# Spotlight on Science

SUMMER 2018 SERIES

**Six new GCSE Science qualifications will be awarded for the first time this summer: GCSE Biology, GCSE Physics, GCSE Chemistry, GCSE Science (Double Award), GCSE Applied Science (Double Award) and GCSE Applied Science (Single Award).**

## What's new?

New GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics replace the old separate science qualifications in these subjects. The new double award science qualification replaces the old GCSE Science and GCSE Additional Science qualifications. Two new applied science qualifications have also been added, one single award and one double award.

Students who want to progress to study science at AS and A level will be taking GCSE Science (Double Award) or the separate sciences. The GCSE Applied Science qualifications are not intended to support progression to AS and A level but rather to give students knowledge and understanding of science in a practical and work-related context.

The new science GCSEs are still unitised and tiered. This means that students can sit exams for individual units during the course; most students will take some units at the end of year 10. Students can sit either the higher or foundation tier depending on the grade they are aiming for.

The new single award GCSEs will be graded A* to G and the new double award GCSEs will be awarded on a 15-point grade scale, from A*A*, A*A, AA, AB through to FG and GG.

## Who's taking these qualifications this summer?

There is a marked change in entry patterns for these new GCSEs compared to the old qualifications. This has been driven by changes to school performance measures for GCSE science which will take effect this summer. The new performance measures do not allow alternatives to GCSE qualifications to count. This means that more schools will be entering more of their students for science GCSEs than in previous years.

The new double award GCSEs are equivalent in size to two GCSEs, so we count entries for them twice. 21,250 students have entered for Science (Double Award) this year, totalling 42,500 entries. This is higher than the combined entries for GCSE Science and GCSE Additional Science in previous years. There have also been increases compared to 2017 in the numbers of students entered for the three separate science GCSEs: Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

## What does this mean for the results this summer?

Changes to science GCSEs and to the entry patterns for them mean that care should be taken when making comparisons with results in previous years. These changes are likely to impact on the final overall results for GCSE science; we expect that these changes will mean that the results this summer will be lower than in previous years.

With all these changes, it will be difficult to make meaningful year-on-year comparisons this summer and schools are likely to see more variation in their year-on-year results.

To find out more about GCSE Science qualifications, please see our **postcard.**

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