



RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENT

NOTICE TO CENTRES

FAO: Head of Science/KS4 Science Coordinator/Examinations Officer

Date: January 2008

Subject: Gateway Science Suite

This Notice to Centres provides the following information for Science B (J640), Additional Science B (J641), Biology B (J643), Chemistry B (J644) and Physics B (J645):

- information on making entries for written units, skills assessment units and certification
- important dates
- Frequently Asked Questions

MAKING ENTRIES

The new Gateway Science qualifications are unitised, each comprising **3 units**:

- 2 externally assessed units - 1-hour written papers (available January and June)
- 1 internally assessed unit - skills assessment unit (available June only)

Candidate entries are specific to either the January or June series so that a candidate who misses an examination paper in January will need to be re-entered for this unit in a subsequent series.

Once entries have been made for all the relevant units of assessment for a qualification, a certification entry can be made which triggers the aggregation of the unit results to generate an overall grade for the qualification. Certification entries can be made in the January or June series.

For example: Gateway Science B: J640

Entry code	Description
B621 F or H	Science B Unit 1 - modules B1, C1, P1 [Foundation or Higher]
B622 F or H	Science B Unit 2 - modules B2, C2, P2 [Foundation or Higher]
B625	Science B Unit 3 – Can-Do tasks and Science in the News
J640	Certification code to be entered when entries have been made for all three units. Without this entry a certificate will not be produced.

Further technical information is available in section 6 of each specification.

IMPORTANT DATES

21 February 2008	June 2008 final entry deadline (all units except re-sit units)
13 March 2008	January 2008 provisional results issue
21 March 2008*	Re-sit units* final entry deadline
15 May 2008	June 2008 coursework marks receipt deadline
21 August 2008	June 2008 provisional results issue
21 October 2008	January 2009 final entry deadline

* The bulk of final entries for June 2008 should be submitted to OCR by **21 February 2008**. After this time, penalty fees will start to apply.

It is, however, recognised that some candidates who take a unit in January 2008 may wish to **re-sit** the unit. These re-sit entries need to be made by **21 March 2008**. After this deadline, penalty fees will start to apply.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How many times can a candidate re-sit a unit?

A candidate can re-sit any unit an unlimited number of times during the lifetime of the specification. In all cases the best result will count in the aggregation to generate the overall grade for the qualification.

Can a student enter for a mixture of foundation and higher tier papers or re-sit a unit at a different tier?

Yes. The marks a candidate obtains for each unit are mapped onto a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). Foundation and higher tier marks for a unit are mapped onto the same scale so marks from different tiers can contribute in the same way when a candidate is entered for certification.

Can candidates re-sit the skills assessment unit without having to re-sit any of the other units for the course?

Yes. Any unit or combination of units (including skills assessment units) can be retaken without the need to re-sit other units.

How is the overall grade for a candidate calculated?

When a certification entry is made for a candidate, the best uniform marks for the three units are added together and a qualification grade calculated.

For example, a certification entry is made for Gateway Science B (certification code J640) for a candidate who has achieved the following marks:

Unit	Date obtained	Uniform mark
B621 F	January 2007	55
B621 H	June 2007	70
B622 H	June 2007	82
B625	June 2008	76

Notice to Centres Continued

The best UMS mark for Unit B621 is added to the marks for B622 and B625 to give a total uniform mark of **228**. This will give the student a grade **B** for Gateway Science B (see table below – also to be found in Section 6.3 of the specification).

Qualification Grade								
A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
300 - 270	269 - 240	239 - 210	209 - 180	179 - 150	149 - 120	119 - 90	89 - 60	59 - 0

Once a candidate has an overall grade, can they re-sit units at a later date and then be entered for certification again?

Yes. There is no need, and it is not possible, for candidates to withdraw their certification entry once a grade has been issued. Candidates may enter for the full qualification an unlimited number of times and may re-sit 1, 2 or all 3 units before making a new certification entry. If the candidate in the example above decided to re-sit unit B621 in January 2009, they could also be entered for certification.

If the candidate obtained a higher uniform mark of 84, then this would give them a total uniform mark of **242** and a grade **A**. If, however the candidate scored a lower mark of 68, then this mark would be ignored and the best mark of 70 (obtained in June 2007) would be used to calculate the overall grade.

If a candidate re-sits a skills assessment unit, can the work used on the first occasion be re-drafted, or does new work need to be completed?

There is a useful JCQ booklet 'Instructions for conducting coursework/portfolios'. Section 4.5 of this booklet indicates that once submitted for final assessment written reports **cannot** be re-drafted; new work will need to be submitted. It is not necessary, however, to re-do the Can-Do tasks.

Can work produced for a skills assessment unit in one Gateway qualification be used in another Gateway qualification?

Yes it can. For example, if a candidate has been entered for both GCSE Gateway Science and GCSE Gateway Biology and they have written a Science in the News report using stimulus material from either B1 or B2, then the report can be submitted for both GCSE Science and GCSE Biology (in the same or a different series). The report should be photocopied as it may be requested by an external moderator as part of the Biology sample **and** as part of the Science sample. Additionally, any Biology Can-Do tasks completed as part of the Biology qualification, based on B1 or B2, can also be used towards the Science qualification.

Similarly, a candidate taking GCSE Gateway Additional Science and GCSE Gateway Physics could submit a Physics Data task and a Physics Research Study, from either P3 or P4, for both qualifications.

Can candidates who sit both written papers at foundation tier achieve a grade B overall?

Yes. This is because the skills assessment unit is untiered so candidates who gain a high mark for the skills assessment unit and for the written papers could have an overall uniform mark score that is high enough to give them a grade B.

Any enquiry about this notice should be referred to the OCR Customer Contact Centre on phone number, 01223 553998 or email, general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk.

