

SOCIOLOGY
Higher

Second edition — published November 2006

**NOTE OF CHANGES TO ARRANGEMENTS
2ND EDITION PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 2006**

COURSE TITLE Sociology (Higher)

COURSE NUMBER: C228 12

National Course Specification:

Course details: No change

National Unit Specification:

Unit DV3P 12

The assessment requirements have been clarified in the statement of the standards and their Appendix:

- **two** conflict theories as indicated in evidence requirements not **one** as in Appendix to the statement of standards and **one** action theory will be addressed in assessment
- candidates may be asked to make a direct comparison between a particular structuralist theory and a particular action theory

National Course Specification

COURSE Sociology (Higher)

COURSE CODE C228 12

COURSE STRUCTURE

This Course has three mandatory Units. The mandatory Units are:

DV3P 12	Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Higher)	1 credit (40 hours)
DV3Y 12	Understanding Human Society 1 (Higher)	1 credit (40 hours)
DV40 12	Understanding Human Society 2 (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 external 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:

- ◆ Intermediate 2 Sociology Course or Unit(s)
- ◆ A Standard Grade in a social subject at Credit level
- ◆ Standard Grade English at Credit level or Intermediate 2 Communication

Administrative Information

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National Course Specification course details (cont)

COURSE Sociology (Higher)

PROGRESSION

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ HNC/HND programmes in social sciences or otherwise
- ◆ Higher Education
- ◆ Training or employment

CREDIT VALUE

The Higher Course in Sociology is allocated 24 SCQF credit 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 (cont)

COURSE Sociology (Higher)

RATIONALE

The purpose of this Course is to provide an in-depth study of the distinct features of the sociological approach to understanding and explaining human social behaviour. It is intended to establish the major theoretical principles upon which sociology rests and to develop a knowledge and understanding of the way in which evidence is produced when sociological research is being carried out.

The aim of the Higher Sociology Course is to develop a knowledge and understanding of sociological concepts, theories and methods and their distinctive approach to the analysis and explanation of substantive areas of society, such as social class, education, the family, crime and deviance, welfare and poverty and the mass media. It will promote the ability to analyse and evaluate sociological arguments, evidence and research methods in a critical way. There are two areas of content used to develop these skills:

- ◆ sociological theories and methods of sociological research
- ◆ application of theories and methods to sociological topics

The Higher Sociology Course is designed to develop the sociological understanding of candidates in schools and colleges, including adult returners and other candidates, who wish to progress to Higher Education Institutions.

AIMS

From undertaking this Course, candidates should be able to:

- ◆ use key sociological concepts and theories to understand human social behaviour
- ◆ develop awareness of cultural and social diversity
- ◆ use key sociological concepts and theories to understand cultural and social diversity
- ◆ understand the extent to which social stratification can lead to social inequality
- ◆ understand that sociology is based upon evidence that is collected in a disciplined way
- ◆ understand and analyse sociological ideas and evidence
- ◆ demonstrate evaluative skills
- ◆ understand the interdependence of individuals, groups, institutions and societies
- ◆ take part in debate regarding the nature of sociology
- ◆ develop communication and other core transferable skills

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Sociology (Higher)

COURSE CONTENT

The Course comprises of three mandatory Units, which focus on a variety of sociological theories and the explanations of human social behaviour they provide. Besides focusing on sociological theories and research methods in the *Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach* (Higher) Unit, candidates will also study four substantive sociological topics covered over both *Understanding Human Society* Units. In *Understanding Human Society 1* (Higher), candidates will study the sociology of class stratification and the sociology of education. In *Understanding Human Society 2* (Higher) candidates will study two topics from a choice of four. These are:

- ◆ the sociology of the family
- ◆ the sociology of welfare and poverty
- ◆ the sociology of crime and deviance
- ◆ the sociology of the mass media

These will be chosen as study themes to develop knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of sociology. The topics offered represent recognised main areas of sociology. The Appendix in each Unit Specification provides the mandatory content for each Unit.

Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (H)

All sociology rests upon concepts, theories and methods, which characterise its distinctive approach in explaining human social behaviour. The Unit introduces a variety of sociological theories and their particular explanations of human social behaviour. It includes an analysis of structural and action theories. It also establishes the link between those theories and the appropriate research methods and strategies that may be adopted to provide evidence for sociologists. In this way, it distinguishes sociological knowledge from common sense or personal opinion and establishes the nature of sociological problems.

This Unit will take account of the similarities and differences between theories, by examining their differing analyses, explanations and methodological strategies, as applied to a wide range of examples drawn from contemporary and/or historical material. It is recommended that the concepts of socialisation and social stratification should be used in an illustrative way for this purpose.

Understanding Human Society 1 (H)

This Unit focuses on the sociological understanding of two substantive areas of human social behaviour. These two areas are the sociology of class stratification and the sociology of education. Whilst the Unit focuses on the UK, wherever possible cross-cultural or comparative studies may be used for purposes of comparison.

Three contrasting theories, **two** studies, plus **two** features, **two** changes and **two** aspects will be covered in the sociology of class stratification. The sociology of education topic differs only in that **three** aspects will be covered. The following lists contain indicative content in relation to each topic.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Sociology (Higher)

Topic 1: Sociology of class stratification

Three relevant, contrasting sociological theories

- ◆ functionalism
- ◆ Marxism
- ◆ Weberianism

Any two relevant studies

Two features, from:

- ◆ social inequality — economic privilege, social prestige, power
- ◆ social stratification — social class in capitalist society
- ◆ measuring social class — subjective approaches, objective approaches

Two changes:

- ◆ changes in workforce demographics, eg decline of manufacturing industry and rise in service sector
- ◆ the impact of recent government policies on greater social mobility

Two aspects:

- ◆ social mobility — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ social closure — an analysis of two features and two studies

Topic 2: Sociology of education

Any three relevant, contrasting sociological theories

Any two relevant studies

Two features:

- ◆ functions of education — eg education as a socialisation process, as a means of providing a workforce
- ◆ the comprehensive range of provision from nursery to higher education

Two changes:

- ◆ changes in the structure of education in the UK with emphasis on contemporary changes
- ◆ rise in credentialism

Three aspects:

- ◆ differential achievement in education and class — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ differential achievement in education and gender — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ differential achievement in education and ethnicity — an analysis of two features and two studies

In each topic, where there are substantially different approaches within a theory, the comparisons and contrasts within that theory may be sufficient for the purposes of analysis and evaluation. For example, manipulative and hegemonic Marxist approaches to the role of the mass media, or liberal, radical or Marxist feminist approaches to many areas of sociology.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Sociology (Higher)

Understanding Human Society 2 (H)

The Unit is divided into four topic areas and candidates must study **two** of these topics. Whilst the Unit focuses on the UK, wherever possible cross-cultural or comparative studies may be used for purposes of comparison.

Two contrasting theories, **two** studies, plus **two** features, **two** changes and **three** aspects will be covered for each topic. The following lists contain indicative content in relation to each topic.

Topic 1: Sociology of the family

Any two relevant, contrasting sociological theories

Any two relevant studies

Two features, from:

- ◆ the various family types — single, nuclear, reconstituted, adopted
- ◆ marriage and divorce
- ◆ conjugal roles
- ◆ power and patriarchy

Two changes, from:

- ◆ changes in the provision of key functions of the family
- ◆ changing family patterns
- ◆ the changing structure and organisation of the family

Three aspects:

- ◆ changes in family patterns — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ conjugal roles — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ marital breakdown — an analysis of two features and two studies

The following **areas** must be covered in the teaching of each of the above aspects:

- ◆ the changing role of women in the family
- ◆ the changing role of men in the family
- ◆ power relationships

It is envisaged that the above areas would be taught naturally through each of the aspects and should not result in additional content. Please note that Unit and Course assessment will not specify or focus entirely on these areas.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Sociology (Higher)

Topic 2: Sociology of welfare and poverty

Any two relevant, contrasting sociological theories

Any two relevant studies

Two features, from:

- ◆ the welfare state and social policies to alleviate poverty
- ◆ indicators of the experience of poverty (eg health, income and wealth, education, housing)
- ◆ those most likely to experience poverty (eg the elderly, children, women, ethnic minorities)

Two changes:

- ◆ definitions and measurement of poverty, for example, absolute to relative measurements of poverty
- ◆ the widening gap between the rich and poor

Three aspects:

- ◆ Poverty and the Welfare State — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ The Welfare State and social inequality — class — an analysis of two features and studies.
- ◆ The Welfare State and social inequality — gender — an analysis of two features and studies

The following **areas** must be covered in the teaching of each of the above aspects:

- ◆ health
- ◆ the underclass
- ◆ employment and unemployment

It is envisaged that the above areas would be taught naturally through each of the aspects and should not result in additional content. Please note that Unit and Course assessment will not specify or focus entirely on these areas.

Topic 3: Sociology of crime and deviance

Any two relevant, contrasting sociological theories

Any two relevant studies

Two features:

- ◆ definitions of crime and deviance and the socially constructed nature of crime and deviance
- ◆ the measurement and validity of criminal statistics

Two changes, from:

- ◆ more women convicted of crimes
- ◆ new types of crime — eg computer crime, people trafficking
- ◆ nature and definition of crime and deviance, change and diversity

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Sociology (Higher)

Three aspects:

- ◆ labelling and the self-fulfilling prophecy — an analysis of two features and studies
- ◆ crime statistics — an analysis of two features and studies
- ◆ gender— an analysis of two features and studies

The following **areas** must be covered in the teaching of each of the above aspects:

- ◆ poverty
- ◆ the penal system
- ◆ social class

It is envisaged that the above areas would be taught naturally through each of the aspects and should not result in additional content. Please note that Unit and Course assessment will not specify or focus entirely on these areas.

Topic 4: Sociology of the mass media

Any two relevant, contrasting sociological theories

Any two relevant studies

Two features from:

- ◆ definition of the mass media
- ◆ the types of the mass media
- ◆ role of the mass media
- ◆ media consumption/audiences

Two changes, from:

- ◆ the changing types of the mass media (eg satellite TV, Internet)
- ◆ the changing nature of the mass media (eg ownership and control, trends in organisation)
- ◆ the impact of the mass media on its audience, in terms of ownership, bias and influence

Three aspects:

- ◆ ownership and control — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ socialisation — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ bias, influence and attitude formation — an analysis of two features and two studies

The following **areas** must be covered in the teaching of each of the above aspects:

- ◆ gender
- ◆ ethnicity
- ◆ political bias

It is envisaged that the above areas would be taught naturally through each of the aspects and should not result in additional content. Please note that Unit and Course assessment will not specify or focus entirely on these areas.

In each topic, where there are substantially different approaches within a theory, the comparisons and contrasts within that theory may be sufficient for the purposes of analysis and evaluation. For example, manipulative and hegemonic Marxist approaches to the role of the mass media, or liberal, radical or Marxist feminist approaches to many areas of sociology.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Sociology (Higher)

ASSESSMENT

To achieve the Course award the candidate must pass the Unit assessment as well as the Course assessment. The candidate's grade is based on the Course assessment.

Assessment objectives

At Higher, the key elements of knowledge and understanding, analysis and evaluation are assessed in the following ways.

Knowledge and understanding

Candidates should be able to demonstrate wide-ranging and detailed knowledge and understanding of aspects of social life and the relevant concepts, theories and methods employed by sociologists in their explanation. The range of knowledge should extend to an understanding of key theoretical and empirical issues surrounding sociological topics, and an ability to refer to relevant sources. Descriptions should be extended, using relevant and detailed illustrations and references, with good knowledge of a range of sociological studies relevant to topics and issues in sociology.

Analysis

Candidates should be able to select from, interpret and analyse different sociological theories and sources of evidence. In so doing, candidates should be able to present information in a balanced, logical and coherent manner, focussing clearly on the issues under review. Candidates should be able to use, with confidence, the language and concepts of sociology and demonstrate a clear and in-depth understanding of the interrelatedness of evidence and theory. Assessment of issues should be critical and comprehensive and should reflect confidence in dealing with complex arguments.

Evaluation

Candidates should demonstrate the ability to make balanced evaluations of sociological theories and evidence and base these upon justified and sustained arguments. Explanations offered and methods used by sociologists should be examined critically and conclusions drawn should be well developed and reasoned, reflecting clear sociological understanding.

Balance between knowledge and understanding and analysis and evaluation

The balance between knowledge and understanding and analysis and evaluation in Course and Unit assessment will be approximately:

Course — 50% knowledge and understanding, 50% analysis and evaluation

Units — 60% knowledge and understanding, 40% analysis and evaluation

Unit assessment

In the Higher Sociology Course, the three Units are *Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach*, *Understanding Human Society 1* and *Understanding Human Society 2*.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Sociology (Higher)

Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Higher)

The Unit will be assessed by candidates demonstrating knowledge and understanding of, and ability to analyse and evaluate, sociological theories and research methods. Candidates must cover consensus theory and conflict theories, although only **one** consensus, and two out of three conflict theories are required for assessment. Both action theories must be covered in learning and teaching and **one** will be assessed. The research strategy and **four** quantitative and **six** qualitative methods will be taught, but only **one** of each method will be assessed. The assessment will take the form of restricted response questions covering all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. This will take the form of an unseen, closed book, supervised assessment lasting one hour. Assessment for the whole Unit should take place in one sitting.

Understanding Human Society 1 (Higher)

The Unit will be assessed by candidates demonstrating knowledge and understanding of, and ability to analyse and evaluate, the application of sociological theories and sociological studies to one topic from the two topics covered in learning and teaching. The assessment will take the form of an essay question integrating all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. This will take the form of an unseen, closed book, supervised assessment lasting one hour. Assessment for the Unit will take place in one sitting.

Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)

The Unit will be assessed by candidates demonstrating knowledge and understanding of, and ability to analyse and evaluate, the application of sociological theories and sociological studies to one topic from the two topics covered in learning and teaching. The assessment will take the form of an essay question integrating all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. This will take the form of an unseen, closed book, supervised assessment lasting one hour. Assessment for the Unit will take place in one sitting.

Further details about Unit assessment can be found in the NAB materials and in the Unit Specifications.

Course assessment

The Course assessment at Higher consists of a question paper which is made up of three sections and lasts 2 hours and 40 minutes.

Section A is a mandatory section with restricted response questions on the sociological approach, theories and methods, and carries 40 marks. There is no choice of questions in this section.

Section B is a mandatory section with an essay response question carrying 30 marks. There will be one question on one of the topics studied — **either** the sociology of class stratification **or** the sociology of education. All candidates must answer this question.

Section C is a mandatory section with an essay response question carrying 30 marks. There will be one question on each of the four topics — the sociology of the family; the sociology of welfare and poverty; the sociology of crime and deviance; the sociology of the mass media. Candidates should answer **one** question. Questions will focus on particular aspects of each topic.

The total mark for Course assessment is 100.

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

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Sociology (Higher)

Link between Unit and Course assessment/added value

The Course consists of three Units and an additional 40 hours study. The Course assessment tests the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the content covered in all three Units and their ability to demonstrate and apply sociological skills acquired throughout the Course.

In the Units at Higher, candidates are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding and the ability to analyse and evaluate a range of sociological theories and sociological research in relation to a range of topics. The Course assessment will require candidates to use their knowledge and understanding of sociology and to apply critical and analytical skills to answer questions drawn from the whole Course.

Unit and Course assessment complement each other. Unit assessment provides evidence of a specific level of achievement in separate sections of the Course. The Course assessment confirms and expands on this, providing evidence of a range of skills exceeding those required for Unit achievement, such as retention of knowledge. The Course assessment at Higher requires that candidates demonstrate the ability to:

- ◆ retain knowledge and understanding from across all three Units of the Course on a single occasion
- ◆ analyse and evaluate sociological theories and research from all three Units on a single occasion
- ◆ apply sociological theories and research to a range of topics from across the Units on a single occasion
- ◆ integrate knowledge and understanding of sociological theories and studies to each of the sociological topics
- ◆ perform more complex analytical and evaluative tasks than required for the Unit assessment

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS AT A AND C

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 Grade A in the Course.

For an award at Grade C candidates should be able to demonstrate mainly accurate knowledge and understanding of sociological concepts, theories, research methods and their application to the chosen substantive topics. Sound analysis of relevant issues should be present in explanations, though a tendency towards description is likely. Some evidence of evaluation should be evident, but may be limited. Integration of theories and studies to an explanation of the topic should be in evidence, but may be limited.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Sociology (Higher)

For an award at Grade A candidates should be able to demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of most of the relevant material required for a complete answer to the questions. Answers should have breadth and depth of knowledge, both theoretical and methodological. Responses should also include sophisticated explanations and detailed illustrative points. There will be evidence of integration and in-depth analysis of relevant sociology including evaluative and critical points for each of the questions, reflecting the whole Course. Candidates will use sustained arguments and will focus analytical and evaluative answers on the questions set. The quality of analysis, use of logical argument, quality of evidence referred to (its diversity or topicality for example) and originality should justify this high grade. Candidates attaining a Grade A would not simply reproduce Unit assessment type responses.

ESTIMATES AND APPEALS

Estimates

In preparing estimates, evidence must take account of performance across the Course and must be judged against the Grade Descriptions. Further advice on the preparation of estimates is given in the Course Assessment Specification.

Appeals

Evidence used to support an appeal must show the full breadth of coverage of the content of the Course and must relate to the Course Grade Descriptions. Centres should base their appeals on the following criteria:

- ◆ there should be evidence of retained knowledge and understanding from all three Units
- ◆ there should be analysis and evaluation of sociological theories and studies from all three Units
- ◆ there should be evidence of an ability to apply and integrate sociological theories and methods from *Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Higher)* to two topics, one from each of the two *Understanding Human Society (Higher)* Units
- ◆ there should be evidence that the candidate is able to perform more complex analytical and evaluative tasks than that required for Unit assessment

A preliminary exam can provide a good indication of how a candidate will perform with the combination of time pressure and retention of a broader knowledge base on a single occasion. The prelim should replicate the style, proportionate timing, level of difficulty and proportionate mark of the Course examination. The Specimen Question Paper will provide a good example of the type of demands that a prelim should make on candidates. A minimum of two Units' worth of learning and teaching should be fully assessed by a prelim. The prelim should cover both restricted response questions on theories and research methods and **at least one** of the substantive topics.

Questions from previous SQA question papers, including the Specimen Question Paper, may be adapted for use in a prelim. However, questions should not be drawn from a single source and adjustments to such questions should be made to ensure that candidates have not seen the same questions previously. It is recommended that questions be drawn from a minimum of three sources.

Some centres may set a prelim date prior to the completion of all of the Units when it would not be possible to assess all of the topics. In this case, additional evidence covering the later topics (which could be from NAB materials) should be submitted along with any prelim.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Sociology (Higher)

Assessment evidence generated from the NAB materials may be used by centres to contribute toward appeals, though it is only useful if it matches the criteria set out in the 'Link between Unit and Course assessment / added value', above. However, such evidence on its own would not be sufficient to support an appeal, since it does not provide evidence of retention across the Units. Use of a prelim should incorporate at least two thirds of the Course assessment requirements. This would include restricted response questions testing the knowledge and understanding of *Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Higher)* and either one extended response from *Understanding Human Society 1 (Higher)* or one extended response from *Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)*, which would also assist in preparation for Course assessment. Further evidence from the remaining Unit should, as noted above, be submitted along with any prelim evidence.

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 and the Examining Team.

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

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS COURSE

In order to facilitate movement between the Intermediate 2 and Higher Courses, where appropriate, it is recommended that candidates begin with the *Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Higher)* Unit and then move on to class stratification in the *Understanding Human Society 1 (Higher)* Unit. This will also ensure that an appropriate and logical introduction to Sociology, through the sociological 'tools' of theory and methods, will help candidates in their understanding of sociological topics. Additionally, class stratification is a pivotal part of much sociological debate, hence its inclusion in the Course as a topic for both learning and teaching and Course assessment purposes. Major structuralist sociological approaches centre much of their argument around social class positioning, ensuring that class-oriented theory informs much sociological debate. In this context, it would be appropriate to cover class stratification as the first substantive topic of the Course.

Learning and teaching approaches should reflect the aims and rationale of the subject as outlined previously. The learning experience should be varied and interesting, to encourage enthusiasm for the subject and to prepare candidates for independent study.

The following learning experiences are essential to the Course and the additional 40 hours should be used to develop the appropriate learning and teaching strategies.

National Course Specification: course details (cont)

COURSE Sociology (Higher)

Candidates should:

- ◆ develop awareness of cultural and social diversity
- ◆ use key sociological concepts and theories to understand cultural and social diversity
- ◆ understand that sociology is based upon evidence that is collected in a disciplined way
- ◆ understand and analyse sociological ideas and evidence
- ◆ demonstrate evaluative skills
- ◆ understand the interdependence of individuals, groups, institutions and societies
- ◆ take part in debate regarding the nature of sociology
- ◆ develop communication and other core transferable skills

A variety of teaching approaches is critical and candidates should be given every opportunity to participate in whole-class activity, in small groups and as individuals. The approach should be candidate-centred and activity-based, but whole-class teaching can play a part in a flexible programme as a means of establishing understanding.

In this process it will be essential to include a wide range of interesting stimulus materials and approaches including audio-visual materials, invited speakers, visits, paper-based resources and ICT resources. The resources should be accessible, interesting and manageable for this level and should allow candidates to draw upon and reflect on their own experiences.

Candidates should have a clear notion of targets and should experience ownership of the planned programme. Regular opportunities for remediation and review should be included in the programme. Opportunity should also be given to candidates to:

- ◆ set learning objectives
- ◆ review progress
- ◆ assess and develop existing knowledge
- ◆ seek and receive learning support

It is intended that candidates should develop, throughout the study of sociological topics, an understanding of the concepts and theories that characterise sociology.

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

SOCIOLOGY 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 the study of a particular subject contributes to the understanding of these themes.

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT	Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Higher)
CODE	DV3P 12
COURSE	Sociology (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit is designed to introduce candidates to the variety of sociological theories and methods of research that characterise the discipline of sociology. It enables candidates to describe, explain, analyse, evaluate and apply an understanding of the principal features of major sociological theories and their associated methods of research. It provides a framework for understanding human behaviour from different sociological theories. By evaluating major sociological theories, candidates will be able to enhance their understanding of the nature and development of human societies.

This is a mandatory Unit in the Higher Sociology Course. This Unit can also be taken as a free-standing Unit for candidates who wish to gain a sound understanding of sociological theories and methods.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Explain the contribution of key sociological theories to an understanding of human social behaviour.
- 2 Evaluate sociological theories.
- 3 Evaluate the main methods and research strategy used by sociologists.

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Higher)

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:

- ◆ Intermediate 2 Sociology Course or Unit(s)
- ◆ Standard Grade in a social subject at Credit level
- ◆ Standard Grade English at Credit level or Intermediate 2 Communication

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit 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 components	Critical Thinking at SCQF Level 6

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (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

Explain the contribution of key sociological theories to an understanding of human social behaviour

Performance Criteria

- (a) Clearly distinguish between common sense and sociological knowledge.
- (b) Describe key sociological theories correctly.
- (c) Explain the principal features of the main sociological theories clearly, using relevant examples.

OUTCOME 2

Evaluate sociological theories

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the similarities and differences between consensus and conflict structuralism clearly.
- (b) Describe the similarities and differences between structural and action sociological theories clearly.
- (c) Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of structural and action sociological theories in a balanced way, using relevant examples.

OUTCOME 3

Evaluate the main methods and research strategy used by sociologists

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the research strategy used by sociologists correctly.
- (b) Describe quantitative methods used by sociologists correctly.
- (c) Describe qualitative methods used by sociologists correctly.
- (d) Explain the relative advantages and disadvantages of qualitative and quantitative methods clearly.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Higher)

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIT

The Appendix to the Statement of Standards details the mandatory content/context for this Unit.

Evidence Requirements apply to the Unit as a whole and, therefore, apply holistically to all Outcomes of the Unit.

Candidates must produce written and/or oral evidence for all Outcomes and Performance Criteria of the Unit. The assessment should take the form of an unseen, closed-book, supervised test that should be completed in one hour. The instrument of assessment should take the form of a range of restricted response-type questions, and should make use of stimulus material as a tool with which to help candidates focus on the question(s) posed.

All theories and research methods should be covered prior to candidates being asked to prepare for assessment. Candidates *should not* be informed prior to the Unit assessment which theories and methods they will be assessed on.

Evidence for the Unit must include:

- ◆ the distinction between common sense and sociological explanations

Theories

- ◆ description and explanation of the principal features of the main sociological theories
- ◆ description of the similarities and differences between consensus and conflict; and structural and action theories
- ◆ analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of structural and action theories

Structural theories: Consensus theory (functionalism) and conflict theories (Marxism, neo-Marxism, feminism) must be covered in teaching and learning. For assessment purposes, only functionalism and **two** of Marxism **or** neo-Marxism **or** feminism is required.

Action theories: both Weberian and symbolic interactionism must be covered in teaching and learning and candidates must be prepared to answer on either.

Research Methods and strategy

- ◆ description of the research strategy: candidates must be able to describe all five stages in the research strategy
- ◆ description of quantitative and qualitative research methods, and an explanation of the relative advantages and disadvantages between both

All four quantitative and all six qualitative methods (including secondary sources) must be covered in learning and teaching, and any one of each type can be sampled in Unit assessment.

Candidate responses will be descriptive in nature, and a proportion of analysis and evaluation is required at this level. The split between knowledge and understanding and analysis and evaluation in Unit assessment is 60% knowledge and understanding and 40% analysis and evaluation.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Higher)

Sampling

Assessment of this Unit should incorporate appropriate sampling of Unit content. For example, if a candidate demonstrates knowledge, understanding and analysis of functionalism as a consensus theory and two of Marxism **or** neo-Marxism **or** feminism as a conflict theory, it is inferred that she or he will have knowledge and understanding of all such structuralist theories. If a candidate correctly identifies similarities and differences between *one* of these structuralist theories and action theories, and analyses and evaluates the same theories, it is inferred that she or he can demonstrate knowledge, understanding, analysis and evaluation of any other sociological theory. This would ensure that both Outcomes and all Performance Criteria pertaining to these Outcomes are achieved.

Similarly, if the candidate demonstrates knowledge and understanding and provides an evaluation of the relative advantages and disadvantages of one example of a qualitative method of gathering data and one example of a quantitative method of gathering data, then it can be inferred this can be done for the other methods. The research strategy used by sociologists will always be assessed in Unit assessment.

Any requirement for reassessment will be based upon a different sample from the range of content, where appropriate, and candidates must attempt a different instrument of assessment in its entirety.

Achievement will be decided by the use of a cut-off score. The National Assessment Bank items illustrate the standard that should be applied and also the nature and extent of the sample to be used. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Higher)

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

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

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THE UNIT

The Appendix to the Statement of Standards contains the mandatory requirements for this Unit.

The Unit introduces candidates to the variety of sociological theories and the particular perspectives they give to the explanation of human social behaviour. It also establishes the link between sociological theories and the research methods and strategies that may be adopted. It is the intention of the Unit to establish good understanding of the theories and research methods that underpin sociology and to encourage candidates to recognise the similarities and differences between their differing analyses, explanations and methodological strategies.

While some candidates may have studied sociology before (possibly at Intermediate 2), for others it will be their first experience of the subject and for this reason its content should be treated in an introductory way and as a means of establishing the sociological approach. Sociological concepts, theories and methods should all be supported by relevant examples. These may be drawn from Intermediate 2 (socialisation and stratification). This would not only offer a means of furthering already acquired sociological knowledge, but may also provide an introduction for those candidates new to the subject who may need to adjust their level of study after joining the Course.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THE UNIT

For candidates studying this Unit as part of the Higher Sociology Course, advice regarding approaches to learning and teaching are contained in the Course specification. It is recommended that the learning experience at this level should be varied, to encourage enthusiasm for the subject and to stimulate and prepare candidates for independent study.

The Unit should be approached using a wide range of stimulus materials and teaching approaches. Candidates should be encouraged to draw upon their own experiences, where appropriate, and should have access to resources such as audio-visual material, invited speakers, Internet, ICT and paper-based resources. Where appropriate, the material should be up to date and relevant to the Unit, the level of study and the interests of the candidates. For the Higher Sociology Course it is recognised that certain key sociological commentary and research, regardless of publication date, is appropriate. Comparisons with more up to date research should be used, where appropriate. The emphasis throughout should be on interactive learning, whether through whole class, small group, or individual activity. The Unit may be delivered on a flexible basis and may also be suitable for open learning and on-line delivery.

Outcomes 1 and 2 are interconnected and should be approached as such. It is recommended that, wherever possible, these two Outcomes should be covered in an integrated way. An Outcome-by-Outcome approach, which could lead to a compartmentalised view of sociology, should be avoided, where possible.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Higher)

If undertaking the Unit as part of the Higher Sociology Course, it is advised that the Unit is taken prior to the two *Understanding Human Society (Higher)* Units. This would allow for an introduction to theories and research, which may then be more effectively applied to the two *Understanding Human Society (Higher)* Units. This approach would also allow for movement between Intermediate 2 and Higher in the first few months of the Course. As the *Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Intermediate 2)* Unit and this Higher Unit have overlapping content, it is envisaged that assessors will be able to decide the appropriate level of study for each candidate. Due to the level of demand at Higher, bi-level delivery of the Intermediate 2 and Higher Courses may be difficult.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THE UNIT

The Evidence Requirements provide specific requirements for Unit assessment.

Outcomes and Performance Criteria should be assessed by means of a single holistic assessment lasting no more than one hour. The Unit assessment must ensure that *all* Outcomes and Performance Criteria are fully met.

Evidence should be gathered by means of a single assessment towards the end of the Unit. Care should be taken to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for remediation and reassessment, if required.

NAB materials provide suitable assessment instruments and guidance to support the national standard. The questions in the NAB are restricted response in nature. Sampling of content in the Unit assessment is acceptable. In the Unit the sampling will be from all theories and methods covered in learning and teaching. Where centres wish to devise their own instruments of assessment, they should refer to the NAB to ensure a comparable standard. It is recommended that centre-devised instruments of assessment should be submitted to SQA for prior moderation.

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

National Unit Specification: appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Higher)

NB: This Appendix forms part of the Statement of Standards, ie requirements that are mandatory.

The sociological approach: an introduction

The Unit should begin with an introduction to common sense explanations and how sociology provides a studied response to such views on human behaviour and social life. This will provide candidates with an appropriate introduction to what is meant by sociology. The means by which the sociological approaches can be reinforced should be through C. Wright Mills' 'The Sociological Imagination'.

Features, analysis and evaluation

The key features and analytical and evaluative points relating to each theory below, must be covered. Candidates must cover the following structural and action theories as part of learning and teaching:

Structural theories

Consensus theory: *functionalism*. A range of features, analytical and evaluative points, along with appropriate key theorists will be required, as specified above.

Conflict theories: *Marxism, neo-Marxism, feminism*. Only **two** of these theories will feature in each instrument of Unit assessment, as achievement with regards to one of these theories will infer that candidates would have knowledge and understanding of the other conflict theories. Similarities and distinctions between Marxist and neo-Marxist explanations should be clear to candidates. Feminism will be addressed as a conflict theory. As such, a range of feminist theories will be covered, including Marxist feminist, liberal feminist and radical feminist theories. Other feminist theories may additionally be used by candidates, and they will be able, where appropriate, to apply these to their Unit or Course assessment responses. A range of features, analytical and evaluative points, along with appropriate key theorists will be required, as specified above.

Consensus versus conflict theories

A requirement to compare and contrast consensus and conflict theories will arise in all Unit and Course assessment. However, the requirements may be more specific and could require a direct comparison of one of the above three conflict theories with functionalism. For questions that do not specify a particular conflict theory, candidate responses that seek to answer the question with reference to a particular conflict theory, as appropriate, should be credited.

Action theories

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of either Weberian theory or symbolic interactionism in Unit assessment.

Weberian theory. Weber will be addressed as a sociologist whose theories provide a 'bridge' between structuralist and action theories. Appropriate attention should be given to both the structural aspects of his theory (eg class, bureaucracy) and the social action aspects of it (eg meaning and interpretation *verstehen*).

Symbolic interactionism. A range of features, analytical and evaluative points, along with appropriate key theorists will be required, as specified above. Labelling theory at some superficial level should be introduced in general learning and teaching when action theories are being addressed. This will help provide candidates, through the use of appropriate examples, with a context with which they may be familiar.

National Unit Specification: appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Higher)

Structural versus action theories

A requirement to compare and contrast structuralist and action theories will arise in all Unit and Course assessment. However, the requirements may be more specific and could require a direct comparison between a particular structuralist and a particular action theory. For questions that do *not* specify a particular theory, candidate responses that seek to answer the question with reference to a particular structuralist or action theory, as appropriate should be credited.

The research process/strategy

The following model for a sociological research strategy should be adopted:

- ◆ theory
- ◆ hypothesis
- ◆ operationalisation
- ◆ fieldwork
- ◆ processing of results

Research methods that generate quantitative data

The main features and relative advantages and disadvantages of the following research methods that generate quantitative data will be covered in learning and teaching for the Unit:

- ◆ postal questionnaires*
- ◆ structured interviews*
- ◆ surveys*
- ◆ use of secondary sources — official statistics

*NB. The term, survey, is often used instead of either postal questionnaires or structured interviews. It **is** appropriate to use the terms postal questionnaire and survey interchangeably. It is also possible to use the terms structured interview and survey interchangeably.

Any **one** of these quantitative methods can be sampled for Unit and Course assessment, as knowledge and understanding of the other three methods will be inferred from a correct description of one of these methods. An evaluation of the relative advantages and disadvantages of the same method will also infer knowledge and understanding of the other methods for gathering quantitative data.

Research methods that generate qualitative data

The main features and relative advantages and disadvantages of the following research methods that generate qualitative data will be covered in learning and teaching for the Unit:

- ◆ non-participant observation
- ◆ participant observation
- ◆ unstructured interviews
- ◆ case studies
- ◆ use of secondary sources — personal documents (eg diaries, letters and personal accounts)
- ◆ use of secondary sources — visual resources (eg film, documentary, newsreel)

Any **one** of these qualitative methods can be sampled for Unit and Course assessment, as knowledge and understanding of the other five methods will be inferred from a correct description of one of these methods. An evaluation of the relative advantages and disadvantages of the same method will also infer the ability to evaluate the other methods for gathering qualitative data.

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Understanding Human Society 1 (Higher)

CODE DV3Y 12

COURSE Sociology (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit focuses on the sociological understanding of two substantive areas of human social behaviour. The Unit is divided into two topic areas and candidates must study both. These topics are the sociology of class stratification, and the sociology of education. The Unit focuses upon the UK but, wherever possible, cross-cultural or comparative studies may be used.

The Unit builds on the knowledge and understanding gained from the *Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Higher)* Unit.

This is a mandatory Unit in the Higher Sociology Course. This Unit can also be taken as a free-standing Unit for candidates who wish to gain a sound understanding of the sociology of class stratification and the sociology of education.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Describe sociological topics and their relationship to human society.
- 2 Evaluate the contribution of key sociological theories to an understanding of sociological topics.
- 3 Evaluate selected aspects of sociological topics using different sociological theories and studies.

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Understanding Human Society 1 (Higher)

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:

- ◆ Intermediate 2 Sociology Course or Unit(s)
- ◆ A Standard Grade in a social subject at Credit level
- ◆ Standard Grade English at Credit level or Intermediate 2 Communication

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit 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 Skill component	Critical Thinking at SCQF Level 6

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Understanding Human Society 1 (Higher)

Acceptable performance in the 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

Describe sociological topics and their relationship to human society

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe sociological topics succinctly and correctly.
- (b) Describe key features of sociological topics succinctly and correctly.

OUTCOME 2

Evaluate the contribution of key sociological theories to an understanding of sociological topics

Performance Criteria

- (a) Correctly apply relevant and contrasting sociological theories to topics.
- (b) Provide a balanced evaluation of the contribution of contrasting sociological theories to understanding topics.

OUTCOME 3

Evaluate selected aspects of sociological topics using different sociological theories and studies

Performance Criteria

- (a) Explain aspects of topics in a balanced way by taking account of different sociological studies.
- (b) Use relevant evidence from a range of sociological studies to support the explanations.
- (c) Develop sociological arguments, based on evidence and examples used in relevant sociological studies.
- (d) Make balanced evaluations that refer to evidence and arguments from contrasting sociological theories.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIT

The Appendix to the Statement of Standards details the mandatory content/context for the Unit.

Evidence Requirements apply to the Unit as a whole and, therefore, apply holistically to all Outcomes of the Unit.

Candidates must produce written and/or oral evidence for all Outcomes and Performance Criteria of the Unit. The assessment should take the form of an unseen, closed-book, supervised test that should be completed in one hour. The instrument of assessment should take the form of an extended response-type (essay) question.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Understanding Human Society 1 (Higher)

The response for the Unit assessment should provide evidence to cover **all** of the Outcomes and Performance Criteria, and should begin with an appropriate introduction addressing definitions and features relating to the topic. The response should then provide contrasting theoretical discussion on the topic from at least two contrasting theories, with appropriate analysis and evaluation. A major aspect of the topic should be introduced, followed by two studies, where the main findings and an appropriate evaluation should be given for each study. A summary/conclusion should provide some final evaluation of evidence and argument from contrasting sociological studies.

Both topics, class stratification and education, will be covered in learning and teaching for the Unit. However, candidates will be assessed on **only one** of the topics. The assessment instrument will use an appropriate sample of Unit content. For example, if a candidate demonstrates knowledge and understanding and an ability to analyse and evaluate one topic, then it is inferred that she or he will be able to demonstrate the same level of achievement for the other topic covered in learning and teaching in the Unit. Each topic allows for coverage of all three Outcomes (including all Performance Criteria). Ensuring that Unit assessment samples one topic will provide adequate inferred evidence of overall Unit achievement.

Any requirement for reassessment will be based upon a different sample from the range of content, where appropriate, and candidates must attempt a different instrument of assessment, on either topic, in its entirety.

Achievement will be decided by the use of a cut-off score. The National Assessment Bank items illustrate the standard that should be applied and also the nature and extent of the sample to be used. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard.

Candidate responses will be descriptive in nature, and a proportion of analysis and evaluation is required at this level. The split between knowledge and understanding and analysis and evaluation in Unit assessment is 60% knowledge and understanding and 40% analysis and evaluation.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Understanding Human Society 1 (Higher)

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

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

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THE UNIT

The Appendix to the Statement of Standards contains the mandatory content for this Unit. This is a more expansive and indicative range of content likely to be covered in class.

There are **two** substantive topic areas of sociology included in the Unit, both of which serve to broaden and deepen sociological understanding. The Unit focuses on the UK but, wherever possible, cross-cultural or comparative studies may be used for comparison.

There are **two** topics — class stratification and education.

The main emphasis of the Unit is on the sociology of these topics. Outcome 1 should be seen, therefore, as an opportunity to introduce, provide an overview of and contextualise the topics and should not be allocated a disproportionate amount of time or attention.

Within each topic area, there is an opportunity to select for sociological analysis and evaluation, aspects or issues associated with that topic. The following aspects or issues are thought to be appropriate at this level. Teachers/lecturers are free to encourage candidates to study more than the minimum requirement as listed.

Topic 1: Sociology of class stratification

Candidates should be introduced to the topic of the sociology of class stratification with some of the key features and definitions of the topic, such as it being a system based on structured inequality that is hierarchical in nature. The following indicators of social class could be included in learning and teaching:

- ◆ those provided by the Registrar General
- ◆ income and wealth
- ◆ occupation
- ◆ home ownership
- ◆ share ownership
- ◆ education
- ◆ health

Perceived changes to the class basis of society, which could lead to possibilities of increased social mobility, should be discussed. Examples could include:

- ◆ the decline in manufacturing industries
- ◆ the rise of service industries
- ◆ council house ownership
- ◆ the increasing importance of women's education/work/income

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Understanding Human Society 1 (Higher)

Three contrasting theories will be discussed in relation to this topic — functionalism, Marxism and Weberianism are the major theories covered. Key theorists and commentators from each theory will be referred to. Key features of these theories relating to class stratification, issues raised by them and **two** studies will be addressed, with appropriate analysis and evaluation of each. Other relevant sociological theories may also be studied.

Two aspects of class stratification, social mobility **and** social closure will be addressed, along with appropriate evaluation. The theoretical approaches, aspects and studies may be approached in a combined or integrated way.

Topic 2: Sociology of education

Candidates should be introduced to the topic of the sociology of education with some of the following key features and definitions of the topic being discussed:

- ◆ education as part of the socialisation process
- ◆ education as a means of attributing and/or enhancing skills
- ◆ the comprehensive range of provision from nursery through to higher education
- ◆ differential achievement on the basis of class and/or gender and/or ethnicity
- ◆ education as social control

Various changes in education should also be covered. These might include:

- ◆ private education versus state education
- ◆ comprehensivisation
- ◆ vocationalism

Alternatively, an increase in the numbers of people entering further and higher education might be discussed, along with the political and/or economic rationale for such social policies. Also, changes in the sociological study of education could be included, such as the growing recognition of factors such as ethnicity and gender.

Three relevant, contrasting sociological theories from the following list will be discussed in relation to this topic:

- ◆ functionalism
- ◆ Marxism
- ◆ new right
- ◆ feminism
- ◆ interactionism
- ◆ liberal

Key theorists and commentators from each theory will be referred to, whereby key features of these theories relating to the sociology of education, issues raised by them and **two studies** will be addressed, with appropriate analysis and evaluation of each.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Understanding Human Society 1 (Higher)

The following **three** aspects of education will be addressed and evaluated:

- ◆ class
- ◆ gender
- ◆ ethnicity

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THE UNIT

In this Unit, the theoretical approaches, aspect and studies may be approached in a combined or integrated way.

For candidates studying this Unit as part of the Higher Sociology Course, advice regarding approaches to learning and teaching are contained in the Course specification.

It is suggested that the learning experience at this level should be varied, to encourage enthusiasm for the subject and to stimulate and prepare candidates for independent study.

The Unit should be approached using a wide range of stimulus materials and teaching approaches. Candidates should be encouraged to draw upon their own experiences, where appropriate, and should have access to resources such as audio-visual material, invited speakers, Internet, ICT and paper-based resources. Where appropriate, the material should be up to date and relevant to the Unit, the level of study and the interests of the candidates. For the Higher Sociology Course it is recognised that certain key sociological commentary and research, regardless of publication date, is appropriate. Comparisons with more up to date research and sociological commentary should be used, where appropriate. The emphasis throughout should be on interactive learning, whether through whole class, small group, or individual activity. The Unit may be delivered on a flexible basis and may also be suitable for open learning and on-line delivery.

The Outcomes are interconnected and should be approached as such. Outcomes should be covered in an integrated way. An Outcome-by-Outcome approach, which could lead to a compartmentalised view of sociology, should be avoided.

If undertaking the Unit as part of the Higher Sociology Course, it is advised that the *Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach* (Higher) Unit is taught first. This would allow for an introduction to theories and research methods, which may then be more effectively applied to the Unit, and for movement between Intermediate 2 to Higher in the first few months of the Course. As the class stratification requirement of the *Social Stratification* (Intermediate 2) Unit and this *Understanding Human Society* (Higher) Unit have some overlapping content, it is envisaged that assessors will be able to decide the appropriate level of study for each candidate. Due to the level of demand at Higher, bi-level delivery of Intermediate 2 and Higher for the Unit may be difficult. Also, content overlap is minimal between Higher and Intermediate 2 and limited only to class stratification.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Understanding Human Society 1 (Higher)

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THE UNIT

The Evidence Requirements provide specific requirements for Unit assessment.

The Outcomes and Performance Criteria in this Unit are assessed holistically. The Unit assessment must cover *all* Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Cut-off scores will be used and the Evidence Requirements, Appendix and the NABs should be consulted for details.

Sampling of content in the Unit assessment is acceptable. NAB materials provide assessment instruments and guidance on implementation. The questions require essay-type responses conducted in supervised, closed-book conditions. Where centres wish to devise their own instruments of assessment, they should refer to the NAB to ensure a comparable standard. It is recommended that centre-devised instruments of assessment should be submitted to SQA for prior moderation.

Evidence should be gathered by means of a single assessment towards the end of the Unit. Care should be taken to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for remediation and reassessment, if required.

It is appropriate to *internally assess only one of the topics* covered in learning and teaching in the Unit. This must ensure that all Outcomes and Performance Criteria are met. Candidates must be prepared to answer *either* topic for both Unit and Course assessment purposes.

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

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Understanding Human Society 1 (Higher)

Appendix: Content and context

NB: This Appendix forms part of the Statement of Standards for the Unit and contains, therefore, requirements that are mandatory.

Both topics must be covered in terms of learning and teaching in this Unit. For the purposes of both Unit and Course assessment only **one** topic will be assessed.

Topic 1: Sociology of class stratification

Three contrasting theories, **two** studies, **two** features, **two** changes and **two** aspects will be covered for this topic, as follows:

Three relevant, contrasting sociological theories:

- ◆ functionalism
- ◆ Marxism
- ◆ Weberianism

Any two relevant studies

Two features, from:

- ◆ social inequality — economic privilege, social prestige, power
- ◆ social stratification — social class in capitalist society
- ◆ measuring social class — subjective approaches, objective approaches

Two changes:

- ◆ changes in workforce demographics, eg. decline of manufacturing industry and rise in service sector
- ◆ the impact of recent government policies on greater social mobility

Two aspects:

- ◆ social mobility — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ social closure — an analysis of two features and two studies

Topic 2: Sociology of education

Three contrasting theories, **two** studies, **two** features, **two** changes and **three** aspects will be covered for this topic, as follows:

Any three relevant, contrasting sociological theories

Any two relevant studies

Two features:

- ◆ functions of education — eg education as a socialisation process, as a means of providing a workforce
- ◆ the comprehensive range of provision from nursery to higher education

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Understanding Human Society 1 (Higher)

Two changes:

- ◆ changes in the structure of education in the UK with emphasis on contemporary changes
- ◆ rise in credentialism

Three aspects:

- ◆ differential achievement in education and class — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ differential achievement in education and gender — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ differential achievement in education and ethnicity — an analysis of two features and two studies

In each topic, where there are substantially different approaches within a theory, the comparisons and contrasts within that theory may be sufficient for the purposes of analysis and evaluation. For example, manipulative and hegemonic Marxist approaches to the role of the mass media, or liberal, radical or Marxist feminist approaches to many areas of sociology.

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2

CODE DV40 12

COURSE Sociology (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit focuses on the sociological understanding of two substantive areas of human social behaviour. The Unit is divided into four optional topic areas and candidates must study two topics chosen from the following areas — the sociology of the family, the sociology of welfare and poverty, the sociology of crime and deviance and the sociology of the mass media. The Unit focuses on the UK but, wherever possible, cross-cultural or comparative studies may be used for comparison. Where possible, reference should be made to recent research.

The Unit builds on the knowledge and understanding gained from the *Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Higher)* Unit.

This is a mandatory Unit in the Higher Sociology Course. This Unit can also be taken as a free-standing Unit for candidates who wish to gain a sound understanding of two substantive areas of human social behaviour.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Describe sociological topics and their relationship to human society.
- 2 Evaluate the contribution of key sociological theories to an understanding of sociological topics.
- 3 Evaluate selected aspects of sociological topics using different sociological theories and studies.

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)

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:

- ◆ Intermediate 2 Sociology Course or Unit(s)
- ◆ A Standard Grade in a social subject at Credit level
- ◆ Standard Grade English at Credit level or Intermediate 2 Communication

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit 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 Skill component	Critical Thinking at SCQF Level 6

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)

Acceptable performance in the 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

Describe sociological topics and their relationship to human society

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe sociological topics succinctly and correctly.
- (b) Describe key features of sociological topics succinctly and correctly.

OUTCOME 2

Evaluate the contribution of key sociological theories to an understanding of sociological topics

Performance Criteria

- (a) Correctly apply relevant and contrasting sociological theories to topics.
- (b) Provide a balanced evaluation of the contribution of contrasting sociological theories to understanding topics.

OUTCOME 3

Evaluate selected aspects of sociological topics using different sociological theories and studies

Performance Criteria

- (a) Explain aspects of topics in a balanced way by taking account of different sociological studies.
- (b) Use relevant evidence from a range of sociological studies to support the explanations.
- (c) Develop sociological arguments, based on evidence and examples used in relevant sociological studies.
- (d) Make balanced evaluations that refer to evidence and arguments from contrasting sociological theories.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIT

The Appendix to the Statement of Standards details the mandatory content/context for the Unit.

Evidence Requirements apply to the Unit as a whole and, therefore, apply holistically to all Outcomes of the Unit.

Candidates must produce written and/or oral evidence for all Outcomes and Performance Criteria of the Unit. The assessment should take the form of an unseen, closed-book, supervised test that should be completed in one hour. The instrument of assessment should take the form of an extended response-type (essay) question.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)

The response for the Unit assessment should provide evidence to cover all the Outcomes and Performance Criteria, and should begin with an appropriate introduction addressing definitions and features relating to the topic. The response should then provide contrasting theoretical discussion on the topic, with appropriate analysis and evaluation. A major aspect of the topic should be introduced, followed by two studies, where the main findings and an appropriate evaluation should be given for each study. A summary/conclusion should provide some final evaluation of evidence and argument from contrasting sociological studies.

Two of the four options will be selected for study in this Unit, with candidates being asked to prepare for Unit assessment in any **one** of the topics studied.

The assessment instrument can use an appropriate sample of Unit content. For example, if a candidate demonstrates knowledge, understanding and an ability to analyse and evaluate one topic, then it is inferred that she or he will be able to demonstrate the same level of achievement for the other topic covered in learning and teaching in the Unit. Each topic allows for coverage of all three Outcomes (including all Performance Criteria), ensuring that Unit assessment that samples one topic will provide adequate inferred evidence of overall Unit achievement.

Any requirement for reassessment will be based upon a different sample from the range of content, where appropriate, and candidates must attempt a different instrument of assessment, on either topic, in its entirety.

Achievement will be decided by the use of a cut-off score of 60%. The National Assessment Bank items illustrate the standard which should be applied and also the nature and extent of the sample to be used. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard.

Candidate responses will be descriptive in nature, and a proportion of analysis and evaluation is required at this level. The split between knowledge and understanding and analysis and evaluation in Unit assessment is 60% knowledge and understanding and 40% analysis and evaluation.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)

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

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

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THE UNIT

The Appendix to the Statement of Standards contains the mandatory content.

Each substantive topic area of sociology included in the Unit serves to broaden and deepen sociological understanding. The Unit focuses on the UK but, wherever possible, cross-cultural or comparative studies may be used for comparison.

There is a choice of **two from four** sociological topics. These are:

- ◆ the sociology of the family
- ◆ the sociology of welfare and poverty
- ◆ the sociology of crime and deviance
- ◆ the sociology of the mass media.

The main emphasis of the Unit is on the sociology of chosen topics. Outcome 1 should be seen, therefore, as an opportunity to introduce, provide an overview of and contextualise the topics and should not be allocated a disproportionate amount of time or attention.

Within each topic area, there is an opportunity to select for sociological analysis and evaluation, aspects associated with that topic. **Two** contrasting theories, **two** studies, **two** features, **two** changes and **three** aspects will be covered for each topic. It is envisaged that the three areas associated with the aspects would naturally be covered in the teaching and learning of the three aspects and should not result in an added burden. Teachers/lecturers are, of course, free to encourage candidates to study more than the minimum requirement as listed.

Topic 1: Sociology of the family

Candidates should be introduced to the topic of the sociology of the family with some of the key features and definitions of the topic. These could include the key functions carried out by the family and changing interpretations of these functions, from sociobiology to the present.

Two or more relevant, contrasting sociological theories from the following list will be discussed in relation to this topic:

- ◆ functionalism
- ◆ Marxism
- ◆ new right
- ◆ feminism
- ◆ Weberianism
- ◆ any other pertinent sociological theory

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)

In studying these theories, candidates would examine their main features and analyse their strengths and weaknesses. In each case candidates would analyse **two** studies and apply these theories to the **three** specified aspects.

Topic 2: Sociology of welfare and poverty

Candidates should be introduced to the topic of the sociology of welfare and poverty with some of the key features and definitions of the topic. Various issues, such as a widening gap between the rich and poor, should be covered.

Two or more relevant, contrasting sociological theories from the following list will be discussed in relation to this topic:

- ◆ functionalism
- ◆ Marxism
- ◆ the New right
- ◆ feminism
- ◆ individualism
- ◆ culture of poverty
- ◆ any other pertinent sociological theory

In studying these theories, candidates would examine their main features and analyse their strengths and weaknesses. In each case candidates would analyse **two** studies and apply these theories to the **three** specified aspects.

Topic 3: Sociology of crime and deviance

Candidates should be introduced to the topic of the sociology of crime and deviance with some of the key features and definitions of the topic.

Two or more relevant, contrasting sociological theories from the following list will be discussed in relation to this topic:

- ◆ functionalism
- ◆ Marxism
- ◆ New left realism
- ◆ feminism
- ◆ interactionism
- ◆ subcultural
- ◆ any other pertinent sociological theory

In studying these theories, candidates would examine their main features and analyse their strengths and weaknesses. In each case candidates would analyse **two** studies and apply these theories to the **three** specified aspects.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)

Topic 4: Sociology of the mass media

Candidates should be introduced to the topic of the sociology of the mass media with some of the key features and definitions of the topic. Various factors, such as types of newspaper coverage, TV programming, and their purpose should also be discussed.

Two or more relevant, contrasting sociological theories from the following list will be discussed in relation to this topic:

- ◆ functionalism
- ◆ Marxism
- ◆ pluralism
- ◆ feminism
- ◆ interactionism
- ◆ hypodermic syringe model
- ◆ any other pertinent sociological theory

In studying these theories, candidates would study their main features and analyse their strengths and weaknesses. In each case candidates would analyse **two** studies and apply these theories to the **three** specified aspects.

In each topic, where there are substantially different approaches within a theory, the comparisons and contrasts within that theory may be sufficient for the purposes of analysis and evaluation. For example, manipulative and hegemonic Marxist approaches to the role of the mass media, or liberal, radical or Marxist feminist approaches to many areas of sociology.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THE UNIT

For candidates studying this Unit as part of the Higher Sociology Course, advice regarding approaches to learning and teaching are contained in the Course specification. It is suggested that the learning experience at this level should be varied, to encourage enthusiasm for the subject and to stimulate and prepare candidates for independent study.

The Unit should be approached using a wide range of stimulus materials and teaching approaches. Candidates should be encouraged to draw upon their own experiences, where appropriate, and should have access to resources such as audio-visual material, invited speakers, Internet, ICT and paper-based resources. Where appropriate, the material should be up to date and relevant to the Unit, the level of study and the interests of the candidates. For the Higher Sociology Course it is recognised that certain key sociological commentary and research, regardless of publication, is appropriate. Comparisons with more up to date research should be used, where appropriate. The emphasis throughout should be on interactive learning, whether through whole class, small group, or individual activity. The Unit may be delivered on a flexible basis and may also be suitable for open learning and on-line delivery.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)

The Outcomes are interconnected and should be approached as such. It is recommended that, wherever possible, Outcomes should be covered in an integrated way. An Outcome-by-Outcome approach, which could lead to a compartmentalised view of sociology, should be avoided.

If undertaking this Unit as part of the Higher Sociology Course, it is advised that the *Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach (Higher)* Unit is delivered first. This would allow for an introduction to theories and research methods, which may then be more effectively applied to the Unit, and for movement between Higher and Intermediate 2 levels in the first few months of the Course.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THE UNIT

The Evidence Requirements provide specific requirements for Unit assessment.

Outcomes and Performance Criteria are assessed holistically. The Unit assessment must cover *all* Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Cut-off scores will be used and the Evidence Requirements, the Appendix and the NABs should be consulted for details.

Sampling of Unit content is acceptable. NAB materials provide assessment instruments and guidance on implementation. The questions require essay-type responses conducted under supervised, closed-book conditions. Where centres wish to devise their own instruments of assessment, they should refer to the NAB to ensure a comparable standard. It is recommended that centre-devised instruments of assessment should be submitted to SQA for prior moderation.

Evidence should be gathered by means of a single assessment of one hour, taken towards the end of the Unit. Care should be taken to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for remediation and reassessment, if required.

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

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)

Appendix: Content and context

NB: This Appendix is within the Statement of Standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

Two of the following four topics must be covered in terms of learning and teaching in this Unit. For the purpose of Unit assessment, *either* of the topics covered in learning and teaching may be used for the purposes of sampling.

Two contrasting theories, **two** studies, **two** features, **two** changes and **three** aspects will be covered for each topic, as follows:

Topic 1: Sociology of the family

Candidates should be introduced to the topic of the sociology of the family with some of the key features and definitions of the topic.

Any two relevant, contrasting sociological theories

Any two relevant studies

NB: Some of the points listed below could equally be considered features or changes since many changes become features.

Two features, from:

- ◆ the various family types — single, nuclear, reconstituted, adopted
- ◆ marriage and divorce
- ◆ conjugal roles
- ◆ power and patriarchy

Two changes, from:

- ◆ changes in the provision of key functions of the family
- ◆ changing family patterns
- ◆ the changing structure and organisation of the family

Three aspects:

- ◆ changes in family patterns — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ conjugal roles — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ marital breakdown — an analysis of two features and two studies

The following **areas** must be covered in the teaching of each of the above aspects:

- ◆ the changing role of women in the family
- ◆ the changing role of men in the family
- ◆ power relationships

It is envisaged that the above areas would be taught naturally through each of the aspects and should not result in additional content. Please note that Unit and Course assessment will not specify or focus entirely on these areas.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)

Topic 2: Sociology of welfare and poverty

Candidates should be introduced to the topic of the sociology of welfare and poverty with some of the key features and definitions of the topic.

Any two relevant, contrasting sociological theories

Any two relevant studies

NB: Some of the points listed below could equally be considered features or changes since many changes become features.

Two features, from:

- ◆ the welfare state and social policies to alleviate poverty
- ◆ indicators of the experience of poverty (eg health, income and wealth, education, housing)
- ◆ those most likely to experience poverty (eg the elderly, children, women, ethnic minorities)

Two changes:

- ◆ definitions and measurement of poverty, for example, absolute to relative measurements of poverty
- ◆ the widening gap between the rich and poor

Three aspects:

- ◆ Poverty and the Welfare State — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ the Welfare State and social inequality — class — an analysis of two features and studies
- ◆ the Welfare State and social inequality — gender — an analysis of two features and studies

The following **areas** must be covered in the teaching of each of the above aspects:

- ◆ health
- ◆ the underclass
- ◆ employment and unemployment

It is envisaged that the above areas would be taught naturally through each of the aspects and should not result in additional content. Please note that Unit and Course assessment will not specify or focus entirely on these areas.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)

Topic 3: Sociology of crime and deviance

Candidates should be introduced to the topic of the sociology of crime and deviance with some of the key features and definitions of the topic.

Any two relevant, contrasting sociological theories

Any two relevant studies

NB Some of the points listed below could equally be considered features or changes since many changes become features.

Two features, from:

- ◆ definitions of crime and deviance and the socially constructed nature of crime and deviance
- ◆ the measurement and validity of criminal statistics

Two changes, from:

- ◆ more women convicted of crimes
- ◆ new types of crime — eg computer crime, people trafficking
- ◆ nature and definition of crime and deviance, change and diversity

Three aspects:

- ◆ labelling and the self-fulfilling prophecy — an analysis of two features and studies
- ◆ crime statistics — an analysis of two features and studies
- ◆ gender — an analysis of two features and studies

The following **areas** must be covered in the teaching of each of the above aspects:

- ◆ poverty
- ◆ the penal system
- ◆ social class

It is envisaged that the above areas would be taught naturally through each of the aspects and should not result in additional content. Please note that Unit and Course assessment will not specify or focus entirely on these areas.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Understanding Human Society 2 (Higher)

Topic 4: Sociology of the Mass Media

Candidates should be introduced to the topic of the sociology of the mass media with some of the key features and definitions of the topic.

Any two relevant, contrasting sociological theories

Any two relevant studies

NB: Some of the points listed below could equally be considered features or changes since many changes become features.

Two features, from:

- ◆ definition of the mass media
- ◆ the types of the mass media
- ◆ role of the mass media
- ◆ media consumption/audiences

Two changes, from:

- ◆ the changing types of the mass media (eg satellite TV, Internet)
- ◆ the changing nature of the mass media (eg ownership and control, trends in organisation)
- ◆ the impact of the mass media on its audience, in terms of ownership, bias and influence

Three aspects:

- ◆ ownership and control — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ socialisation — an analysis of two features and two studies
- ◆ bias, influence and attitude formation — an analysis of two features and two studies

The following **areas** must be covered in the teaching of each of the above aspects:

- ◆ gender
- ◆ ethnicity
- ◆ political bias

It is envisaged that the above areas would be taught naturally through each of the aspects and should not result in additional content. Please note that Unit and Course assessment will not specify or focus entirely on these areas.

In each topic, where there are substantially different approaches within a theory, the comparisons and contrasts within that theory may be sufficient for the purposes of analysis and evaluation. For example, manipulative and hegemonic Marxist approaches to the role of the mass media, or liberal, radical or Marxist feminist approaches to many areas of sociology.