

# **National Qualifications 2008**

## **Senior Verifier's Report**

**Subject: Biology            NQ Units**

**Assessment Panel:        Biology / Human Biology**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on moderation which has taken place within National Qualifications in this subject.

## **TITLES/LEVELS OF NATIONAL UNITS VERIFIED**

*Insert detail:*

**ACCESS / INTERMEDIATE 1**

**INTERMEDIATE 2**

**HIGHER**

**ADVANCED HIGHER BIOLOGY**

**(NO HIGHER HUMAN BIOLOGY UNITS VERIFIED THIS YEAR)**

## **FEEDBACK TO CENTRES**

*Insert details relating to specific guidance which should be offered to centres based on the verification of centres. Include:*

- *General comment*
- *Areas of good practice*
- *Areas for further development*

### **General comments:**

The general standard of verification was excellent with most centres producing evidence of a very high standard.

- All centres verified had used NAB assessments to test Outcomes 1 and 2
- Marking was accurate and consistent, with most of the centres using updated Marking Instructions.
- Changes to the published Marking Instructions should be submitted with the evidence.
- No centre failed due to arithmetic error, mainly due to the increased practice of internal verification.
- Where internal verification produces changes to assessment decisions, these should be obvious to the verification team.
- As only one completed report is required for Outcome 3 then it need not necessarily be linked to the Unit being verified.
- The Outcome 3 report used as evidence should allow the candidates the opportunity to achieve all of the required PC's.
- The choice of practical and the evaluation of procedures and results should reflect level of candidates' work being assessed.

### Advanced Higher Biology

In a move away from retrospective verification six centres were visited in March and April. The centres were chosen from those that had previously presented evidence for retrospective moderation and received feedback and advice on the internal assessment of the half unit Biology Investigation.

In the centres visited the candidates were aware of the uniquely valuable learning experience that the Investigation offered. Many enjoyed a productive relationship with staff, technicians, fellow candidates and other students. Restraints on teaching time possibly contributed to noticeable differences in the responsibility for planning, experimentation and write up of the practical work undertaken.

In all centres visited the candidates and staff enjoyed regular verbal interaction and candidates had all been issued with the 'Advice to Candidates' and 'Advanced Higher Biology Investigation Guidance' prior to starting their practical work.

All candidates interviewed were aware of the need to keep a daybook but there was an uneven appreciation of the AH requirements for internal assessment of this record of work. In each of the centres the need for assessment was appreciated and the candidates were aware of the performance criteria to be achieved. In all centres daybooks of some description were available and more were records of ongoing work and there were only a couple of cases where the candidate had completed their work.

#### **Advice on good practice and areas for further development:**

The practice of internal verification should continue to be encouraged.

Unlike the unit assessments, the marking of Outcome 3 was rarely internally verified and many of the candidate scripts submitted failed to clearly indicate where each of the specific PCs were being awarded.

Unit assessments are PASS or FAIL – many centres appear to award a variety of grades.

For Outcome 3:

The degree of complexity should reflect the level of the award, in particular, the practical work undertaken and the reporting of such work at AH;

Extrapolation of graph work should not be awarded marks;

More specific evaluation relating to the experiment should be encouraged, rather than the use of the generalised statements.

Advanced Higher Biology:

Use a PC checklist and indicate in the day book where each PC is achieved;

In the initial verbal discussions the class teacher should initial and date the candidate record of discussion/advice given;

Hazards and problems should be discussed and recorded;

Clear aims, through planning and appropriate procedures should be documented;

Raw data should be laid out in tables which are correctly presented with appropriate headings, scales and units;

Each entry needs to be dated;

To achieve Outcome 2 analysis of experimental information is required;

No duplication of work is needed – photocopies of relevant data/tables can be attached.