



SUBJECT PROFILE

Biology



Subject Content

Just take a moment to think of all of the very important things affecting the quality of human life, from genetic engineering to ecology and from agriculture to medicine, that are dependent upon a good understanding of plants and animals, cell biology, physiology and metabolism, biochemistry, genetics, ecology and development and you will begin to see how and why Biology is such a valuable and interesting subject to study. Then go on to remember three things:

- 1 this basic Biology is there to help you to understand how human bodies work,
- 2 there is much more Biology still to be discovered,
- 3 this is a real science with an economic, social and industrial future,

and then you will understand even more of how Biology will fascinate, amaze and challenge you in ways that can be very rewarding. Not only is the subject good to study, but the ways we do it are also varied as you can see below. The science and sensitivity of the subject make it an excellent preparation for many very different careers.

The main aims of the Biology Module are to:

- i. improve your knowledge and understanding of Biology and of the nature of scientific enquiry;
- ii. develop your enjoyment of selective reading and of the collection, organization and presentation of Biological ideas, facts and data;
- iii. enable you to design and carry out experiments and then to analyse their outcomes in a Biological context;
- iv. write effective comparisons, discussions, descriptions and reports in a variety of styles appropriate to Biological Science;
- v. enhance your prospects of continuing your education and training successfully

There are three units – Cell Biology, Aspects of Human Physiology and Inheritance, Evolution and Ecology.

By taking Biology you will add an extra dimension to your general academic skills whatever combination of modules you intend to study. Intending primary teachers should consider studying a least one science module. Anyone intending to have a career in Biology should seriously consider doing Chemistry.

Assessment

By the end of the course you will have completed a range of assignments; one based on practical work and others related to the more theoretical aspects of the study. These pieces of work are marked by your lecturer and then put into your coursework file ready for external moderation. There will be an examination at the end of each unit designed to test your scientific skills and understanding of Biology. The exams cover a range of skills including comprehension, short essay and structured questions



SUBJECT PROFILE

Chemistry



Subject Content

The Chemistry course aims to develop a knowledge and understanding of the **scientific method** using the principles and concepts of chemistry as a framework.

Areas of study will include:

- Atomic structure and chemical bonding
- The chemistry of the chemical elements
- The chemistry of oil-based compounds
- Oxidation and reduction
- Acids and bases
- Energy changes
- Chemical equilibrium
- Rates of reaction

A variety of teaching methods will be used to study these areas, with experimental laboratory work as the core of learning activities.

The most effective way to prepare for this course is to work your way through one of the GCSE Chemistry guides that are available in most bookshops. Those published by C.G.P. (Co-ordination Group Publications) are recommended. You should consider the following publications:

- Chemistry Revision Guide ISBN: 978 1 84146 640 8
- Complete Revision and Practice ISBN: 978 1 84146 658 3

As well as being a good general qualification, relating chemical science and scientific methods to the world around us, this unit also allows progression into Further and Higher Education, especially when it is studied in combination with other units, such as Biology, Sociology and Historical Studies. A wide range of courses are available at local institutions including Environmental Sciences, Food Quality, Archaeology, Chemistry, Nursing, Geography and Land Management.

Assessment

The course is divided into three units, with 50% of the assessment by written examination and 50% on coursework assignments.

Unit 1	(level 2 or 3)	45 minute test and a practical report.
Unit 2	(level 3)	1 hour examination and a practical project
Unit 3	(level 3)	1 hour examination and a practical research project



SUBJECT PROFILE

GCSE English



Subject Content

GCSE English is required by most Higher Education institutions so we recommend that all students taking the Access course, who do not already have a GCSE English qualification or equivalent, take this course in addition to the 4 main subjects in the Access course.

On the GCSE course you will develop your ability to use English accurately and effectively in a variety of styles and for a variety of audiences. Tasks will include: personal writing, both fiction and non-fiction; responding to modern literature and a play by Shakespeare; writing for practical and factual purposes. Some of the literature studied will be from other cultures and traditions. You will learn how to draft, proof read and revise your own writing, and will analyse aspects of the way in which language is used.

The examination at the end of the course will test your ability to read and respond to written passages. You will also need to write in different forms (for example: letters, reports, essays, notes), adapting your own writing to suit different purposes and audiences.

Throughout the course you will be given advice and guidance about how to do well in the examination, as well as compiling a small file of coursework (4 pieces of writing). Oral communication is also an important part of the course and class work will involve lots of discussion as well as written work.

Assessment

You will be assessed through the **WJEC** Welsh examination board.

Your final grade will be assessed by:

- Examination 60%
- Written coursework 20%
- Oral coursework 20%

Access course students are liable for tuition fees for GCSE subjects, unless they are exempt from this through the Level 2 Entitlement (not in possession of 5 GCSE A – C grades or equivalent). See Centre staff for further advice on this. Exam fees will apply to all students.



SUBJECT PROFILE

Literature -

English Studies



If you are willing to read in your own time and explore varied and often contradictory ideas in an atmosphere of lively discussion, then you should consider this option as one of the four to be chosen for the Access course.

Subject Content

There are three units in this subject. The first one is worth 3 credits and units two and three are worth 6 credits each making a total of 15 credits for the subject. Each unit focuses on different type of literature – poetry, drama and prose writing. Discussions within the group in class time will include:

- What are the main ideas, emotions and themes being explored by the author?
- How is the text written? What techniques are used? How can we describe the writer's style?
- What light does the text shed on the society in which or about which it is written?
- How effective is the text? Does it all 'hang together'?

Out of the classroom you will have to do a certain amount of reading in your own time. In the lessons you will be encouraged to share your own ideas and opinions about the text, and will learn how to look closely at the author's words in order to support your own ideas about the possible meanings of the text.

The aims of the English Studies module are to improve your knowledge of literature and to develop your skills of careful reading, analysis, criticism and rational argument. These skills, along with those involved in essay-writing, will be of great use to you in Higher Education. It will be specifically of use for students who want to go onto a teaching qualification or any career which involves presentation of information.

Assessment

There will be a variety of assessments including academic essays, class presentations and oral work. All units are fully assessed through coursework although one of the assessments will include a timed exercise in class.



SUBJECT PROFILE

History



Subject Content

The course is intended to increase awareness of change and continuity and the relevance of history to the present day. You will look at source material from the early twentieth century and learn to evaluate it in a critical way. There is no completely 'right' interpretation of events in the study of history and you will learn to look at and evaluate competing accounts of events. You will be encouraged to write essays that consider these factors and support your arguments with evidence as well as give accounts of the events themselves. Critical judgment of different interpretations supported by evidence is a skill you will acquire in historical essay writing.

The aims of the Historical studies course are to improve your knowledge of history and develop your skills of evaluation, analysis and interpretation of sources and historical accounts. These skills along with all those involved in essay writing will be of great use to you on Higher Education Courses in a wide range of subjects. You need to be prepared to research and read up competing historical accounts in your own time. If you enjoy the study of the past and change in society and can see its relevance to the present day you should consider this option.

The course will be looking at Britain and Russia in the early twentieth century (up to 1939). In preparation for it you could try finding out about topics like the suffragette movement in Britain or the Russian Revolution of 1917, and also about people like Asquith, Churchill, Lloyd-George, Lenin and Stalin.

Assessment

The course has four units each of which carries its own assessment. (There are no, end of year exams.) Unit one must be passed to continue, but does not count towards the final overall mark. Assessment for Units 2, 3 and 4 are made up of a document question, a timed essay in class and two other essays, one of which will be on a research topic.



SUBJECT PROFILE

Law



Subject Content

The Law course involves a study of three units and the topics covered include:

- Categories of law including civil and criminal law. Courts of law, the legal profession including barristers, solicitors and judges and the role of lay people such as juries and magistrates in the law.
- Law relating to negligence including defences available and psychiatric injury.
- Morality of the law in decisions relating to life and death and consent to medical treatment.
- Legislation and how judges interpret Acts of Parliament. The role of judges in creating law.

The aim of the Law module is to introduce legal concepts and to develop your skills of reading material, analysis, criticism, rational and structured argument and research. The module and the skills you develop will be of assistance to potential law students, students wishing to study a business related course, social work, nursing or teaching.

The course will be lively, relevant and interesting. It will complement any of the other options. It will provide an opportunity to explore the subject and gain some understanding of the controls, checks and balances and authority that give power in our society.

Preparing for the course

You will need to read some fairly complex material both in class and in your own time but no previous knowledge of the law and legal systems is required. During lessons you will be encouraged to share your ideas and opinions and understanding of legal material. To help you to prepare for the course you will find it useful to broaden your reading. For example, you might get a law book from your local library to provide a flavour of the subject: keep up to date with current issues in newspapers such as the Times, Independent and Telegraph: watch and listen to TV and radio programmes with political, legal and morality related aspects.

Do not buy a textbook in advance of starting this module as you will be advised of the most up to date and suitable text once you start the course.

Assessment

Unit One is worth 3 credits and is assessed at either Level 2 or Level 3 according to the individual student's ability. Units Two and Three are worth 6 credits each and are both assessed at Level 3 which is roughly equivalent to AS/A Level standard. You will be assessed in each of the units separately by a variety of methods including essay writing, tests, oral presentations and written case studies. The assessments will be marked and graded by your teacher but will be subject to external moderation by the awarding body for the diploma SAAVA.

There is no end of course examination.



SUBJECT PROFILE

GCSE Mathematics



GCSE Mathematics is required by most Higher Education institutions so we recommend that all students who do not already have a GCSE Mathematics at grade C or above (or equivalent), take this course in addition to the 4 main subjects in the Access course.

Subject Content

Why study Mathematics?

A good grasp of basic mathematical concepts and techniques is essential to support work in a whole range of other courses.

What will I learn?

Students will follow the AQA modular (B) Mathematics course.

How will I learn?

Two Maths lessons each week where the mathematical concepts will be introduced and explained and examples of their relevance in questions demonstrated. Students will have the opportunity to practise a variety of questions on each topic using their peers and teacher for support. Students will be advised to buy the relevant text book and will be encouraged to use computer software packages available at college and on the internet. Regular homework will be set and a mathematics workshop is available for students to use on a drop-in basis to support those with any problems.

What will I be able to do next?

The qualification opens many doors into employment and continuing education and provides important background to the study of many other subjects.

Assessment

The course consists of 3 modules with examination sessions in November (number), March (statistics) and June (algebra and geometry). Each exam contains calculator and non-calculator sections.

Access course students are liable for tuition fees for GCSE subjects, unless they are exempt from this through the Level 2 Entitlement (not in possession of 5 GCSE A – C grades or equivalent). See Centre staff for further advice on this. Exam fees will apply to all students.



SUBJECT PROFILE

Psychology



Subject Content

Psychology is the study of mind and behaviour. In this module we look at a variety of aspects of the working of the mind and of human (and occasionally animal) behaviour.

The course is split into three units:

Unit 1: Biological, Developmental or Social approaches to psychology: This Unit looks at the ways psychologists from two approaches, usually social and biological, investigate behaviour. The first area covered is Social Psychology, specifically Conformity and Obedience. This involves looking at the reasons why we go along with others in a group situation – even when we know that they are wrong - and under what circumstances we obey, or refuse to obey, authority figures. The second area of study is from Physiological Psychology which looks at Bodily Rhythms and, more specifically, the functions and characteristics of sleep and what role dreams play in our lives.

Unit 2: Perspectives of Psychology & Psychopathology: Here we look at the major perspectives or explanations for human behaviour. These include behaviourists, psychodynamic, humanistic, cognitive biological explanations for specific behaviours. This Unit also looks at ways of defining abnormality (in the sense of diagnosing mental disorders) and how various psychological perspectives seek to explain the causes of mental disorders. We then see how each perspective then leads us on to adopting one of a variety of courses of treatment.

Unit 3: Research Methods: In this Unit we look at how psychologists carry out their research, and the strengths and weaknesses of their research. Some of this is taught alongside Unit 1 and Unit 2 but in Unit 3 students are required to carry out and write up their own psychological investigation. We focus this around the Cognitive Psychological perspective - which is the prevailing approach taken by Psychologists today - and concentrate on the issue of how our memories are structured and why forgetting occurs.

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Will I have to be able to do Maths? There is some Maths involved. We do a lesson on simple statistics to enable you to work out the results of your own research.

Is there a lot of reading involved? Yes, some will be from your text book and some from hand-outs given to you in lessons. You will also need to read other books at times, especially when doing your own research and when preparing your seminar.

I haven't studied psychology before. Will this be a problem? No, we don't expect you to have any formal knowledge of psychology. We build a lot of training in study skills into the first two Units to help you if you are not very experienced in things such as note-taking and essay writing.

Assessment

The first unit is assessed by a 1000 word essay on one approach plus a short answer test questions on research studies from the second approach. Unit 2 is assessed by a timed essay on the perspectives of psychology and a group presentation on one psychological disorder. In Unit 3 the assessment requires you to carry out a Psychological Investigation of your own and write it up in the accepted format.



SUBJECT PROFILE

Sociology



Subject Content

The Sociology course aims to develop knowledge and critical understanding of the social processes which shape people's behaviour, identity, experiences and attitudes, using a range of sociological approaches and methods.

Areas of study will include:

- Different theoretical perspectives
- Different methods used for sociological research and analysis
- Education; the role of education, educational policies, stratification and educational achievement
- Crime and Deviance; the social distribution of crime with reference to class, gender, ethnicity and region.

Also a further topic selected for a research project, possibly from one of the following:- gender, health, welfare and poverty, mass media, religion.

Teaching sessions will include formal teaching,, small group activities, and discussion groups, with individual support for essay writing and research skills. Students will have the opportunities to practice and gain competence in the independent use of learning resources, research methods, evaluation of material and revision techniques.

Suggested textbooks are:- Sociology in focus by Taylor et al (Causeway), Sociology, Themes and Perspectives by Haralambos and Holborn (Collins) and Sociology In Perspective by Kirby et al (Heinemann).

Sociology is a dynamic subject which offers different ways of discovering and understanding the social world. In combination with other units, such as natural sciences, history, psychology and law, it provides an excellent qualification for continuing to Higher Education. It is particularly useful to those students interested in teaching, social work, nursing and health-related qualification, personnel management, journalism and law.

Assessment

The course is divided into units using the following assessment pattern:

Unit 1: An essay in draft form and in a final, revised and edited form.

Unit 2: A series of glossary entries, to define and illustrate a number of terms chosen from a given list on a particular topic, using context-reference-example to make clear the individual student's input.

A timed essay, written under exam conditions, in answer to a seen question.

Unit 3: The outline proposal for a research project; a document giving a full report on the research carried out; a 10-minute presentation and discussion with the learning group as audience.