



**Standard Grade 2013
Internal Assessment Report
Biology
Practical Abilities**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in Standard Grade qualifications in this subject.

Standard Grade

Titles/levels of Standard Grade qualifications verified:

Biology – Practical Abilities

General comments

All of the centres sampled were Accepted on the evidence provided.

All of the centres provided the required sample evidence. Despite highlighting the good practice of internal verification in previous internal assessment reports, there was a reduction in the number of centres employing robust internal verification procedures.

While all of the centres sampled used SQA-published investigations and the recommended answer booklet, the majority appear to have carried out two investigations over the two years of the Course and to have done these at set times in the year. As highlighted in previous reports, this limits the candidate's opportunity to complete two booklets successfully.

Administration of assessments

While the vast majority of candidates completed the investigations at Credit level, grade 1 and 2, a sizeable minority of candidates lost out by only doing two investigations and also lost marks throughout due to lack of understanding/knowledge; this could have been overcome if candidates had been given allowable assistance during the generative phase.

Very few assessors made use of the comment box at the end of the investigation booklet. Wider use would have been helpful, especially where there was some ambiguity in the award/non-award of marks.

The majority of candidates from all of the centres sampled completed the minimum two investigations and completed all 10 techniques; however, as highlighted in previous reports, there are cases where candidates lost out on a grade having failed to complete one or more of these recommended techniques.

Areas of good practice

In general, the application by centres of the recommended mark scheme was consistently correct and accurate.

Where internal verification was evident, any discrepancies were clearly marked and explained.

Centres where candidates were given more opportunities to carry out more than two investigations over the Course had fewer candidates with lower grades.

Specific areas for improvement

Any practical work undertaken in the classroom should lend support to the theory, rather than be seen as an independent area for assessment.