**Biology Department Assessment Policy (AQA) 2019-20**

**The Importance of Feedback**

Learning will not happen instantly and takes time; attending lessons is not enough, you also need to be working outside of class, to learn new information and consolidate learning. In the process, you will make mistakes but hopefully feedback will enable you to learn from these mistakes. Better to make a mistake during the year and correct it, than make your first mistake in the actual exam! Feedback is essential for your learning and will consist of written (teacher marking), peer (where you feedback on someone else’s work in the class) and self (where you assess yourself).

**The Final Assessment**

Final assessment at the end of the second year is made up of **three** exams (2 hours each). Paper 1 will exam topics 1-4 and required practicals 1 -6 , paper 2 will examine topics 5-8 and required practicals 7 -12, paper 3 will examine topics 1-8, required practical 1-12 and will include a 25 mark holistic essay.

**Weekly Independent Tasks (Homework)**

Homework does not necessarily need to be completed at home! You can use free periods during the day to complete these tasks outside of lessons. To keep a good work/life balance, you might like to treat College as an 0845 to 1615 day and use your free periods in the library completing tasks. This will minimise the work you need to complete at home and might make you more productive!!

The classes are shared equally between two teachers for 2.25 hours, with each teacher delivering one of the two units. Each week, homework will be set and could take up to 5 hours in total. Each teacher therefore could set you up to 2 ½ hours homework per week. If the homework only takes you 1 hour for a week, then you will have a further 1 ½ hours to conduct further reading and consolidate learning. Homework tasks will consist of two types:

* *‘PREP WORK’:* Not all homework will be marked. It will be given a quick inspection in class and then will involve peer and self-assessment as part of a class exercise. This work will ‘prepare’ you for the lesson.
* *REVISION WORKSHEETS:* Throughout the year, for each unit, there will be 6-8 revision worksheets set. These revision worksheets should take you 2.5 hours to complete and consist of a summary of the work we have done in class on 2 sides of A4. These worksheets will be submitted to the teacher who will provide an effort/outcome grade from 1 (excellent), 2 (good), 3 (satisfactory) and 4 (cause for concern).

**Benchmark Assessments**

Throughout each of the two years, there will be 4 benchmark assessments for each side of the course in November, January, March and April. These will be for 1 hour and consist of questions that you would see in the exam and will cover the most recent topics.

* WRITTEN FEEDBACK: Each benchmark assessment will receive substantial written feedback in the form of comments on a cover sheet that relate directly to the assessment criteria of the exam board. Alongside this, symbols (representing comments) and questions will be posed about how to improve).
* VERBAL FEEDBACK: 1-2-1’s will also occur in November and March after the benchmarks have been marked. These benchmark assessments will then feed directly into the student reviews (‘reports’) which get sent home to your parents.
* REFLECTION AND TARGET SETTING: After each assessment, students will be expected to reflect on the written feedback from their teacher and set themselves targets for improvement in the period in question. These targets will be stored on A3 sheets within the classroom and the students will write up their targets as ‘Learning Conversations’ onto the centralised computer system.
* FOLLOW UP WORK: After each benchmark, during the 1-2-1’s, joint essays will be set in groups of 3. These will initially be peer assessed and then given a final mark by the teacher. The idea is to learn from the mistakes in your written work. Students who perform particularly badly are encouraged to rewrite the assessment and submit to the teacher for another grade.

Benchmarks are extremely important and should be treated like the actual exam. They are an ideal point to see how you are progressing and to get valuable feedback. You will make mistakes in the benchmarks and so the follow up work is to test whether you have learned from those mistakes to become better at the subject and exam technique. The benchmarks in the first year will provide evidence for the first year Annual review grade upon which the predicted grade will be determined.

**DEADLINES AND MOCK EXAM**

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| **Year 1** | **Year 2** |
| The benchmarks will be set in the following windows of time and this is where you will receive your main written feedback from the teacher:   * **Oct – Benchmark 1** * **JAN – Benchmark 2** * **MAR – Benchmark 3** * **June – Benchmark 4** | The benchmarks will be set in the following windows of time and this is where you will receive your main written feedback from the teacher:   * **Oct – Benchmark 5** * **Jan – Benchmark 6** * **MAR – Benchmark 7 and paper 1 mock** * **May – Paper 2 mock and Paper 3 mock** |

**COURSEWORK DEADLINES**

All required practicals and associated work to be completed by April of the second year. You can access the College policy on Godalming Online.

* **Marks released to students on SELF: 7th May 2020 –** The final moderated mark for all the coursework components together will be displayed on your SELF page on this date. The exam board stipulates that no formal grade can be released to students by the teacher (please do not ask!).
* **Marks submitted to the exam board: 15th May 2020 –** The department will submit your final moderated mark to the exam board.

**Other Considerations**

* *LATE POLICY:* In line with the ‘College Assessment Policy’, the department are under no obligation to provide feedback to a student who does not meet the internal deadlines for weekly independent tasks, benchmark assessments or coursework drafts. Please be warned that a failure to meet the final coursework deadline is the equivalent to missing the exam and it will be recommended that the student should be removed from the course. Students who fail to prepare adequately for the lesson as requested, maybe excluded for part of the lesson and asked to work independently at the back of the classroom. A continued failure to meet ‘PREP’ work requirements will result in a reference to the pastoral team and a phone call home to parents.
* *RETURNED WORK:* Work will be assessed and returned within 10 working days of it being submitted unless it is the final coursework submission. The exam board stipulates that no feedback or formal grade can be released to students by the teacher. The exam board reserve the right to inform you of the final grade in August with your results. Please do not ask the teacher for your final mark as they will be unable to provide it.
* *PLAGIARISIM:*  Plagiarism is submitting another person’s written work as one’s own original work or using someone else’s idea without referencing the source or using pictorial work without permission or referencing the source. If there is a suspicion of plagiarism, the Head of Department and Senior Tutor will be informed and a meeting will take place. If a student is found guilty, they will be subject to disciplinary action by the College and the awarding body will be informed. Students should be aware that the College is subscribed to software designed to detect plagiarism.