

GCSE science Virtual communities Spring 2021

Spring 2021



Welcome



Today's agenda

- How did the 2020 exams go?
- What do we know about 2021?
- Supporting the learning gap
- Understanding key command words in GCSE science assessments

How did the 2020 exams go?

How did Summer 2020 compare to 2019?

- Slight increase in total entries for all sciences
- Slight shift towards Higher tier for all specifications
- Outcomes significantly higher, across all grades

Autumn 2020 exceptional series

- Only for students who could not receive a grade in summer 2020, or students who wanted to improve their grade
- Entries very low compared with summer
- Most entries were resits
- Grade boundaries set to align with the outcomes of the summer series
- Check the grade boundaries and results statistics on our website (see page 5 of the Support booklet)

What do we know about summer 2021?

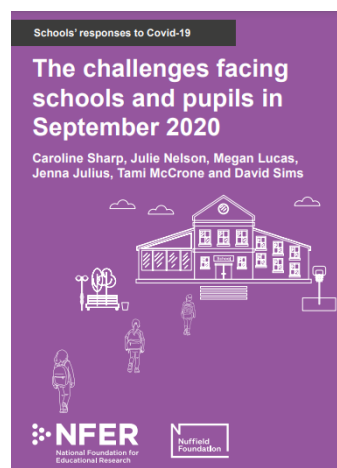
- Student grades will be determined by teacher assessment. We'll share the details as soon as we know more.
- Outcomes from Ofqual's consultation in January 2021 were published in February.
- To get the latest news from AQA, sign up for updates on our website (link on page 30 of the Support booklet)

What do we know about the learning gap?

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) has conducted a report on schools' responses to Covid-19:

The challenges facing schools and pupils in September 2020 (NFER, September 2020)

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What do we know about the learning gap?

Key messages from the NFER study

- Engagement with remote learning during the first national lockdown was low, particularly in deprived areas. This led to learning gaps.
- On return to school, many senior leaders prioritised emotional and mental health of students – focusing on resettling and engaging them with learning again.
- All year groups are affected, not just years 11 and 13.
- The learning gap is thought to be bigger for disadvantaged pupils and lower attainers. Some schools estimate the gap to be greater for boys than girls.

Supporting planning to overcome the learning gap

In August 2020, the Educational Endowment Foundation produced a guide to supporting school planning.

This was based on research about the impact of Covid-19 in 2020.



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Supporting planning to overcome the learning gap

The EEF guide suggests focusing efforts in three areas.

1. High-quality teaching for all, for example:
 - professional development programme
 - in-depth subject knowledge of teachers
 - effective diagnostic assessment
 - effective remote teaching
 - support for newly qualified teachers
2. Targeted academic support, for example:
 - small group/one-to-one tuition
 - structured interventions
3. Wider strategies to support pupils, such as social and emotional learning.

The EEF's full *Guide to supporting school planning* can be found [here](#).

CPD support with the learning gap

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, STEM Learning, ASE, CLEAPSS, IoP, RSC and RSB have also been providing teaching and learning support on the following:

- practical work
- online lessons for students
- home learning suggestions and resources
- CPD for teachers.

AQA can provide information and advice on assessment.

STEM Learning – an overview

- The National STEM Centre in York provides residential and online CPD.
- Local Science Learning Partnerships (SLPs) are school-based. They provide local expertise in teaching and learning in science, facilitating CPD, and providing school-to-school support for teachers, subject leaders, trainees and support staff.
- CPD includes face-to-face, remote learning, online or bespoke (for example for your department or MAT).
- Visit the local CPD pages on the STEM learning website (find a link for this on page 6 of the Support booklet).

‘Catch up’ CPD from STEM learning

Remote	Face-to-face	Online	Residential
Planning and delivering a remote science lesson	Metacognition and self-regulated learning in science	Teaching for home learning: Secondary Science	Teaching for home learning: Secondary science
Narrowing the gap – supporting disadvantaged learners	Science for low attainers - how to engage and ensure progress	Introducing assessment for learning	Maximising progress for low attaining learners
Supporting the working memory: strategies and techniques to improve recall and understanding in science	Applying knowledge and understanding in science	Planning for learning: formative assessment	Practical science including health and safety
Diagnostic teaching and dealing with misconceptions	Supporting EAL Learners in science		Formative assessment and remote learning
Effective delivery of blended practical work	Stretch and challenge of pupils in science		Reaching for grade 9
Self-regulated learning for TS	Early Career Network/ Early Career Conference		

Understanding some key command words

Students need to be able to show understanding of the content and practical skills, but don't always understand what the question is asking.

These command words seem to cause students particular difficulty:

- describe
- explain
- compare
- evaluate.

Group exercises for each command word:

- brief discussion of what examiners are looking for
- exploring student responses
- how can you help your students understand what is required?

Exercise 1: Introducing the command words

- The 'Command words' page on our website briefly describes what is required of 'describe', 'explain', 'compare' and 'evaluate'.
- Look at the definitions on screen.
- Comment in the chat boxes below each definition.
- Further information on pages 7–19 of the Support booklet.

Exercise 2: Responses to 'explain' questions

- Look at student responses 1, 2 and 3.
- Refer to the mark schemes in the Support booklet (pages 12–14).
- How well has each student addressed the requirements of the command word (ie have they answered the question)?

Exercise 3: Example 'compare' questions

- Look at student responses 4 and 5.
- Refer to the mark schemes in the Support booklet (pages 16 and 18).
- Both of these responses gained full marks.
- Can you see the features that make them good responses to the command word?

Exercise 4: 'Evaluate' questions

- Look at student responses 6 and 7.
- Refer to the mark scheme on page 22 of the Support booklet.
- Can you see the features that differentiate the two, in terms of meeting the command?

More assessment resources from AQA

On the AQA website:

- 'Focus on success' packs
- Materials from previous Hub meetings (see Support booklet)
- Free CPD course: Mark scheme guidance and application

On Centre Services (previously e-AQA):

- Fundamental skills course materials
- Standardisation materials for 2019 Paper 1s
- Standardisation materials for 2020 key questions

Sign up for the latest resources and assessment support on the science pages of the AQA website.

Extra resources

Take advantage of our extra resources in the 'Plan', 'Teach' and 'Assess' sections of our website.

Teaching resources

Plan	Teach	Assess
20	73	106
Prepare for your teaching year. Information, support and services to help you deliver the specification.	Teaching resources that you can use to plan your lessons and support your students' learning.	Prepare your students for assessment. Past papers, mark schemes and example answers.
All planning resources >	All teaching resources >	All assessment resources >

Event materials

The electronic materials from this event will be available to download shortly. If you aren't able to download them at this time, they will be made available to you in the customer portal of our online booking system.

Once we receive notification that you have attended the course, you will be sent a certificate of attendance email. When you receive the email, please log in to your account and the materials will be available on the 'my resources' tab on the welcome screen.

Any questions?



Get in touch

Our friendly team will be happy to support you between 8am and 4pm, Monday to Friday.

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aqa.org.uk



Thank you
