

HN Science Qualifications Support Team (QST)

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 5 October 2026 (via Microsoft Teams)

Present:

Carole Barnes (Ayrshire College), Ciara Kyne (External Verifier), Colin McMorris (Forth Valley College), Conor Larkin (Glasgow Clyde College), David Whitley (External Verifier), Doug Fraser (Senior External Verifier), Jonathan Gillies (Qualifications Scotland), Jordan Gulland (Qualifications Scotland), Katie Paget (Dundee and Angus College), Laura Young (External Verifier), Lindsay Brown (Forth Valley College), Michael Balzo (New College Lanarkshire), Michael McKenna (Qualifications Scotland), Nicola Levitt (External Verifier), Sandra Spence (West College Scotland), Sion Snape (North East Scotland College)

Welcome, introductions and apologies

Jonathan welcomed members to the meeting.

1. Actions from last meeting

All actions from previous meetings are closed or discussed within the agenda.

New Understanding Standards materials have been published for Science NPAs on our [Understanding Standards website](#). Sections have been added for Science Practical Skills (J42F 44) and Science Practical and Investigation Skills (J3RF 44) with checklists, lab diaries and pro formas added for Fundamental Chemistry: An Introduction (HT6V 46).

Suggested practical experiments have also been updated for Fundamental Chemistry: An Introduction (H92W 33).

2. NC Applied Sciences (G90N 46)

Jordan provided an overview of the proposed revisions to the NC Applied Sciences framework at SCQF level 6 which had been previously circulated to members for review.

The mandatory science routes will now consist of Chemistry, Physics, Biology and Human Biology with Biotechnology, Environmental Science and Managing Environmental Resources units being retained as optional units. Other units which have finished or had no entries as part of the NC over the last 5 years will be removed from the framework with the exception of Introducing Microbiological Techniques (J2W2 45), Environmental Science: Earth's Resources (J264 76) and Environmental Science: Sustainability (J266 76).

It was also agreed that additional flexibility would be introduced for the Biology and Chemistry optional units at SCQF level 5.

Action

- Jordan to complete recoding and republication of revised framework.

3. Biotechnology: An Introduction (H926 34)

It was confirmed that no revisions are required.

4. New biomedically focused unit at SCQF level 7

This item will be resolved offline.

5. Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (H91W 34)

Following concerns raised at the previous QST meeting around the challenges presented by the increase of learners using AI, members were asked to submit feedback and proposals for changes to Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (H91W 34).

Jonathan provided an overview of feedback followed by a discussion around the various options available. Guidance to support assessors in verifying the authenticity of learner's work will be produced and circulated to members for feedback.

Action:

- Viva guidance to be produced to support assessors

6. Science NOS review

Jonathan provided an update on Cogent Skills' review of the Science NOS. Development of the new NOS and revised qualifications has been paused while Cogent Skills complete a scoping exercise with employers.

SVQs in Laboratory Skills and Laboratory and Associated Technical Activities may need to be extended beyond 2027 as a result.

7. HND Applied Biological Sciences (GK6G 16)

Conor proposed adding Organic Chemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills (H933 34) and Inorganic Chemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills (H92Y 34) as optional units to the HND Applied Biological Sciences (GK6G 16) framework. This would support learner progression to the Pharmacy course at the University of Strathclyde.

Members agreed to the proposal and the units will be added to the framework.

Action

- Jordan to update and republish Group Award Specification.

8. AOB

Lindsay raised the issue of colleges cutting down on printing and the impact this has on producing physical lab diaries. Members discussed their experience of using digital lab diaries in learner support plans and raised the importance of being able to track changes and view amendments. Jonathan advised there is a potential option to pilot the use of digital lab diaries.

Katie asked for any members with experience in delivering the Quality and Health and Safety Systems in Science Industries (DF82 34) unit to contact her to share resources.

Next steps

It was agreed that the next meeting of the science QST would be arranged for January.

ACTION GRID

Action	Date completed
Jordan to complete recoding and republication of NC Applied Sciences at SCQF level 6	
Viva guidance to be produced to support assessors with Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1	
Jordan to update and republish HND Applied Biological Sciences (GK6G 16) group award specification	