

# Frequently Asked Questions about Accelerated Science

Based on discussions we have had with staff, administrators and parents, we have compiled this list of frequently asked questions and their answers regarding the Accelerated Science course:

1. If my child decides not to go into this course next year, but changes their mind for 10th grade, will they be allowed to go into the course?

**No.**

2. If I take Accelerated 1 and 2, could they still take physics as an 11th grade student?

**Yes.**

3. What electives will my child be able to take in 10th grade if they take Accelerated Science?

**Because students will be exposed to Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science and Physics, there are many electives they will be eligible to take along side of Accelerated 2. Please consult the most recent version of the Staples Program of Studies for specific courses.**

4. What about preparation for SAT subject area tests?

**Most students take the SAT subject tests while they are in the corresponding AP course, so as long as that is the case, accelerated science should have no negative effects on students' preparation for these tests.**

5. What about AP courses?

**The college board is in the process of revising their science courses to align more with the new science standards, the NGSS. In fact, the AP Biology curriculum has already changed to focus on themes and the new AP Physics 1 course is very much aligned with NGSS.**

6. How are the teachers trained with this new approach?

**The teachers have been engaged in multiple forms of professional development including week-long workshops offered by the Connecticut Science Center, online courses and webinars. They have also participated in numerous subject-specific NGSS workshops.**

7. Should I reach out to my child's current science teacher?

**Sure, but keep in mind, they are trained to recommend for biology levels only. They could certainly speak to your child's learning style, but they do not know enough**



about the accelerated course (sequence, pacing, content) to be able to answer specific questions about the course.

8. How will colleges know the level or rigor this class involves? How will the transcript be interpreted?

**There are several answers to this question. Colleges know the type of education Staples students receive. They value this and see the level of preparation our students receive. Also, the Guidance Department publishes a school profile and part of this profile describes any special courses such as Accelerated Science we offer. This will help colleges understand how Accelerated Science fits into the overall science program at Staples. Guidance counselors will also describe the nature of the course in their letter of recommendation for students. Finally, most university professors will tell you that they value the ability of students to think about problems over high school content.**

9. Will students be adequately prepared to AP courses?

**Yes.**

10. My child was recommended for B-level biology. Will this course be too challenging for them?

**This is a difficult question to give a general answer to. The course does lend itself to differentiation in the sense that the teacher knows, in a detailed way, what a student does and does not understand. It is true that this course promotes a different learning style; one that may be well suited for some students who are recommended for Biology B. On the other hand, it may not be a good fit for other students if they are concrete-sequential learners.**

11. My child was recommended for H-level Biology. Will it be challenging enough for me?

**Again, specific answers are difficult and what is right for one student may not be right for another student. Students can think as deeply into a problem as they wish and this may appeal to some students. Alternatively, if a student prefers to learn in a discipline-specific way, this course may not be the right choice.**

12. How does the amount of work in this class compare to H-level science classes?

**In some ways, this is comparing apples to oranges. The workload is comparable to any A-level class, but the type of work is different. For example, laboratory experiences happen in both types of courses, but in the traditional course, a student might be asked to write a formal lab report summarizing their results. In the accelerated course, the student might be asked to write an explanation of how the results of the experiment fit with other data they already have and to explain how the results might lead to the next investigation.**

**The other thing to keep in mind is that the new science standards give equal weight to content, skills and themes, so all of the courses that are aligned with the new standards will have this emphasis and the nature of the homework will reflect this change.**

