



## **QUALIFICATIONS SUPPORT TEAM for the HN SCIENCE Portfolio of Awards**

### **Minutes of meeting held on Monday 19 January 2026 (via Microsoft Teams)**

#### **Present:**

Anu Mital (North East Scotland College), Colin McMorris (Forth Valley College), David Whitley (External Verifier), Doug Fraser (Senior External Verifier), Fiona Jackson (Forth Valley College), Graham Motion (Fife College), Jane Manson (Inverness College), Jonathan Gillies (SQA), Julia Wright (Dundee and Angus College), Laura Young (External Verifier), Leann Tait (External Verifier), May Byrne (SQA), Michael Balzo (New College Lanarkshire), Michael McKenna (SQA), Sandra Dickson (Glasgow Kelvin College), Sandra Spence (West College Scotland), Sion Snape (North East Scotland College), Susan Bunton (External Verifier).

#### **Welcome and apologies**

Jonathan welcomed all QST members to the meeting.

#### **1. Actions from last meeting**

All actions were confirmed as being completed.

#### **2. NC in Applied Sciences (G90M 45)**

Jonathan presented the proposed new framework, developed by the working group. The revised framework offers increased flexibility for the mandatory science requirements. Some optional units will be removed from the framework due to no/low uptake.

Members welcomed the increased flexibility and the additional routes to achievement offered by the new framework.

Members agreed that the NC in Applied Sciences at SCQF level 6 should also be reviewed to ensure alignment with the proposed SCQF level 5 changes.

#### **Actions agreed:**

- Jonathan to circulate the revised framework to members for review and discussion with colleagues.
- Members to provide feedback on the proposed new framework to Jonathan by Friday 30 January 2026.
- Members to seek volunteers to join the working group to review the SCQF level 6 qualification. Any volunteers to be nominated to Jonathan by Friday 30 January 2026.

### **3. Cell Biology: Theory and Laboratory Skills (J2RE 34)**

Jane requested an increase to the duration of assessment for the Cell Biology: Theory and Laboratory Skills unit from 60 to 90 minutes, as some learners are having trouble completing the assessment within the current time allocation.

Some members agreed that this should be considered, noting that other science units at SCQF level 7 have 90-minute assessments.

There was consensus that this issue may not be specific to the Cell Biology: Theory and Laboratory Skills unit alone but could also apply across other biology units at SCQF level 7.

#### **Actions agreed:**

- Members to consult with colleagues and advise if they are supportive of the duration of assessment being increased from 60 to 90 minutes. Any feedback to be provided to Jonathan by Friday 30 January 2026.
- Members to consult with colleagues to determine if there are any other biology units at SCQF level 7 that may need the duration of assessment to be reviewed. Any feedback to be provided to Jonathan by Friday 30 January 2026.

### **4. HNC in Applied Sciences (GK6E 15)**

Sandra Spence proposed adding the new Pharmacotherapeutics and the Human Body units to the optional section of the framework to support improved progression pathways.

Members agreed this would be beneficial, subject to a restriction that learners could select a maximum of two out of the four Pharmacotherapeutics and the Human Body units.

#### **Action agreed:**

- Members to consult with colleagues and advise if they have any concerns with the Pharmacotherapeutics and the Human Body units being added to the framework as optional units. Any feedback to be provided to Jonathan by Friday 30 January 2026.

## 5. Experimental Procedures: Science (HN8D 46)

Doug provided an update on new Understanding Standards materials that are being developed on the selection of suitable practical activities. The document is intended primarily to support schools but may also be useful for colleges and for staff new to teaching.

Jonathan advised that the document is currently being house-styled and formatted and will be made available on the Understanding Standards webpage in due course.

## 6. AOB

Members to reconvene in a couple of months. Jonathan will send QST members an online poll to ascertain the best date and time.

### ACTION GRID

Action	Date completed
Jonathan to circulate the revised NC in Applied Sciences at SCQF level 5 framework to members for review and discussion with colleagues	
Members to provide any feedback on the revised NC in Applied Sciences at SCQF level 5 framework to Jonathan by Friday 30 January 2026	
Members to seek volunteers to join the NC in Applied Sciences at SCQF level 6 working group. Any volunteers to be nominated to Jonathan by Friday 30 January 2026.	
Members to consult with colleagues and advise if they are supportive of the duration of assessment for the Cell Biology: Theory and Laboratory Skills (J2RE 34) unit being increased from 60 to 90 minutes. Any feedback to be provided to Jonathan by Friday 30 January 2026.	
Members to consult with colleagues to determine if there are any other biology units at SCQF level 7 that may need the duration of assessment to be reviewed. Any feedback to be provided to Jonathan by Friday 30 January 2026.	
Members to consult with colleagues and advise if they have any concerns with the Pharmacotherapeutics and the Human Body units being added to the HNC in Applied Sciences framework as optional units. Any feedback to be provided to Jonathan by Friday 30 January 2026.	
Jonathan to send QST members an online poll to ascertain the best date and time for the next meeting.	