

Parents' guide to coursework – all SCIENCE GCSEs

How much is it worth?	What has to be done?	
<p>The controlled conditions coursework in science is called an ISA. This stands for 'Individual Skills Assignment'</p> <p>It makes up 25% of the available marks; this is 100 of the UMS (uniform mark scheme) marks out of the 400 total for the GCSE. The written papers make up the other 300 UMS marks..</p> <p>The exam board [AQA] convert the mark out of 34 into a mark out of 100 UMS.</p>	<p>All ISA work is done in lessons. The teacher will lead a discussion on the context of the ISA. For instance "cooling by evaporation". Then students research possible practical methods and make notes. These notes are used in the following lesson to help the students answer the first section of the "ISA test" which has questions on how they could do a practical to investigate the context</p> <p>In the following lesson students then complete practical work following a supplied method – this is not marked in anyway. The teacher may take in all the results from all students to produce a class set of results. In the next lesson students draw a line graph or bar chart to show the results. The teacher will again discuss what has been found out and the students will consider the reliability of their work.</p> <p>In the final lesson students have to use their table and graph to help them answer the second section of the "ISA test". Both sections of the test are completed under exam type conditions, but generally in a normal classroom or laboratory. The test is then marked by the teacher.</p> <p>Teachers are not allowed to return the marked papers to the students.</p>	
When is it done?	Can parents help their children?	If the mark is low, can it be re-done or improved?
<p>In Science we carry out ISAs at the best time for each individual science set. They are not at a set point in the year. Generally speaking top sets will be ready to attempt them by February of Yr 10.</p> <p>Students who are studying only a single core Science GCSE, spread over Yr 10 and 11, are likely to only attempt their first ISA in the summer of Yr 10.</p>	<p>All the written work has to be carried out under the supervision of the teacher in school. Although parents can help by supporting their children in their normal science homework's and to revise for all the practice and real GCSE exams, there is no specific help that can be given during the Science ISAs.</p> <p>Please rest assured that we target the work during the build up to the ISA test to help students achieve the best mark possible.</p>	<p>The ISA tasks and tests are set by the exam board. The work must be completed by April of the year in which the GCSE finishes. At that time we have to submit the single best mark that a student achieves in an ISA for that GCSE.</p> <p>We are allowed to complete up to six ISAs over Yr 10 and 11. However the most any student has ever taken is five.</p> <p>Often after taking two or three ISAs we believe that students have achieved their best performance possible and lesson time would then focus on the understanding needed for the remaining 75% of the marks available. Students cannot repeat the same ISA but can take a new ISA to improve on their previous mark.</p>