

Subject report: Endorsement

Biology — 2026 cohort

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

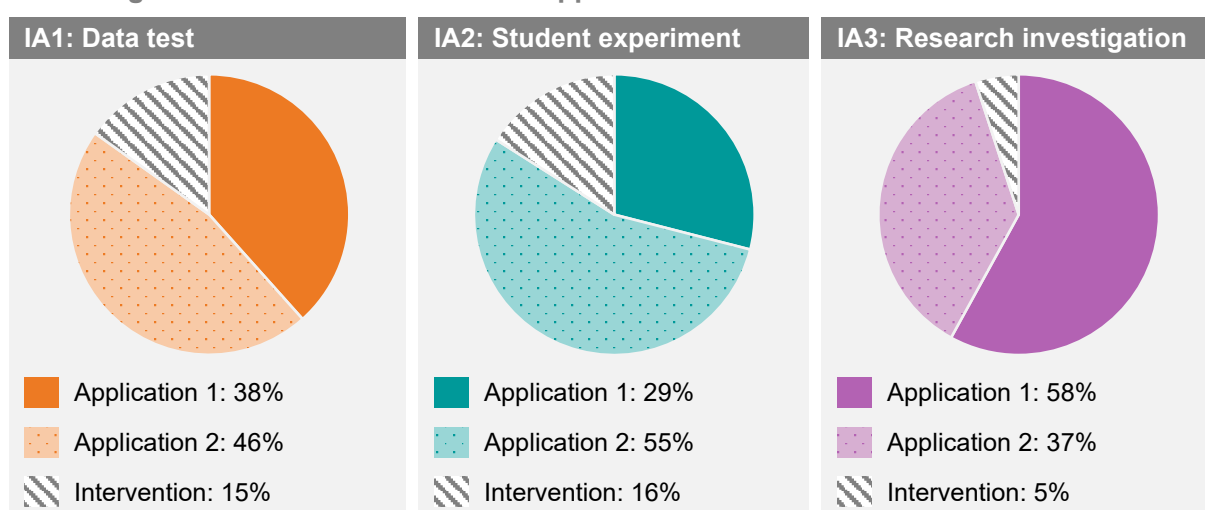
Summary of endorsement for the 2026 cohort

Number of internal assessment (IA) instruments submitted for endorsement

IA1	IA2	IA3
452	452	452

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



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	215	Alignment	274	Alignment	99
Authentication	0	Authentication	19	Authentication	4
Authenticity	11	Authenticity	130	Authenticity	4
Item construction	41	Item construction	21	Item construction	14
Scope and scale	68	Scope and scale	0	Scope and scale	58

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

IA1		IA2		IA3	
Bias avoidance	19	Bias avoidance	0	Bias avoidance	1
Language	52	Language	18	Language	14
Layout	26	Layout	4	Layout	3
Transparency	66	Transparency	14	Transparency	68

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 and allowed all assessment objectives to be demonstrated across a range of scenarios, e.g. datasets based on the Unit 3 science inquiry subject matter (**alignment**)
- used an appropriate cognitive verb for each question that clearly cued the expected response and aligned with the mark allocation, e.g.
 - for a 2-mark *infer* question, 1 mark is allocated to the conclusion and 1 mark to the reasoning
 - for a 2-mark *compare* question, 1 mark is allocated to identifying a similarity and 1 mark to identifying the differences (**transparency**)
- used consistent language conventions throughout, including italicised species names and standardised dataset labels (e.g. Dataset 1, Dataset 2), and consistent use of bolding (**language**).

Practices to strengthen

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

- aligning each question with a single assessment objective based on the focus of the question, e.g. questions requiring students to identify trends, patterns, relationships, limitations or uncertainty in datasets align with the Analyse data objective, whereas questions requiring students to draw conclusions based on analysis of datasets align with the Interpret evidence objective (syllabus, p. 39, Question specifications table) (**alignment**)
- ensuring each question assesses a single cognition matched to an appropriate number of marks, e.g. avoiding multiple cognitive verbs in a single question unless they are specifically used to cue an aspect of the expected response such as 'justify your response' (**scope and scale**)
- providing datasets with sufficient scope for students to demonstrate a range of cognitions, e.g. datasets that allow students to identify trends, patterns, relationships, limitations and uncertainty, rather than repeatedly using the same cognition to assess the Analyse data objective (**scope and scale**)
- ensuring each item requires students to use the dataset, e.g. if an item requires students to interpret a p -value, placing the p -value in the dataset rather than in the question (**item construction**).

■ IA2: Student experiment (20%)

Effective practices

Assessment instruments demonstrated validity and accessibility when they:

- included checkpoints that were appropriate for the task and consistent with authentication strategies, e.g. if a draft was referenced in the checkpoints, it was also identified as an authentication strategy (**authentication**)
- provided clear instructions that used appropriate scientific language and were free from spelling, grammar and formatting errors (**language**)
- identified Unit 3 practicals or investigations that students could modify to address their own related hypothesis or question, e.g. investigations from the science inquiry subject matter (**authenticity**).

Practices to strengthen

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

- ensuring the task description references the task specifications of the syllabus (p. 42), and that all requirements are accurate and consistent with current syllabus language, including clear identification of which aspects may be completed as group work (**alignment**)
- ensuring experiments listed in the context section of the task provide opportunities for students to investigate biodiversity or ecosystem dynamics (**scope and scale**).

■ IA3: Research investigation (20%)

Effective practices

Assessment instruments demonstrated validity and accessibility when they:

- included a statement, if the scaffolding provided an example research question, to indicate that the research question could not be used as it may lead to a predetermined response (**item construction**)
- provided conditions and scaffolding sections that were consistent, e.g. the genre identified in the conditions (e.g. scientific essay) was also reflected in the scaffolding section (**transparency**)
- were free from spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors and used appropriate scientific conventions, including italicised species names (**language**).

Practices to strengthen

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

- ensuring the task includes all specifications from the syllabus (pp. 46–47) (**alignment**)
- ensuring claims directly link to Unit 4 subject matter and avoid redirecting students toward ethical considerations or content outside the syllabus, which limits students' ability to address all assessment objectives (**alignment**)
- writing claims that address a single, specific context (e.g. gene therapy, CRISPR, DNA profiling) rather than broad claims that cover multiple aspects (e.g. society and the environment) (**scope and scale**)
- ensuring authentication strategies show how individual student contributions will be identified and how the submission of drafts will be managed (**transparency**).

Additional advice

- Before submitting an instrument for endorsement, check the formatting using the Print preview function in the Endorsement application (app) to ensure datasets, figure labels, questions and headings are presented accurately.
- 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.



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