

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

BIOLOGY

Rochdale
sixth form
college

1

WHAT TOPICS DO YOU DO AT A-LEVEL? /DOES IT FOLLOW ON FROM GCSE BIOLOGY?

A-level Biology covers the same topics that you did at GCSE but in more detail. For example, at GCSE you will have studied photosynthesis. At A-level we look in greater detail the different reaction pathways that that convert the energy in photons being used to synthesise organic molecules required for the growth of the plant.

2

RSFC DOES AQA 7402 BIOLOGY BUT AT GCSE MY SCHOOL DID ANOTHER EXAM BOARD. WILL THIS MATTER?

No, we start teaching from the fundamentals you need, and which are covered by all GCSE exam boards.

3

I HAVE ONLY COMPLETED GCSE COMBINED SCIENCE AND NOT THE THREE SEPARATE SCIENCES AT GCSE, DOES THIS MATTER?

No, the majority of our biology students have completed GCSE combined science. The A-Level specification does not overlap with either of the two GCSE pathways. The most important thing to consider is that, you meet the subject entry requirements.

4

HOW IS A-LEVEL BIOLOGY ASSESSED?

After following the course for 2 years you will sit three 2-hour exams. These exams will decide your grade. There is also the practical endorsement element to the course. This is assessed as either pass or fail from the practical work you do in class throughout the two years. The final grade on your certificate will read as a grade then a pass/fail (e.g. B pass or B fail). Your progress will also be assessed through regular in-class and online assessment.

5

HOW OFTEN DO YOU DO PRACTICAL WORK?

It depends on the topic we are studying. There are 12 'Required practical activities' and several 'non-required practical activities'. You will be assessed in some way during each practical activity to ensure you can demonstrate that you have developed the skills you need to work independently in the future and pass your endorsement. Initially this may be as simple as whether you are able to 'Follow a method' or able to 'work safely' to Year 13, where you should be able to 'design and carry out an investigation independently'.