

POLITICS
Higher

First edition — published March 2006

National Course Specification

POLITICS (Higher)

COURSE CODE C235 12

COURSE STRUCTURE

This Course has three mandatory Units:

DV4R 12	Political Theory (Higher)	1 credit (40 hours)
DV4T 12	Political Structures (Higher)	1 credit (40 hours)
DV4V 12	Political Representation (Higher)	1 credit (40 hours)

All Courses include 40 hours over and above the 120 hours for the Units. This may be used for induction, extending the range of learning and teaching approaches, support, consolidation, integration of learning and preparation for Course assessment.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ a Standard Grade Social Subject at Credit level or an equivalent Intermediate 2 Course or Units
- or
- ◆ Intermediate 2 Politics Units

and Standard Grade English at Credit level or Communication at Intermediate 2.

PROGRESSION

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ a Higher National programme in Social Sciences
- ◆ a higher education Course
- ◆ training or employment

Administrative Information

Publication date: March 2006

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2005

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this specification (including Unit specifications) can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority for £7.50. **Note:** Unit specifications can be purchased individually for £2.50 (minimum order £5).

National Course Specification (cont)

COURSE Politics (Higher)

CREDIT VALUE

The Higher Course in Politics is allocated 24 SCQF points at SCQF level 6.

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

CORE SKILLS

Achievement of this Course gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	None
Core Skills component	Critical Thinking at SCQF Level 6

National Course Specification: Course details

COURSE Politics (Higher)

RATIONALE

Politics has been defined as “the activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live”. Politics is linked to both conflict and co-operation. The fact that there are opposing and diverse opinions, needs and interests guarantees disagreement about these rules. On the other hand, people recognise that, in order to influence these rules, or ensure that they are upheld, they must work with others. For these reasons Politics is often described as a process of conflict resolution despite the fact that not all conflicts can, or ever will be, resolved.

The study of Politics enables learners to develop analytical, reasoned and critical argument which is crucial not only in this subject but in personal and vocational contexts. While Politics is in a sense everywhere and significant in everyone’s lives there is no single focus, no entire approach that can provide all the answers to political questions.

Aims

- ◆ to provide a programme of political study which will develop the knowledge, concepts, skills and critical awareness needed to understand political events and issues
- ◆ to develop knowledge and understanding of the structures of governments and political representation in different political contexts, using a variety of theoretical perspectives
- ◆ to develop knowledge and understanding of individual rights, duties and citizenship

Particular knowledge, understanding and skills will be developed:

- ◆ knowledge and understanding of political concepts, models and theories and the ability to relate these to past and current structures, institutions and practice
- ◆ knowledge and understanding of the work of major political theorists
- ◆ knowledge and understanding of how people participate in the political process and elections in different contemporary contexts
- ◆ skills needed to interpret, analyse and evaluate political sources and election data
- ◆ the ability to select, organise and distinguish evidence from opinion
- ◆ the ability to construct arguments and explanations which lead to informed and reasoned conclusions
- ◆ the ability to communicate arguments and explanations clearly and accurately, using appropriate vocabulary

These skills are developed in three syllabus areas:

- ◆ Political Theory
- ◆ Political Structures
- ◆ Political Representation

The focus of this Course will be on exploring the distinctive theoretical perspectives which characterise political study. Employing a theoretical approach allows candidates to identify, explore and make observations on political issues, develop their own views and perspectives, and allow for understanding of the problematic nature of political structures and systems.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Politics (Higher)

Throughout the Course the emphasis will be on a comparative approach. The focus should be on developing a deeper understanding of political concepts, structures and interactions as they apply in an appropriate range of political contexts.

Candidates will appreciate that Politics is a process in which groups resolve conflicts and make collective decisions. These decisions involve the analysis of different types of evidence, the construction of valid arguments, the detection of bias and exaggeration, appreciation of alternative points of view and reaching informed conclusions.

COURSE CONTENT

A summary of Course content is provided here, comprising a combination of the content of the three Units. For full details of content, refer to the relevant Unit Specifications.

Political Theory (Higher)

This Unit will introduce candidates to a range of political concepts and ideologies as follows:

Concepts

The State — what is meant by the term the state; the origins of the state; the link to sovereignty; its principal features and forms; the Pluralist and Marxist views/theories of the role of the state. Hobbes, Locke and Marx/Lenin are the relevant theorists.

Power — different definitions of power — power to — the consensus view of power should be contrasted with the conflict view — power is getting people to do what they would not have done otherwise ie power over others. Power as decision-making; power as agenda setting; power by manipulating desires; Steven Lukes is the relevant theorist.

Authority — ‘legitimate power’ — using Max Weber’s work the candidate should be able to describe different types of authority and give relevant examples to illustrate them ie traditional authority; charismatic authority and legal-rational authority.

Legitimacy — linked to authority and rightful power. Max Weber is the relevant theorist.

Democracy — criteria for defining democracy; models of democracy — direct, representative, liberal and people’s democracies; the advantages and disadvantages of democracy must be covered from different viewpoints using the work of appropriate theorists.

Ideologies

Liberalism — human nature; individualism; notion of freedom, justice and equality; democracy; rights and toleration; classical and modern liberalism. John Locke is the relevant theorist.

Conservatism — human imperfection; tradition; organic society; hierarchy; authority; property; traditional conservatism and the New Right. Edmund Burke is the relevant theorist.

Socialism — human nature; fraternity; social equality; social justice; Marxist and socialist traditions.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Politics (Higher)

Political Structures (Higher)

This Unit compares and contrasts a number of key political structures in the UK with those in either Scotland or the USA.

Political Assemblies — unicameral and bicameral legislatures and their advantages and disadvantages, their functions including: representation of interests and legitimacy in each of the countries; the scrutiny of legislation and government policies.

Judiciary — the importance of the judiciary and its independence in constitutions; its place in the separation of powers debate is critical from a comparative point of view; the constitutional importance of the Supreme Court in the USA and the debate about the creation of such a body in the UK should be covered rather than a detailed look at the judicial process and judicial reviews in each country.

Political Executives — types of executive – prime ministerial versus first ministerial/presidential; method of election; differences in the distribution of power and how the executive relates to other branches of government — separation of powers, sovereignty of parliament; cabinet government and accountability; styles/theories of leadership; formal and informal sources of power.

Political Representation (Higher)

This Unit explores a variety of elections in the UK, the US Presidential election along with other electoral systems and theories of representation and voting behaviour.

Representation — definitions, models and theories and the controversies that surround them. The candidates will cover competing theories of representation, based on particular ideological assumptions.

The types of electoral system that are already used for different elections in the UK at local, Scottish, UK and European level — Simple Majority, Alternative Vote, Second Ballot, Party List, Single Transferable Vote, Additional Member System and their relative advantages and disadvantages; the Presidential electoral system in the USA.

The use of referenda as a special case; the role of political parties and pressure groups in the electoral process.

The role of opinion polls and their uses/abuses; and the short-term and long-term influences on voting behaviour; theories of voting behaviour.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Politics (Higher)

ASSESSMENT

To gain the award of the Politics Higher Course, candidates must pass all the Units and the Course assessment. The candidate's grade is based on the Course assessment.

Assessment Objectives

The key objective of assessment is to ensure that candidates have achieved the aims of the Course. In particular, Unit assessment seeks to ensure that candidates can complete a range of descriptive and explanatory questions about familiar situations. There is some limited integration but it is restricted to the topics covered within the Unit.

Course assessment aims to ensure candidates can describe and explain political issues in less familiar and more complex contexts through the use of interpretation items and extended response questions. There is some integration of topics and this integration applies across the whole of the Course content.

Unit Assessment

The Unit assessment for each of the three Units will be a closed book assessment which should take place at an appropriate time. The maximum time allowed for each assessment is 60 minutes.

Each Unit is assessed against the standards set out in the *National Unit Specification: statement of standards* for each Unit. Full details of the Outcomes, Performance Criteria and Evidence Requirements may be found in the Unit Specifications.

Further details about Unit assessment for this Course can be found in the NAB materials produced in conjunction with each of the three Unit Specifications.

Course Assessment

The Course assessment is based on two Question Papers. The total for these is 80 marks.

Paper	Time allocation	Mark allocation
1	1 hour	20
2	1 hour 40 minutes	60

Paper 1

- ◆ this paper will take the form of data analyses tasks based on source materials
- ◆ the source materials may relate to the content of any of the three Units in the Course
- ◆ the material may be in written, tabular or graphical forms
- ◆ the paper assesses evaluation of sources rather than specific knowledge

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Politics (Higher)

Paper 2

- ◆ there are three sections in this paper:
 - Section A will cover Political Theory
 - Section B will cover Political Structures
 - Section C will cover Political Representation
- ◆ candidates should answer one question from each section
- ◆ each question is worth 20 marks
- ◆ questions will require extended responses, though some may be sub-divided
- ◆ the paper assesses knowledge and understanding of political perspectives and issues and the ability to synthesise, analyse, interpret and evaluate these

Further details of the Course assessment are given in the Course Assessment Specification and in the Specimen Question Paper.

Link between Unit and Course assessment/added value

In the Unit assessment, knowledge and understanding will constitute a major element of the tasks required of candidates, but the skills of analysis and evaluation will also be assessed to a lesser extent than in the Course content and applied to familiar contexts which have been dealt with in the learning and teaching process.

The added value of the Course

Unit and Course assessments are intended to complement each other. The Unit assessment provides evidence of a specific level of achievement in separate sections of the Course. The Course assessment confirms this achievement, by sampling, but in addition provides evidence of a range of skills beyond those required for Unit success.

In Higher Politics this added value consists of the following:

- ◆ retention and recall: the ability to respond to knowledge and understanding questions from across all the Units of the Course on a single occasion
- ◆ the ability to demonstrate the skills of analysis and evaluation, in familiar contexts from across all the Units of the Course on a single occasion
- ◆ the ability to respond to a task which requires the candidate to integrate their knowledge ie to draw on and apply knowledge and understanding from more than one Unit
- ◆ responses showing more complex analysis/evaluation than required for the Unit
- ◆ the application of analysis and evaluation in more complex situations than those addressed in the Unit assessment

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Politics (Higher)

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

The candidate's grade will be based on the total score obtained from the Course assessment. The descriptions below indicate the nature of achievement required for an award at Grade C and A in the Course.

For an award at Grade C a candidate demonstrates:

- ◆ accurate political knowledge
- ◆ correct usage of political terminology
- ◆ application of political concepts and terms, to a range of political contexts
- ◆ ability to support arguments with examples from a range of political contexts
- ◆ correct identification of relevant information from source materials
- ◆ ability to identify bias and selectivity in source materials

For an award at Grade A a candidate demonstrates:

- ◆ detailed and accurate political knowledge
- ◆ correct and detailed usage of a wide range of political terminology
- ◆ application of political concepts and terms to a wide range of political contexts
- ◆ ability to support arguments with detailed examples from a range of political contexts
- ◆ correct identification of detailed and relevant information from source materials
- ◆ identification and explanation of examples of bias and selectivity in source materials

ESTIMATES AND APPEALS

Estimates

In preparing estimates, evidence of performance should be considered from across the breadth of coverage of content of the Course and must take account of performance in the whole Course. Further advice on the preparation of estimates is given in the Course Assessment Specification.

Appeals

Evidence used to support appeals for the Course must show a sufficient breadth of coverage of content and must relate to the Course Grade Descriptions.

As candidates are required to have a sound knowledge of all the political concepts, theories and ideologies in the Course, the best evidence for appeals should demonstrate this knowledge.

Evidence which meets the essential criteria and demonstrates the retention of knowledge and skills over a period of time is likely to come from an integrated test or prelim which reflects the requirements of the Course assessment in demand, structure and timing.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Politics (Higher)

Although a prelim examination is not mandatory, it can give a good indication of how a candidate will perform with the addition of time pressure and the need to apply knowledge and skills in new contexts in the Course examination. Questions should replicate the style, level of demand and mark allocation of the Specimen Question Paper (please refer to the Course Assessment Specification). Questions from previous SQA examination papers may be selected and adapted for use in a prelim exam, which may provide appropriate evidence. Where this method is used, centres should ensure that the questions used come from at least three different examination papers and that some adjustments are made to some of the questions to ensure that the candidates will not have had the opportunity previously to see the questions. Whatever approach is taken to the creation of prelim papers or other assessment items, centres must be certain that the material has not been seen previously by the candidates.

The NABs for the Units of this Course on their own do not provide sufficient evidence to support an appeal since they do not provide evidence of a candidate's ability to:

- ◆ respond to questions from across more than one Unit of the Course on a single occasion
- ◆ apply analysis and evaluation in more demanding situations.

However, a high scoring NAB may be submitted to support an appeal if it provides evidence of some aspects of the grade criteria.

Centres which offer an integrated test or prelim which covers only two Units should include in their submission an additional test covering the third Unit.

To lend weight to an appeal, the candidate should have exceeded the minimum cut-off score for the test or prelim, or for the NABs that are being submitted (if applicable).

QUALITY ASSURANCE

All National Courses are subject to external marking and/or moderation. External markers, visiting examiners and moderators are trained by SQA to apply national standards.

The Units of all Courses are subject to internal moderation and may also be chosen for external moderation. This is to ensure that national standards are being applied across all subjects.

Courses may be assessed by a variety of methods. Where marking is undertaken by a trained marker in their own time, markers' meetings are held to ensure that a consistent standard is applied. The work of all markers is subject to scrutiny by the Principal Assessor.

To assist centres, Principal Assessor and Senior Moderator reports are published annually on SQA's website www.sqa.org.uk.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Politics (Higher)

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS COURSE

This section offers guidance and advice on delivery of the Course, rather than being mandatory.

It is possible to deliver two of the Units at the same time by covering particular political concepts and ideologies from the *Political Theory* Unit while introducing theories of representation and voting behaviour in the *Political Representation* Unit and/or introducing political assemblies in the UK and either Scotland or the USA. Some candidates may find this confusing but it is an integrated model that would make the concepts and theories come to life and may actually motivate some candidates.

Assuming the Course is delivered over one academic year, the number of weeks spent on each Unit should be roughly one third of the total weeks in the academic year, minus one or two weeks for revision and assessment. Whatever the model of delivery selected, at induction candidates should be provided with full information on the sequence and timing of Units, assessment objectives and Outcomes, content to be studied, nature and timing of assessments, and recommended resources.

Mode of delivery

The guidance provided below refers primarily to classroom delivery in centres, comprising weekly class contact hours. Other modes, including flexible and online delivery, may be effective, if learning activities are adapted. However, opportunities for group discussion with peers and the teacher/lecturer should be provided wherever possible, to facilitate learning. This is particularly important in the development of analysis and evaluation skills related to electoral data.

Sequence and timing of delivery

Tackling the Units in the following order provides a coherent approach to delivering the Course:

- 1 *Political Theory (Higher)*
- 2 *Political Structures (Higher)*
- 3 *Political Representation (Higher)*

The first Unit covers a range of political concepts and ideologies which provide a broad introduction to the discipline.

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Course 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 Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Politics (Higher)

POLITICS IN A BROADER CONTEXT

A number of national initiatives and programmes have been designed to promote themes that are important to contemporary society such as citizenship and enterprise. These themes contribute to individual subjects and Courses by making connections beyond the subject boundaries and enrich the learning experience. Similarly, the specialist knowledge and skills developed through study of a particular subject contributes to the understanding of these themes.

Politics is a subject which by its very nature deals with matters which impact on the everyday life of everyone in society. It covers things which most people do every day like making decisions about courses of action. Political issues are reported daily in the national and local news. As such, therefore, it permeates throughout all aspects of life.

All parts of the Politics Course contribute to building a wider awareness of contemporary society. In particular, candidates who complete the Course will be better informed citizens who, as a result, will be able to participate in political life in its broadest sense and have a basis for life long learning. They will also have a strong awareness and appreciation of the place of the UK in Europe and the world and the effect that global events can have on the UK. Examples of each of these are given below.

Education for citizenship — Politics increases awareness of key social and political concepts like democracy and representation. As such, those who have studied the subject are better able to understand and make sense of current events. They are thus able to make better-informed decisions and to ask more careful questions. The teaching and learning approaches for this subject actively encourage candidates to keep up to date with current developments.

Lifelong learning — Politics increases candidate awareness of current affairs and, as already noted, the learning and teaching approaches for the subject are built around the use of current and past examples. These examples can come from a wide variety of sources such as the Internet, newspapers, magazines and journals as well as television programmes. The study of Politics, therefore promotes habits of being interested and aware of current developments which can last a lifetime.

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT	Political Theory
CODE	DV4R 12
COURSE	Politics (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit is a mandatory Unit in the Higher Politics Course although it can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit will enable candidates to gain an understanding of political theory with reference to the work of relevant modern and/or classical political theorists. The Unit is intended to develop knowledge and understanding of general political concepts and ideologies and to explore the work of particular political theorists in detail. The Unit should provide practical illustrations and applications in a range of different historical and contemporary political contexts.

For those new to the subject, the Unit should stimulate interest and enjoyment, and may serve as an introduction to the discipline of Politics. For candidates progressing from Units at Intermediate 2 the Unit provides the opportunity to study some familiar as well as new concepts and ideologies and it will promote development of more in-depth knowledge and understanding.

The Unit provides suitable preparation for entry to higher education courses in Politics or further study in other subjects. Whether as part of a Course or on a free-standing basis, the Unit may offer preparation for employment or career advancement. The concepts and ideologies chosen for study in this Unit are likely to be of relevance and interest to candidates personally and socially.

Administrative Information

Superclass:	EA
Publication date:	March 2006
Source:	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Version:	01

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2005

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The cost for each Unit specification is £2.50 (minimum order £5).

National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Political Theory (Higher)

OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political concepts.
- 2 Analyse and evaluate political ideologies.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ A Standard Grade Social Subject at Credit level or an equivalent Intermediate 2 Course or Units
or
- ◆ Intermediate 2 Politics Units

and Standard Grade English at Credit level or Communication at Intermediate 2.

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit(s) at Higher (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*)

**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.*

CORE SKILLS

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	None
Core Skills component	Critical Thinking at SCQF Level 6

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Political Theory (Higher)

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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political concepts.

Performance Criteria

- (a) The key features of political concepts are described accurately.
- (b) The contribution of at least one political theorist to each political concept is explained accurately.

OUTCOME 2

Analyse and evaluate political ideologies.

Performance Criteria

- (a) The key elements of political ideologies are compared and contrasted accurately.
- (b) The impact of these ideologies is evaluated accurately in an appropriate historical or contemporary political context.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

The content and context for this Unit is specified in Appendix 1 — Statement of Standards.

Evidence Requirements apply to the Unit as a whole, and therefore, apply holistically to all Outcomes of the Unit. To demonstrate satisfactory attainment of all Outcomes of the Unit, candidates must produce written or recorded oral responses to items that cover Performance Criteria from all Outcomes. These will typically be produced in response to specific questions in an assessment comprising a mixture of short-answer, restricted response and more extended response items; questions may be structured, and may be based on stimulus material. This will take the form of a closed-book, supervised test, with a time limit of one hour and will be holistic, covering all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Each assessment will sample the range of possible content. The sample will be unpredictable in order that the complete Unit is covered in learning and teaching. The sampling will be balanced so that no assessment is any easier or more difficult than any other in terms of the spread of content covered or the nature of the items. If the candidate is able to demonstrate attainment in a random selection of items, it can be inferred that attainment in the areas not sampled would also be satisfactory.

If reassessment is required, it should consist of a fresh assessment instrument. This should sample different areas from the range of content.

Achievement can be determined by a cut-off score. The standard to be applied and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard. It is recommended that such an instrument of assessment should be submitted to SQA for prior moderation.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Political Theory (Higher)

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

While the 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

The content of this Unit is detailed under Course Content in the Course details. An expanded description of the content for this Unit is attached as an appendix to this Unit Specification.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Political Concepts

Ponton and Gill in “Introduction to Politics” (1993), suggest that a concept is “an idea defined in the mind as an aid to understanding; it is not a given — we do not search for some “objective meaning”. The Collins dictionary defines a concept as “something formed in the mind; a thought; a general idea”.

It is this sense that we use the term concept. There is no one correct objective definition with which everyone agrees. Andrew Heywood’s “Political Theory: An Introduction” (2004) examines political theory “by exploring the use and significance of key political concepts, clustered into related groups”. He also points out the difficulty of agreeing to one particular definition and/or explanation of a political concept. He cites concepts such as power, democracy and freedom as cases where “controversy runs so deep that no neutral or settled definition can ever be developed”. These concepts (and some others) are “essentially contested concepts” ie each term encompasses a range of competing versions of the concept which may be equally valid.

A political concept therefore should be regarded as a tool which has a broad purpose but can be adapted and refined for particular and specialised needs. The approach should be to examine what each concept means to recognised authorities and then attempt to discover a core of meaning common to all or most of these authorities. Concepts are therefore the building blocks of political knowledge.

Particular political ideas like freedom, equality and rights are not explicitly mentioned in the mandatory content nor will they be assessed but they could be introduced as underpinning relevant concepts like the state, power, authority, legitimacy and democracy. Candidates coming to the Higher Course from the Intermediate 2 Units in Politics will have covered rights and obligations already.

Political ideologies tend to be defined as “a more or less coherent set of ideas that provide the basis for organised political action, whether this is intended to preserve, modify or overthrow the existing system of power relationships.” Looked at from this point of view ideologies:

- ◆ offer an account of the existing order
- ◆ provide a model of a desired future
- ◆ outline how political change can and should be brought about.

This becomes the blueprint for the approach to the main ideologies of liberalism, conservatism and socialism. It should be possible to teach these using both a historical and contextual approach and so reflect changes and factions within each ideology.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Political Theory (Higher)

Where this Unit is being delivered as part of a Course, Units can be taught in any order or in an integrated manner. An integrated approach would enable the teaching and learning process to emphasise the holistic and integrative nature of the subject. It is also possible to teach Units in parallel with each other eg exploring several political concepts like the state, power, authority and legitimacy from the *Political Theory* Unit while applying them in the UK, Scottish and USA political contexts of the *Political Structures* Unit or the concept of democracy while teaching the electoral systems and electoral reforms in the *Political Representation* Unit. If Units are taught separately it is important that the concepts and ideologies within this Unit are taught first because they underpin many of the topics within the *Political Structures* and *Political Representation* Units.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Teachers/lecturers may devise their own assessment tasks while the National Assessment Bank will provide assessment instruments and guidance on implementation. The most appropriate means of obtaining evidence of attainment of the Outcomes of this Unit will be an assessment covering both Outcomes, comprising a mixture of short-answer and more extended response items, where questions may be structured, and may be based on stimulus material; to be conducted under supervised test conditions and lasting no more than 60 minutes.

The marking scheme should reflect the standard embodied in the Performance Criteria. This will allow the evidence to be considered as a whole. The level of attainment required for successful completion of the Unit should represent satisfactory attainment of the Outcomes and, by inference, satisfactory coverage of all Performance Criteria.

Care should be taken to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for support and reassessment of candidates if required.

Where suitable tasks can be set which allow candidates to demonstrate competence beyond the minimum standard required, evidence gathered for Unit assessment may also be used for grade prediction and for appeals for the Course assessment. For details of the grade descriptions for Grade C and Grade A in the Course assessment, refer to the Politics Higher Course Specification.

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 Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).

UNIT Political Theory (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

Content and Context

This Unit involves the teaching of political theory with reference to the work of relevant modern and/or classical political theorists. The Unit is intended to develop knowledge and understanding of general political ideas and to explore the work of particular political theorists in detail. The Unit should provide practical illustrations and applications in a range of different historical and contemporary political contexts.

All political concepts and ideologies below should be covered and will be subject to sampling in the Unit NAB and Course assessment. Political Theorists mentioned in connection with the concepts and ideologies must be covered but it is expected that centres will choose other theorists to compare and contrast with the views of the mandatory theorist.

The State

This requires an understanding of what is meant by the term the state; the origins of the state; the link to sovereignty; its principal features and forms; the Pluralist and Marxist views/theories of the role of the state. Political theorists to be covered for this concept must include Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Marx/Lenin.

Power, Authority and Legitimacy

Power — different definitions of power eg the ability to get what we want — power to — the capacity to achieve objectives rather than to exercise control over other people; this consensus view of power should be contrasted with the conflict view — power is getting people to do what they would not have done otherwise ie power over others. This allows candidates to distinguish between different dimensions of power using the work of Steven Lukes (1974) — power as decision-making — the open face of power that can be seen to be exercised when a decision is taken. Power as agenda setting — the secret face of power – exercised behind closed doors. Those who have power to set the political agenda have the power to determine not only what can be discussed but, more importantly, what cannot be discussed. Power is also therefore about preventing decisions being taken ie ‘non-decision making’. Power by manipulating desires — people with such power can persuade others that what is being offered is desired — the ability to shape what someone thinks.

Authority — closely connected with power — additional factor that those over whom power is exercised must believe the power holder has the moral right to exercise power and to employ sanctions if they wish — ‘legitimate power’. Using Max Weber’s work the candidate should be able to describe different types of authority and give relevant examples to illustrate them ie traditional authority — rooted in history; charismatic authority which stems from personality and legal-rational authority which is grounded in a set of impersonal rules.

Legitimacy — linked to authority and rightful power. The term legitimacy is frequently used in discussing an entire system of government rather than specific positions within a government. The most common legitimising procedure is free elections — Gorbachev’s power and authority was seriously undermined in Russia by the fact that he had never submitted himself to popular election whereas Yeltsin made sure he had popular electoral support. Some would argue that it is possible to exercise power without authority but it is unstable; rulers without legitimacy are obliged to rely on coercion. It is also possible to retain authority without power — overthrown leaders in exile are often seen as legitimate rulers. Max Weber’s work is clearly relevant here.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Political Theory (Higher)

Democracy — the identification of criteria for defining democracy; models of democracy – direct, representative, liberal and people’s democracies — should be described and explained using appropriate historical and/or contemporary examples. The advantages and disadvantages of democracy must be covered from different viewpoints.

Political Ideologies

Liberalism — key elements: Individualism is the core principle of liberalism — a belief in the supreme importance of the human individual as opposed to any social group. Individual freedom or liberty is a core value of liberalism; this arises naturally from a belief in the individual. Reason — the world has a rational structure and humans have ability to reason — they believe in progress and the capacity of individuals to resolve their differences through debate not war. Equality — ‘born equal’ — liberals have a commitment to equal rights especially before the law and in politics ie one person, one vote, favour equality of opportunity — meritocracy — rather than equality of Outcome. Toleration — to think, act and speak freely (within some limits) can lead to social enrichment; they believe pluralism is healthy; natural balance and harmony — no such thing as irreconcilable conflict. Consent — willing agreement — ‘consent of the governed’ — favour democracy and representation although need a ‘constitution’ as vital to guarantee order and stability in society — aware of dangers of tyranny — need for a bill of rights and written constitution. Distinguish between classical and modern liberalism.

Major theorist — John Locke.

Conservatism — key elements: Tradition — ‘desire to conserve’; respect for established customs and institutions. This promotes stability, security and sense of belonging. Human imperfection — they have a pessimistic view of human nature; humans are limited, dependent, need stable/orderly life. Individuals may be morally corrupt, selfish and greedy. For these reasons they believe we need a strong state and laws. Property — ownership vital – it gives independence, security; it also gives rights and duties and ensures respect for the law and property of others. Authority — exercised from above, provides strong leadership, guidance and support; a source of social cohesion, which leads to a willingness to accept obligations and duties. Hierarchy — gradations of social position and status are natural and inevitable. They reflect different roles and responsibilities; do not necessarily give rise to conflict due to mutual obligations and ‘knowing one’s place’. Distinguish between traditional conservatism and the New Right in the UK.

Major theorist — Edmund Burke.

Socialism — key elements: Community — the core of socialism is the importance of community — human beings are social creatures and have a common humanity. Fraternity or comradeship — socialists prefer co-operation to competition and collectivism over individualism. Cooperation enables people to harness their collective energies — competition pits individuals against individuals, may breed resentment, conflict. Social equality — a central value of socialism — equality of Outcome (not opportunity) — this is the basis for the exercise of legal and political rights. Material benefits should be distributed on the basis of need rather than merit or work. Karl Marx’s “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.” This requires people to be motivated by moral incentives rather than material ones. Socialism analyses society in terms of the distribution of income or wealth and social class is significant in this. Socialism is usually associated with the interests of an oppressed and exploited class and that class is the agent of change, even social revolution. Common ownership — a controversial feature with some socialists seeing it as an end of socialism itself, others as a means of generating broader equality. Material resources can be harnessed for the common good. Private property promotes social division and selfishness.

Major theorist — Karl Marx.

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Political Structures

CODE DV4T 12

COURSE Politics (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit is a mandatory Unit in the Higher Politics Course although it can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit will enable candidates to gain an understanding of the political structures of the UK and either Scotland or the USA — the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government. Comparison is the foundation of any systematic branch of knowledge. It provides context. It alerts candidates to similarities and differences in institutions and processes. It improves our classification of Politics.

For those new to the subject, the Unit should stimulate interest and enjoyment, and may serve as an introduction to the discipline of Politics. For candidates progressing from Units at Intermediate 2 the Unit provides the opportunity to study some familiar topics related to the UK and Scotland and some new topics involving the USA and it will promote development of more in-depth knowledge and understanding.

As part of Higher Politics, the Unit provides suitable preparation for entry to higher education courses in Politics or further study in other subjects. Whether as part of a Course or on a free-standing basis, the Unit may offer preparation for employment or career advancement. The topics and the political contexts chosen for study in this Unit are likely to be of relevance and interest to candidates personally and socially.

Administrative Information

Superclass: EA

Publication date: March 2006

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2005

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The cost for each Unit specification is £2.50 (minimum order £5).

National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Political Structures (Higher)

OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the legislative and judicial branches of government in the UK and either Scotland or the USA.
- 2 Analyse and evaluate the political executives of the UK and either Scotland or the USA.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ A Standard Grade Social Subject at Credit level or an equivalent Intermediate 2 Course or Units
or
- ◆ Intermediate 2 Politics Units

and Standard Grade English at Credit level or Communication at Intermediate 2.

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit(s) at Higher (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*)

**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.*

CORE SKILLS

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	None
Core Skills component	Critical Thinking at SCQF Level 6

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Political Structures (Higher)

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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the legislative and judicial branches of government in the UK and either Scotland or the USA.

Performance Criteria

- (a) The role and structure of political assemblies is described accurately.
- (b) The relationship between the legislative and judicial branches of government is explained accurately.

OUTCOME 2

Analyse and evaluate the political executives of the UK and either Scotland or the USA.

Performance Criteria

- (a) The roles, powers and functions of the Prime Minister of the UK with those of the First Minister in Scotland or the President of the USA are compared and contrasted accurately.
- (b) The relationship between the executive and legislative branches of government in the UK and either Scotland or the USA is evaluated accurately.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

The content and context for this Unit is specified in Appendix 1 — Statement of Standards.

Evidence Requirements apply to the Unit as a whole, and therefore, apply holistically to all Outcomes of the Unit. To demonstrate satisfactory attainment of all Outcomes of the Unit, candidates must produce written or recorded oral responses to items that cover Performance Criteria from all Outcomes. These will typically be produced in response to specific questions in an assessment comprising a mixture of short-answer, restricted response and more extended response items; questions may be structured, and may be based on stimulus material. This will take the form of a closed-book, supervised test, with a time limit of one hour and will be holistic, covering all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Each assessment will sample the range of possible content. The sample will be unpredictable in order that the complete Unit is covered in learning and teaching. The sampling will be balanced so that no assessment is any easier or more difficult than any other in terms of the spread of content covered or the nature of the items. If the candidate is able to demonstrate attainment in a random selection of items, it can be inferred that attainment in the areas not sampled would also be satisfactory.

If reassessment is required, it should consist of a fresh assessment instrument. This should sample different areas from the range of content.

Achievement can be determined by a cut-off score. The standard to be applied and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard. It is recommended that such an instrument of assessment should be submitted to SQA for prior moderation.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Political Structures (Higher)

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

While the 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

The content of this Unit is detailed under Course Content in the Course details. An expanded description of the content for this Unit is attached as an appendix to this Unit Specification.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Candidates should be introduced to this Unit by looking at the key features of the UK constitution and either how these relate to and involve Scotland or how they compare with the key features of the American constitution. The UK's constitution is conservative compared with the liberal nature of the American constitution. How devolved power in Scotland is accomplished within the UK constitution needs to be examined. Many liberal ideas and principles are fixed in the American constitution — limited government, government by consent, the separation of powers, the desire to safeguard individual rights and the need to establish legal and political equality. The conservative traditions in the UK have demanded that the system should be more flexible; the constitution should be allowed to grow with the system and therefore cannot be a fixed set of ideas and principles. The Scottish Parliamentary powers and those policy areas “reserved” for Westminster provides a good source of examples of how flexible the UK constitution is.

Candidates should explore how these approaches affect the status of the constitutions; the distinction between “written” and “unwritten”, flexible and rigid constitutions; a very brief look at constitutional amendments and judicial reviews is required.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

While teachers/lecturers may devise their own assessment tasks the National Assessment Bank will provide assessment instruments and guidance on implementation. The most appropriate means of obtaining evidence of attainment of the Outcomes of this Unit will be an assessment covering both more Outcomes, comprising a mixture of short-answer and extended response items, where questions may be structured, and may be based on stimulus material; to be conducted under supervised test conditions and lasting no more than 60 minutes.

The marking scheme should reflect the standard embodied in the Performance Criteria. This will allow the evidence to be considered as a whole. The level of attainment required for successful completion of the Unit should represent satisfactory attainment of the Outcomes and, by inference, satisfactory coverage of all Performance Criteria.

Care should be taken to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for support and reassessment of candidates if required.

Where suitable tasks can be set which allow candidates to demonstrate competence beyond the minimum standard required, evidence gathered for Unit assessment may also be used for grade prediction and for appeals for the Course assessment. For details of the grade descriptions for Grade C and Grade A in the Course assessment, refer to the Politics Higher Course Specification.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Political Structures (Higher)

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 Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).

UNIT Political Structures (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

Content and Context

Constitutions — candidates should be introduced to this Unit by looking at the key features of the UK constitution and either how these relate to and involve Scotland or how they compare with the American constitution. The UK's constitution is conservative compared with the liberal nature of the American constitution. How devolved power in Scotland is accomplished within the UK constitution should be examined. Many liberal ideas and principles are fixed in the American constitution — limited government, government by consent, the separation of powers, the desire to safeguard individual rights and the need to establish legal and political equality. The conservative traditions in the UK have demanded that the system should be more flexible; the constitution should be allowed to grow with the system and therefore cannot be a fixed set of ideas and principles. The Scottish Parliamentary powers and those policy areas “reserved” for Westminster provides a good source of examples of how flexible the UK constitution is.

Candidates should explore how these approaches affect the status of the constitutions; the distinction between “written” and “unwritten”, flexible and rigid constitutions; a very brief look at constitutional amendments and judicial reviews is required.

Political Assemblies — there is a need to clarify the definition and role of assemblies; Heywood uses the term assemblies to refer to both houses or chambers and points out that it is also used interchangeably with the terms legislature and parliament; use the principle of the separation of powers to identify the three branches of government before comparing and contrasting the role and structure of assemblies in the UK and either Scotland or the USA.

Candidates should appreciate that the role of assemblies is much more than simply a debating and representative body. Assemblies cover a number of functions — legislation, representation of interests, finance, and scrutiny of the government. Underpinning all of these is a system of checks and balances and a party system in each country.

Legislation — Congress may initiate, draft, amend or reject legislation whereas very little legislation originates in Parliament (Private Members' Bills are mostly rejected); government legislation is virtually guaranteed success in the UK and to a large extent in Scotland but this is not always so in the USA; the influence of lobby groups is extensive in the USA but weaker in Scotland and the UK.

Representation of interests — candidates need to be able to describe, discuss and exemplify the differences and/or similarities for lobbyists in the chosen countries in terms of access, sponsorship of representatives and the workings of the committee system; the link between representatives and their constituencies and how they support or oppose legislation that affects their constituencies.

Finance — a very brief review of the role of finance is required in the chosen countries.

Scrutiny of Government — the differences and similarities in the committee systems of the UK and either Scotland or the USA in terms of openness, profile and publicity should be looked at; the differences on the appointment of government members and opportunities open to representatives to question the executive are important.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Political Structures (Higher)

Structure of assemblies in the UK and either Scotland or the USA — candidates should be aware of the distinction between bicameral and unicameral legislatures and the advantages and disadvantages of each, with examples from the UK and the chosen country for comparison; they should be able to discuss and comment on how members are selected in these chambers and the strengths and weaknesses of the committee system in the UK and Scotland or the USA.

Relationship between the legislature and Judiciary — this topic should be at an introductory level. It is expected that in looking at constitutions the importance of the judiciary and its independence will be explored; its place in the separation of powers debate will also be explored, depending on the country chosen for comparison; the constitutional importance of the Supreme Court in the USA and the creation of such a body in the UK could be covered. The unusual position of Scotland and the UK parliament and judiciary could be covered.

Political Executives

Historically, executives predated the emergence of separate legislatures, judiciaries and bureaucracies. These bodies developed to aid, advise and later to constrain executive rulers. Our concern here is with core executives, defined as the ‘commanding heights’ of the state apparatus. At the core is the top leader and his or her ministers and key officials. The major task of the political executive is leadership and this involves several functions — making policy; mobilising support for policies; supervising the implementation of policy and ceremonial and crisis leadership.

The study of political executives in the UK and Scotland or the USA involves looking at how the executives are aided and constrained by political assemblies and judiciaries. A brief comparison of constitutional and authoritarian executives will aid understanding of how more democratic states have reasonably effective restraints on the exercise of power and succession to executive office. With authoritarian executives constitutional and electoral controls may be either unacknowledged or ineffective.

Comparing the UK’s Prime Ministerial executive with either Scotland’s First Minister or the American President will lead to some similarities and differences and interpretations/conclusions about which is more or less “powerful” in one area or another — if Scotland is chosen it should be clear the First Minister lacks power in several critical areas.

Their relationship with their respective political parties, cabinets and the administrations of each of the countries are very different — the doctrine of collective responsibility is a useful comparative device here; the method of election and constitutional position regarding removal from office are other areas for comparison.

Relationship between the Executive and the Legislative branches of government in the UK and either Scotland or the USA — generally the relationship can be described as one of executive dominance in the UK and Scotland but a more balanced relationship in the USA. Candidates should examine the relationship and evaluate where the power lies and why; the checks and balances that operate and their effectiveness.

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Political Representation

CODE DV4V 12

COURSE Politics (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit is a mandatory Unit in the Higher Politics Course although it can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit will enable candidates to focus on the issue of political representation and the controversies that surround it. The intention of this Unit is to introduce the candidate to different models of representation and the types of electoral system that are already used for different elections in the UK at local, Scottish, UK and European level. By comparing and contrasting those used in the UK with other possible systems the candidates will achieve a more thorough knowledge and understanding of representation. The role of political parties and interest groups, the use of referenda as a special case, the role of opinion polls and the short-term and long-term influences on voting are all critical topics within the Unit. Candidates will also be expected to develop the skills of analysis, interpretation and evaluation using data from the various election campaigns in the UK.

For those new to the subject, the Unit should stimulate interest and enjoyment, and may serve as an introduction to the discipline of Politics. For candidates progressing from Units at Intermediate 2 the Unit provides the opportunity to study some familiar as well as new topics related to representation and elections and it will promote development of more in-depth knowledge and understanding.

As part of Higher Politics, the Unit provides suitable preparation for entry to higher education courses in Politics or further study in other subjects. Whether as part of a Course or on a free-standing basis, the Unit may offer preparation for employment or career advancement. The topics chosen for study in this Unit are likely to be of relevance and interest to candidates personally and socially.

Administrative Information

Superclass: EA

Publication date: March 2006

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2005

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this specification (including Unit specifications) can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority for £7.50. **Note:** Unit specifications can be purchased individually for £2.50 (minimum order £5).

National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Political Representation (Higher)

OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of representation and electoral systems.
- 2 Analyse and evaluate electoral data.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ A Standard Grade Social Subject at Credit level or an equivalent Intermediate 2 Course or Units
or
- ◆ Intermediate 2 Politics Units

and Standard Grade English at Credit level or Communication at Intermediate 2.

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit(s) at Higher level (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*)

**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.*

CORE SKILLS

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	None
Core Skills component	Critical Thinking at SCQF Level 6

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Political Representation (Higher)

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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of representation and electoral systems.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Theories of representation and voting behavior in the UK are described accurately.
- (b) The key features of majoritarian and proportional electoral systems are explained accurately.

OUTCOME 2

Analyse and evaluate electoral data.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Electoral data is analysed to reach accurate and valid conclusions.
- (b) Sources related to elections are evaluated to identify and explain examples of bias and selective argument.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

The content and context for this Unit is specified in Appendix 1 — Statement of Standards.

Evidence Requirements apply to the Unit as a whole, and therefore, apply holistically to all Outcomes of the Unit. To demonstrate satisfactory attainment of all Outcomes of the Unit, candidates must produce written or recorded oral responses to items that cover Performance Criteria from all Outcomes. These will typically be produced in response to specific questions in an assessment comprising a mixture of short-answer, restricted response and more extended response items; questions may be structured, and may be based on stimulus material. This will take the form of a closed-book, supervised test, with a time limit of one hour and will be holistic, covering all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Each assessment will sample the range of possible content. The sample will be unpredictable in order that the complete Unit is covered in learning and teaching. The sampling will be balanced so that no assessment is any easier or more difficult than any other in terms of the spread of content covered or the nature of the items. If the candidate is able to demonstrate attainment in a random selection of items, it can be inferred that attainment in the areas not sampled would also be satisfactory.

If reassessment is required, it should consist of a fresh assessment instrument. This should sample different areas from the range of content.

Achievement can be determined by a cut-off score. The standard to be applied and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard. It is recommended that such an instrument of assessment should be submitted to SQA for prior moderation.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Political Representation (Higher)

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

While the 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

The content of this Unit is detailed under Course Content in the Course details. An expanded description of the content for this Unit is attached as an appendix to this Unit Specification.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

This Unit will focus on the issue of representation and the controversies that surround it. The candidates will cover competing theories of representation, based on particular ideological assumptions, which link well with some of the content in the *Political Theory* Unit.

The intention of this Unit is to introduce the candidate to different models of representation and the types of electoral system that are already used for different elections in the UK at local, Scottish, UK and European level and also to look at the Presidential electoral system in the USA. The use of Referenda as a special case should be introduced while the role of political parties and pressure groups in the electoral process should be covered. Candidates should be aware of opinion polls and their uses and the short-term and long-term influences on voting behaviour are critical for political parties seeking election.

Candidates will also be expected to develop the skills of analysis, interpretation and evaluation using data from the various election campaigns in the UK and the USA Presidential elections. Specific knowledge of these campaigns will not be assessed.

Where this Unit is being delivered as part of a Course, Units can be taught in any order or in an integrated manner. An integrated approach would enable the teaching and learning process to emphasise the holistic and integrative nature of the subject. It is also possible to teach Units in parallel with each other eg exploring several political concepts like the state, power, authority and legitimacy from the *Political Theory* Unit while applying them in the UK and either Scotland or the USA political contexts in the *Political Structures* Unit or the concept of democracy while teaching the electoral systems and electoral reforms in this Unit. If Units are taught separately it is important that the concepts and ideologies within the *Political Theory* Unit are taught first because they underpin many of the topics within this Unit and the *Political Structures* Units.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Political Representation (Higher)

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

While teachers/lecturers may devise their own assessment tasks the National Assessment Bank will provide assessment instruments and guidance on implementation. The most appropriate means of obtaining evidence of attainment of the Outcomes of this Unit will be an assessment covering both Outcomes, comprising a mixture of short-answer and more extended response items, where questions may be structured, and may be based on stimulus material; to be conducted under supervised test conditions, lasting no more than 60 minutes.

The marking scheme should reflect the standard embodied in the Performance Criteria. This will allow the evidence to be considered as a whole. The level of attainment required for successful completion of the Unit should represent satisfactory attainment of the Outcomes and, by inference, satisfactory coverage of all Performance Criteria.

Care should be taken to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for support and reassessment of candidates if required.

Where suitable tasks can be set which allow candidates to demonstrate competence beyond the minimum standard required, evidence gathered for Unit assessment may also be used for grade prediction and for appeals for the Course assessment. For details of the grade descriptions for Grade C and Grade A in the Course assessment, refer to the Politics Higher Course Specification.

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 Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).

UNIT Political Representation (Higher)

NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

Content and Context

This Unit will focus on the issue of representation and the controversies that surround it. The candidates will cover competing theories of representation, based on particular ideological assumptions, which link well with some of the content in the *Political Theory* Unit. The intention of this Unit is to introduce the candidate to different models of representation and the types of electoral system that are already used for different elections in the UK at local, Scottish, UK and European level and also to look at the Presidential electoral system in the USA. The use of Referenda as a special case should be introduced while the role of political parties and pressure groups in the electoral process should be covered. Candidates should be aware of opinion polls and their uses and the short-term and long-term influences on voting behaviour are critical for political parties seeking election.

Candidates will also be expected to develop the skills of analysis, interpretation and evaluation using data from the various election campaigns in the UK and the USA Presidential elections. Specific knowledge of these campaigns will not be assessed.

The background to this Unit involves introducing candidates to models of Democracy — the identification of criteria for defining democracy; models of democracy — direct, representative, liberal and people's democracies — should be described and explained using appropriate historical and/or contemporary examples. The advantages and disadvantages of democracy must be covered from different viewpoints.

Representation — the nature of representation; theories of representation — the trustee, delegate, mandate and resemblance models; links between representation and elections, political parties and pressure groups.

The Trustee and Delegate Models were developed before the emergence of modern political parties and therefore they view representatives as individual actors. The trustee theory suggests that the role of a representative is to act in the interest of his or her constituents. This theory presents a solution to the problem of uninformed constituents that do not have the necessary knowledge on issues to take an educated position on issues. The representative is "entrusted" with the position to make decisions that will benefit the district he or she represents. This position also allows for the representative to take into consideration other benefactors such as the state or nation as a whole. This definition is put forward by Edmund Burke and is clearly based on a historical period where mass education did not take place and illiteracy was rife. It has been criticised as being anti-democratic. The delegate theory of representation counters this ideal of representation. The delegate model suggests that the legislator should act only on the instruction of his or her constituents. In this role, representatives are elected by a local group or constituency, and sent to deliver the group's vote. This theory does not provide representatives the luxury of acting in their own conscience, and often fails to take the good of the state or nation into account. In essence, the representative acts as the voice of those who are not literally present.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Political Representation (Higher)

Since the advent of political parties and universal adult suffrage new theories of representation have emerged. The Mandate Theory is based on the idea that in winning an election a party gains a popular mandate that authorises it to carry out whatever policies and/or programmes outlined in its Election manifesto. Candidates should be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of such a theory particularly when some governments are elected by gaining less than 50% of the popular vote. The Resemblance Theory refers to whether those elected are in fact a representative cross-section — the extent to which they typify or resemble the group they claim to represent. Many would argue this is too narrow or exclusive a view of representation to be useful.

Theories of Voting Behaviour

Candidates should be aware of some of the short-term and long-term influences on voting behaviour; short-term — these are usually specific to a particular election — the state of the economy, personality and public-standing of party leaders, style and effectiveness of the campaign and the mass media; long-term — these are best summed up in several theories of voting behaviour and include:

- ◆ the party-identification model — based on a sense of psychological attachment to a party; early political socialisation with the family as the main influence reinforced later by group membership and experiences; attitudes and perceptions are learned. Candidates need to be aware of partisan de-alignment — a general fall in party identification and habitual voting patterns
- ◆ the sociological model — voting behaviour is linked to the economic and social position of a particular group that the voter belongs to — social class, gender, ethnicity, religion and region are examples. The role of the individual and personal self-interest are ignored here. Empirical evidence is that the link between sociological factors and party support has weakened
- ◆ the rational-choice model — the individual is at the heart of this making rational decisions based on personal self-interest; issue-voting becomes important in this model
- ◆ the dominant-ideology model — similar to sociological theories but the role of the mass media is much stronger — a process of social conditioning where individual choices are perhaps shaped by ideological manipulation and control.

Elections and Electoral systems

Candidates should be aware of the functions of elections and the advantages and disadvantages of a number of electoral systems, including the simple plurality system, the second ballot system, the alternative vote system, additional member system, single transferable vote system and the party list system; some examples of the use of referenda in the UK and Presidential elections in the USA will be expected. The main electoral systems to compare in terms of advantages and disadvantages are listed below.

First Past the Post (FPTP)

The system currently used for electing members to the House of Commons is a plurality system with single member constituencies. Winning candidates simply gain more votes than any other candidate on a single count. This need not be an absolute majority of the votes cast in a constituency.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Political Representation (Higher)

The Alternative Vote (AV)

The Alternative Vote, which like FPTP is based upon single member constituencies, is a majoritarian system. Winning candidates secure the support of over half the voters in a constituency. The vote is exercised by recording preferences against the candidates on the ballot paper. If no candidate receives more than half of the votes cast on the first count of first preference votes, the candidate who received the fewest first preference votes is eliminated and his/her second preferences are distributed between the other candidates. This process continues until one candidate has achieved an overall majority.

Second Ballot

As with the Alternative Vote the main objective of the Second Ballot system is to increase the chances of a candidate being elected on an absolute majority of the vote. Voting takes place on two separate days. If no candidate achieves an absolute majority after the first ballot a second ballot takes place. Where more than two candidates are allowed to progress to the second ballot a majority result cannot necessarily be guaranteed but, typically, candidates not performing well in the first ballot will withdraw and throw their support behind a candidate with a better chance of winning.

List Systems

The rationale of list systems is to translate directly a party's share of the vote into an equivalent proportion of seats in parliament. The precise proportionality of such systems will, however, be influenced by such factors as whether the country is treated as a single constituency for the purpose of voting and the allocation of seats (some systems involve the use of smaller, regional or sub-regional units or two-tier districting), the use of differing electoral formulae for the allocation of seats and the use of thresholds.

Single Transferable Vote (STV)

The Single Transferable Vote system is essentially preferential voting (as in AV) in multi-member constituencies. Voters are able to rank as many candidates, both within parties and across different parties, as they wish in order of preference. Any of those candidates who reach a certain quota are deemed to have been elected. The surplus votes of candidates elected on the first count and the votes of those with fewest votes after subsequent counts are distributed on the basis of preferences to the remaining candidates until sufficient candidates reach the quota and are, as a result, elected.

Mixed systems: the Additional Member System (AMS) and the AV top-up

The title of mixed systems describes any system which combines a list system element together with a plurality or majoritarian single constituency system. Under an additional member system, voters cast two distinct votes — the first for a constituency MP and the second a party vote. The allocation of additional members then serves to correct the disproportionality which arises from the election of single constituency MPs. Under a parallel system, the two votes are independent of each other and the additional members exist to mitigate rather than correct any disproportionality in the return of constituency members.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Political Representation (Higher)

Analysing and Evaluating election sources and data

Examples of election figures from local, Scottish, UK, European and Presidential elections should be used with the candidates — these figures could be from any period since the intention is to build analytical and evaluation skills rather than a body of knowledge. It should be obvious that particular election years give results that pinpoint more clearly than others the advantages and disadvantages of particular systems eg 1951 and 1974 (both) UK Parliamentary elections or the 2000 American Presidential elections where Al Gore had more popular votes but fewer electoral college votes than George Bush. Using opinion polls taken before the elections and comparing these with actual results could be a useful statistical exercise which will help build analytical and evaluative skills.

In building skills there will clearly be an element of knowledge and understanding as candidates learn how to analyse and evaluate data and the criteria to use. Assessment marks though for Outcome 2 in the Unit will be based only on evidence cited from the sources used and not on underpinning or extended knowledge of the topics.