year 12 to fill gaps in students’ records.

Students who still do not meet the requirements by the summer should be entered as Not Classified.

Q4. What if we cannot do practical work with our students?

Under current guidelines, we believe that practical is possible in schools, but centres are advised to take note of expert guidance from organisations such as CLEAPSS. Where schools have their own internal policies restricting practical work, teachers may wish to highlight to Senior Managers in the school that a Pass in the Endorsement requires sufficient hands-on practical work to have been carried out.



Q5. What is the minimum number of practicals that students must carry out to demonstrate competency in CPAC?

There is no minimum number specified – but it needs to be sufficient to meet the requirements outlined in Q2.

Remember that you are not limited to assessing only the CPAC statements listed on the tracking spreadsheet for each practical – you can assess more, if they are relevant to the practical activity. You can also assess CPAC on any piece of practical work, not just on the practicals that we have highlighted as Core Practical.

Q6. Do we have to cover all the apparatus and techniques?

Ideally, students should cover all the techniques and apparatus listed in Appendix 5c of the specification through their own practical work. Having said that, we would not wish to withhold a Pass grade from a student who had shown competency in all the CPAC statements, but had encountered a small number of apparatus and techniques through observation rather than through direct hands-on experience.

We have mapped the apparatus and techniques to each Core Practical ([Biology A](#), [Biology B](#), [Chemistry](#), [Physics](#)) so that you can select Core Practicals that give maximum coverage of apparatus and techniques, especially if using some Year 12 practicals with Year 13 students.

Q7. Do we have to catch up on any Core Practicals missed last year?

There is no obligation to complete Year 12 practicals with your Year 13 classes. However, some Year 12 practicals may cover key apparatus and techniques; or may give opportunities to select particular CPAC skills, and you may therefore choose to complete some of these with your students.

Note that examinations can still ask about any practical activity, so any practicals that students have missed in terms of lab work should still be covered in theory lessons. Alternatively, you may advise students to follow our Core Practical playlist to learn about any practical activity which they have not undertaken in the laboratory themselves.

Q8. Will we still have a Monitoring Visit in 2021/22?

Yes. This year is the 1st year of Cycle 4 of Monitoring Visits, and visits will take place as normal – although will continue to be remote, rather than face-to-face. Note that Visits will not start until January 2022, so that centres have time to start collecting evidence of CPAC assessment.

Further guidance can be found in the “CPAC guidance and tracking” section of our support pages for each subject (e.g. [here](#) for Biology A)

Q9. Do we still need to submit a CPAC Centre Declaration Form in summer 2022?

Yes. The wording of the Head Teacher Declaration Form has been changed to take account of the new requirements; but the Form will still need to be completed, signed and retained as usual.

Q10. What is Advance Information?

Advance Information will take the form of a pre-release document. This document will list, for each examination paper, the topic areas that form the focus of the examination ie the topics where the majority of the marks are assigned. Advance Information will not assign an exact number of marks to each topic, nor will it give a complete list of every topic assessed in a question paper.

Where possible, the Advance Information will provide some guidance on the practical activities assessed in question papers.



Q11. When will Advance Information be available?

The Ofqual consultation says that the Advance Information will be available by 7th February 2022. If it released in advance of this date, a week's notice will be given.

Note that the date for the release of Advance Information is decided by DfE, and not by individual exam boards.

Q12. How will student work be graded this summer?

Ofqual have already announced that the standard of public exams – ie the grade distribution for students – will return to 2019 levels, rather than continuing the more inflated profile seen in 2020 and 2021. The indication that Ofqual have given is that grade profiles will be more generous than those in 2019, but not as generous as those in 2020.

Q13. What further support and guidance are you providing to support teachers and students this summer?

Each subject web pages has a section, called “Summer 2022 support”, on the Teaching and Learning Materials page. Further support materials will be placed there over the coming weeks and months.

Do also keep looking at our main “COVID-19” link from the homepage, which gives details of all the change and adaptations for this summer as they happen:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/campaigns/pearson-covid-19.html>

Q14. How will these changes affect current Year 12 students who will be sitting A levels in 2022?

All the amendments to the Practical Endorsement and the assessment of students relate only to students taking exams in May / June 2022.

The expectation for your current Year 12 is that exams in 2023 would be back to normal, assuming that there are no significant disruptions to schools in the near future. Therefore, Year 12 students should receive a near-as-normal experience as is possible, including the resumption of practical work.