Entry Level Certificates in Science
STEM Technical Award Level 1 and Level 2
GCSE Combined Science: Trilogy
GCSE Combined Science: Synergy
GCSE Biology
GCSE Chemistry
GCSE Physics

Find out more at:
aqa.org.uk/ks4-science
Our philosophy: science for all

We believe that science has something to offer every student, whatever their aspirations. From trainee chef to nuclear physicist, construction apprentice to cancer researcher, everyone needs some level of relevant science understanding.

That’s why we’ve developed an exciting new suite of seven Key Stage 4 (KS4) qualifications, to suit students of all abilities and all aspirations.

You can use our new Entry Level Certificate (ELC) in year 9 as progression to GCSE. Our new Level 1 and Level 2 STEM Technical Awards can be taught alongside all of our KS4 Science qualifications.

You can also choose from two GCSE Combined Science options; Trilogy, which teaches the three sciences separately and Synergy which splits the content into two sections; Life and environmental sciences and Physical sciences.

You’ll be pleased to know that GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics have maintained much of their original content but have a more coherent and logical structure to help your teaching.

Designed by teachers

Over 1,000 teachers have already helped create our new qualifications by responding to surveys, giving their views in focus groups, writing papers, developing resources and reviewing our draft specifications and question papers.

Our experienced senior examiners incorporated all this feedback into our specifications and specimen question papers, to ensure that our qualifications really meet your needs.

Practical is still at the heart of science

There’s no better way to learn about science than through purposeful practical activities that form a natural part of day to day teaching and learning.
Mathematical skills
A minimum of 10% of marks will test maths skills in GCSE Biology; 20% in GCSE Chemistry; and 30% in GCSE Physics. For Combined Science qualifications maths skills will be in the ratio 1:2:3. In other words for every one mark of maths in biology there must be two in chemistry and three in physics.

There will be a variety of question types testing maths skills, including multi-step and open calculations. Some skills will be tested more than others such as use of decimals and translation of graphs.

Maths skills will be tested up to KS3 standard in Foundation Tier papers and Level 1 GCSE in Higher Tier papers. Maths skills questions common to foundation and higher tier papers will test the harder end of KS3.

Ramping and level of demand
The demand of our papers steadily increases within each topic area and throughout the paper. This is known as the saw tooth model. This allows students of all abilities a fair chance of gaining some marks on each topic throughout the paper.

Foundation papers are made up of low and standard demand questions with a higher proportion of structured and multiple-choice questions.

In Higher Tier papers there will be more marks for unstructured, open and extended response questions and the questions are made up of standard and high demand with some marks aimed at the new grade 9 (beyond the current A*).
Resources supporting you on your journey from KS3 to KS5

An overview of the key resources that will support you and your students learning from Key Stage 3 up to Key Stage 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 8</th>
<th>Year 9 Transition Year</th>
<th>Year 10</th>
<th>Year 11 GCSE</th>
<th>AS and A-level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online progress tracking tests*</td>
<td>The KS3 Science Syllabus*</td>
<td>Six week teaching pack</td>
<td>Practical handbook*</td>
<td>Summaries of changes</td>
<td>Mock papers*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flexible, and suitable for students from Year 7 to GCSE.</td>
<td>An outline of objectives to define what students need to know for KS3</td>
<td>Lesson plans and activities for getting started with your Year 9s. Bridges the gap between KS3 and GCSE subject areas.</td>
<td>All the guidance you need to support students with practical work.</td>
<td>Show the changes between current and new GCSE specifications.</td>
<td>With mark schemes and results analysis.</td>
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<td>KS3 baseline test*</td>
<td>Year 8 tests*</td>
<td>Year 9 tests October and May*</td>
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Key:

- **Plan**: Prepare for your teaching year: Information, support and services to help you deliver the specification.
- **Teach**: Teaching resources that you can use to plan your lessons and support your students’ learning.
- **Assess**: Resources to support and prepare your students for assessment.

*coming soon

Visit our website to download more great resources, plus information about textbooks for the new qualifications, a free trial of Exampro and more.
Entry Level Certificates (ELC) in Science

Single award and double award

Our Entry Level Certificates (ELC) in Science are designed for lower ability students who may not achieve a grade 1 at GCSE. They are also great as a progression to GCSE for students who are unmotivated or have low attendance.

Why teach ELC?

Flexibility
We’ve developed two ELCs, a single and a double award, so you’ll have the flexibility to decide which route is most appropriate for your students.

Our ELCs cover the KS4 Science Programme of Study. Many teachers have told us that they co-teach ELC and GCSE, so we have maintained and strengthened those links with our new GCSEs.

Spark an interest in science
Our ELC courses encourages students to develop their interest in and enthusiasm for science as well as develop a critical approach to scientific evidence and methods.

Develop key skills
The ELCs help students acquire and apply social skills, knowledge and understanding of working scientifically and its essential role in learning. Students will acquire the scientific skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for progression to further learning. This course also allows students to apply literacy, numeracy and information technology skills.

Summary of content
Both the single and the double ELC have six components.

Biology
- The human body
- Environment, evolution and inheritance

Chemistry
- Elements, mixtures and compounds
- Chemistry in our world

Physics
- Energy, forces and the structure of matter
- Electricity, magnetism and waves

Assessment

There are two different types of assessment.

1. Externally-Set Assignments (ESA) consist of a short written test. Each Test is worth 20 marks with a weighting of 57%.

2. Teacher-Devised Assignments (TDA) consist of a short piece of practical work. Each is worth 15 marks with a weighting of 43%.

For the single award students submit evidence from at least three components chosen from the list below (one each from Biology, Chemistry and Physics). For the double award students submit evidence for all six components.

These assignments are set by AQA and marked by the teacher using a mark scheme provided by AQA. ESAs and mark schemes are accessible via e-AQA.

Biology
Component 1
The human body
Component 2
Environment, evolution and inheritance

Chemistry
Component 3
Elements, mixtures and compounds
Component 4
Chemistry in our world

Physics
Component 5
Energy, forces and the structure of matter
Component 6
Electricity, magnetism and waves

Did you know?
Subject content in our ELCs overlaps with some GCSE Combined Science: Trilogy topics. This helps progression to GCSE science, if appropriate. It will also enable teachers to co-teach ELC and GCSE Science students of different abilities. The ELC specification signposts common material and shows differences between the content of the ELC and GCSE.

“A double award Entry Level would be an excellent idea as it would accredit the additional learning which takes place anyway.”
STEM Technical Awards Level 1 and 2

The DfE has introduced Technical Awards for 14 to 16 year olds at KS4, which are equivalent to a single GCSE. Our new STEM Technical Award is designed to develop real life practical and technical skills and complement our other KS4 Science qualifications.

Why teach our STEM Technical Award?

Broadening the STEM curriculum
We’re developing an exciting qualification that will:
- provide students with interesting and relevant industry-based content across science, technology, engineering and maths
- broaden the STEM offer in schools
- meet the requirements for performance measures
- enable progression to a wide range of academic and vocational post-16 studies and employment in STEM careers.

Ground-breaking qualification
Many teachers are already involved in developing this ground-breaking qualification and we’re working with them throughout the autumn term to make this qualification the very best it can be, with exciting resources to support you. You’ll be able to teach it from June 2016 with first awards in 2018.

“I trust AQA to do as good a job as possible to turn government demands into a coherent science qualification.”

Highly valued
We’re working with teachers and STEM industries to ensure that our Technical Awards will build the skills that employers tell us they need.

These qualifications include problem solving, team working, research and communication skills using a range of technologies.

Assessment

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1</td>
<td>Externally assessed</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 2</td>
<td>Internally assessed</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>Internally assessed</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is the difference between Level 1 and Level 2?
Level 1 is equivalent to GCSE grades 1–4 and Level 2 is equivalent to GCSE grades 5–9.

Do you need state of the art facilities to implement and teach STEM?
No. The content of the qualification will be designed to ensure that any school or STEM club will be able to deliver the practical activities without having to invest in expensive equipment.

When will we know more?
We are currently developing our STEM Technical Level 1 and 2 qualification for first teaching in June 2016. If you would like to be involved in this exciting opportunity, please contact us gcsescience@aqa.org.uk

What is STEM?
STEM is an acronym referring to the academic disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics

What is a Technical Award?
Technical Awards are high quality qualifications that develop the practical skills associated with a particular industry or occupation. They are intended to incorporate competency based practical activities with applied knowledge. They will be graded Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Stay up-to-date with the latest news information about our STEM Technical Award Level 1 and 2 at aqa.org.uk/ks4-updates

Did you know?

What is a Technical Award?
GCSE Combined Science: Trilogy

Double award

This double award is equivalent to two GCSEs and covers much of the same content as the current core and additional science GCSEs that many teachers are familiar with.

Why teach our Combined Science: Trilogy?

Familiar content

Students studying Combined Science: Trilogy will cover the three science disciplines in the traditional fashion, much like the current Core and Additional Science GCSEs. Combined Science: Trilogy takes a logical and coherent journey through the familiar and new content.

Co-teachable

The subject content and the practicals also appear in our Biology, Chemistry and Physics GCSEs. This means you have the flexibility to move your students between combined and separate sciences during their studies.

Engaging practicals

We know that practicals are not only one of the most engaging parts of a science education but are also essential to students’ understanding of scientific theory. There are 16 required practicals.

Summary of content

Biology
- Cell biology
- Organisation
- Infection and response
- Bioenergetics
- Homeostasis and response
- Inheritance, variation and evolution
- Ecology

Chemistry
- Atomic structure and the periodic table
- Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter
- Quantitative chemistry
- Chemical changes
- Energy changes
- The rate and extent of chemical change
- Organic chemistry
- Chemical analysis
- Chemistry of the atmosphere
- Using resources

Physics
- Forces
- Energy
- Waves
- Electricity
- Magnetism and electromagnetism
- Particle model of matter
- Atomic structure

Exams

Six papers: two biology, two chemistry and two physics. Each will assess different topics. Duration: all the papers are 1 hour 15 minutes. Tiers: Foundation and Higher. Weighting: the papers are equally weighted. Each is worth 16.7% of the grade and has 70 marks. Question types: multiple choice, structured, closed, short answer and open response.

Did you know?

- 70 marks means that each of the papers will differentiate well. This allows us to set a range of questions including questions accessible to the lowest ability students for the tier and questions that stretch and challenge students.
- We’ve given students five minutes more on each paper than other exam boards so that they have enough time to complete the paper and check their work.

“Descriptions of ideas that pupils are required to learn are clear and concise.”

Changes from DfE and Ofqual

- A single GCSE science will no longer be offered. This means no core, additional or further additional science GCSEs.
- We have created a new GCSE Combined Science (double award). The content is a subset of the content from the three separate sciences.
- Combined Science will have a 17 point grading scale, from 9–9, 9–8 through to 2–1, 1–1.
- All science GCSEs will have Higher and Foundation tier papers.

Download our specification online aqa.org.uk/gcse-trilogy
GCSE Combined Science: Synergy

Double award

This specification will help you inspire students of all abilities. The subject content is split into two sections so it can be easily taught by two teachers. This approach can be great for switching students onto science.

Why teach our Combined Science: Synergy?

Two sections, two teachers
It can easily be taught by two science teachers. One section covers most of the biology content, with related and relevant chemistry and physics. The other section covers physics and chemistry with related biology.

Engaging practicals
There are 16 required practicals. Our specification gives clear information on the requirements and guidance about how to integrate practicals into your day-to-day teaching.

Switch students onto science
Science learning is enriched when teaching draws on different areas that can be naturally linked together.

So we have divided the content into two main sections, which contain connections between areas of biology, physics and chemistry that sit together as part of good science.

Summary of content

Life and environmental sciences
- States of matter
- Atomic structure
- Cells in animals and plants
- Waves
- Systems in the human body
- Plants and photosynthesis
- Lifestyle and health
- Radiation and risk
- Treating and curing communicable diseases
- The Earth's atmosphere
- Ecosystems and biodiversity
- Inheritance
- Variation and evolution

Physical sciences
- The periodic table
- Chemical quantities
- Forces and energy changes
- Structure and bonding
- Magnetism and electromagnetism
- Forces and motion
- Electricity
- Acids and alkalis
- The rate and extent of physical change
- Atoms into ions and ions into atoms
- Carbon chemistry
- Resources of materials and energy

Exams

Four exams: two covering Life and environmental sciences, and two covering Physical sciences.

Duration: all of the papers are 1 hour 45 minutes in length.

Tiers: Foundation and Higher.

Weighting: the papers are equally weighted. Each is worth 25% of the grade and has 100 marks available.

Did you know?

The decision to create a second Combined Science qualification was made in autumn 2014. We realised that a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach was not going to be best for students or for teachers.

The Combined Science: Synergy qualification was created to:
- offer more opportunities to bring the big ideas in science together
- give teachers more time to introduce stimulating and contemporary contexts
- provide two styles of teaching and learning and two different models of assessment to suit teachers’ and students’ interests and strengths.

We provide free events where you can find out more about the new specifications.

Visit www.aqa.org.uk/Ks4-events

“... I like the question styles, which are accessible to my students.”

Changes from DfE and Ofqual

- A single GCSE science will no longer be offered. This means no core, additional or further additional science GCSEs.
- We have created a new GCSE Combined Science (double award). The content is a subset of the content from the three separate sciences.
- Combined Science will have a 17 point grading scale, from 9–9, 9–8 through to 2–1, 1–1.
- All GCSEs will have higher and foundation tier papers.
GCSE Biology

Rest assured the content is largely the same as our current GCSE Biology. Any changes are either from the DfE or to make the topic flow better. It tells a coherent and logical story through biology, with exciting and relevant topics such as cloning.

Why teach Biology?

Great preparation for A-level
Studying the separate sciences means students will cover more content than GCSE Combined Sciences. Our new GCSE Biology will provide great preparation for AS and A-level, without overlapping content.

Practical at the heart of science
There are eight required practicals and all are familiar.

Our specification gives information on the requirements and guidance about how to integrate practicals into your day-to-day teaching.

We want to give you options on how to teach practicals so you can find the best way for your students. That’s why we are providing a Practical handbook to give more guidance and ideas for the new practical requirements.

"I like that there is a wider scope of content. I like that it leads in better to A-level Biology. I like the layout of the spec..."

Summary of content
1. Cell biology
2. Organisation
3. Infection and response
4. Bioenergetics
5. Homeostasis and response
6. Inheritance, variation and evolution
7. Ecology

Download our specification
aqa.org.uk/gcse-biology

Did you know?
Content is presented in a format similar to our outgoing GCSE Biology and to our new A-level Biology which helps make it easier for teachers to use.

The content is based on key biological concepts and principles such as cell division, respiration and photosynthesis. Students should be able to use this knowledge in questions in either paper.

Exams

Two papers: each paper will assess knowledge and understanding from different topics. The questions will use clearer and simpler language, to assess students only on their scientific ability.

Duration: both papers are 1 hour 45 minutes.

Tier: Foundation and Higher.

Weighting: the papers are equally weighted. Each is worth 50% of the grade and has 100 marks available.

Question types: multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

Paper 1

What's assessed?
Topics 1–4: Cell biology; Organisation; Infection and response; Bioenergetics.

Paper 2

What's assessed?
Topics 5–7: Homeostasis and response; Inheritance, variation and evolution; Ecology.

Changes from DfE and Ofqual

• A single GCSE science will no longer be offered. This means no core, additional or further additional science GCSEs.
• All science GCSEs will have higher and foundation tier papers.
• The new subject content for the separate sciences – GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics – is similar to previous content.
• The A* to G grades will be replaced by 9 to 1 for Biology, Chemistry and Physics. See the new grades explained at aqa.org.uk/science-changes
• Content removed: drugs, diet and exercise.
• New content: monoclonal antibodies, plant disease, the brain, selective breeding, negative feedback and maintaining biodiversity.

Content is presented in a format similar to our outgoing GCSE Biology and to our new A-level Biology which helps make it easier for teachers to use.

The content is based on key biological concepts and principles such as cell division, respiration and photosynthesis. Students should be able to use this knowledge in questions in either paper.
GCSE Chemistry

You’ll see a GCSE Chemistry specification with a better flow, not only for your teaching, but for students’ learning. We have removed some topics, added a few new sections and brought together information into coherent teaching topics. As you’d expect, we’re developing a range of resources to give you confidence with teaching the new content.

Why teach our Chemistry?

Great preparation for A-level
Studying the separate sciences means students will cover more content than GCSE Combined Science. Our new GCSE Chemistry will provide great preparation for AS and A-level, without overlapping content.

New content
Much of the content will be familiar to the current specification.

• Removed: limestone, plate tectonics and earth science, oils and emulsions.

• New: life cycle assessment and recycling, chemical cells and fuel cells and greenhouse gases.

Practical
There are eight required practicals and all are familiar.

Our specification gives clear information on the requirements and guidance about how to integrate practicals into your day-to-day teaching.

We want to give you options on how to teach practicals so you can find the best way for your students. That’s why we are providing a Practical handbook to give guidance and ideas for the new practical requirements.

Summary of content

1. Atomic structure and the periodic table
2. Bonding, structure and the properties of matter
3. Quantitative chemistry
4. Chemical changes
5. Energy changes
6. The rate and extent of chemical change
7. Organic chemistry
8. Chemical analysis
9. Chemistry of the atmosphere
10. Using resources

"Much more logical arrangement of topics; even by paper content (sections 1–5 and 6–10)… All the required practicals are straightforward."

Exams

Two papers: each paper will assess knowledge and understanding from different topics. The questions will use clearer and simpler language, to assess students only on their scientific ability.

Duration: both papers are 1 hour 45 minutes.

Tiers: Foundation and Higher.

Weighting: the papers are equally weighted. Each is worth 50% of the grade and has 100 marks available.

Question types: multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

Paper 1

What’s assessed?
Topics 1–5: Atomic structure and the periodic table; Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter; Quantitative chemistry; Chemical changes; and Energy changes.

Paper 2

What’s assessed?
Topics 6–10: The rate and extent of chemical change; Organic chemistry; Chemical analysis, Chemistry of the atmosphere and Using resources.

Did you know?

Atomic structure and the periodic table, Bonding structure and the properties of matter and Quantitative chemistry are key concepts in our specification. These topics are important principles in chemistry and may be assessed in both of our papers.

The periodic table will be included as an insert in the question papers.

Changes from DfE and Ofqual

• A single GCSE science will no longer be offered. This means no core, additional or further additional science GCSEs.

• All science GCSEs will have higher and foundation tier papers.

• The new subject content for the separate sciences – GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics – is similar to previous content.

• The A* to G grades will be replaced by 9 to 1 for Biology, Chemistry and Physics.
GCSE Physics

This specification provides a coherent and logical journey through physics. We’ve retained topics that teachers have asked for, such as life of a star. As you’d expect, we’re developing a range of resources to give you confidence with the new content.

Why teach our Physics?

Great preparation for A-level
Studying the separate sciences means students will cover more content than GCSE Combined Science. Our new GCSE Physics will provide great preparation for AS and A-level, without overlapping content.

Engaging practicals
There are eight required practicals and all are familiar.

Our specification gives clear information on the requirements and guidance on how to integrate practicals into your day-to-day teaching.

We want to give you options on how to teach practicals so you can find the best way to teach your students. That’s why we are providing a Practical handbook to give more guidance and ideas for the new practical requirements.

New content
Much of the content from the current specifications has been maintained for the new GCSE Physics.

• Removed: conduction, convection, radiation, U-values, power stations, structure of the eye and centre of mass.
• New: gears, forces as vectors and atmospheric pressure.

Summary of content

1. Forces
2. Energy
3. Waves
4. Electricity
5. Magnetism and electromagnetism
6. Particle model of matter
7. Atomic structure
8. Space physics

Equations
Students should know how to apply two lists of physics equations: one is learnt by students and the second is provided as an insert in the question paper.

Exams

Two papers: each paper will assess different topics.
Duration: both papers are 1 hour 45 minutes.
Tiers: Foundation and Higher.
Weighting: the papers are equally weighted. Each is worth 50% of the grade and has 100 marks available.
Question types: multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

Paper 1
What’s assessed?
Energy; Electricity; Particle model of matter and Atomic structure

Paper 2
What’s assessed?
Forces; Waves; Magnetism and electromagnetism and Space physics

“Covers important areas of Physics, spec is broken down clearly.”

Changes from DfE and Ofqual

• A single GCSE science will no longer be offered. This means no core, additional or further additional science GCSEs.
• All science GCSEs will have higher and foundation tier papers.
• The new subject content for the separate sciences – GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics – is similar to previous content.
• The A* to G grades will be replaced by 9 to 1 for Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Download our specification online aqa.org.uk/gcse-physics

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What’s next?

Here are some key dates and events that will help you find out more about our new qualifications. You’ll always find the most up-to-date information at aqa.org.uk/ks4-science

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science hubs network</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Discovering science events</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online science hub meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-9th: ASE Conference</td>
<td>Preparing to teach GCSE events</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science hub schools network</td>
<td>Practice papers and mark schemes available on e-AQA</td>
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Many of our free events are available online or face-to-face. Book your free place now aqa.org.uk/gcse-science-launch

Our new KS4 Science qualifications at a glance

We recognise that different students have different needs and interests. With our new suite of seven KS4 qualifications you can tailor your curriculum to give the best opportunities to all your students.

**Entry level**
- Entry Level Certificates in Science
  - Choose single or double award

**Level 1 and 2**
- GCSE Biology, Chemistry, Physics
- GCSE Combined Science (double award)
  - Choose Trilogy or Synergy
- STEM Technical Award Level 1 and 2

**Level 3**
- A-level sciences
- New Applied General
- Tech-levels

**Flexible routes**
This choice and flexibility means you can deliver all your KS4 Science with AQA, so you’ll benefit from consistent information, support, resources and administration.

In May 2015, 40 Local Authority Science Advisers tested our new suite of science qualifications. They agreed that these options will enable teachers to tailor a route through science for all students.

**Examples**
- A lower achieving student might start with our Entry Level Certificate and progress to our Level 1 STEM Technical Award.
- A middle achiever might start with our Entry Level Certificate in year 9 as preparation for GCSE Combined Science (double award).
- A high achieving student, who definitely wants to study science at A-level, could do GCSE Biology, GCSE Chemistry and GCSE Physics.
Stay updated

Let us keep you up-to-date
If you’re interested in any of our new science specifications, let us know and we’ll:

- keep you up-to-date with developments
- let you know when the new resources are available
- invite you to free events where you can find out even more.

Want to know about our new specifications, launch meetings and resources?
Register at aqa.org.uk/ks4-updates

Contact us

You can always talk directly to our dedicated science team. We’re happy to help with any queries.

Telephone: 01483 477 756
Email: gcsescience@aqa.org.uk

You’ll always find the most up-to-date information on our website:
aqa.org.uk/ks4-science

September 2015
The information in this document is based on the draft specimen question papers and mark schemes, submitted to Ofqual in July 2015, and is subject to change. We will publish the accredited specifications and specimen question papers as soon as we receive accreditation from Ofqual.
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