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GCSE controlled assessment regulations for biology

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1. Scheme of assessment

- 75% external assessment
- 25% controlled assessment

Assessment objectives		% weighting
AO1	Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of biology	30–40
AO2	Apply skills, knowledge and understanding of biology in practical and other contexts	30–40
AO3	Analyse and evaluate evidence, make reasoned judgements and draw conclusions based on evidence	25-35

2. Skills assessed by controlled assessment

All controlled assessments in biology must be directly related to candidates' practical work.

The following skills must be assessed through controlled assessment:

- Develop hypotheses and plan practical ways to test them including risk assessment; manage risks when carrying out practical work; collect, process, analyse and interpret primary and secondary data including the use of appropriate technology to draw evidence-based conclusions; review methodology to assess fitness for purpose, and review hypotheses in light of outcomes.

In addition, elements of these skills may be assessed externally.

These skills must be assessed in the context of the content specified in paragraph 12 of the GCSE biology criteria.

3. Level of control

Regulations for controlled assessment in biology are defined for the three stages of the assessment:

- task setting
- task taking
- task marking.

For each stage, to ensure reliability and authenticity, the level of control is set as high as possible for the skills assessed.

3(i) Task setting

High control

- Specifications must require candidates to complete a single controlled assessment component/unit. Each controlled assessment component/unit may contain more than one task.
- Tasks must be selected from a number of comparable tasks provided by the awarding organisation.
- The tasks must be replaced each year.
- Specifications must provide opportunities for centres to contextualise the task(s) to best suit their centre-specific circumstances¹.

¹ Centre-specific circumstances will include the availability of and access to resources.

3(ii) Task taking

A) Research/data collection - Limited control

- Authenticity control (externally defined): Specifications must require candidates to complete all work under limited supervision. The awarding organisation must provide clear guidance regarding the use of research methodology, materials from other sources, and the preparation for final production of the work to be assessed.
- Feedback control (externally defined): the awarding organisation must indicate clearly what support is allowed and how this should be recorded.
- Time control (internally defined): specifications must provide guidance on appropriate time limits².
- Collaboration control (externally defined): specifications must state that the work of individual candidates may be informed by working with others but that candidates must provide an individual response³.
- Resource control (internally defined): specifications must state that candidates' access to resources is determined by those available to the centre.

² The awarding organisation must provide guidance, regarding candidates who require extra time due to, for example, a disability.

³ The awarding organisation must provide guidance, regarding candidates who require the use of special equipment due to, for example, a disability.

B) Analysis and evaluation of findings - High control

- Authenticity control (externally defined): Specifications must require candidates to complete all work under formal supervision. The awarding organisation must provide clear guidance regarding the use of materials from other sources, and the preparation for final production of the work to be assessed.
- Feedback control (externally defined): the awarding organisation must indicate clearly what teacher support is allowed and how this should be recorded.
- Time control (externally defined): the awarding organisation must indicate the approximate duration of the tasks⁴.
- Collaboration control (externally defined): specifications must require candidates to complete all work independently.
- Resource control (externally defined): the awarding organisation must specify the resources available to candidates⁵.

⁴ The awarding organisation must provide guidance regarding candidates who require extra time due to, for example, a disability.

⁵ The awarding organisation must provide guidance regarding candidates who require the use of special equipment due to, for example, a disability.

3(iii) Task marking

Medium control

- Teachers mark the controlled assessment using mark schemes or criteria provided by the awarding organisation.
- The awarding organisation moderation must be consistent with *Code of Practice* requirements.

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