

# National Course modification summary: Biology



## Freestanding units at SCQF levels 5, 6 and 7; and National 3, National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher: session 2021–22

### Freestanding units at SCQF levels 5, 6 and 7

Modifications for session 2021–22 remain the same as session 2020–21.

For the freestanding units that were formerly part of the National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Biology courses, **the requirement to complete outcome 1 for the unit assessment is removed.**

The rationale for this modification is the difficulty of carrying out practical work safely due to current restrictions, local authority health and safety protocols, and compliance with the guidelines issued by the Scottish Schools Education Research Centre (SSERC).

Teachers and lecturers should still endeavour to develop the practical skills that are a feature of these units.

### National 3

The development of practical skills in biology is essential, and candidates should undertake and experience practical work in science courses at all levels. However, the modifications made in session 2020–21 remain unchanged, and **the requirement to complete outcome 1 for the unit assessment is removed for session 2021–22**, as outcome 1 requires candidates to undertake a practical experiment and write a report.

The rationale for this modification is the difficulty of carrying out practical work safely due to current restrictions, local authority health and safety protocols, and compliance with the guidelines issued by SSERC.

Teachers and lecturers should still endeavour to develop the practical skills that are a feature of the National 3 course.

### National 4

The development of practical skills in biology is essential, and candidates should undertake and experience practical work in science courses at all levels. However, the modifications made in session 2020–21 remain unchanged, and **the requirement to complete outcome 1 for the unit assessment is removed for session 2021–22**, as outcome 1 requires candidates to undertake a practical experiment and write a report.

The rationale for this modification is the difficulty of carrying out practical work safely due to current restrictions, local authority health and safety protocols, and compliance with the guidelines issued by SSERC.

Teachers and lecturers should still endeavour to develop the practical skills that are a feature of the National 4 course.

### Added value unit

The requirement to complete the added value unit is removed for session 2021–22. To achieve the overall course award for National 4 this session, candidates must pass all other contributing units in the National 4 course. You must submit a 'pass' result for the added value unit to ensure your candidates are certificated for the course award.

You are not required to gather evidence for the added value unit this session; however, it is important you give candidates opportunities to develop and demonstrate the skills, knowledge and understanding outlined in the National 4 added value unit specification, where possible. This will support your candidates as they progress to further learning and assessment at SCQF level 5.

### National 5

Component	Marks	Duration
Question paper	100	2 hours and 30 minutes

### Question paper

There are **no changes** to the question paper. The structure and length of the question paper remain unchanged.

### Assignment

The development of practical skills in biology is essential, and candidates should undertake and experience practical work in science courses at all levels. However, the modifications made in session 2020–21 remain unchanged, and **the assignment is removed from the course for session 2021–22.**

The rationale for this modification is the difficulty of carrying out practical work safely due to current restrictions, local authority health and safety protocols, and compliance with the guidelines issued by SSERC.

Removing the assignment also allows teachers and lecturers to make up for lost time and deliver the course content. Access to IT facilities is still an issue and this could impede candidates' ability to undertake the research element of the assignment.

## Higher

Component	Marks	Duration
Question paper 1: multiple choice	25	40 minutes
Question paper 2	95	2 hours and 20 minutes

### Question paper

There are **no changes** to the question papers. The structure and length of the question papers remain unchanged.

### Assignment

The development of practical skills in biology is essential, and candidates should undertake and experience practical work in science courses at all levels. However, the modifications made in session 2020–21 remain unchanged, and **the assignment is removed from the course for session 2021–22.**

The rationale for this modification is the difficulty of carrying out practical work safely due to current restrictions, local authority health and safety protocols, and compliance with the guidelines issued by SSERC.

Removing the assignment also allows teachers and lecturers to make up for lost time and deliver the course content. Access to IT facilities is still an issue and this could impede candidates' ability to undertake the research element of the assignment.

## Advanced Higher

Component	Marks	Scaled marks	Duration
Question paper	100	120	3 hours

### Question paper

There are **no changes** to the question paper. The structure and length of the question paper remain unchanged.

### Project

The development of practical skills in biology is essential, and candidates should undertake and experience practical work in science courses at all levels. However, the modifications made in session 2020–21 remain unchanged, and **the project is removed from the course for session 2021–22.**

The rationale for this modification is the difficulty of carrying out practical work safely due to current restrictions, local authority health and safety protocols, and compliance with the guidelines issued by SSERC.

Many centres have links with consortium hubs to help them deliver the project. This may still be difficult to arrange this year. Many centres rely on universities for equipment and facilities that they do not have in their centre, and it is unclear whether universities will be able to offer

such facilities this year. This may cause additional problems for centres around practical work and apparatus.

Removing the project also allows teachers and lecturers to make up for lost time and deliver the course content.

If you have any questions about these changes, please email [qualification.development@sqa.org.uk](mailto:qualification.development@sqa.org.uk).