



Optional assessment guidance 2023–24

This guidance is **optional**. You can use this guidance or deliver and assess as outlined in the group award specification.

Group award title and code:	HND in Applied Biological Sciences (SCQF level 8) GK6G 16
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The approach you take **must** meet the:

- ◆ full evidence requirements for graded units
- ◆ national standards

Changes to conditions of assessment and/or evidence requirements

The following guidance applies to session 2023–24. No action is required for any units certificated on or before 8 August 2023.

Theory assessments

You can assess all units in the group award outcome-by-outcome. If you use a cut-off score for an examination-based assessment, the cut-off score must be 60% for each assessment. If you assess a single outcome using an examination-based assessment, the cut-off score must also be 60%.

You cannot remediate examination-based assessments. If a candidate does not pass, you must re-assess them using an alternative examination-based assessment.

If selected, you must assess the following units using closed-book assessments:

- ◆ [Biochemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills \(SCQF level 7\) H922 34](#)
- ◆ [Cell Biology: Theory and Laboratory Skills \(SCQF level 7\) J2RE 34](#)
- ◆ [DNA and Genetics \(SCQF level 7\) J2RF 34](#)
- ◆ [DNA Molecular Techniques \(SCQF level 8\) H92A 35](#)
- ◆ [Fundamental Chemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills \(SCQF level 7\) H92X 34](#)
- ◆ [Immunological Techniques \(SCQF level 8\) H92E 35](#)
- ◆ [Mathematics for Science 1 \(SCQF level 6\) H8XP 33](#)

- ◆ [Mathematics for Science 2 \(SCQF level 7\) H8XR 34](#)
- ◆ [Microbiological Techniques \(SCQF level 8\) J2GM 35](#)
- ◆ [Microbiology: Theory and Laboratory Skills \(SCQF level 7\) H92G 34](#)
- ◆ [Protein Structure and Function \(SCQF level 8\) H92J 35](#)
- ◆ [Statistics for Science 1 \(SCQF level 6\) H8XT 33](#)
- ◆ [Statistics for Science 2 \(SCQF level 7\) H8XV 34](#)

If you want to use different approaches to assessment rather than a traditional closed-book examination, you can amend a maximum of **6** optional credits from closed-book to open-book assessment. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ case studies
- ◆ group discussions
- ◆ investigations
- ◆ presentations
- ◆ projects
- ◆ supervised assessments covering the application of knowledge and understanding, and problem solving.

If you are using open-book assessments, the following applies.

- ◆ You cannot amend any of the units listed above to open-book.
- ◆ For any supervised and timed open-book assessments, candidates are restricted to **one page** of summary notes for each outcome, and this must be in their own words.
- ◆ You must not use a traditional closed-book examination in open-book supervised conditions.
- ◆ The revised assessment task(s) must have the same level of demand as the original assessment.
- ◆ You cannot use questions from SQA's assessment support packs (ASPs) in open-book assessments.
- ◆ You must split the **6** open-book optional credits into:
 - 3 credits in year 1
 - 3 credits in year 2

Note: some open-book assessments used in previous sessions are no longer valid. You must ensure that all open-book assessments meet the criteria listed above.

Practical experiments

We have introduced an abbreviated pro forma. This should avoid candidates being repeatedly assessed on laboratory reporting skills that they have adequately demonstrated competence in the [Laboratory Skills for Science Industries \(SCQF level 7\) H91V 34](#) unit. It also allows more time to further develop practical skills.

You can only use the abbreviated pro forma when a candidate has demonstrated full competence in the required laboratory reporting skills, as detailed in the [Laboratory Skills for Science Industries \(SCQF level 7\) H91V 34](#) unit. The revised laboratory reporting requirements for the group award are:

- ◆ [Laboratory Skills for Science Industries \(SCQF level 7\) H91V 34](#)
- ◆ **Three** full laboratory reports at SCQF level 8
- ◆ All remaining practical experiments can be reported using an abbreviated pro forma, a laboratory diary entry, a pro forma or a full laboratory report.

You can amend the practical requirements for the following unit:

- ◆ [Human Metabolism \(SCQF level 8\) H92D 35](#)
 - reduce to **two** practical experiments

Additional guidance and information

We have guidance on how to use the abbreviated pro forma on SQA's [Understanding Standards](#) website.

You can find more information on [HNVQ delivery and assessment approaches for session 2023-24](#) on SQA's website.