



Biology SCQF level 5: understanding delivery of free-standing units in session 2017–18

This guidance note explains how candidates are assessed for free-standing units in session 2017–18.

It refers to instances where candidates are being assessed using the unit assessment support packs, outlining the options available and providing guidance for each option.

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Background

As a result of the Deputy First Minister's announcement in September 2016, units and unit assessments have been removed from the National 5 Biology course and are no longer required to achieve an overall course award.

Outcome 1 and outcome 2 have therefore been **removed** from the National 5 Biology course, and the mandatory course content has been revised in order to address key issues.

Units that were previously part of the National 5 Biology course remain available as free-standing units and are now referred to as SCQF level 5 units. All existing unit assessment support packs remain available for teachers and lecturers to use as a resource. There are no plans to update the unit assessment support packs for National 5 Biology, as the units are now separate from the course and are not subject to the same updates.

The following guidance refers to those instances where candidates are being presented for free-standing units.

Important note: for session 2017–18 candidates can be taught the revised course content **or** the previous course content.

Outcome 1

The following guidance applies regardless of whether a centre is delivering the revised course content from the [National 5 Biology course specification](#) or the previous course content.

Candidates are not 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.

The following table outlines the scenarios in which candidates can achieve outcome 1:

Scenario	Assessment standard achieved (✓ or x)						Overall result
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	
1	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Pass
2	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	Pass
3	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	Pass
4	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	Pass
5	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	Pass
6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	Pass

Important note: the requirement for candidates to be given the opportunity to meet all assessment standards has not changed. The threshold has been put in place to reduce the volume of re-assessment.

Transfer of evidence

Evidence of outcome 1 in a unit is transferrable between the other units at SCQF level 5.

Re-assessment

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

Outcome 2: revised content

The following guidance applies where a centre is delivering the revised course content from the [National 5 Biology course specification](#).

There is no requirement to pass assessment standard 2.1 (making accurate statements) and assessment standard 2.2 (solving problems) independently. Candidates can be assessed using a single test that contains marks and a cut-off score.

A suitable unit assessment will cover all of the key areas (assessment standard 2.1) **and** assess each of the problem-solving skills (assessment standard 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 2017–18. Teachers and lecturers can choose to adapt the existing unit assessment support packs using the following guidance, or can replace the questions with suitable alternatives of a similar standard.

a) Unit assessment support pack 1 (unit-by-unit approach)

Where the assessments in unit assessment support pack 1 are being used, these can be adapted as follows:

Cell Biology

- ◆ remove questions 3 and 7

Multicellular Organisms

- ◆ remove questions 2 c) and 9
- ◆ insert question 3 from unit assessment support pack 1 Cell Biology
- ◆ change 'relay neuron' to 'inter neuron' in question 3 b)
- ◆ insert a question that will assess some aspect of the 'absorption of materials' key area, eg:
 - Intermediate 2 Biology 2007, section b, question 1 b) [2 marks]
 - add 2 marks to the total number of marks available, to account for this question being used (see table on page 4)

Life on Earth

- ◆ remove question 1
- ◆ insert question 7 from unit assessment support pack 1 Cell Biology
- ◆ marking guidance
 - question 4 b) — remove high temperature
 - question 4 d) — change reproductive to behavioural

The following table outlines the total number of marks available and cut-off scores based on the above guidance:

Unit assessment support pack 1 (V2.0)	Total number of marks available (assessment standards 2.1 + 2.2)	Cut-off score
H207 75 Cell Biology	30	15
H208 75 Multicellular Organisms	34*	17*
H209 75 Life on Earth	21	11

* 2 marks added to account for the absorption of materials question

b) Outcome 2, assessment activity 2 — tests

Where the outcome 2, assessment activity 2 — tests are being used, these can be adapted as follows:

Cell Biology

- ◆ remove questions 3, 4, 8 and 9
- ◆ insert an analysis type question, eg:
 - Intermediate 2 Biology 2009, section 1, question 3 [1 mark]
 - add 1 mark to the total number of marks available to account for this question being used (see table on page 5)
- ◆ change ‘works best’ in question 6 d) to ‘is most active’

Multicellular Organisms

- ◆ remove questions 2 a), 7 a) and b) and 10
- ◆ insert questions 3 a) and b) from *Cell Biology outcome 2, assessment activity 2 — test*

Life on Earth

- ◆ remove question 1 c) i), 3 a) i), 3 b), 3 c) and 5
- ◆ insert question 8 from *Cell Biology outcome 2, assessment activity 2 — test*
- ◆ marking guidance
 - question 7 a) ii) — change reproductive to behavioural
 - question 7 b) — remove high temperatures

The following table outlines the total number of marks available and cut-off scores based on the above guidance:

Outcome 2: assessment activity 2	Total number of marks available (assessment standards 2.1 + 2.2)	Cut-off score
H207 75 Cell Biology	27*	14*
H208 75 Multicellular Organisms	35	18
H209 75 Life on Earth	27	14

* 1 mark added to account for the analysis type question

Important note: during session 2017–18 teachers and lecturers can continue to assess assessment standard 2.1 and assessment standard 2.2 separately using the existing unit assessment support packs. If they choose to do this, 50% or more of the knowledge statements (assessment standard 2.1) made by candidates must be correct in the unit assessment and at least one correct response for each problem-solving skill (assessment standard 2.2) is required to pass outcome 2.

However, if in a unit assessment a candidate is given more than one opportunity to provide a response for a problem-solving skill, then they must answer 50% or more correctly. Guidance on re-assessment is provided on page 8.

Outcome 2: previous content

The following guidance applies where a centre is delivering the previous course content from the National 5 Biology course specification.

There is no requirement to pass assessment standard 2.1 (making accurate statements) and assessment standard 2.2 (solving problems) independently. Candidates can be assessed using a single test that contains marks and a cut-off score.

A suitable unit assessment will cover all of the key areas (assessment standard 2.1) **and** assess each of the problem-solving skills (assessment standard 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 2017-2018. Teachers and lecturers can choose to adapt the existing unit assessment support packs using the following guidance, or can replace the questions with suitable alternatives of a similar standard.

a) Unit assessment support pack 1 (unit-by-unit approach)

Where teachers and lecturers are using the assessments in unit assessment support pack 1, they can use these as follows.

Unit assessment support pack 1 (V2.0)	Total number of marks available (assessment standards 2.1 + 2.2)	Cut-off score
H207 75 Cell Biology	39	20
H208 75 Multicellular Organisms	32	16
H209 75 Life on Earth	19	10

b) Outcome 2: assessment activity 2 — tests

Where teachers and lecturers are using outcome 2, assessment activity 2 — tests, they can use these as follows.

Outcome 2: assessment activity 2	Total number of marks available (assessment standards 2.1 + 2.2)	Cut-off score
H207 75 Cell Biology	40	20
H208 75 Multicellular Organisms	40	20
H209 75 Life on Earth	30	15

Important note: during session 2017–18 teachers and lecturers can continue to assess assessment standard 2.1 and assessment standard 2.2 separately using the existing unit assessment support packs. If they choose to do this, 50% or more of the knowledge statements (assessment standard 2.1) made by candidates must be correct in the unit assessment and at least one correct response for each problem-solving skill (assessment standard 2.2) is required to pass outcome 2.

However, if in a unit assessment a candidate is given more than one opportunity to provide a response for a problem-solving skill, then they must answer 50% or more correctly. Guidance on re-assessment is provided on page 8.

Re-assessment of outcome 2

The following guidance applies regardless of whether a centre is delivering the revised course content from the National 5 Biology course specification **or** the previous course content.

SQA's guidance on re-assessment is there should only 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 the teacher or lecturer's discretion 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. Candidates must achieve 50% or more in each re-assessment.

If assessment standard 2.1 and assessment standard 2.2 are combined, then candidates must achieve 50% of the marks available in the re-assessment.

If assessment standard 2.1 is assessed separately, then candidates must achieve 50% of the marks available in the re-assessment.

If assessment standard 2.2 is assessed separately, then candidates must achieve 50% of the marks available for each problem-solving skill in the re-assessment.

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
1.1	Page 5: The cut-off score and the number of marks available for the Cell Biology Unit in the 'Outcome 2: assessment activity 2' table have been corrected to 14 and 27.	January 2018