

AS and A level Biology 2015

A guide to our
new qualifications





AS and A level Biology are changing from September 2015

We promise to provide you with the most up-to-date information on the reforms for 2015 and the support you need to help you prepare for specification change.

This brochure is designed to outline the key changes and explains what they mean for your students. We will show you how we are addressing the new requirements in our new qualifications, and the support available to you.



Key changes to AS and A level from 2015

There are some structural changes to AS and A level Sciences subjects from 2015. The following changes will apply to all exam board specifications:

- **AS will become a stand-alone qualification** – results from AS examinations will not count towards the final A level grade.
- **AS will be a linear qualification** with examinations taking place at the end of the course.
- **A levels will be two-year courses**, with all examinations – covering material learned across both years of the course – taken in the summer of Year 13.
- **Coursework units are being replaced** with a new way to assess practical skills.

What do these changes mean for Biology?

The new subject criteria are designed to help learners keep pace with the world's highest-performing countries, ensuring students have the appropriate foundation to progress to undergraduate study or the workplace.

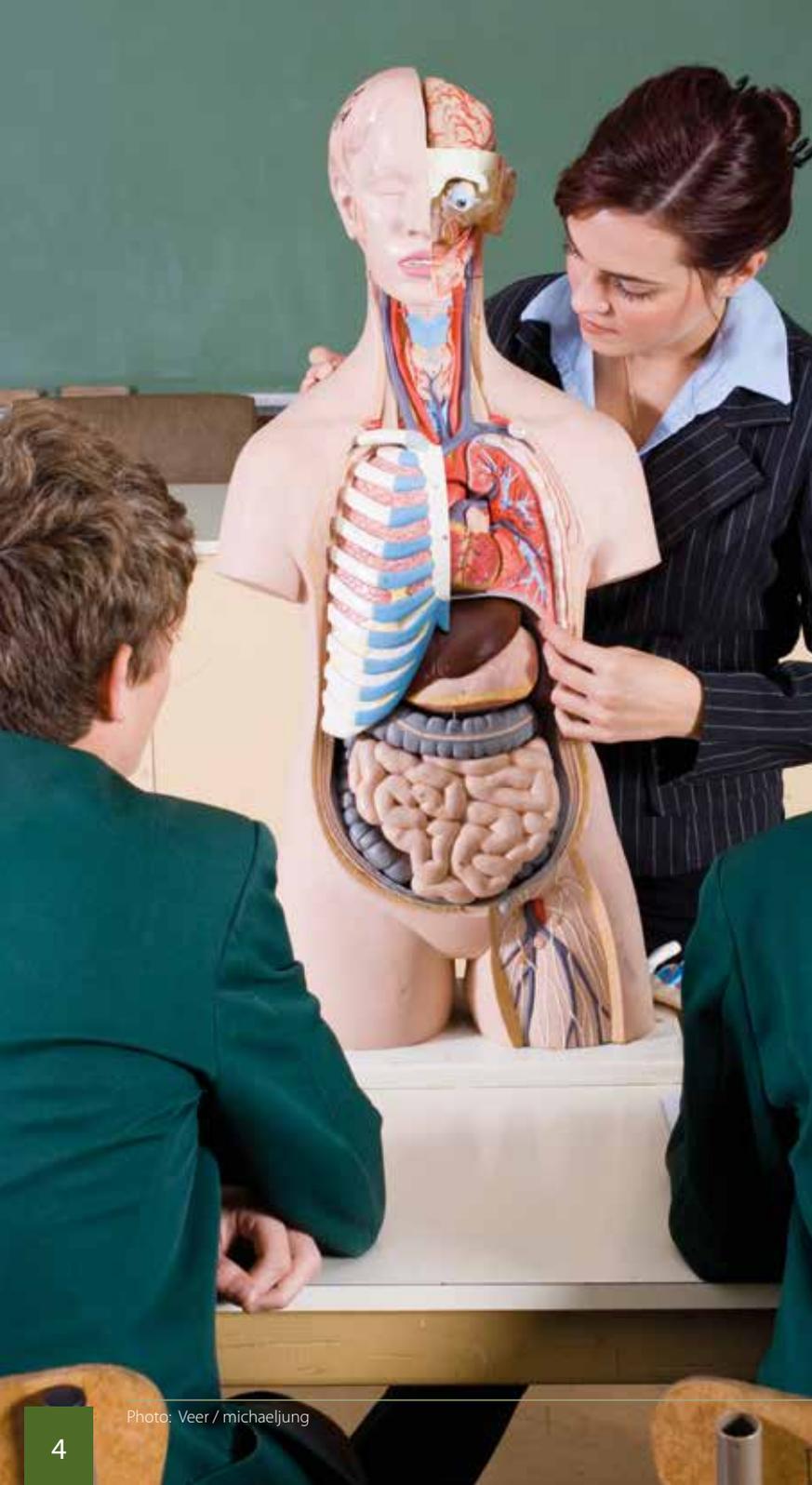
Key changes for AS and A level Biology

- Minor revisions to the subject content, including moving some material into AS which had previously been in A level only.
- Content revised to ensure that it adequately prepares learners for university courses.
- Questions involving the use of mathematical skills in Biology will contribute 10% of the assessment total.
- Coursework removed at AS and A level.
- Question papers will include written assessment of practical skills.
- Assessment of 'practical competency' will be teacher led and reported on separately, to assess the ability of learners.

We've thought hard about these challenges when **structuring our specifications** and **assessments**, and developing our **support materials**. We want to provide an experience that is challenging, inclusive and empowering for **all learners**.

See full details of the changes at
www.edexcel.com/AlevelBiologyGuide





How our AS and A level Biology qualifications address the changes



Our Science team has been working with teachers, subject stakeholders and a range of universities to understand the changes required to provide robust, high-quality qualifications for our learners of the future.

As a result, we are introducing these AS and A level Biology specifications for 2015:

- **AS and A level Biology A (Salters-Nuffield Biology)**
- **AS and A level Biology B (a new Biology A level)**

We are confident our new AS and A level Biology qualifications offer an engaging approach, providing a secure foundation for further study or entry to the workplace.

Co-teachability of AS and A level

Although AS is a stand-alone qualification, the AS content is fully co-teachable with the first year of the A level Biology course, for both specifications.

The information provided is based on Pearson's draft specifications submitted to Ofqual and are subject to change in the final accredited qualifications.





Highlights

- **Clearly-organised specifications with revised content**
 - *Biology A* – SNAB is the original context-based Biology specification, with proven storylines, developed with the University of York. The specification includes biological concepts in highly transferable areas, such as developmental and neurobiology.
 - *Biology B* – A new specification with a broad range of topics chosen to allow progression to a wide range of biological courses at HE: biochemistry and molecular biology, animal and plant physiology, genetics, and microbiology. The specification combines more traditional elements, such as the kidney, with more modern biological ideas such as epigenetics.
- **High-quality assessments designed to give greater consistency**
 - *Biology A* – Question papers similar to current AS and A level, including a pre-release article to develop scientific reading skills and a defined structure for assessment.
 - *Biology B* – Two topic-based question papers to ensure breadth of coverage of theory. A third paper focuses on the assessment of practical skills.
- **A personal, local support promise**
 - In addition to face-to-face training programmes, we are establishing collaborative local networks to provide centres with opportunities to receive more support from us, and each other.
- **Extensive support for planning, delivery and tracking learner progress**
 - We have a comprehensive support package available to support you in delivering our new qualifications. See overleaf for details.
- **Clear guidance and support in the development of practical skills**
 - The specifications contain integrated core practicals, allowing learners to master a range of skills and techniques.

Podcasts

Listen to our Senior Product Manager for Science, Damian Riddle, explain the changes to AS and A level more fully by listening to our podcasts. Visit www.edexcel.com/AlevelBioPodcasts



Find out more at www.edexcel.com/AlevelBiologyGuide

How we're supporting you

We're dedicated to providing the support you need to plan and implement our new Edexcel AS and A level Biology specifications successfully, including:

- **Getting Started guides** – summarising the changes to the qualifications with guidance for planning your teaching and learning.
- **Student and Teacher guides** to support you with mathematical and practical work.
- **Guides for choosing a 'concept' or 'context' approach** – supporting you with making the right decision for you and your students.
- Establishing **collaborative networks** in your local area to provide you with local opportunities to receive a more personal degree of support from us, and each other.
- A comprehensive bank of **exemplar student work**, with examiner commentary, available prior to first teaching.
- Additional set of **specimen question papers**, to provide an opportunity for additional mock exams for your students.
- A **dedicated Science Subject Advisor** available to provide you with personal support whenever you need it.



Training

We are running a series of **FREE launch and network events** during 2014 to talk you through the changes to AS and A level from September 2015 and introduce our new AS and A level Biology specifications.

FREE LAUNCH EVENTS

Book on to one of our free launch events at www.edexcel.com/training



Exam preparation and results support services

ResultsPlus

ResultsPlus, our free online service, gives instant and detailed analysis of your students' exam and mock performance, helping you to help them more effectively.

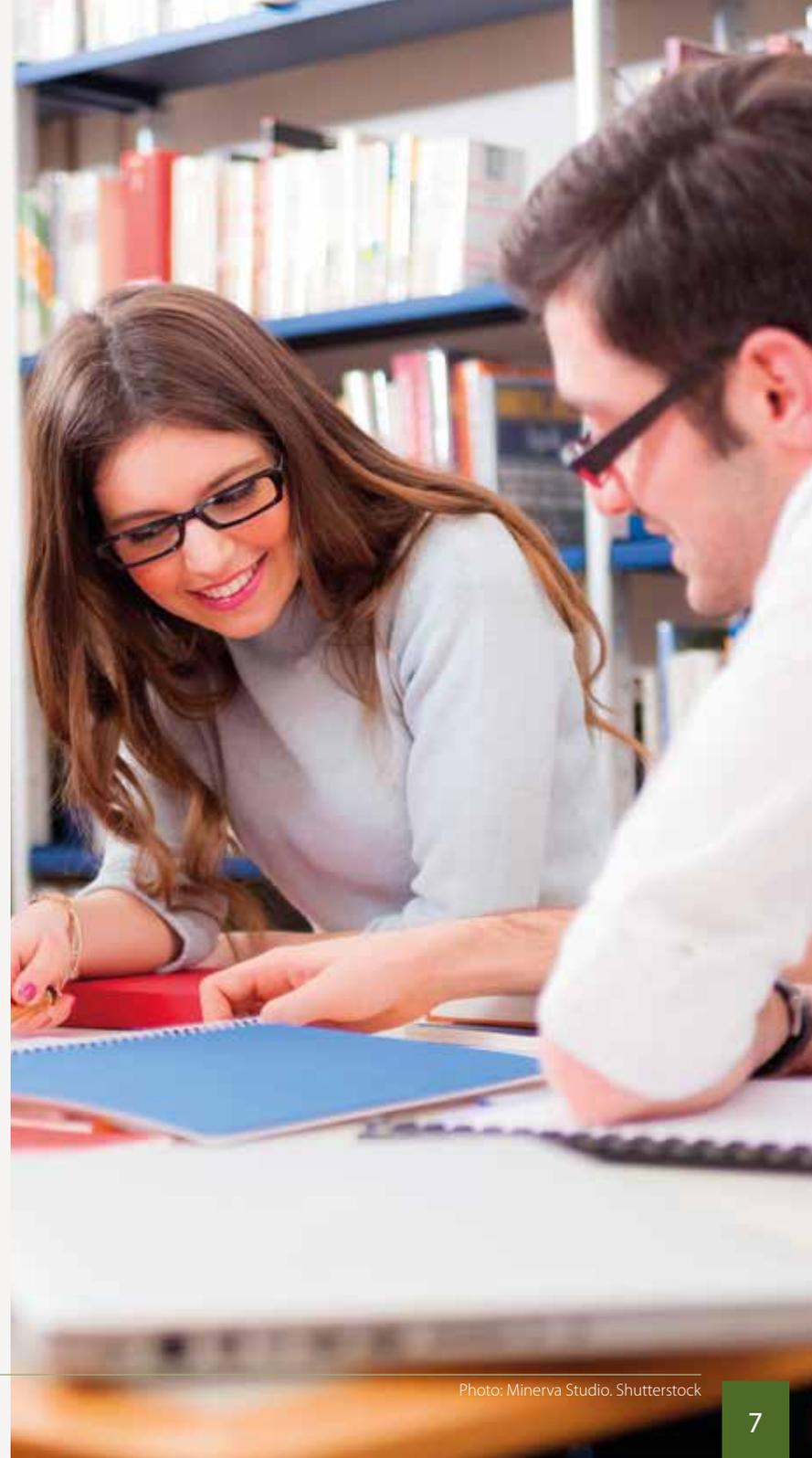
Mock Analysis provides a bank of exam papers for you to set mock exams and practice tests for your students. The reporting function provides instant analysis of performance, allowing you to track progress and focus revision more effectively.

www.edexcel.com/ResultsPlus

examWizard

examWizard is a free online resource, containing a huge bank of past paper questions and support materials to help you create your own mock exams and tests.

www.examwizard.com



Find out more at www.edexcel.com/AlevelBiologyGuide



Timeline for AS and A level Biology reform

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Current AS and A level Biology	June 2014 Summer exam series for the current AS and A2 Biology qualifications.	June 2015 Summer exam series for the current AS and A2 Biology qualifications.	June 2016 Final summer exam series for the current AS and A2 Biology qualifications.	
AS and A level Biology from 2015	September 2014 New AS and A level Biology specifications available.*	September 2015 First teaching of the new AS and A level Biology qualifications.	June 2016 First exam series for the new AS Biology qualification.	June 2017 First exam series for the new A level Biology qualification.**

* Subject to Ofqual accreditation

** There is no longer an AS/A2 split. A levels will now be assessed at the end of the two-year course only.

Stay up to date

Sign up to receive the latest news on our new specifications and the changes to A level. Visit www.edexcel.com/BioGuideSignUp



Find out more at
www.edexcel.com/AlevelBiologyGuide

Original origami artwork: Mark Bolitho