Subject report: Endorsement

Agricultural Science — 2026 cohort

This resource identifies strengths and opportunities to improve the development and submission of internal assessment instruments for Agricultural Science (General subject and alternative sequence (AS)). Refer to *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v7.0*, Section 9.5.

Summary of endorsement for the 2026 cohort

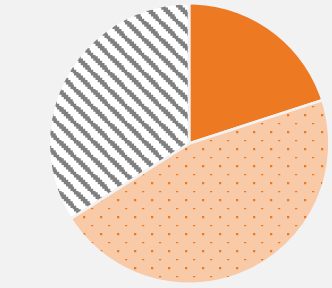
Number of internal assessment (IA) instruments submitted for endorsement

IA1	IA2	IA3
41	41	40

Note: Number of instruments may vary due to changes in schools offering the subject after the endorsement process started.

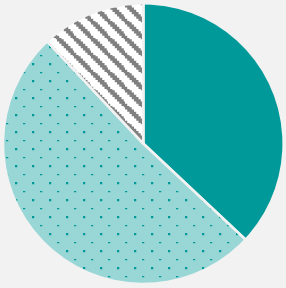
Percentage of instruments endorsed at Applications 1 and 2

IA1: Data test



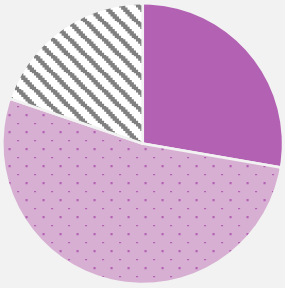
Application 1: 20%
Application 2: 46%
Intervention: 34%

IA2: Student experiment



Application 1: 37%
Application 2: 51%
Intervention: 12%

IA3: Research investigation



Application 1: 28%
Application 2: 53%
Intervention: 20%

Note: Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers and, therefore, may not add up to 100%.

Validity: Reasons for non-endorsement at Application 1 by assessment priority

IA1		IA2		IA3	
Alignment	23	Alignment	9	Alignment	16
Authentication	0	Authentication	2	Authentication	3
Authenticity	4	Authenticity	17	Authenticity	1
Item construction	23	Item construction	3	Item construction	2
Scope and scale	12	Scope and scale	2	Scope and scale	17

Accessibility: Reasons for non-endorsement at Application 1 by assessment priority

IA1		IA2		IA3	
Bias avoidance	0	Bias avoidance	0	Bias avoidance	0
Language	1	Language	2	Language	0
Layout	1	Layout	0	Layout	2
Transparency	5	Transparency	0	Transparency	14

Note: A priority may be identified more than once in the endorsement decision for an assessment instrument.

Advice for assessment design

Endorsement is the quality assurance process based on the attributes of validity and accessibility. The following advice is based on the endorsement process for the 2026 completion year. In acknowledging effective practices and areas for refinement, it offers schools timely and evidence-based guidance to further develop valid and accessible assessment.

IA1: Data test (10%)

Effective practices

Assessment instruments demonstrated validity and accessibility when they:

- included two to four authentic datasets that clearly aligned with Unit 3 subject matter (agricultural production) and allowed all assessment objectives to be demonstrated across a range of scenarios **(alignment)**
- provided datasets that matched the topics listed in the conditions **(authenticity)**
- allocated marks to all aspects of the required response, e.g. when the marking scheme for a calculation question indicated working and a correct answer was required, the question was allocated 2 marks **(scope and scale)**.

Practices to strengthen

Schools can improve the validity and accessibility of assessment instruments by:

- ensuring the objective and cognitive verb for each question align with the expected nature of the response (syllabus, p. 45) **(alignment)**
- assigning each question a single cognition and ensuring questions do not rely on answers from previous items **(item construction)**
- removing scaffolding that leads to a predetermined student response, e.g. ‘deduce the most effective feeding program. In your answer refer to the feed conversion ratio of each animal’ guides students through the steps required to arrive at the correct answer, while ‘deduce the most effective feeding program’ requires students to identify how best to respond to the item **(item construction)**
- using the same terminology in the dataset and its corresponding question/s, e.g. if the dataset uses ‘average germination percentage’, the question also refers to ‘average germination percentage’ rather than ‘mean germination percentage’ **(transparency)**.

IA2: Student experiment (20%)

Effective practices

Assessment instruments demonstrated validity and accessibility when they:

- included relevant and appropriate strategies to guarantee student ownership **(authentication)**
- provided experimental contexts that were of appropriate scope and scale to allow students to complete the task within the syllabus conditions; students could conduct investigations in a school setting and reasonable timeframe **(scope and scale)**
- contained minimal distractors, e.g. did not repeat information or provide additional information in the context section **(layout)**
- provided clear information about appropriate scientific genres, e.g. the genre selected in the conditions matched the example in the task specifications **(transparency)**.

Practices to strengthen

Schools can improve the validity and accessibility of assessment instruments by:

- ensuring the topics selected in the conditions align with the practicals provided in the context **(authenticity)**
- providing a clear experimental context aligned with Unit 3 subject matter that enables students to develop unique responses **(authenticity)**
- ensuring the task includes all specifications from the syllabus (p. 48) **(alignment)**.

IA3: Research investigation (20%)

Effective practices

Assessment instruments demonstrated validity and accessibility when they:

- included authentication strategies that matched the conditions listed, e.g. group work **(authentication)**
- provided scaffolding with clear instructions about the processes students could use to complete responses, e.g. do not use the sample research question **(item construction)**
- omitted information that was not relevant to completing a research investigation, e.g. information about the content of Unit 4 **(layout)**
- used terminology consistently **(language)**.

Practices to strengthen

Schools can improve the validity and accessibility of assessment instruments by:

- providing clear, scientifically credible contained claims that direct students to investigate Unit 4 subject matter (**alignment**)
- ensuring the task includes all specifications from the syllabus (pp. 52–53) **(alignment)**
- ensuring claims address a single context and can be answered within the word limit, e.g. Government decisions have a significant effect on Australian agriculture **(scope and scale)**
- providing clear information about appropriate scientific genres, e.g. removing references to a conference presentation in the task specifications when the task only allows for written responses **(transparency)**.

Additional advice

- Before submitting an instrument, check the formatting using the Print preview function in the Endorsement application (app). This helps ensure assessment instruments are well presented with appropriate page breaks and other formatting features.
- If an instrument is not endorsed at Application 1, consider consulting with the lead endorser before submitting the revised instrument at Application 2. These consultations are supportive and provide feedback to school communities to strengthen the endorsement process.