



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:	PDA in Laboratory Science (SCQF level 7) GM3G 47
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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](#)
- ◆ [Mathematics for Science 1 \(SCQF level 6\) H8XP 33](#)
- ◆ [Physics for Life Sciences \(SCQF level 7\) J5RT 34](#)
- ◆ [Statistics for Science 1 \(SCQF level 6\) H8XT 33](#)

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.

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

You can amend the practical requirements for the following unit:

- ◆ [Thermodynamics and Kinetics: Theory and Laboratory Skills \(SCQF level 8\) H938 35](#)
— reduce to **one** multistep practical experiment

If you are assessing a multistep practical experiment in the following units, you can amend the practical requirements, as shown:

- ◆ [Organic Chemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills \(SCQF level 7\) H933 34](#)
— reduce to **one** multistep practical experiment
- ◆ [Main Group Inorganic Chemistry \(SCQF level 8\) H932 35](#)
— reduce to **one** multistep practical experiment
- ◆ [Aromatic Chemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills \(SCQF level 8\) H92N 35](#)
— reduce to **one** multistep practical experiment
- ◆ [Base-Catalysed and Organometallic Chemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills \(SCQF level 8\) H92P 35](#)
— reduce to **one** multistep practical experiment

A multistep practical experiment must involve a minimum of **three** steps at SCQF level 7 and **four** steps at SCQF level 8. Examples of steps that could contribute towards a multistep practical experiment are:

- ◆ Synthesis (which itself could be more than one step) — providing the steps are substantive, for example preparation of a Grignard reagent followed by its reaction with a carbonyl compound could count as distinct steps
- ◆ Purification (for example by recrystallisation)
- ◆ Determination of melting point
- ◆ Running and analysing IR spectrum
- ◆ Thin layer chromatography of product

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