

The Biology specification builds on concepts and skills you have learned in your GCSE Science and develops these principles in a context that you will find interesting, stimulating and relevant as well as challenging.

If you need any further information or have some questions then don't hesitate to ask this evening or if something occurs later, then please do contact me by phone or email:

Brian Marriott
Programme Coordinator [Biology]
01273 508011 Ext. 427
bcm@varndean.ac.uk



"Teachers successfully encourage students to develop independent learning skills, utilising high-quality materials. For example, students in a Biology lesson produced good work on different types of cells, using a variety of different methods and learning resources."

OFSTED



A Level Biology



Varndean
College Brighton & Hove

Biology A Level

This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of their two year A Level course.

Entry Requirements

Standard advanced course entry requirements PLUS Grade 6 in GCSE Biology and another Science GCSE OR 6/6 in GCSE Combined Science. PLUS Grade 5 in GCSE Maths. Please note Biology should only be taken with a facilitating subject.

Core Content

- Biological molecules
- Cells
- Organisms exchange substances with their environment
- Genetic information, variation and relationships between organisms
- Energy transfers in and between organisms
- Organisms respond to changes in their internal and external environments
- Genetics, populations, evolution and ecosystems
- The control of gene expression

How is the course assessed?

Paper 1

What's assessed

- Any content from topics 1–4, including relevant practical skills

Assessed

- Written exam: 2 hours (91 marks) = 35% of A-level

Questions

- 76 marks: a mixture of short and long answer questions
- 15 marks: extended response questions



Paper 2

What's assessed

- Any content from topics 5–8, including relevant practical skills

Assessed

- Written exam: 2 hours (91 marks) = 35% of A-level

Questions

- 76 marks: a mixture of short and long answer questions
- 15 marks: comprehension question

Paper 3

What's assessed

- Any content from topics 1–8, including relevant practical skills

Assessed

- Written exam: 2 hours (78 marks) = 30% of A-level

Questions

- 38 marks: structured questions, including practical techniques
- 15 marks: critical analysis of given experimental data
- 25 marks: one essay from a choice of two titles

What about coursework?

There is no coursework in the new specifications. However, practical work is at the heart of biology, so it has been placed at the heart of this specification.

Practical assessments have been divided into those that can be assessed in written exams and those that can only be directly assessed whilst students are carrying out experiments. A-level grades will be based only on marks from written exams.

A separate endorsement of practical skills will be taken alongside the A Level. This will be assessed by teachers and will be based on direct observation of students' competency in a range of skills that are not assessable in written exams.

