

Higher National Unit specification: general information

This Graded Unit has been validated as part of the HNC/D in Social Sciences. Centres are required to develop the assessment instrument in accordance with this validated specification. Centres wishing to use another type of Graded Unit or assessment instrument are required to submit proposals detailing the justification for change for validation.

Graded Unit title: Social Sciences: Graded Unit 1

Graded Unit code: FM67 34

Type of Graded Unit: Examination

Assessment Instrument: Closed-book

Publication date: May 2011

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Unit purpose

This Graded Unit is designed to provide evidence that the candidate has achieved the following principal aims of the HNC/D in Social Sciences:

- ◆ develop an understanding of different social science disciplines
- ◆ develop an understanding of the contribution of social sciences to the modern world and human behaviour
- ◆ demonstrate that by combining perspectives from more than one subject, particular themes or aspects of human behaviour can be examined, explained and thereby understood
- ◆ develop an open-minded, critical and evaluative approach to study
- ◆ develop examination techniques
- ◆ gain knowledge and understanding of different research methods
- ◆ gain knowledge of competing views, perspectives, theories and evidence from a variety of subjects to enable the candidate to adopt a social scientific approach
- ◆ develop skills in managing and prioritising information

General information (continued)

It is intended for candidates who wish to test their ability to integrate what they have learned while working towards the Units of the Group Award. Their purpose is to add value to the Group Award, making it more than the sum of its parts, and to encourage candidates to retain and adapt their skills and knowledge.

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

- 1 Progress onto the HND Social Sciences Award, assuming the successful completion of all other required units
- 2 Articulate into an appropriate undergraduate programme
- 3 Enter the field of employment with a recognised and valued qualification

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

It is recommended that the candidate should have completed or be in the process of completing the following Units relating to these specific aims prior to undertaking this Graded Unit:

- ◆ Social Science: Research and Methodology
- ◆ Sociology A: Introduction to Sociology
- ◆ Psychology A: History and Development of Psychology
- ◆ Sociology B: Applying Sociological Theories and Studies to Sociological Topics

and a minimum of 2 credits from the following units:

- ◆ Economics A: Introduction to Economics
- ◆ Economics B: Economic Theory and Application
- ◆ Geography A: The Geography of Inequality
- ◆ Geography B: Urban Geography
- ◆ History A: Introducing Topics within a Historical Period
- ◆ History B: Analysing Topics within a Historical Period
- ◆ Philosophy A: An Introduction to Philosophical Debate
- ◆ Philosophy B: Classic Texts in Philosophy
- ◆ Politics A: An Introduction to Political Theories of the State
- ◆ Politics B: The United Kingdom and Scotland
- ◆ Psychology B: Explanation and Research of Psychological Topics

Credit points and level

1 HN credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

**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.*

General information (continued)

Core Skills

There are no Core Skills embedded in this Graded Unit specification.

Assessment

This examination-based Graded Unit is closed-book. It will consist of three questions in a written examination of three hours' duration. The use of notes, textbooks, handouts and other materials will not be permitted. The questions relating to research and methodology and social science disciplines should provide the candidate with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates she/he has met the aims of the Group Award. The examination is generally reflective of the Group Award.

In undertaking this closed-book examination candidates should:

- ◆ demonstrate achievement of the aims of the Group Award covered by this Graded Unit
- ◆ indicate the national standard of achievement required at SCQF level 7

It is recommended that close attention is paid to the exemplar for this unit to assist in the design of the assessment, getting it prior verified and then using and marking the assessment.

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates

Graded Unit title: Social Sciences: Graded Unit 1

Conditions of assessment

The assessment is based on a closed-book examination lasting 3 hours.

The questions relating to research and methodology and social science disciplines should provide the candidate with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates she/he has met the aims of the Group Award. The examination is generally reflective of the Group Award.

NB: It is important that the language used in the assessment instrument reflects SCQF level 7 in each type of task.

If a candidate does not achieve a pass or if a candidate wishes to upgrade, this must be based on a significantly different examination from that given originally. A candidate's grade will be based on his/her achievement on the new assessment event using a significantly different examination, if this results in a higher grade.

The examination should be unseen and the assessment should be conducted in controlled and invigilated conditions. The use of notes, textbooks, handouts and other materials will not be permitted.

At all times, the security, integrity and confidentiality of examinations must be ensured.

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates

Graded Unit title: Social Sciences: Graded Unit 1

Instructions for designing the assessment task

The examination should be designed to assess the candidate's critical knowledge and understanding of the topics relating to the specific aims which this Graded Unit is designed to cover. The questions and corresponding marks should be designed in accordance with the ranges indicated in the table that follows. However, the overall total mark for the examination is 100.

Questions:

- ◆ Candidates will be required to answer three questions
- ◆ One question will be drawn from an understanding of Social Science: Research and Methodology
- ◆ The other two questions will relate to two different social science disciplines from the A and/or B Units. It is expected that there will be a number of questions for candidates to choose from – one from each of the Social Sciences Units A and B combinations delivered at the centre.
- ◆ Each question must relate to a different topic
- ◆ the chosen questions will not replicate questions covered in the specific A and B Units
- ◆ Examination questions should be changed on each assessment occasion and each session

Key topics	Level of demand	Percentage weighting for each topic
<p>First question This question will relate to:</p> <p>Social Science: Research and Methodology</p>	<p>Discussion relevant to the topic and question set.</p> <p>Ability to highlight the debates about research and methodology within the social sciences.</p> <p>NB Question will not directly duplicate questions set in assessment for Research and Methodology Unit.</p> <p>Explanation, analysis, evaluation and an ability to draw valid conclusions.</p>	<p>40 marks</p> <p>Knowledge and Understanding — 30 marks</p> <p>Evaluation and Conclusion — 10 marks</p> <p>(See below for range and descriptions of marks/grades)</p>

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Key topics	Level of demand	Percentage weighting for each topic
<p>Second question</p> <p>Answer a question chosen from any one of the following Social Science disciplines that has been delivered in the centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Economics A/B ◆ Geography A/B ◆ History A/B ◆ Philosophy A/B ◆ Politics A/B ◆ Psychology A/B ◆ Sociology A/B <p>NB The candidate must choose a different discipline to third question.</p>	<p>Discussion relevant to the discipline, topic and question set. In depth discipline knowledge applied to this question. Use of relevant terminology.</p> <p>NB Question will not directly duplicate questions set in assessment in any of these Units.</p> <p>Centre may choose specific disciplines for candidate responses, according to centre requirements/resources.</p> <p>Explanation, analysis, evaluation and an ability to draw valid conclusions.</p>	<p>30 marks</p> <p>Knowledge and Understanding — 20 marks</p> <p>Evaluation and Conclusion — 10 marks</p> <p>(See below for range and descriptions of marks/grades)</p>

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Key topics	Level of demand	Percentage weighting for each topic
<p>Third question</p> <p>Answer a question chosen from any one of the following Social Science disciplines that has been presented in the centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Economics A/B ◆ Geography A/B ◆ History A/B ◆ Philosophy A/B ◆ Politics A/B ◆ Psychology A/B ◆ Sociology A/B <p>NB The candidate must choose a different discipline to second question.</p>	<p>Discussion relevant to the discipline, topic and question set.</p> <p>In depth discipline knowledge applied to this question.</p> <p>Use of relevant terminology.</p> <p>NB Question will not directly duplicate questions set in assessment in any of these Units.</p> <p>Centre may choose specific disciplines for candidate responses, according to centre requirements/resources.</p> <p>Explanation, analysis, evaluation and an ability to draw valid conclusions.</p>	<p>30 marks</p> <p>Knowledge and Understanding — 20 marks</p> <p>Evaluation and Conclusion — 10 marks</p> <p>(see below for range and descriptions of marks/grades).</p>

The examination will be marked out of 100. Assessors will aggregate the marks achieved by the candidate to arrive at an overall mark for the examination. Assessors will then assign a grade to the candidate for this Graded Unit based on the following grade boundaries:

- ◆ A = 70%–100%
- ◆ B = 60%–69%
- ◆ C = 50%–59%

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (continued)

Graded Unit title: Social Sciences: Graded Unit 1

Guidance on grading candidates

Candidates who meet the minimum Evidence Requirements will have their achievement graded as a C (competent), A (highly competent), or B (somewhere between A and C). The grade related criteria to be used to judge candidate performance for this Graded Unit is specified in the following table:

Grade A	Grade C
Is a seamless, coherent piece of work or exam script which consistently:	Is a co-ordinated piece of work or exam script which:
◆ Knowledge and understanding shown is relevant.	◆ Knowledge and understanding is shown, but may be vague and not central.
◆ Answers will be consistently good and strength of analysis will be demonstrated within questions.	◆ Answers may be uneven within each question.
◆ Terminology used will be appropriate to the topic and disciplines.	◆ Terminology may be relevant but vague.
◆ Accurate technical coverage will be well integrated and explanation.	◆ Likely to have more technical coverage from rote learning.
◆ Evaluation and analysis eg looking at strengths and weaknesses and weighing up different sides of an argument — likely to be more balanced.	◆ Evaluation and analysis eg looking at strengths and weaknesses and weighing up different sides of an argument — may be less balanced.

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (continued)

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Open learning

The preparation for the Examination may be undertaken by open or distance learning. The Examination itself would need to be undertaken under the approved conditions and invigilated in a designated centre

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

Support notes

This Unit is intended for candidates who wish to test their ability to integrate what they have learned while working towards the Units of the Group Award. Much of your time in this unit will be taken up in preparation for the exam both in revising the material covered in the relevant Social Sciences units and also in improving the candidates' examination technique. It is recommended that those delivering this unit speak to their colleagues to discuss what topics have been covered in the units studied by the candidates and how they should best approach answering questions in the various social sciences disciplines.

Centres are strongly advised to get their examination and resit papers, along with marking guidelines in the prescribed format (see exemplar), prior verified if they are proposing to use papers that do not already have SQA approval. This will ensure that no fault is found with the papers if scrutinised at Central Verification.

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, whilst the opportunity is available for group learning through formative tasks. The social sciences demand 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. 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. The preparation required for the Examination in Graded Unit 1 should allow the learner to develop their own thoughts of the world around them, and they will be given the opportunity to express these views within the classroom setting. This should lead to the emergence of a **Confident Individual**, particularly if they gain success in the achievement of the Unit.

Graded Unit 1 can also contribute to learners becoming **Responsible Citizens** by allowing the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of why people behave the way they do. Furthermore, informed, ethical views of complex issues can be developed, as can an understanding of different cultures.

Learners can become **Effective Contributors** to society by learning to work together effectively in teams within the class setting. 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, and oral presentations and discussions. All these skills can be developed within the Unit.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for candidates

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This Unit is intended for candidates to test your ability to integrate what you have learned while working towards the Units of the Group Award. Much of your time in this unit will be taken up in preparation for the exam both in revising the material covered in the relevant Social Sciences units and also in improving your examination technique.

The examination itself will be closed book, invigilated and of three hours duration.

The examination paper will contain one compulsory unseen question based on the Research and Methodology unit and a number of other unseen questions covering the Social Sciences A and B units which have been delivered by the centre. Candidates will be required to attempt two of the remaining questions. After marking, candidates who pass the examination will be awarded a grade – A, B or C.

There will be opportunity, if you fail, to resit an examination with a different set of questions. Candidates wishing to improve their grade may also choose to attempt the resit examination.

This Unit is one of the Units within the mandatory core of the HNC and HND Social Sciences awards and must be achieved before gaining the awards. The grade achieved in this unit may determine articulation opportunities into undergraduate programmes.

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.