



## Higher National Unit Specification

### General information

**Unit title:** Politics D: Political Representation (SCQF level 8)

**Unit code:** FK84 35

**Superclass:** EA

**Publication date:** December 2018

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 02

### Unit purpose

This unit is intended for learners who have a basis and knowledge of politics and wish to further develop this in a practical way. The unit aims to develop a learner's ability to analyse political concepts and a system of political representation. It requires learners to critically evaluate an historic, or contemporary, state's system of political representation in relation to two political concepts.

### Outcomes

On successful completion of the unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Analyse two political concepts and a system of political representation.
- 2 Critically evaluate a specific state's system of political representation, in relation to two political concepts.

### Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit(s) at SCQF level 8: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8)

### Recommended entry to the unit

Learners should possess good communication skills. Other knowledge, skills and experience relevant to the unit would also be beneficial.

In addition, learners would benefit from achievement of HN Unit *Politics A: An Introduction to Political Theories of the State*, HN Unit *Politics B: The United Kingdom and Scotland* and HN Unit *Politics C: The United States and the European Union*.

Ultimately, entry is at the discretion of the centre.

## **Higher National Unit Specification: General information (cont)**

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### **Core Skills**

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following Core Skills component:

Core Skill component                      Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

### **Context for delivery**

If this unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes.

This unit is in the optional section of the HND Social Sciences award. It can also be offered as a stand-alone unit.

### **Equality and inclusion**

This unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

# Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards

## Unit title: Politics D: Political Representation

Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

### Outcome 1

Analyse two political concepts and a system of political representation.

#### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Political concepts, in terms of power relationships between a state and its citizens
- ◆ Main features of a system of political representation
- ◆ Likely consequences to a society of establishing such a system of political representation

### Outcome 2

Critically evaluate a specific state's system of political representation, in relation to two political concepts.

#### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ The ways in which a system of political representation was used by an historic state, or is used by a contemporary state
- ◆ Critical evaluation of this state's system of political representation, in relation to two political concepts

#### Evidence requirements for this unit

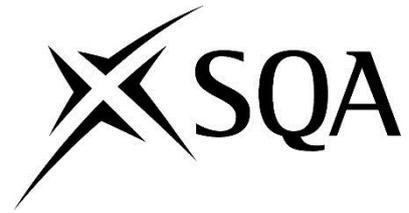
Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills across all outcomes by showing that they can:

- ◆ Explain and analyse two political concepts in terms of power relationships between a state and its citizens
- ◆ describe accurately the main features of one system of political representation
- ◆ analyse likely consequences to a society of establishing such a system of political representation
- ◆ identify and describe the ways in which a system of political representation was/is used by one state (past or present)
- ◆ critically evaluate this state's system of political representation, in relation to two political concepts

This unit will be holistically assessed by a single instrument of assessment covering all unit outcomes. This will take the form of an open-book research project handed out or negotiated at an appropriate point in the delivery of the unit (generally near the start of the unit) and a submission/presentation date set.

A written response should be 2,000 words approximately; an oral response should be 12–15 minutes in duration.

Regardless of the assessment method chosen, the learner must submit a bibliography presented in a standard referencing format, such as Harvard.



## Higher National Unit Support Notes

### Unit title: Politics D: Political Representation (SCQF level 8)

Unit support notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

### Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This is the last in a suite of four units that covers Politics within the HNC/D Social Sciences Group Awards; the others being *Politics A: An Introduction to Political Theories of the State*, *Politics B: The United Kingdom and Scotland* and *Politics C: The United States and the European Union*. The unit can be taught as a stand-alone unit or as part of the HND Social Sciences Award.

The aim of this unit is to build on learners' theoretical knowledge learned from previous Politics units and encourage creativity and innovation through research. The unit provides: an examination and analysis of political concepts, in terms of power relationships between a state and its citizens; description and analysis of the likely consequences of establishing a system of political representation, and the opportunity for the learner to research the system of political representation used by a state, past or present, in relation to two political concepts.

The two political concepts chosen to be researched may include: accountability, citizenship, democracy, equality, justice, liberty, power and authority or rights. This is an indicative list, but appropriate alternative political concepts may be introduced. The system of political representation to be researched could be one of the following: direct democracy, representative democracy, liberal democracy, social democracy, constitutional democracy, totalitarianism, anarchism, Marxism, Leninism, communitarianism. This is an indicative list, but appropriate alternative systems of representation may be introduced. Learners, having negotiated with their tutor, may choose to research two concepts and one system of representation in relation, either to a state examined whilst studying a previous HN Politics unit, or one of the learner's own choosing. Learners will however gain a greater understanding of the historical development and continuing relevance of systems of representation and political concepts if they are introduced to more than just those chosen for assessment.

### Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

While this is an intellectually challenging and stimulating unit it is also one that presents learners with the opportunity to learn creatively and innovatively by developing critical political research skills appropriate for higher level study.

Centres should structure the teaching programme to allow time for development of Core Skills and other transferable skills and for assessment practice within the notional hours suggested.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Politics D: Political Representation (SCQF level 8)

### Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

This assessment could take the form of an open-book report with an expected learner response of approximately 2,000 words *or* an individual oral presentation *or* poster exhibition with expected learner's response of 12–15 minutes in presentation or explanation of poster *or* any other method that is appropriate to meet the evidence requirements. Learners could also provide the evidence requirements in the form of an individual blog or creation of a website, with approximately 2,000 words. It is important that it is designed with an agreed format to meet all knowledge and skills required across all outcomes.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

The purpose of the unit is to build on learners' theoretical knowledge learned from previous Politics units, based on examination and analysis of political concepts, in terms of power relationships between a state and its citizens; description and analysis of the likely consequences of establishing a system of political representation, and the opportunity for the learner to research the system of political representation used by a state, past or present, in relation to two political concepts. When delivering lectures, therefore, it would be appropriate to draw up a list of topics for investigation (systems of political representation and states to which the research could be applied) from which learners would make a choice. The list, however, should be used to stimulate innovative research possibilities and not be considered either prescriptive or exhaustive. Learners should make their choice in discussion with their lecturer. This will allow for both learner 'freedom' to choose a state/system of particular interest, and tutor input, guidance and support to be achieved. Given the higher order nature of this task there will need to be a degree of 'structured guidance' from tutors. Tutors may, therefore, wish to provide periodic individual tutorials as a means of monitoring progress, reading drafts or suggesting further avenues of research.

Tutors should make learners aware of the importance of the judicious selection of appropriate academic sources. They should be encouraged to choose academic sources rather than generic search engines, to enable them to be more confident of information, particularly as this unit is at SCQF level 8.

Centres should design an appropriate assessment instrument based on a method that is suitable in allowing learners to meet the evidence requirements. This can be written or oral (depending on the needs of the learners and the organisational aspects for the centre in choosing particular methods). If an oral method is chosen, it is recommended that centres record this (either by DVD or digital recorder, etc) or provide assessor notes on the presentation for external verification purposes. Oral presentations must be done individually as each learner has to show evidence of meeting all evidence requirements, so a group presentation would not be suitable.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

### Unit title: Politics D: Political Representation (SCQF level 8)

A centre can choose to use a mixture of methods across a cohort, as it may be more suitable for some learners to give a written response and for others to use an oral method or to create a 'blog', etc. It is possible to combine the poster exhibition with an oral presentation. The time across all the evidence requirements covered would be 12–15 minutes (not 12–15 minutes each for the poster and for the oral presentation, but rather combining both in the time). They should also be done on the same occasion. Whichever method is chosen the learners should be allowed access to notes, text books or other materials, as the assessment must be conducted open-book.

If the centre is using a blog or creation of a website as the way of gathering evidence, this should not be in the public domain. Rather it should be on an intranet or private area of a VLE to reduce the likelihood of plagiarism. Authentication of the learner's work is essential. It would be helpful to collect notes or PPT presentation materials from the learner as further evidence of meeting SCQF level 8 in the presentation.

Centres should make sure they can authenticate a learner's work for this unit (open-book). This may be done by questioning a learner about their work, by seeing drafts of work under construction, by having a partial write-up in the presence of assessor or by using an anti-plagiarism tool, such as Turnitin or SafeAssign, which checks internet sites.

Remediation should be done by a review of the original work. Learners should be asked to hand in a complete piece of work, with amendments incorporated in the appropriate context, rather than a large add-on at the end, or asked to fully rewrite their work to a prescribed format if it did not meet requirements. Oral clarification could be used for minor omissions or to clarify minor detail. If it is thought appropriate that a learner tackle a different topic or question, then that new submission would count as a re-assessment.

In oral work, learners can be questioned by the assessor at the end of their presentation or explanation, where minor omissions occur, or where clarity is required. This would help to reduce the need for re-assessment. However, where more work is required to meet the evidence requirements (eg, where the quality of evidence is poor in a presentation) another presentation of the same duration, on the same topic or question as the original would be required. Only where a different topic or question is attempted would this be classed as re-assessment.

### Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the evidence requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at [www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment).

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Politics D: Political Representation (SCQF level 8)

### Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

The delivery and assessment of this unit may contribute towards the development of Core Skills in *Communication, Information and Communication Technology* and *Problem Solving*. It can also support the development of other transferable skills, such as, essay/report writing, referencing, citation and bibliography skills and thinking, analytical and critical skills.

It is possible to develop **Communication at SCQF level 6** if the assessment takes the form of an essay/report or oral presentation. **For written communication at SCQF level 6 the skill is: produce well-structured written communication on complex topics.** To develop this skill learners can be encouraged in both formative and summative assessment to present all essential ideas/information and supporting detail in a logical and effective order; use a structure that is organised and use paragraphing to make distinctions between facts, opinions, arguments and conclusion, use a format, layout, and word choice which are appropriate to the content and context, and use spelling, punctuation, vocabulary and sentence structures which are consistently accurate. It is part of the evidence requirements for the unit to ensure learners convey complex ideas in a well-structured and coherent way. This can be stressed in delivery and in formative work, as well as being considered in summative assessment.

The learners could be tasked with producing a written communication, such as a report, which presents, analyses, and evaluates a substantial body of information. These skills can be developed through formative activities, such as providing an essay on a political concept or on the theory of the political representation, without being formally assessed for certification of the Core Skill. The topics that centres can choose are complex so should easily fit with SCQF level 6.

It is important to develop report writing or essay-writing skills for learners' future progression. In doing this, learners should also be encouraged to use an appropriate referencing method, such as Harvard, for any formative or summative reports. Referencing, citation and bibliography skills are best developed using the vehicle of formative essay or report writing. It is hoped learners will have been introduced to these skills by undertaking *Politics A, B or C* units. This unit is useful for consolidation of the skills. The assessment for the unit could be a written report that would be to a prescribed format but would include the need for referencing and citation skills.

**For Oral Communication at SCQF level 6 the skill is: produce and respond to oral communication on a complex topic.** In both formative and summative assessment, the learner could be encouraged to give a detailed oral presentation on two political concepts, one system of political representation and one specific state where this system of representation has been adopted. This would be a complex topic. The specific skills of using an appropriate level of vocabulary, consistent spoken language structures and formality, conveying all essential information, opinions, or ideas with supporting detail accurately and coherently, and with varied emphasis as appropriate and responding to others, taking account of their contributions would be developed in an oral presentation or in an oral explanation of a poster exhibition. Although a summative assessment would require individual work and individual presentation, a formative assessment could be constructed that would encourage learners to work in a small group, with a few people contributing to the presentation. This may allow a learner to experience the demands of oral presentation before choosing this as an option for summative assessment of the unit (if the centre is able to give a choice).

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Politics D: Political Representation (SCQF level 8)

**For the Core Skill of *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* at SCQF level 5 the skills are: 'Accessing Information, use ICT independently, effectively, and responsibly to access information within a range of tasks' and 'Providing/Creating Information, use ICT independently, effectively, and responsibly to carry out a range of processing tasks'.** This unit can help to develop such skills by the use of mini formative presentations using PowerPoint or other ICT presentation tool that will also support the development of oral communication. A summative assessment using ICT presentation methods is also possible. Specific areas of accessing information using internet searches or VLE use and providing and creating information can be developed in such tasks. Creating a blog or a website for the summative assessment is another way in which this Core Skill can be developed. This could be used where learners (and their lecturer) have particular skills and interest in ICT.

**For the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6, the skill is 'Critical Thinking', 'Planning and Organising' and 'Reviewing and Evaluating'.** Thinking, analytical and critical skills could be developed by posing questions at appropriate points in the delivery, enabling discussion and promoting the need for learners to take responsibility for learning by encouraging the development of research skills via internet or using political journals and text books. These skills are also developed through the discussion of the research. The research task for this unit requires that a complex issue is identified; research is undertaken, and the findings are presented, either in the form of a written report or through the use of one of a number of other methods deemed appropriate to meet the evidence requirements. This task fits well with the development of this Core Skill.

Thinking, analytical and critical skills could be developed by posing questions at appropriate points in the delivery, enabling discussion and promoting the need for learners to take responsibility for learning by encouraging the development of research skills via the internet or using political journals and text books.

### Curriculum for Excellence

The Curriculum for Excellence aspires to place learners at the centre of the curriculum and develop their capacities as Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens and Effective Contributors. The four capacities will be developed throughout this unit. This unit will develop the literacy and communication skills of the learners by way of formative and summative assessments. Independent learning is required throughout this unit, as it is an independent research task, whilst the opportunity is available for group learning through the summative assessment. The subject of politics demands independent thinking, and through reasoned evaluation encourages learners to reach satisfactory conclusions. Further opportunity is offered to develop technological skills by way of researching via the internet, the production of word documents, PowerPoint presentations, blogs and/or the creation of a website. Collectively these skills contribute towards the creation of a **Successful Learner**.

Time management skills should improve during the delivery of this unit, as should the ability to relate to others through formative tasks and during the summative assessment task. The topics that form the basis for the research in *Politics D* should allow the learner to develop their own thoughts in terms of power relationships between a state and its citizens, and they will be given the opportunity to express these views within the classroom setting. This should lend to the emergence of a **Confident Individual**, particularly if they gain success in the achievement of the unit.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

### Unit title: Politics D: Political Representation (SCQF level 8)

Politics D can also contribute to learners becoming **Responsible Citizens** by allowing the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of the extent to which citizens of societies (past and present) have been able to have their political wishes represented by those in power. Furthermore, informed, ethical views of complex issues can be developed, as can an understanding of different nations and cultures.

Learners can become **Effective Contributors** to society by learning to work together effectively in teams within the class setting or outwith in carrying out their research task. This can be achieved through group-work where they can apply critical thinking within new contexts. In planning group tasks, evaluating data and presenting their findings, learners will also develop problem solving skills. Both oral and written communication skills will also be developed. This can be achieved through written work, individual PowerPoint presentations, and the creation of blogs and websites.

All these skills can be developed within the unit.

The Critical Thinking component of Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 is embedded in this unit. When a learner achieves the unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to include this component.

## History of changes to unit

| Version | Description of change   | Date     |
|---------|---|----------|
| 02      | Core Skills Component Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6 embedded. | 30/11/18 |
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## General information for learners

### Unit title: Politics D: Political Representation (SCQF level 8)

This section will help you decide whether this is the unit for you by explaining what the unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This unit is designed to enable you to develop your investigative and research skills and build on the theoretical knowledge learned from previous Politics units. You will have the opportunity to examine and analyse political concepts, in terms of the power relationships that can exist between a state and its citizens. In addition, you will learn how to describe and analyse the likely consequences to a society of establishing a system of political representation. You will also have the opportunity to design an investigation and conduct research on the system of political representation used by a state, past or present, in relation to two political concepts. Throughout, you will be encouraged to develop a creative and innovative mind, with analytical and evaluative skills highlighted throughout.

The research will be conducted partly in structured class time and partly in your own time and will be detailed work. The assessment will be open-book. This means that you will be allowed access to materials (eg, text books, political journals, newspapers, VLE).

The research task will be handed out to be completed at a date specified by your lecturer. It should be completed according to a prescribed format and could take the form of an open-book research project with access to materials (eg, text books, political journals, notes, VLE) and could take the form of an essay *or* report *or* set of structured questions with an expected response of approximately 2,000 words, submitted as a written report, *or* an individual oral presentation *or* poster exhibition with expected response of 12–15 minutes in presentation *or* explanation of poster, a pod cast *or* any other method that is appropriate to meet the evidence requirements. You could also provide the evidence requirements in the form of an individual blog, or creation of a website, with approximately 2,000 words.

It is possible to combine the oral presentation with the poster exhibition, where you could outline some aspects of the research findings in a poster and cover the others in an oral presentation on the same occasion. If you did this the total time for all aspects would be 12–15 minutes (rather than 12–15 minutes each).

It is important that it is designed with an agreed format to meet all knowledge and skills required across all outcomes. Your lecturer will inform you of which method(s) your centre will support.

As you progress through the unit, you will be encouraged to develop Core Skills of *Communication* at SCQF level 6, *Information and Communication Technology* at SCQF level 5 and *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6 by the types of activities you will experience.

You will also be given opportunities throughout the unit to develop as a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor.

The Critical Thinking component of Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 is embedded in this unit. When a learner achieves the unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to include this component.