

BTEC EXTENDED CERTIFICATE IN APPLIED SCIENCE FAQs

Q: Why should I do the BTEC Applied Science course instead of A level Science?

There are several answers to that question! The most obvious answer is if you don't get the grades to do an A level and you want to carry on with science past GCSE – BTEC is the best pathway. Students who don't do well at GCSE in maths and science will generally struggle with A level sciences. You have a much better chance of getting a great grade with a BTEC.

Another reason is that BTECs include coursework, not just exams at the end of 2 years. None of the A level sciences have coursework, but for applied science, about half the marks for your overall grade come from coursework that you have completed. Applied science includes formal exams and externally set practical and research tasks that you do under supervised conditions. If you would rather work steadily towards your grade over two years than just rely on exams at the end of the course, then a BTEC is right for you.

Q: Can I do the applied science course alongside a science A level?

You cannot take the applied science course alongside A level sciences as there is too much overlap in the material covered. Universities don't accept this combination of subjects.

Q: How much maths is in the course?

All sciences at level 3 have a reasonable amount of maths in, including applied science. You need at least a grade 4 in maths to be able to do the applied science course. You need to be comfortable using percentages, basic algebra like rearranging equations, and working in standard form. You must have a scientific calculator, like the one that you used for GCSE maths and science.

Q: How do the grades on BTEC courses compare to A level courses?

BTECs are graded at distinction*, distinction, merit or pass. This is equivalent to A level grades of A*, A, C or E. In terms of applying to University, they are worth the same amount as the equivalent A level grade.

Q: Why do I have to study all 3 sciences? Is there any way round this?

All the compulsory units for the course involve all 3 sciences and so we don't get a choice. The optional unit we offer is biology based, as most students on this course are interested in some science to back up their other courses in sport/psychology/geography etc.

We have chosen to put in equal amounts of the 3 sciences to keep your options open after college as many students change their mind about their career direction.

Q: Where do students go after studying Applied Science?

Most of our students go onto university. Students who want to do science at university often end up on a science foundation course initially, to increase their science knowledge. But generally, the students study a wide range of courses from geography to sport to marketing, depending on their other courses.