



Internal Assessment Report: Biology (SG): Practical Abilities

Sector Panel or SSC: Biology

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in National Qualifications in this subject.

Standard Grade

Elements/coursework verified

Practical Abilities: Techniques and Investigations

General comments

The evidence submitted by centres was generally complete and as requested. The sample contained the broad spectrum of grades as per the sampling format given in the guidelines to centres.

Techniques

There was a notable decline in the number of centres failing to test one or more of the techniques. As in previous years, the main technique that centres fail to cover is Technique 10: the Choice Chamber. Failure to complete all 10 techniques often results in the candidate being penalised a grade.

Investigations

Once again, there was a noticeable improvement in candidate performance and in the centres' submissions in terms of grades, with fewer investigations being awarded grades 4–7.

Many centres fulfil the requirements of SQA but appear to penalise some of the candidates from their centre by only doing investigations at two points in the Course. Candidates absent at these times appear to get little or no other chance to complete the work.

The guidelines to centres request that candidate evidence covers both continuous and discontinuous variables — many centres present two investigations with discontinuous variables.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development

Candidates should be given the opportunity to attempt all techniques as part of ongoing Coursework and in several investigations in their two years of Standard Grade work.

Increased evidence of internal verification should continue to be encouraged, although changes in marks and final decisions should be clearly recorded and obvious.

In terms of staff development, the verifier's report should be forwarded to the appropriate members of staff. This is particularly important where the member of staff responsible for forwarding the verification feedback is a teacher of another science discipline.