

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Community Learning and Development: Social Science Approaches

Unit code: DK1G 35

Unit purpose: This Unit will enable candidates to build an understanding of some of the key features of social science approaches and explanations within society. It will enable them to describe some sociological theories and concepts in order to understand communities. The Unit will also enable candidates to discuss different sociological perspectives and apply them to community learning and development practice. The application of sociological theories will help candidates understand some of the issues affecting society and how they impact on communities. The research component of the Unit will help candidates get a better understanding of their communities.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Describe key sociological theories.
- 2 Apply research methods used by social scientists in relation to community based settings.
- 3 Apply sociological theories to explain how social issues affect communities.

Credit points and level: 2 HN Credits at SCQF level 8: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: While there are no prescribed knowledge and skills for this Unit, it would be beneficial for candidates to have good written, verbal communication skills and good interpersonal skills. It is anticipated that candidates have some active involvement in a community-based setting.

Core skills: There are opportunities to gather evidence towards Core Skills in this Unit, particularly Problem Solving, Working with Others and Communication. There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Context for delivery: This is a mandatory Unit of the HNC Working with Communities. It should be taught and assessed within the subject area of this Group Award. Due recognition must be given to the community dimension in the teaching of the Unit and the

particular circumstances which affect communities. It can also be delivered as a free-standing Unit for Continuing Professional Development.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment: This Unit will be assessed using two instruments of assessment, as follows:

- 1 Outcome 1 requires candidates to produce one essay of 1,000-1,500 words. This does not require to be conducted under supervision. The topic and question will be known in advance.
- 2 Outcomes 2 and 3 require candidates to undertake a piece of research related to their community. Candidates should describe conditions within their communities in terms of its economic, social and political characteristics. Relevant statistics relating to economic, social and political characteristics should be included. Candidates need to apply sociological theories to explain how social issues affect their communities. This research should analyse the connections between social issues and how they affect local communities. Information about community provision should be highlighted and include forms of discrimination, cultural and physical constraints.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and evidence requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Describe key sociological theories

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Key features of **four** sociological theories
- ◆ Similarities and differences in relation to each of the **four** theories
- ◆ Key concepts within all **four** theories

NOTE:

The four key **theories** are: Functionalism; Marxism; Social Action; Feminism
The key **features** within each theory are:

- ◆ Functionalism: interdependence of institutions; social stability; value consensus; socialisation; conformity/consensus
- ◆ Marxism: base/superstructure; class and ideology; exploitation/conflict
- ◆ Social Action: Weber; subjective meaning; human agency. Symbolic interactionism: interpretation and negotiation of meaning; labelling theory and self-concept
- ◆ Feminist Theory: patriarchy; varieties of feminism; power/inequality

Evidence requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ discuss the key features of **two key** sociological theories
- ◆ state the similarities and differences in relation to **both** theories

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Community Learning and Development: Social Science Approaches

Assessment guidelines

In order to achieve Outcome 1, the candidate is required to produce one 1,000-1,500 words. This essay must cover all the knowledge and/or skills for **two** theories. The exercise does not require to be conducted under supervision.

The evidence requirements for Outcome 1 are assessed on a sample basis. All four theories and corresponding key features must be taught and available for assessment, although candidates need only discuss two theories and the corresponding key features within the essay.

Outcome 2

Apply research methods used by social scientists in relation to community based settings

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Primary: participant and non-participant observation; case study; interviews and surveys; questionnaires
- ◆ Secondary: documents; statistics
- ◆ Quantitative and qualitative data

Evidence requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their skills and/or knowledge by showing that they can:

- ◆ select appropriate methods to undertake the research in their community
- ◆ gather information
- ◆ explain the differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods
- ◆ use statistics relating to economic, social and political characteristics of communities
- ◆ select and use information from their research

Assessment guidelines

The assessment for this Outcome is combined with Outcome 3.

The assessment for Outcome 2 should be integrated with Outcome 3. Candidates will need to provide evidence of having undertaken research in their community. They can undertake this as a group activity, but evaluation of individual contribution is required. They should use appropriate methods to gather information about their community, relating to its economic, social and political characteristics. They should select relevant information and use this data to produce a profile of their community.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Community Learning and Development: Social Science Approaches

Outcome 3

Apply sociological theories to explain how social issues affect communities

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Arguments which underpin the key theories
- ◆ Application of sociological theories to different topic areas
- ◆ Use of sociological theories to provide an explanation of their communities

Suitable topic areas are: social class; poverty/deprivation; family; gender; education; race/ethnicity; crime and deviance.

Evidence requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ identify the economic, social and political characteristics of communities
- ◆ use at least **two** sociological theories
- ◆ outline causes of social inequalities
- ◆ describe causes of inequalities
- ◆ recognise the causes and impact of discrimination

Assessment guidelines

Outcomes 2 and 3 should be assessed together. Candidates should carry out research which will enable them to prepare and present a profile of their community. This profile should clearly describe the economic, social and political characteristics of their community. They should be able to identify existing provision within their community designed to help alleviate social issues such as marginalisation, discrimination, social deprivation and labelling.

Administrative Information

Unit code:	DK1G 35
Unit title:	Community Learning and Development: Social Science Approaches
Superclass category:	EE
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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Community Learning and Development: Social Science Approaches

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 80 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

The Unit is designed to provide people working within community-based settings with social science approaches which may be applied to develop an understanding of issues faced by people in their communities.

The Unit is designed to build on candidates' experience within their community setting and to provide an understanding of sociological theories. Within **Outcome 1**, aspects of some of the central theories within sociology are covered. These theories reflect the complex nature of the social world. Thus, candidates should become aware of the need for different types of theory to try and explain what is going on in the social world and how we cannot understand one theory fully, without understanding another.

For example, in order to try to make sense of the diversity of sociological theory, lecturers may want to outline aspects of 'conflict' and 'consensus' within some of the main sociological theories. The point to stress is the way in which different sociologists have approached their work, and that the debate over the interpretation of social behaviour and how societies operate, continues. Candidates should be introduced to the main theorists associated with each of the theories.

Outcome 2 is designed to provide candidates with the skills and knowledge to undertake sociological research. The strengths and weaknesses of different approaches should be made clear. Candidates should be aware of the differences between qualitative and quantitative data. It is envisaged that lecturers will take a practical approach to the delivery of this outcome and opportunities will be provided to design and use different research methods as appropriate.

Outcome 3 is designed to combine the skills and knowledge gained in **Outcomes 1 and 2** into a practical assignment which requires candidates to investigate a community, or communities, and produce a profile which provides an understanding of that community. The profile should include information on the **economic characteristics** — employment/unemployment, patterns of local industry — **social characteristics** — housing, social amenities, demography — **political characteristics** — local and national government representation. Candidates should also refer to social issues which may affect communities such as crime levels, lack of facilities etc. In addition, they should be able to apply sociological theory to their findings and provide explanations of their research findings. This profile could be in the form of a report.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Community Learning and Development: Social Science Approaches

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit covers a range of sociological theories and research skills. For Outcome 1 all four key theories and corresponding key features should be taught and available for assessment. However, candidates are only required to be assessed on two of the theories and their corresponding key features for their assessment. The taught part of Outcome 2 should be delivered in as practical a way as possible. Candidates should be introduced to as wide a range of sources as possible. Delivery should take into consideration lecturer expertise, candidate needs and time constraints. This could include formal lectures, group discussions, research exercises, visits to access resources, use of a variety of resources and the use of audio/visual stimuli.

Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by open or distance learning. Centres will need to ensure that candidates can access the necessary resources to undertake the research element of Outcome 2 and to ensure sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence. For further information and advice consult the current SQA publication on the provision of providing open and distance learning opportunities.

Candidates with additional support needs

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Additional Support Needs* (BA 2399, SQA, due 2004).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Community Learning and Development: Social Science Approaches

This Unit is designed to familiarise you with the main sociological theories used to assist in the understanding of societies. An understanding of the theories will enable you to look at communities and to apply social science approaches to evaluate issues faced by communities. You will also be introduced to a variety of research methods which you will be required to apply to your community/s in order to produce a clear outline of the community/s and the issues faced by them. These research methods will provide you with useful skills which you will be able to apply in professional and personal capacities.

In order to successfully complete Outcome 1 of this Unit you will be required to produce an open book essay of 1,500–2,000 words which demonstrates that you understand sociological theories.

In order to satisfy the requirements for Outcomes 2 and 3 you will produce a profile of your community/s which demonstrates that you can apply sociological theories and research skills to identify the features of the community/ies and to use sociological theories to provide explanations for some of the issues facing communities. The profile should examine aspects of the community/s such as social class, poverty/deprivation, housing provision, employment/unemployment, and provide a clear description of the community/ies and the issues it/they face.