



National 3  
Course  
Specification



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# National 3 Modern Studies Course Specification (C749 73)

**Valid from August 2013**

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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this Course Specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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## Course outline

**Course title:** National 3 Modern Studies

**SCQF:** level 3 (18 SCQF credit points)

**Course code:** C749 73

### Mandatory Units

**H23C 73 Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom (National 3)\*\*** 6 SCQF credit points

And either

**H23F 73 Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom (National 3)** 6 SCQF credit points

Or

**H6NB 73 Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom with a Scottish Context (National 3)\*** 6 SCQF credit points

and

**H23G 73 Modern Studies: International Issues (National 3)** 6 SCQF credit points

\*Scottish Studies Award contributing Unit: This Course Specification should be read in conjunction with the relevant Scottish Studies Unit Specification on the [Scottish Studies Award web page](#).

\*\* Scottish Studies Award contributing Unit

### Recommended entry

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ National 2 Social Subjects Course or relevant component Units

In terms of prior learning and experience, relevant experiences and outcomes may also provide an appropriate basis for doing this Course.

### Progression

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ Modern Studies Course or its component Units at National 4
- ◆ further study, employment and/or training

Further details are provided in the Rationale section.

## **Equality and inclusion**

This Course 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. For further information please refer to the *Course Support Notes*.

## **Rationale**

All new and revised National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

In this Course, and its component Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

## **Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles**

The Modern Studies Course builds on the principles and practices for social studies and will be developed primarily, although not exclusively, from the 'people in society, economy and business' organiser within the experiences and outcomes in the social studies curriculum area.

This Course will encourage learners to develop important attitudes including: an open mind and respect for the values, beliefs and cultures of others; openness to new thinking and ideas and a sense of responsibility and global citizenship.

This Course develops in learners a greater understanding of the contemporary world and their place in it. By studying this Course, learners are enabled to develop the four capacities in many respects. For example, learners' horizons are extended and they are challenged to look at the world in new ways. Their confidence can grow as they begin to understand more about their sense of identity and place in the contemporary world. Learners will build up a framework of social, political and economic knowledge and understanding which can help them develop a sense of responsible citizenship.

The investigative and critical thinking activities in this Course give learners important experience in contributing to group work and also working on their own. Learners will acquire attributes which will be important for their life and work.

Through the skills and content of this Course, learners will develop an increased understanding of the democratic political system and their place in it. Through this, and its focus on social and economic understanding, learners will develop a sense of responsible citizenship. The emphasis on the use of sources and decision-making will develop thinking skills. Learners will also progressively develop skills in literacy and numeracy.

## **Purpose and aims of the Course**

Modern Studies opens up the world of contemporary society for learners.

The purpose of Modern Studies is to develop the learner's knowledge and understanding of contemporary political and social issues in local, Scottish, United Kingdom and international contexts. In these contexts, learners will develop an awareness of the social and political issues they will meet in their lives. This purpose will be achieved through successful study of the three Units of the Course.

Through this Course, learners will undertake a coherent study of contemporary society with concepts and themes being revisited and built upon across Units. This Course will develop the skills to help learners understand and participate in the social and political processes they will encounter now and in the future.

Modern Studies makes a distinctive contribution to the curriculum by drawing on the social sciences of politics, sociology and economics and where appropriate, associated ideas drawn from other social subjects. It thereby adopts a multi-disciplinary approach.

The main aims of this Course are to enable learners to develop:

- ◆ a range of information handling skills
- ◆ basic understanding of the main features of democracy
- ◆ basic understanding of social issues at local, Scottish, national and international levels
- ◆ awareness of different views about the role of government
- ◆ awareness of the ways societies deal with conflict
- ◆ understanding of, and respect for, basic human and legal rights and responsibilities

## **Information about typical learners who might do the Course**

This Course is appropriate for a wide range of learners, from those who wish to achieve a greater understanding of contemporary society and their place in it, to learners who wish to progress to more specialised training or further education or employment.

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, it may be beneficial for the learner to have the skills and knowledge developed by relevant experiences and outcomes from the broad, general education or equivalent qualifications.

Through the successful completion of this Course learners will develop a range of important and transferable skills including: using a limited range of information on contemporary issues in order to give brief descriptions and basic explanations while identifying accuracy and bias; making decisions, and drawing conclusions; constructing basic arguments; and communicating views, opinions, decisions and conclusions.

Modern Studies Units and Courses are offered from SCQF level 3 to SCQF level 7. Vertical progression is possible through the levels of Modern Studies qualifications and lateral progression is possible to other qualifications in the Social Studies suite of Courses.

The National 3 Modern Studies Course provides an entry qualification for further study, employment and training. This Course is a preparation for a diverse range of occupations and careers.

# Course structure and conditions of award

## Course structure

This Course develops a range of cognitive skills. It encourages active learning in the process of developing an understanding of contemporary society. Learners will acquire and apply relevant knowledge. Through using a limited range of sources of information they will develop skills in the use of information in order to understand political, social and international issues.

By undertaking this Course, learners will develop a range of important and transferable skills, including using a limited range of information on contemporary issues in order to give brief descriptions and basic explanations while identifying accuracy and bias; making decisions, and drawing conclusions; constructing basic arguments; and communicating views, opinions, decisions and conclusions.

The skills listed above will be developed and applied over a range of political, social and international contexts in the following Units. Each Unit also offers opportunities for learners to focus on particular skills.

This Course has three mandatory Units. Within each Unit there is a considerable degree of flexibility in themes which can be studied to allow personalisation and choice.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a number of ways.

The principles above will be applied in the Units below:

### **Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom (National 3)**

In this Unit, learners will develop routine skills by using sources of information to identify accuracy and bias. Learners will develop a basic knowledge of aspects of democracy and the political system in Scotland and the United Kingdom. Learners will then have a choice to study aspects of **either** democracy and the political system in Scotland **or** democracy and the political system in the United Kingdom in greater depth.

### **Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom (National 3)**

In this Unit, learners will develop routine skills by using sources of information to make decisions. Learners will develop a basic knowledge of aspects of social issues in the United Kingdom. Learners will have a choice to study aspects of **either** social inequality **or** crime and the law in the United Kingdom.

### **Modern Studies: International Issues (National 3)**

In this Unit, learners will develop routine skills by using sources of information to draw conclusions. Learners will develop a basic knowledge of aspects of international issues. Learners will have a choice to study **either** socio-economic and political aspects of a significant world power **or** a recent world issue.

## Conditions of award

To gain the National 3 Modern Studies Course, learners must pass all of the required Units. The required Units are shown in the Course Outline section. National 3 Courses are not graded.

## Skills, knowledge and understanding

Further information on skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course will be given in the *Course Support Notes*. A broad overview of the subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be covered in the Course is given in this section.

This covers:

- ◆ using sources of information to identify and comment on accuracy and bias in familiar political contexts
- ◆ using sources of information to make and justify a decision in familiar social contexts
- ◆ using sources of information to draw and support valid conclusions about familiar international issues
- ◆ using knowledge and understanding of the main features of democracy in Scotland and the UK by giving basic, factual descriptions
- ◆ using knowledge and understanding of the main features of a major social issue in Scotland and the UK by giving basic, factual descriptions
- ◆ using knowledge and understanding of the main features of an international issue relating to a significant world power or recent world issue by giving basic, factual descriptions

Skills, knowledge and understanding to be included in the Course will be appropriate to the SCQF level of the Course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level ([www.sqa.org.uk/scqf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/scqf)).

# Assessment

Further information about assessment for the Course is included in the *Course Support Notes*.

## Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the Unit Specifications.

They can be assessed on an individual Unit basis or by using other approaches which combine the assessment for more than one Unit.

They will be assessed on a pass/fail basis within centres. SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgments are consistent and meet national standards.

The assessment of the Units in this Course will be as follows:

### **Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom (National 3)**

The learner will be required to give evidence of:

- ◆ ability to use a limited range of sources of information to identify and comment on accuracy and bias in familiar contexts drawn from political issues in Scotland and the United Kingdom
- ◆ basic knowledge and understanding, which is mainly factual, of political issues in the United Kingdom drawn from a Scottish and/or United Kingdom wide context

### **Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom (National 3)**

The learner will be required to give evidence of:

- ◆ ability to use a limited range of sources of information to make and justify decisions in familiar contexts about social issues in the United Kingdom
- ◆ basic knowledge and understanding, which is mainly factual, of social issues the UK drawn from either the context of social inequality in the United Kingdom or crime and the law in the United Kingdom

### **Modern Studies: International Issues (National 3)**

The learner will be required to give evidence of:

- ◆ ability to use a limited range of sources of information to draw and support valid conclusions in familiar contexts about international issues
- ◆ basic knowledge and understanding, which is mainly factual, of international issues drawn from either the study of a significant world power or recent world issue

# Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this Course. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Course are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the Course where there are appropriate opportunities.

## **1 Literacy**

1.1 Reading

## **2 Numeracy**

2.3 Information handling

## **4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship**

4.6 Citizenship

## **5 Thinking skills**

5.2 Understanding

5.3 Applying

Amplification of these skills is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for the Course is given in the *Course Support Notes*.

# Administrative information

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## History of changes to National Course Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
	1.1	Minor wording changes under 'Course structure' and under 'Unit assessment'.	Qualifications Development Manager	June 2013
	1.2	Scottish Studies Award Unit contributing information added. No other changes made to document content.	Qualifications Manager	September 2014

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Note: You are advised to check SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of the Course Specification.

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