

City & Guilds Pesticides

Application

PA1 Guide

Version 1

Last modified 1-April-2026

For external use



Document revision history

Version	Changed by	Summary of change	Approval date
1	Product Management	Creation	April 2026

As part of the recent updates to the PA1 Safe Use of Pesticides unit, we would like to offer further clarification and support to assist centres in transitioning to the revised specification. These changes ensure the product aligns with the latest legislative requirements and the updates outlined in the National Action Plan (NAP).

Key Updates and What Centres Need to Know

1. Teach directly from the new PA1 Unit Handbook

All assessment content within the PA1 multiple-choice examination is drawn exclusively from the revised Unit Handbook. No questions will reference information outside this document.

This means:

- The old handbook and previous training materials should now be retired.
- Centres must update their training resources to reflect the structure and content of the revised handbook.

2. Consolidation of Code of Practice content

Previously, learners were required to refer to the extensive Pesticides Code of Practice alongside the handbook.

In the redevelopment, relevant Code of Practice content has now been merged into the Unit Handbook, removing the need for learners to navigate multiple sources or study material beyond the handbook.

3. Expanded, not new, content

While no entirely new topics have been introduced, several areas have been expanded for clarity and to bring the specification in line with legislation and the NAP. This includes clearer mapping to legislation and regulations within Learning Outcome 1, and expanded coverage of product label requirements and contamination guidance.

4. New and Expanded Initiatives Included (NAP-aligned)

The revised PA1 now places enhanced focus on environmental and ecological protection. Centres should ensure learners are familiar with updates relating to:

- Beneficial insects – recognising their role, identifying risks to non-target species, and safe application practices to minimise harm.
- Biosecurity – preventing the spread of pests, diseases, and invasive species during pesticide use.
- Conservation areas – understanding responsibilities and restrictions when working in or near protected habitats.
- Aquatic environments – updated requirements for preventing water contamination, including buffer zones, drift reduction and chemical handling near watercourses.

These enhancements reflect the evolving expectations within the NAP and the increased emphasis on integrated pest management (IPM) and environmental protection.

5. Sample MCQ Paper Now Available

For the first time, a sample PA1 MCQ paper is available.

Centres are strongly encouraged to use this as a formative tool, as it reflects:

- The style and format of live exam questions
- The use of images where relevant
- The exact mapping of questions to learning outcomes

This should give candidates a clearer understanding of what to expect when completing their Evolve assessment.

6. Early Release of the New Handbook

As communicated in December 2025, the new Unit Handbook was released 6–8 weeks before go-live to support centres in updating their materials. We appreciate that not all centres may have taken full advantage of this window, and we hope this guide offers helpful direction and reassurance moving forward.

Summary for Centres

- Teach to the new PA1 Unit Handbook only
- Update training materials to align with the revised specification
- Use the sample MCQ paper to prepare candidates effectively
- Ensure learners understand NAP-aligned updates, including environmental protection and biosecurity
- No external documents (including the Code of Practice) are required for exam preparation

If you have any questions or would like additional support in adapting to the revised PA1 delivery requirements, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

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