

Biology National 5

Why take this course?

Biology, the study of living organisms, plays a crucial role in our everyday existence and is an increasingly important subject in the modern world, with some of the biggest issues facing humans and the planet covered within the course. Biology affects everyone and aims to find solutions to many of the world's current issues, including health, food and a range of environmental issues. Advances in technologies have made this varied subject more exciting and relevant than ever.

These courses will be of interest and value to candidates wishing to develop skills, knowledge and understanding of biology. The course is a broad and up-to-date selection of concepts and ideas relevant to the central position of life science within our society. An experimental and investigative approach is used to develop knowledge and understanding of key areas of Biology.

To succeed in this course, you need...

The correct application and attitude towards study both in theoretical and practical situations. Candidates having followed the S3 Biology course will be at an advantage. Knowledge from the BGE courses are essential stepping stones along with the skills required in application of scientific knowledge and investigative skills.

Good literacy and numeracy skills are essential and will be developed in context throughout the course.

Course structure and Content

National 5 is divided into 3 units.

Cell Biology - A focus on cellular level processes leading to an understanding of the importance and roles of the cell;

Multicellular Organisms - By comparing the processes in multicellular plants and animals, candidates investigate increasing levels of complexity;

Life on Earth - Biodiversity and interdependence are covered, along with the processes leading to evolution as well as food security and ethical issues.

Course Assessment (Subject to changes by SQA)

National 5 course assessment is externally assessed and conducted in two parts:

- a final exam worth 80% of the final grade;
- an assignment worth 20% of the final grade

The question paper assesses the application or extension of knowledge and/or skills in unfamiliar situations, practical and theoretical contexts.

The purpose of the assignment is to assess candidates' ability to apply the skills of scientific inquiry and related biology knowledge and understanding. Candidates will, with support, choose a relevant topic, devise an aim and conduct an experimental study giving an account of the relevant biology.

This allows assessment of skills which cannot be assessed through the question paper; for example, the handling and processing of experimental or fieldwork data, and research skills.

Where might this course take me?

Biology opens up a variety of employment opportunities within Orkney and beyond in, for example, medical and veterinary sciences, sports, genetics, agriculture, fish farming, marine biology, renewable energy, food technology and nature conservation.

National 5 is also the preferred and usual entry route to Higher Biological science courses.