Supporting students in A-level Biology at Toot Hill College

Our team of experienced biology staff welcome you to our fantastic course where we explore the fascinating world around us allowing students to grow in curiosity around physiological processes and the complexities of nature. Below is some important information and frequently asked questions designed to inform parents and carers of how to support students in ensuring the best possible success from the A level biology course.

Please do not hesitate to contact teaching staff or the Head of Faculty if you have further questions.

**Department staff:**

Head of Faculty - Biology– Mrs C Morgan [cmorgan@toothillschool.co.uk](mailto:cmorgan@toothillschool.co.uk)

Teachers of year 12: Mrs A Moreman/ Mrs S Benskin/ Mr L Collen/ Miss L Hughes/ Miss A Read/ Mrs C Morgan

Teachers of year 13: Miss L Hughes/ Mrs A Moreman/ Mr L Collen/ Mrs C Morgan/ Miss A Read

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| Subject | Exam board | Course title and code | Structure | Key dates | Final exams |
| Biology | AQA | 7402 A Level Biology | Year 12   1. Biological molecules 2. Cells 3. Organisms exchange of substances with the environment 4. Genetic information, variation and relationships between organisms   Year 13:   1. Energy transfer in and between organisms 2. Organisms respond to changes in their internal and external environments 3. Genetics, populations, evolution and ecosystems 4. The control of gene expression | **Internal assessments:**  October—Autumn term: Year 12- end of topic tests on Biological molecules and Cells.  November- Year 12 mock exams- Biological molecules (carbs/lipids and proteins)  Cells (structure/ microscopes/ mitosis)  (1hr30)  Feb- Spring term:  End of topic test for Immunity/ mass transport and genetics  Year 12 in class assessment week-  June- Summer term: Year 12 mock- Full paper 1  October-Autumn term: Year 13 in class assessment- Year 1 focus with an addition of the small volume of year 13 content covered so far. (1hr30)  In class end of topic assessments on Respiration and Energy and ecosystems.  November- Year 13 mock- Paper 1 content plus Yr13 Respiration and Energy and ecosystems. (2hrs)  In class end of topic assessments on Photosynthesis  February- Spring term: Year 13 mock exams- Full paper 1 and Full paper 2 (2 x 2hrs).  In class end of topic assessments on Muscles/nerves & Genetics | **Summer 2024 exam dates**  All exams at sat at the end of year 13  Paper 1: 5.06.24 PM  Paper 2: 14.05.24 AM  Paper 3: 19.06.24 AM  Practical submitted by: 15.05.24  Paper 1:  Topics 1-4 (Year 12) including relevant practical skills  2 hour written paper  91 marks  35% of A level   * 76 marks of short and long questions * 15 marks of extended response   Paper 2:  Topics 5-8 (Year 13) including relevant practical skills  2 hour written paper  91 marks  35% of A level   * 76 marks of short and long answer questions * 15 marks of comprehension questions   Paper 3  Any topic 1-8 (Year 12 and 13) including relevant practical skills  2 hour written paper  78 marks  30% of A level   * 38 marks structured question and practical techniques * 15 marks of critical analysis of experimental data * 25 mark essay- one synoptic essay with a choice of two titles. |

**Frequently asked questions**

1. Where can I find past papers and mark schemes?

* You can find all past paper questions and mark schemes here: [AQA | AS and A-level | Biology | Assessment resources](https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/as-and-a-level/biology-7401-7402/assessment-resources) We also recommend the following website as a resource hub: [A-Level Biology Past Papers - PMT (physicsandmathstutor.com)](https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/past-papers/a-level-biology/)

1. Does my student know where to access guidance when answering exam questions? [AQA | AS and A-level | Biology | Assessment resources](https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/as-and-a-level/biology-7401-7402/assessment-resources)

* The AQA website also has examiner reports that students will find useful in understanding common misconceptions:
* In class, we complete regular assessments and exam questions. We also use SENECA to set home learning as well as encouraging UPLEARN for independent study.

1. What is the Practical endorsement award?
   * Across the 2 year course students will complete 12 assessed practical tasks. Each of these will assess a key skill known as a CPAC.
   * Students will pass the practical endorsement award assuming all practical skills have been demonstrated across the course.
   * Students will keep a record of their lab work in their lab books.
   * If a student misses a practical it is important that they talk with their class teacher about when they can re-sit that lesson. Students understanding of the practical skills will be assessed during paper 3.
   * Practical videos and practice questions can be found here: [AQA A-level Biology Revision - PMT (physicsandmathstutor.com)](https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/biology-revision/a-level-aqa/)
2. What happens if my student has gaps in their knowledge due to absence?

* Class teaching resources are uploaded on to the files section of teams regularly. Students can catch up with any work if they are absent using these resources.
* Full student friendly notes can be downloaded here: [AQA A-level Biology Revision - PMT (physicsandmathstutor.com)](https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/biology-revision/a-level-aqa/)
* Students should consider attending Biology Clinics (enrichment) which are advertised using class TEAMS pages.
* All students also have an UPLEARN account where they can watch summary videos, read key content and practice exam questions. Students also have access to personalised SENECA learning accounts set up by their class teachers.

1. What resources are recommended to support my student?

* Exam practice questions should be completed at home regularly to develop key exam skills.
* Revision questions, flash cards, mind maps as well as topic notes can be found here: [AQA A-level Biology Revision - PMT (physicsandmathstutor.com)](https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/biology-revision/a-level-aqa/)

1. What else can I do to support my student at home?

* Parents/carers could direct students to complete as many past paper questions as possible as this is proven to raise student understanding of exam technique which is a key skill developed with practice.
* Parents/carers could also test their knowledge of key concepts by using flash cards.
* Parents/carers could encourage students to complete a number of hours of UPLEARN and SENECA a week.

1. How can I help with revision?

* Encourage your student to access resources found on the files section of teams.
* Encouraging your student to review the AQA specification to identify gaps in knowledge.
* Encourage students to complete a number of hours of UPLEARN a week.

1. What can I do if I need more support or my student is needing more support?

* Please contact classroom teacher or head of faculty to arrange a meeting.