Subject report: Endorsement

Physics — 2026 cohort

This resource identifies strengths and opportunities to improve the development and submission of internal assessment instruments for Physics (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

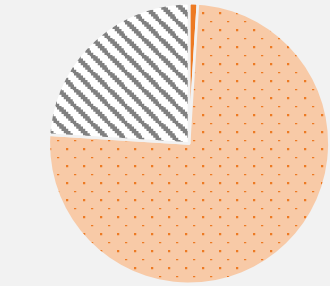
Number of internal assessment (IA) instruments submitted for endorsement

IA1	IA2	IA3
418	418	416

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

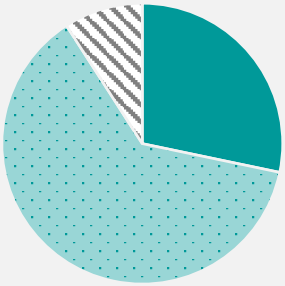
Percentage of instruments endorsed at Applications 1 and 2

IA1: Data test



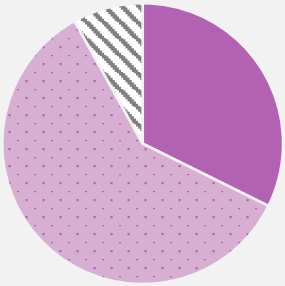
- Application 1: 1%
- Application 2: 75%
- Intervention: 24%

IA2: Student experiment



- Application 1: 28%
- Application 2: 62%
- Intervention: 9%

IA3: Research investigation



- Application 1: 32%
- Application 2: 59%
- Intervention: 8%

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	154	Alignment	196	Alignment	172
Authentication	0	Authentication	43	Authentication	61
Authenticity	22	Authenticity	33	Authenticity	25
Item construction	411	Item construction	34	Item construction	37
Scope and scale	73	Scope and scale	1	Scope and scale	33

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

IA1		IA2		IA3	
Bias avoidance	16	Bias avoidance	0	Bias avoidance	4
Language	50	Language	12	Language	21
Layout	93	Layout	14	Layout	9
Transparency	56	Transparency	102	Transparency	72

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:

- datasets were concise, relevant to Unit 3 subject matter and free from extraneous information, allowing students to focus on analysing the provided evidence, e.g. included trendlines only if they would be analysed **(transparency)**
- datasets appeared immediately before all the related items, allowing students to identify the relevant information without the need for additional cues or directional statements, e.g. the full dataset was placed before Questions 1–5, rather than a single graph from the dataset directly above Question 3 **(transparency)**.

Practices to strengthen

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

- removing references to specific tables, graphs or figures within items (e.g. ‘refer to Graph 1’), as these cues are unnecessary and prevent students from independently selecting relevant evidence **(item construction)**
- ensuring each question assesses a single cognition and does not rely on the answer to a previous item (e.g. avoiding items where Question 7 requires the numerical answer from Question 6), allowing students to demonstrate the intended objective without dependency **(item construction)**
- aligning the cognitive verb with the nature of the student response, e.g. for a *determine* question categorised as Objective 2, students are required to identify unknown scientific quantities, while in Objective 4 they draw conclusions based on analysis of datasets (syllabus, p. 40, Questions specifications table) **(alignment)**
- avoiding response boxes, embedded units, decimal-place cues and formulas that are available in the QCAA Physics formula and data book, as these formatting choices can distract students and limit demonstration of scientific inquiry skills **(layout)**.

IA2: Student experiment (20%)

Effective practices

Assessment instruments demonstrated validity and accessibility when they:

- used concise, consistent language and logically sequenced task sections, supporting students to interpret requirements correctly without ambiguity **(language)**
- provided a clear experimental context that enabled students to collect sufficient primary data to analyse trends, justify conclusions and evaluate uncertainty, e.g. investigating how the force between two magnets varies with separation distance **(scope and scale)**.

Practices to strengthen

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

- ensuring the task includes all specifications from the syllabus (p. 43) **(alignment)**
- providing clear information about appropriate scientific genres, e.g. removing references to a conference presentation from the task specifications when the task only allows for written responses **(transparency)**
- clearly indicating which task components may be completed in groups and which must be completed individually **(alignment)**
- replacing generic or unimplementable authentication strategies with actions that genuinely verify authorship, such as checkpoints linked to draft data, analysis and evaluation stages **(authentication)**.

IA3: Research investigation (20%)

Effective practices

Assessment instruments demonstrated validity and accessibility when they:

- included authentication strategies that were specific, readily implemented and linked to key stages of the task, supporting teachers to verify authorship while maintaining student independence **(authentication)**
- clearly identified aspects of the task that could be completed in groups **(item construction)**.

Practices to strengthen

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

- providing clear, scientifically credible claims explicitly linked to Unit 4 subject matter, enabling students to pose researchable questions with appropriate depth and disciplinary relevance **(alignment)**
- ensuring the task includes all specifications from the syllabus (pp. 47–48) **(alignment)**
- ensuring that when students may select their own claim in consultation with the teacher, all Unit 4 topics (i.e. Special relativity, Quantum theory and The Standard Model) are selected in the Endorsement application (app) to reflect the full potential scope **(alignment)**
- clearly indicating which aspects of the task may be completed collaboratively and requiring students to formulate their own research question to maintain authorship integrity **(authentication)**
- avoiding contradictions between the stated mode and the communication examples, particularly the inclusion of multimodal genres (e.g. a conference presentation) for a written-only task **(transparency)**.

Additional advice

- Before submitting an instrument, check the formatting using the Print preview function in the Endorsement 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.