



Advanced Higher Biology: Understanding the next steps for session 2016–17

Early in 2016, each subject area was reviewed and the results published in individual [Subject Review Reports](#) in May. Some actions applied immediately for candidates in session 2016–17, other actions were for later years.

This Guidance note explains the impact on assessment for candidates being presented in session 2016–17 and must be read in conjunction with the Subject Review Report as the principal guide to arrangements for this year.

(Previously published subject documents affected by the subject changes will be amended in due course. There may be a period of misalignment.)

Unit assessment

♦ Outcome 1

Biology: Cells and Proteins (H7W5 77)

Biology: Organisms and Evolution (H7W6 77)

Candidates are no longer required to show full mastery of the Assessment Standards to achieve Outcome 1. Instead, five out of the six Assessment Standards for Outcome 1 must be met to achieve a pass.

Assessment Standard	Achieved (✓ or x)					
	1.1	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.2	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.3	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓
1.4	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
1.5	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
1.6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x
Pass/Fail	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

Important notes: There is still the requirement for candidates to be given the opportunity to meet all Assessment Standards. The above threshold has been put in place to reduce the volume of re-assessment, where that is required.

The achievement of Outcome 1 in either of the Units, H7W5 77 or H7W6 77, cannot be used as evidence of the achievement of Outcome 1 in the Investigative Biology Unit, H7W7 77, of this Course.

Re-assessment

Candidates may be given the opportunity to re-draft their original Outcome 1 report or to carry out a new experiment/practical investigation.

◆ **Outcome 2**

Biology: Cells and Proteins (H7W5 77)

Biology: Organisms and Evolution (H7W6 77)

Assessment Standards 2.1 and 2.2

Assessment Standards 2.1 (making accurate statements) and 2.2 (solving problems) are no longer required to be passed independently. Assessment Standards 2.1 and 2.2 can now be assessed by means of a single assessment for each Unit.

During session 2016–17, centres have two possible options when assessing Outcome 2 (AS 2.1 and 2.2). Option 1 is detailed on pages 3–5 and Option 2 on page 6.

Option 1: Assessment

Candidates can be assessed by means of a single test that contains marks and a cut-off score. A suitable Unit assessment will cover all of the key areas (AS 2.1) **and** assess each of the problem solving skills (AS 2.2).

Where a candidate achieves 50% or more of the total marks available in a single Unit assessment they will pass Outcome 2 for that Unit. Existing Unit assessment support packs can be used during session 2016–17. Guidance on the use of each pack is noted below.

(a) Unit assessment support packs 1 and 2

As these packages contain questions on all of the key areas (AS 2.1) and questions covering each of the problem solving skills (AS 2.2), Unit assessment support packs 1 and 2 **are suitable** for use as a single assessment for their associated Units.

The number of marks available for each question should be combined to give the total number of marks available. A cut-off score of 50% should be applied to each of these Unit assessments.

Where a centre is using Unit assessment support packs 1 and/or 2 they should apply the cut-off scores shown in the following tables:

Unit assessment support pack 1	Total number of marks available (AS 2.1 + AS 2.2)	Cut-off score
H7W5 77 Biology: Cells and Proteins (V 1.2)	34	17/34
H7W6 77 Biology: Organisms and Evolution (V 1.3)	34	17/34

Unit assessment support pack 2	Total number of marks available (AS 2.1 + AS 2.2)	Cut-off score
H7W5 77 Biology: Cells and Proteins (V 1.2)	34	17/34
H7W6 77 Biology: Organisms and Evolution (V 1.2)	34	17/34

(b) Unit assessment support pack 3 (portfolio approach)

It is still acceptable for centres to use this method of assessment.

Candidates should be given the opportunity to make accurate statements for all of the key areas of each Unit (AS 2.1). They must also be given opportunities throughout the Course to answer questions on each of the three problem solving skills (AS 2.2).

Evidence should be collected as candidates progress through the Course. For Assessment Standard 2.1, candidates must achieve 50% or more of the total KU marks available for **each** Unit. For Assessment Standard 2.2, candidates must achieve 50% or more of the **total** marks available for all three problem solving skills.

Examples are given below:

◆ **Example A**

This candidate has passed Outcome 2 for both Units as they have achieved 50% or more of the total KU marks available for each Unit **and** 50% or more of the total marks available for all three problem solving skills across both Units.

Unit	Assessment Standard (marks achieved)	
	2.1	2.2
H7W5 77 Biology: Cells and Proteins	25/34	5/10
H7W6 77 Biology: Organisms and Evolution	28/34	

◆ **Example B**

This candidate has not passed Outcome 2 for both Units as, although they have achieved 50% or more of the total KU marks available, they have not achieved 50% or more of the total marks available for all three problem solving skills across both Units.

Unit	Assessment Standard (marks achieved)	
	2.1	2.2
H7W5 77 Biology: Cells and Proteins	18/34	2/10
H7W6 77 Biology: Organisms and Evolution	20/34	

Option 1: Re-assessment

SQA's guidance on re-assessment is that there should be one or, in exceptional circumstances, two re-assessment opportunities. Re-assessment should be carried out under the same conditions as the original assessment. It is at a centre's discretion as to how they re-assess their candidates. Candidates may be given a full re-assessment opportunity, or be re-assessed on individual key areas and/or problem solving skills. Regardless of which option is chosen, candidates must achieve 50% or more of each re-assessment opportunity.

Option 2: Assessment

Centres can continue to use the Unit assessment support packs from SQA's secure site or their own centre devised assessments in the same way as before.

If this option is chosen, 50% or more of the KU statements (AS 2.1) made by candidates must be correct in the Unit assessment and at least one correct response for each problem solving skill (AS 2.2) is required to pass Outcome 2. However, if a candidate is given more than one opportunity in a Unit assessment to provide a response for a problem solving skill, then they must answer 50% or more correctly.

Option 2: Re-assessment

SQA's guidance on re-assessment is that there should be one or, in exceptional circumstances, two re-assessment opportunities. Re-assessment should be carried out under the same conditions as the original assessment. It is at a centre's discretion as to how they re-assess their candidates. Candidates may be given a full re-assessment opportunity, or be re-assessed on individual key areas and/or problem solving skills. Regardless of which KU option is chosen, candidates must achieve 50% or more of each re-assessment opportunity.

Unit assessment

◆ Outcome 1

Investigative Biology (H7W7 77)

Candidates are no longer required to show full mastery of the Assessment Standards to achieve Outcome 1. Instead, four out of the five Assessment Standards for Outcome 1 must be met to achieve a pass.

Assessment Standard	Achieved (✓ or x)				
	1.1	x	✓	✓	✓
1.2	✓	x	✓	✓	✓
1.3	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
1.4	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
1.5	✓	✓	✓	✓	x
Pass/Fail	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

Important notes: There is still the requirement for candidates to be given the opportunity to meet all Assessment Standards. The above threshold has been put in place to reduce the volume of re-assessment, where that is required.

The achievement of Outcome 1 in this Unit, H7W7 77, can be used as evidence of the achievement of Outcome 1 in the other two Units, H7W5 77 and H7W6 77, of this Course. There is no requirement to match Assessment Standards.

Re-assessment

Candidates may be given the opportunity to re-draft their original Outcome 1 report or to carry out a new biological investigation.

◆ **Outcome 2**

Investigative Biology (H7W7 77)

Assessment Standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4

Assessment Standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 are no longer required to be passed independently. Assessment Standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 can now be assessed by means of a single assessment for this Unit.

During session 2016–17, centres have two possible options when assessing Outcome 2 (AS 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4). Option 1 is detailed on pages 9–10 and Option 2 on page 11.

Option 1: Assessment

Candidates can be assessed by means of a single test that contains marks and a cut-off score. A suitable Unit assessment will cover all four of the Assessment Standards (AS 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4).

Where a candidate achieves 50% or more of the total marks available in a single Unit assessment they will pass Outcome 2 for this Unit. Existing Unit assessment support packs can be used during session 2016–17. Guidance on the use of each pack is noted below.

(a) Unit assessment support packs 1 and 2

As these packages contain questions on all of the key areas (AS 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4), Unit assessment support packs 1 and 2 **are suitable** for use as a single assessment for their associated Units.

The number of marks available for each question should be combined to give the total number of marks available. A cut-off score of 50% should be applied to each of these Unit assessments.

Where a centre is using Unit assessment support packs 1 and/or 2 they should apply the cut-off scores shown in the following tables:

Investigative Biology (H7W7 77)	Total number of marks available (AS 2.1 + AS 2.2 + AS 2.3 + AS 2.4)	Cut-off score
Unit assessment support pack 1 (V 2.1)	20	10/20
Unit assessment support pack 2 (V 1.2)	20	10/20

(b) Unit assessment support pack 3 (portfolio approach)

It is still acceptable for centres to use this method of assessment.

Candidates should be given the opportunity to make accurate statements for all four of the Assessment Standards (AS 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4).

Evidence should be collected as candidates progress through the Course. Candidates must achieve 50% or more of the **total** marks available for all four of the Assessment Standards (AS 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4) to pass Outcome 2.

Option 1: Re-assessment

SQA's guidance on re-assessment is that there should be one or, in exceptional circumstances, two re-assessment opportunities. Re-assessment should be carried out under the same conditions as the original assessment. It is at a centre's discretion as to how they re-assess their candidates. Candidates may be given a full re-assessment opportunity, or be re-assessed on individual key areas. Regardless of which option is chosen, candidates must achieve 50% or more of each re-assessment opportunity.

Option 2: Assessment

Centres can continue to use the Unit assessment support packs from SQA's secure site or their own centre devised assessments in the same way as before.

If this option is chosen, 50% or more of the statements made by candidates for **each** Assessment Standard (AS 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4) must be correct in the Unit assessment to pass Outcome 2.

Option 2: Re-assessment

SQA's guidance on re-assessment is that there should be one or, in exceptional circumstances, two re-assessment opportunities. Re-assessment should be carried out under the same conditions as the original assessment. It is at a centre's discretion as to how they re-assess their candidates. Candidates may be given a full re-assessment opportunity, or be re-assessed on individual key areas. Regardless of which option is chosen, 50% or more of the statements made by candidates for **each** Assessment Standard (AS 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4) must be correct.

Course assessment

The word count amount for the Advanced Higher Biology Project has been revised for session 2016–17. As a guide, the Project-report should be between 3,000 and 3,600 words in length excluding the title page, contents page, tables, graphs, diagrams, calculations, references, acknowledgements and any appendices. The word count should be submitted with the Project-report. If the word count exceeds the maximum by 10%, a 3 mark penalty will be applied.

Understanding Standards packs

Existing Understanding Standards packs are still current and will be updated in due course.