



Additional cross board messaging on the Practical Endorsement for GCE Biology, Chemistry, Geology and Physics

This messaging is in addition to the main cycle 3 messaging updated in August 2020. It provides clarity on the requirements for the Practical Endorsement for centres making entries in Autumn 2020 and/or Summer 2021.

Autumn 2020 series and the Practical Endorsement

Students who are unhappy with their grade this summer may choose to enter for the Autumn 2020 examinations. For students who were entered for the Summer 2020 series:

- If students have a result in the Practical Endorsement from the Summer 2020 series, they can carry forward this result into the autumn series.
- If students received a Not Classified in the Summer 2020 series, but have subsequently completed sufficient practical work to meet the Practical Endorsement requirements, the centre can submit a new Pass outcome.

Entry for the Autumn 2020 series is limited to students who were entered for the Summer 2020 exams and to students who the exam board believes had intended to enter for those exams. Students being awarded a Practical Endorsement grade for the first time may be awarded a Pass if the centre has sufficient evidence. This will include candidates who were on track before school closures but may not have met all the requirements for a minimum number of practical activities.

Summer 2021 series and the Practical Endorsement

The basic requirements for the Practical Endorsement are unchanged. **You should still aim to complete a minimum of 12 practical activities with your students, covering both the CPAC requirements and all apparatus and techniques.** A minimum of 15% of marks in the written examinations will still cover indirect assessment of practical skills.

We understand that externally imposed limitations, such as localised school closures, may make meeting the usual Practical Endorsement requirements difficult for some centres. In such cases, students may still be awarded a Pass in the Practical Endorsement if they have demonstrated competence in all of the CPAC, even if they haven't completed the usual minimum requirement of 12 practicals. In all circumstances, it's important that students are still taught about any apparatus and techniques they are unable to cover, as they will still be expected to answer questions about these in the examinations.

For students sitting AS Biology, Chemistry, Geology or Physics **only**, demonstrations and simulations of practical activities to cover required practical apparatus and techniques are permitted, though a "hands on" experience of practical work is preferable where possible. Year 12 students embarking on the first year of the A Level pathway from September 2020 should still be completing practical work and being assessed on the CPAC to support the requirements for the Practical Endorsement as far as is possible.

For A Level Geology, the same changes to the Practical Endorsement as for A Level Biology, Chemistry and Physics apply. Additionally, the requirement for a written statement that centres have given students the opportunity to undertake 4 mandatory days of fieldwork at A Level (and 2 mandatory days of fieldwork at AS) has been removed. **You should still try and meet the fieldwork requirements if you can.** The requirements can also be achieved in a local or lab setting rather than out on location. If you are unable to meet the fieldwork requirements, you still need to teach the relevant techniques to your students as they will still be expected to answer questions about these in the examinations.

The changes detailed above apply to the summer 2021 series only.

2020–2021 academic year monitoring arrangements for all A Level sciences

All monitoring during the 2020-21 academic year will be carried out remotely. There will be no face-to-face visits. Remote monitoring will **not** include a lesson observation but will still require all other elements.

Full guidance on the format and requirements for these visits is outlined in the separate document, **Practical Endorsement guidance for remote monitoring**. Centres who still require monitoring within the current cycle will be contacted by their Monitor in due course who will be able to answer any questions they may have about the process.

The changes to the monitoring arrangements apply to the 2020-21 academic year only.