

National 5 Biology assessment overview (June 2012)

Key points

SQA is currently developing Unit and Course assessment support and this document outlines what SQA will produce for the National 5 Biology Course.

- ◆ Unit assessment support — three exemplar support packages, which meet the requirements of the Unit Specifications. Each package will exemplify a different approach to assessment and gathering evidence. Evidence for the achievement of Outcome 1 in one Unit may be used as evidence of the achievement of Outcome 1 for other Units in this Course. Centres will be free to develop their own assessment packages.
- ◆ A specimen question paper and marking instructions, which meet the requirements of the *Course Assessment Specification*.
- ◆ A specimen assignment and marking instructions, which meet the requirements of the *Course Assessment Specification*.
- ◆ All coursework will be published by 30 April 2013 in a phased release:
 - 28 February 2013
 - 31 March 2013
 - 30 April 2013

Unit assessment support

This section should be read in conjunction with the [National 5 Biology Unit Specifications](#).

The resources can be used in a number of ways, appropriate to the needs of the learner. These packages will show how to generate evidence and make assessment judgements. Each package will provide complete coverage of the requirements of the Units of the Course.

Package 1: Unit-by-Unit assessment (31 October 2012)

Unit-by-Unit assessment support will be provided in the form of an experiment/practical investigation and a report for Outcome 1, and an investigation report and bank of questions for Outcome 2.

Package 2: Unit-by-Unit assessment — alternative forms of evidence (28 Feb 2013)

Unit-by-Unit assessment support will be provided in the form of an investigation covering Outcome 1 and some of Outcome 2. Other assessment approaches will indicate how the remaining Assessment Standards for Outcome 2 can be overtaken.

Package 3: portfolio approach (30 April 2013)

A portfolio assessment support will be provided, showing how centres could use naturally occurring evidence to build up an Outcome-based portfolio of learners' work that meets the requirement of the Outcomes of the Units in the Course.

Specimen question paper

(Publication by 28 February 2013)

This should be read in conjunction with the [National 5 Biology Course Assessment Specification](#). The question paper will have two Sections. Section A will contain objective questions and will have 20 marks. Section B will contain restricted and extended response questions and will have 60 marks. The majority of the marks (55±5) will be awarded for demonstrating and applying knowledge and understanding of the mandatory content of the Course. The other marks (25±5) will be awarded for applying scientific inquiry skills. Marks will be distributed approximately proportionately across the three Units.

Amount of change

Structurally, the question paper will be similar to Intermediate 2 Biology. The mandatory knowledge is similar to both Standard Grade Credit and Intermediate 2 Biology and has been updated. However, there will be less emphasis on recall questions and more emphasis on application of knowledge and skills.

Specimen assignment

(Publication by 30 April 2013)

This should be read in conjunction with the [National 5 Biology Course Assessment Specification](#). The coursework task is an open-book assignment, which is a research investigation into a relevant topic in biology, focusing on its application and its impact on society/the environment. The assignment will have 20 marks. The majority of the marks (14±2) will be awarded for applying scientific inquiry skills. The other marks (6±2) will be awarded for applying related knowledge and understanding.

The assignment brief will outline the task to be carried out. The stages to be covered in the assignment brief are: select a relevant topic related to the key areas, plan the investigation, identify resources, carry out research, select relevant information/data, gather relevant information/data and write-up a report.

The investigation stage should be covered within approximately 7 hours of class time. Resources required by the learner will include access to sources of information relevant to their chosen topic. The investigation will be carried out under supervised conditions. Teachers/lecturers should discuss each stage of the investigation with the learners. Learners will complete the report write-up in no more than 1 hour. Resources required by the learner for the write-up will include their data from the investigation stage.

Stages of report

The aim of the investigation, the reason for learner choice of topic, the process undertaken, presentation of data/results, the application of the topic, a balanced evaluation of the impact on society/the environment and a reasoned conclusion.

SQA will provide guidance for teachers, guidance for learners and exemplification of standards regarding the level of the task and expected learner response.

Amount of change

This is a new method of assessment for this subject.