

Notes for Private Candidates in GCSE Science 2009/2010

Entering for the Units:

- Once you have decided which subject you intend to take an examination in, you need to find a centre where you can take the examinations. You do not need to do the experiment at the centre.
- It is very important for you to get hold of the AQA specification of the subject you are entering even if you are studying with a distance learning provider.
- The questions asked in the examinations are all based on the content of the specification,
- The specification for your subject contains all the entry codes. The specifications can be found on the website at: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/qual/newgcse/science.php?id=03&prev>

Private candidates must apply to a centre to sit AQA Science Units with the centre's own candidates.

This application needs to be in time for the Examination officers to meet the "Last Date for Entry" for each exam.

		Last Date For Entry
For The Objective Tests	November Tests	4 October 2009
	March Tests	21 January 2010
	June Tests	27 April 2010
For the Written papers	January Tests	21 October 2009
	June Tests	21 March 2010
For the Centre Assessed Unit	May/June 2010	21 February 2010

You must discuss with the Examinations Officer at the centre which units you want to enter and when you want to enter them.

- **Science A:** objective test papers available three times a year – November, March and June. Objective Tests are multiple choice answer papers. There are 2 30 minute objective tests for each Biology/Chemistry/Physics Unit 1. If you are entering for Science A you must take all 6 Objective Tests plus the Centre Assessed Unit (CAU).
- **Science B:** papers are 45 minutes Structured papers. These are short answers written on the question paper. They are available in January and June. For Science B you must take all Unit 1 Structured Tests plus the Centre Assessed Unit.
- **Additional Science** is made up of Biology Unit 2, Chemistry Unit 2 and Physics Unit 2 available in January and June. All will be 45 minutes written (structured) papers plus the Centre Assessed Unit
- **Separate Sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics)** If you are entering for any of the separate science subjects, you may take either the 2 Objective Tests or the structured paper for Unit 1.
 - Objective Tests are not available as an alternative for Units 2 or 3 which are written (structured) papers only.
 - There is only one written (structured) paper per unit. The paper lasts for 45 minutes.
 - You will need to complete:
 - either 2 Objective Tests and 2 written papers for Unit 2 and 3
 - or 3 Written (structured) papers for Units 1, 2 and 3
 - PLUS 1 CAU Unit to make up the requirement for your GCSE.

Timetable:

The Examinations Officer will be able to tell you the dates and times for the examinations. You can also find the Exam Timetables on the AQA website at:
(<http://www.aqa.org.uk/admin/timetable.php>).

You do need to make sure that you arrive at the right time for the **examination**.

ISAs are different – you may be the only one doing the ISA, but if you are sharing one of the school test days, the others would be disturbed if you arrived late.

The Centre Assessed Unit (CAU) – Practical Work

The centre will **not** be able to host a practical session for you so you will need to do the investigation at home.

- You need to arrange for an Authenticator to verify that the table of results and the graphs and or charts are in fact your own work. The Authenticator must fill in a form with their own information as AQA may need to contact the authenticator for confirmation of details. The form can be found on the website at:
http://www.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_private.php
- The Centre Assessed Unit is worth 25% of the total examination marks. It is based on the practical work. You need to have done an appropriate investigation and then answer questions on a written paper. This paper is the Investigative Skills Assignment (ISA). The papers are supplied to the centres for use when the candidates have completed their practical investigation and comprises questions about how practical work should be done, how results should be processed and how conclusions should be made.

You can look at the ISA Topics in the Teachers' Notes which are published in the subject areas on the AQA website. Look in the Support Material folder. (http://www.aqa.org.uk/qual/newgcse/science/new/sciencea_materials.php) Discuss with your tutor, or decide yourself, which investigation you wish to do.

Be sure that you have chosen a current ISA as they are only live for 2 years. The availability dates are printed on the front of the Teachers' Notes and it is essential that you choose ISAs that will be live **and** valid at the time you are taking the examination.

You will then need to contact the Examinations Officer at your examination centre to arrange:

- a mutually convenient date for you to go to the centre to sit the ISA paper. One suggestion is to arrange a day that the Objective Tests or an ISA test is being taken at the centre as this would reduce the amount of supervision required.
- to arrange for the appropriate ISA to be printed for you when you attend to do the ISA.

If the centre does not have the ISA papers the Examinations Officer should contact the AQA Science Subject office to obtain the CD.

You need to complete the experiment/investigation and produce table/s of results and graphs or charts of the results. Your tutor will validate that this is your own work and complete the appropriate information forms which can also be found on the website. http://www.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_private.php

The centre will provide you with the ISA test on the mutually agreed date and you will be able to take the ISA test under controlled conditions.

You must take your table of results and graphs or charts into the ISA test – they are needed for the marking of your ISA and will be able to help you answer the questions. There should be no annotation on the tables, graphs or charts other than title, labels and numerical information/lines/bars.

You do not need to submit any other work for the ISA. It will not be used by the AQA Moderator to credit you with extra marks.

The private candidate should submit to the centre **at entry**:

- a signed Private Candidate Identification Form (this form can be found on the AQA website) http://www.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_private.php)
- a Private Candidate Coursework Information Form completed by the candidate and the tutor/authenticator (this form can be found on the AQA website http://www.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_private.php)

The Private candidate should submit **with** the ISA:

- Private Candidate Record Form http://www.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_private.php)
- table/s of results
- chart/s or graph/s produced from the table/s of results
- any paperwork regarding Access Arrangements you have been given (eg scribe, reader, Braille, helper). You can review the availability of access arrangements and how to get them on the AQA website at: http://www.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_special.php

The Examinations Officer at the centre will keep the completed ISA, the tables, charts, graphs and forms and will send everything to the moderator on or before 7 May with the rest of the ISAs from that centre.

Your work must be put in an envelope marked 'Private Candidate' with your name and candidate number shown clearly on the outside to ensure that its significance is not lost within the rest of the centre's sample work.

The AQA moderator will mark the ISA test. As you will be performing the ISA individually, the Practical Skills Assessment (PSA) mark will be awarded pro rata with the marks scored in the ISA test.

ISA Mark	Pro Rata PSA Mark
0 – 5	0
6 – 10	1
11 – 15	2
16 – 20	3
21 – 25	4
26 – 30	5
31 – 34	6

The moderator will forward your total CAU score (ie PSA + ISA) to AQA and it will be added to the unit paper marks for certification.

Keep a copy of all the forms, charts, graphs and tables and ensure that the centre confirms that you have sat the ISA and they have received all the forms and the ISA paper from you.