

WGSB6 A Level Options Chemistry FAQ Information Sheet



Which exam board and courses are studied at A Level?

AQA Chemistry A-level 7405.

What skills will studying Chemistry equip me with?

Chemistry is a practical subject and one of the key skills developed in the course is how to safely use a range of practical equipment to independently investigate a range of scientific hypotheses. There is also a significant mathematical side to the course, helping to develop your numeracy skills. Problem solving is integral to the course with students often asked to apply their knowledge to unseen contexts. Articulating your ideas precisely and unambiguously is a key skill we train students for throughout the course.

Do I need a specific grade at GCSE to access A level?

There are no grade requirements for studying chemistry at A-level. However, students who achieve less than a grade 7 at GCSE tend to struggle with the significant demands of the course. The majority of students who go on to achieve A* and A grades at A-level had little difficulty with the GCSE, achieving grades 8/9.

How is the course structured and how will it be taught?

The specification is split into three main areas – Physical Chemistry, Organic Chemistry and Inorganic Chemistry. Physical and Organic make up the majority of the content with a teacher taking responsibility for each of these sides of the course, the remaining Inorganic topics are split between the two teachers. We teach the content in the same structure as the specification with end of topic tests every few weeks.

Is there a coursework component?

Chemistry is a practical subject however there is no coursework, instead this content will be assessed and graded through the written examinations only. At the end of the two-year course students will receive a separate endorsement of their practical skills, taken alongside their A-level exams.

Who teaches the course?

All teachers in the chemistry department currently teach A-level and have years of experience in encouraging students to fulfil their potential in the subject. Each year of study you will have two teachers, one teaching the organic side of the course and one teaching the physical side of the course.

How is the course resourced?

Each topic is delivered via bespoke booklets containing notes and banks of questions to support students learning. Students are also provided with an AQA endorsed textbook for each year of their study, which they are prompted to use in their own time alongside their booklets to create revision notes. The practical endorsement is evidenced by a practical folder kept in school that contains reports on every required practical completed by the students.



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How well do students achieve in Chemistry?

We have an excellent track record of supporting students to achieve consistently strong results at A-level, often being one of the highest achieving subjects at A-level in the school. The vast majority of students achieve a C grade or above, with a significant number of these achieving the top grades of A and A*.

Will I need to do a lot of independent study?

On average you will receive 1-2 hours of structured homework a week, however this does not represent all the work expected outside of lessons. At A-level there is more responsibility on the student to reflect on their own learning and ensure they master the content. Reviewing, rewriting and adding to your notes alongside completing past paper questions will need to become part of your working routine.

What are typical A level subject choices alongside Chemistry?

Students often choose to study another science alongside Chemistry, most commonly Biology or Physics, but also Psychology or Geology. Maths is another subject that is frequently chosen alongside Chemistry at A-level.

Do I need to take another subject to support my study of Chemistry?

Whilst not essential, students who take Physics or Maths as well as Chemistry tend to do particularly well, whilst students without this combination find the significant mathematical aspects of the course challenging. Whilst extra support would be provided, it is important to recognise the extra commitment that would be required to develop your Maths skills.

What subject related extracurricular opportunities are offered at A level?

We enter students into a range of national chemistry competitions designed to push more able sixth form chemists, including the Royal Society Chemistry Olympiad and the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge. We also take a team of our 5 strongest year 13 chemists down to Cambridge University each year to take part in the annual Cambridge Chemistry Race. We also run an annual trip for year 12 students to the LJMU Pharmaceutical Science department to get first-hand experience of working in a university lab.

How might Chemistry help me in my next steps / university / career planning?

Chemistry underlies many branches of technology such as metallurgy, fuel, textiles and chemical engineering to name but a few. Chemistry also enters into every manufacturing industry as well as medicine and agriculture. Knowledge of chemistry is also helpful in the building industry when considering materials and their structures. The chemical industry, together with its associated industries, is a major source of employment.

Other helpful information about studying Chemistry

Success at A-level Chemistry is heavily reliant on a strong work ethic. Even the brightest students have to work hard, establishing positive work habits to achieve top grades. We support students in doing this every step of the way, but it is important to realise that Chemistry A-level is a demanding undertaking.

