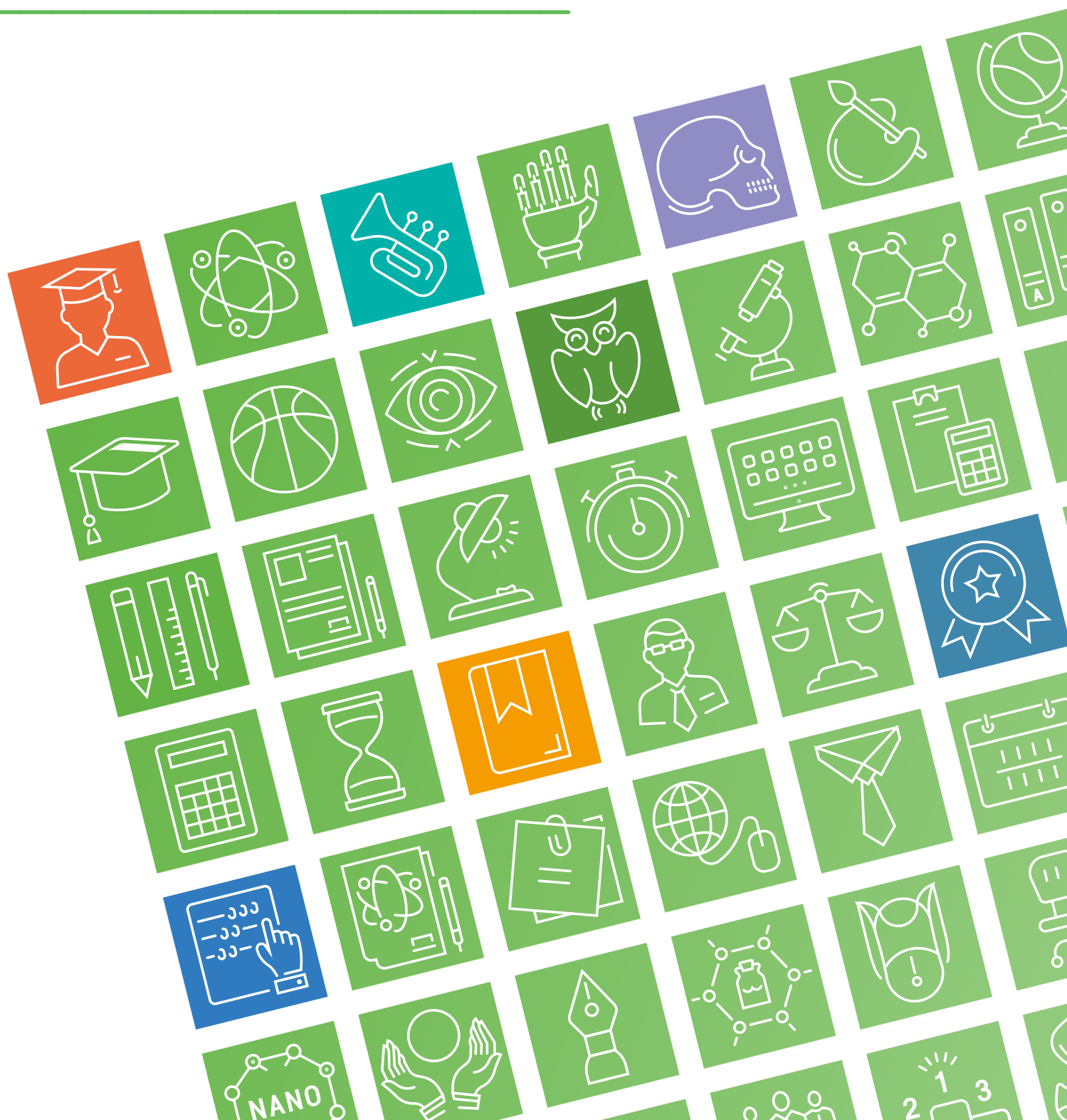


Autumn 2018



Introduction

This edition of our news update includes:

- important information on changes to UAS
- unit 'culling'
- trouble shooting tips
- feedback from centres.

Our statistics for the last academic year continue to show that UAS is being widely used by centres and that there is a real need for a recording of achievement scheme like ours to recognise the learning of a wide range of learners who might otherwise miss out.

We've had a really successful year with even more students benefitting from UAS in 2017/18. In total, just over 31,600 students achieved certificates over the course of the year. We really appreciate the way you act as advocates, letting colleagues, in your own and other centres, know about the scheme so that even more learners can reap the benefits of it.

We've had a really successful year!



Important changes to UAS from September 2018

In our summer update we told you about changes we wanted to pilot as a result of continuously reviewing our procedures so they always work well for everyone involved.

We're pleased to tell you that the changes we've trialled over the summer have been very successful and they will be formally introduced from September.

The changes are as follows:

- removal of the need for itemisation of evidence – this will no longer be a requirement and won't need to be included on newly written units. This has always been your (and consequently our) biggest problem when recording achievement – and in future we'll trust teachers to ensure that if outcomes require, for example, actions to be completed on several occasions, or 'x' numbers of 'things' to be achieved, that this will be completed thoroughly by the learner. It just means that one date on the summary sheet will confirm to us that this has been done rather than a date for each 'occasion'
- we will offer only three types of evidence on units, but with a wide interpretation of these which can hopefully be used by everyone. Evidence takes so many different forms these days, especially with new technology and terminology, which can sometimes be confusing. The evidence stated will be limited to:
 - **summary sheet** – completed by the teacher delivering the unit to cover all outcomes, as now, including teacher (checklist) evidence of observation, discussion and/or communication. The term 'teacher checklist' is no longer being used; the summary sheet will cover teacher evidence of this nature and will include a

sentence to cover confirmation of what the teacher, and ultimately the Coordinator, are signing to confirm

- **student completed work** – to cover all student produced work, no matter what form this takes, eg written work, worksheets, posters, artwork, recordings, IT-generated work
- **photograph(s)** – taken by the teacher or the student where this is appropriate or relevant to the outcome.

Further changes include:

- encouraging the use of non-gender specific language in units, eg 'they/them' rather than 'he/she' or 'his/her'
- issuing you with feedback on new or amended units you write so that you can take this into account when writing units in the future.

These changes will result in a much more efficient way of working both for you and the UAS team in Harrogate.

Important changes (cont'd)

All of our main documentation has been updated on the UAS website [Administer](#) and [Unit writing](#) pages.

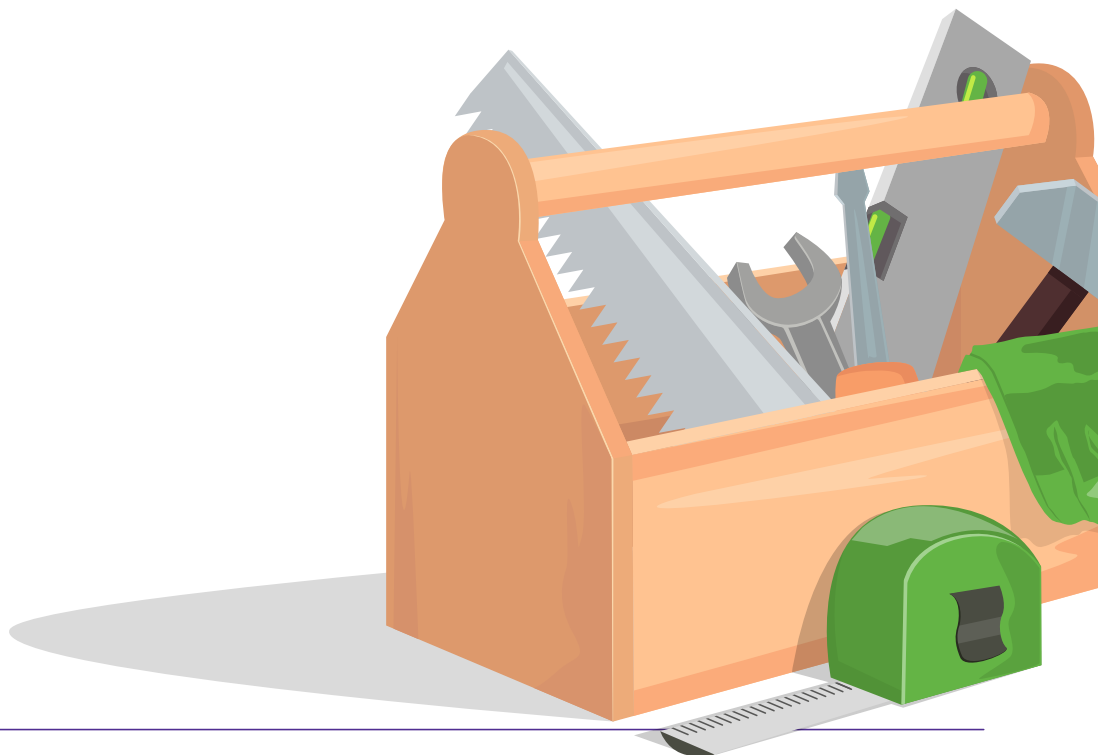
This includes the:

- Administration procedures and assessment arrangements booklet
- Guide to writing and submitting units
- Gateway – User guide for Coordinators
- summary sheet.

Our new fees for 2018/19 are shown on our fees page. Learner participation invoices for the 2017/18 academic year will be going out shortly.

Other documentation will be updated as soon as possible, eg our unit writing training webinar. It will also take us time to amend our huge bank of units to the new format but you'll be able to use all of these units in the new way, straightaway, in the meantime.

As always, we welcome your feedback or thoughts on any of this. Please get in touch: unitawardscheme@aga.org.uk



Encouraging use of UAS by registered centres

We're sending this news update to all our registered centres, whether you are active with us at present or not. If you've not had the time to operate UAS, we're hoping that the changes outlined above will make for a more streamlined and easier-to-operate scheme, which will encourage you to get going again.

If you're a potentially new Coordinator and aren't sure how to get going again, please do [get in touch](#) with us. We'll tell you about the [Coordinator amendment form](#) which needs completing, we'll send you a link to a short training webinar you'll need to watch and can also send you our latest infographic (poster!) with key facts and figures about UAS.

We also run training meetings at various locations throughout the country aimed at centres which are not yet registered with UAS. These are payable and the full list can be accessed (and booked) via our website. Sometimes these meetings are more appropriate for centres who've been inactive for a long time, or who feel they need extra face to face support with training.

Unit 'cull'

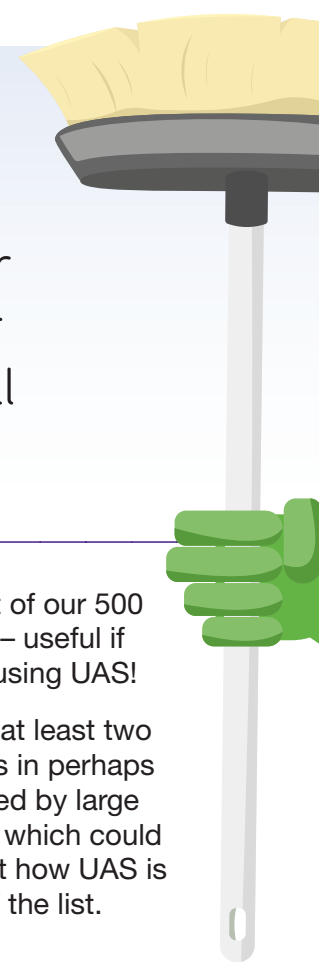
We're removing some old and/or unused units from our database so that the unit search engine can do a better job for you. Hopefully a more efficient search engine will result in the need for less units being written.

Whilst the ability to amend units or write new ones is a key feature of UAS, it does mean that our bank of units needs keeping in check every so often! You don't need to do anything, but if you find that a unit you want to use is no longer on our database, just get in touch and we will reinstate it, or you can find a similar one to use.

We don't have a definitive 'list' of all our units – which is something we sometimes get asked for. There are simply too many of them – well

over 10 000. Instead we have a list of our 500 or thereabouts most popular units – useful if you want to know how others are using UAS!

The list is filtered by units used by at least two or more centres. This sifts out units in perhaps more 'unusual' areas which are used by large numbers of learners in one centre, which could give a wrong first impression about how UAS is used if they appeared at the top of the list.



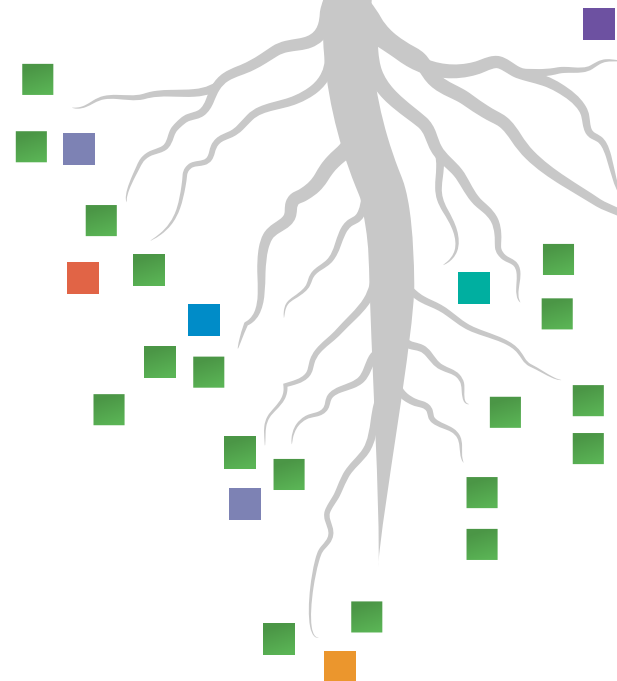
Unit writing update

A reminder that if you do write your own units, and are putting several outcomes under the same stem, you select the stem once and put all the outcomes for that stem underneath – you don't need to repeat the stem each time. This will really help us as it's something we have to amend here before the unit can be validated.

There is much more information on writing units in our updated guide to writing and submitting units on the website. You'll also find our unit writing training webinar [here](#).

Our new unit validation feedback form, which you'll now receive if you are writing or amending units, will give you additional support. Please make sure you read these before submitting your next units for validation, and do get in touch if you want to discuss any of the comments with us.

We don't reject many units, but when we do, it's usually because our unit writing guidelines have largely been ignored.



Correct completion of the claim form

This is just a plea from the team not to ‘manipulate’ our Excel claim form.

When we’re processing claims, if the form has been changed at all, eg colours added, extracolumns added or hidden, it is so much

more difficult for us to sort out. It’s much better to keep the form as simple as possible, and use another claim form if you need to, rather than trying to ‘fit’ large numbers of learners and units on one form.

The latest version of the claim form which you should be using now is in the list of important documents on the Administer page of the website. You’ll see that you no longer need to specify the gender of learners.

New ‘refresher/trouble shooting’ webinar planned

To help you if you have recurring problems with either writing and submitting units, or collecting and assessing evidence or completing and uploading claims, summary sheets and evidence, we plan to produce a short trouble shooting webinar covering the main issues which centres sometimes struggle with when using UAS. We’ll request that you watch it, if there have been problems, to try and help and support you. An example here is the importance of checking learners’ dates of birth and spelling of names on

the claim form, so we don’t end up having to issue replacement certificates for which you incur a fee.

If you need our help or support at any time, however, please don’t hesitate to contact us:

unitawardscheme@aqa.org.uk



Feedback from centres on UAS and case studies

We've had some lovely feedback on UAS from our centres recently, including:



Dear team,

Since I volunteered to take over last September the Award system has grown in popularity.

Many teachers now are using Unit Awards in many different aspects of our curriculum. They all now know how it works. One member of staff even wants to write her own units in Humanities. We now use the Unit Award in SLT, textiles, science, English British Sign Language, independence and life skills and Humanities. When I took over it was not used so much.

I now do assemblies where students are recognised with their achievements and we all clap and praise the winners. I normally do a PowerPoint to let everyone see what Units were taken and who achieved them.

Students of all abilities are now benefitting from the award scheme and the teachers are now well informed of the value to accredit achievements in our school community.

Thank you.



Jane Daly
Teacher of the deaf, Blanche Nevile School



Feedback from centres (cont'd)



It is our 1st year using UAS and I must say I have been amazed with the support given and the ease of processing claims. Our

students have loved getting their certificates and showing off their achievements. Please pass on our thanks to the whole team.



Nicola Reeson
SEND Manager, Haven High Academy



Feedback from centres (cont'd)

Mandy Seymour, SENCO/Teacher at Brunel and Burton Academies kindly wrote a more detailed case study for us:



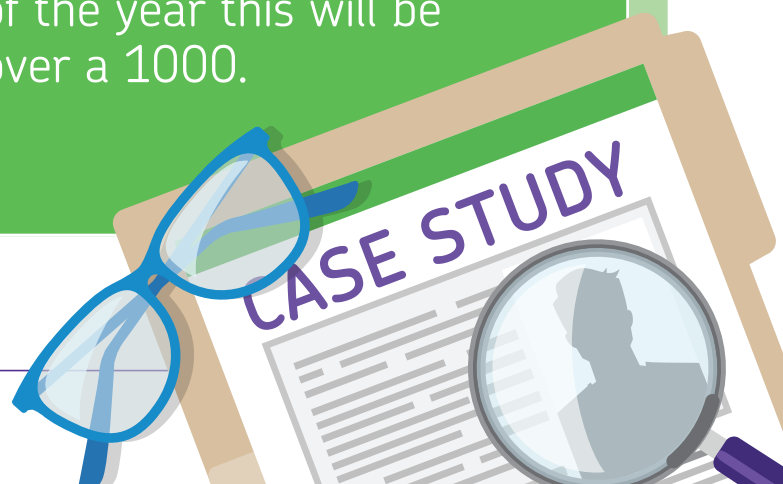
I am the UAS coordinator in a small school for pupils permanently excluded from mainstream, 100% with an Education Health Care Plan and all within the main area of need in social, emotional and mental health. As a body our students struggle with attendance and being in learning spaces. They have all travelled a tough road to get to us and feel disaffected with education and their self-esteem is low and has a big effect on how they perceive learning and themselves as learners.

The AQA Unit Award Scheme has been fantastic for us; it enables us to teach groups or individuals on a wide variety of topics and to evidence to the students how well they can learn and

they feel a real sense of achievement. One pupil, on completing some Entry 1, 2 and 3 Maths units* stated, does this mean I could do a GCSE? When asked “What do you think?”, the answer was “I know I can now, I’ve got no excuse – you will just keep reminding me of all these certificates!”

We started using UAS last year and I claimed 250 certificates, across our 52 students. Once we knew what we were doing we have been able to create a curriculum that embeds UAS awards and so far this year I have claimed over 900 certificates, and by the end of the year this will be over a 1000.

*UAS can be used as a stepping stone towards the achievement of AQA’s Entry level certificates.



Feedback from centres (cont'd)

Our outreach staff who teach our most disaffected, off site, learners use UAS for everything – a basis of maths and English then a broad coverage, which has included things such as horse riding and climbing a wall. UAS provides a resource that can diversify and provide teaching and learning on any subject for staff and pupils that are rarely on site.

As UAS Coordinator my biggest learning curve was in how to simplify the process of showing evidence

ready for claiming. Some of my simplest evolutions were the best, such as making sure staff provide a space to write the name and UAS unit number on every worksheet before photocopying – saves writing it 50 times! We have also created a set of stickers that say Outcome 1, 2, 3 etc which we can stick on relevant work showing which outcomes it covers. As Coordinator this helps in make checking the evidence very simple.

Mandy Seymour
SENCO/Teacher, Brunel and Burton Academies



Your experience of UAS

We always love to hear how you're using UAS with your learners, especially if UAS has helped them progress in any way, eg to employment or independent living.

If you have a story to share, please do [get in touch](#) and thank you to those of you who have!



UAS Staff

We've said goodbye to two of our staff members. Edd Hadley has left the team to work as a Teacher of English in Japan, and Nadene Stonebanks has left to work in Assessment Production here at the Harrogate office.

In Edd's place, we welcome James Selway, who has joined us from the Customer Services team in Manchester, and we've been lucky to have the services of a former member of staff, Pam Firth, over our busy summer period.

Head of UAS:

Adrienne Nichols

Delivery Manager:

Jessica Ramsey

Training and Development Manager:

Sue Birch

Customer Support Administrators:

Sharon Brown, Matthew Phillips, James Selway, Linda Selway, Tabatha Telfer, Jane Valentine

Contact us

AQA Unit Award Scheme,
Windsor House,
Cornwall Road,
Harrogate
HG1 2PW

T: 01423 534 235

E: unitawardscheme@aqa.org.uk

W: aqa.org.uk/uas
