

Changes to the key stage 4 science curriculum from 2006

What changes have been made to science at key stage 4?

- New two-page programme of study
- Removal of disapplication for science
- The changes will support the current proportion of students studying at least two science GCSEs
- Students will have a statutory entitlement to study at least two science GCSEs
- Only applied science remains as a double award
- GCSEs in geology, astronomy, electronics, psychology will not be amended until first teaching in 2007
- A clear focus has been maintained on academic rigour and standards

Changes to assessment

- All GCSE specifications to have a minimum of 25% and maximum of 75% external assessment
- Different awarding bodies will offer different assessments to suit the specification
- Each specification will have a range of assessment methods
- Assessments may be taken at the end of year 10, at the end of year 11, or throughout the course
- No requirement for terminal, externally set assessment

Teaching and learning opportunities

- The new programme of study encourages a wider variety of teaching and learning styles
- Specifications will engage students in up-to-date and relevant science through 'How science works' and may favour particular learning styles
- Teachers will need to incorporate relevant contemporary science examples
- Ways of communicating scientific ideas will be more varied and accessible
- Teachers will need appropriate training and professional development

Progression routes

- All specifications will include progression routes
- A wider range of routes will be available
- A*-C in GCSE science + additional science (or separate sciences) allow progression to traditional A levels
- A*-C in GCSE science could lead to an AS in perspectives on science
- A*A*-CC in GCSE applied science or a pass in a BTEC first certificate in applied science could lead to A level in applied science
- GCSE in science would not normally be considered sufficient to enable progression to traditional A levels

Planning and managing the curriculum at key stage 4 in science

- There are several ways to meet the statutory programme of study. Schools should choose the most appropriate way for their students
- GCSE science covers the new programme of study although all students will be entitled to study at least a second science
- Decide if courses should run in parallel or series
- Plan the time between now and September 2006 carefully and ensure that parents and students are given appropriate information

