

**-SQA- SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY**

**Hanover House  
24 Douglas Street  
GLASGOW G2 7NQ**

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**NATIONAL CERTIFICATE MODULE DESCRIPTOR**

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**-Module Number- 7174070 -Session-1990-91**  
**-Superclass- DB**

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**-Title- PRACTICAL INVESTIGATION IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES: PEOPLE AND THE PAST**

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**-DESCRIPTION-**

**Purpose** A student completing this module will have been introduced to the methodology of Social Science research and presentation. The module will prepare students for entry to Higher Education modes of research/study in the Social Sciences.

This module has been designed as part of a series of modules at different levels of demand which accredit competence in the Social Sciences. The series was designed to facilitate entry to Higher Education. However, the modules in the series may be used in their own right with senior school pupils, adult returners and those whose employment requires them to develop a broad social perspective. Social Science modules may also be useful in adding breadth and ensuring balance in modular programmes.

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**Preferred Entry Level** Students should have studied at least one of the modules from the series - People and the Past:

91458 People and the Past : Scottish Society,  
91459 People and the Past : British Society,  
91460 People and the Past : European Society,  
91461 People and the Past : Global Society,  
91462 People and the Past : Optional Society.

Students may benefit from some previous experience of the subject (eg. through Standard Grade History at Grades 1-3). A level of communication skills such as is required by Communication 3 is also desirable.

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Outcomes	The student should: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. plan a social science investigation;</li> <li>2. select and analyse data appropriate to the aims of the social science investigation;</li> <li>3. present a structured report supported by the evidence gathered in the investigation.</li> </ol>
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Assessment Procedures	Acceptable performance in the module will be satisfactory achievement of all the Performance Criteria specified for each Outcome.
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The following abbreviations are used below:

PC	Performance Criteria
IA	Instrument of Assessment

**Note:** The Outcomes and PCs are mandatory and cannot be altered. The IA may be altered by arrangement with SQA. (Where a range of performance is indicated, this should be regarded as an extension of the PCs and is therefore mandatory.)

**OUTCOME 1-4** IA Project and Personal Interview

In the Project, the student is required to undertake a social science investigation. This investigation includes planning, gathering and selecting appropriate information, analysing the information and presenting a report of the investigation of approximately 2,000 words. Personal interviews are central to the assessment and will be used to elicit information concerning the student's progress in relation to the stated Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Personal interviews will be conducted by the tutor with individual students and may take place on an ongoing basis throughout the module or towards the end of the module. The interviews should focus on the Performance Criteria for each Outcome.

**OUTCOME 1 PLAN A SOCIAL SCIENCE INVESTIGATION**

PCs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The plan includes objectives, identification of sources of information, and identification of methods of gathering information.</li> <li>(b) The objectives are relevant to the aims of the social science investigation.</li> </ol>
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- (c) The sources of information are relevant to the social science investigation.
- (d) The identified methods of gathering information are appropriate to the study.

IA Personal Interview

The student will be tested on his/her ability to plan a Social Science investigation. The personal interview will focus on the above Performance Criteria.

Satisfactory performance will be that the student achieves all Performance Criteria in terms of the studied topic.

**OUTCOME 2**

**SELECT AND ANALYSE DATA APPROPRIATE TO THE AIMS OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCE INVESTIGATION**

PC

- (a) The data gathered is from a variety of sources.
- (b) The selection of the data is appropriate to the aims of the investigation.
- (c) The analysis of the data is accurate in terms of the aims of the investigation.
- (d) The analysis of the data is accurate in terms of the subject methodology.

IA Personal Interview

The student will be tested on his/her ability to select relevant information appropriate to the aims of the Social Science investigation.

The personal interview will focus on the above Performance Criteria.

Satisfactory performance will be that the student achieves all Performance Criteria in terms of the studied topic.

**OUTCOME 3**

**PRESENT A STRUCTURED REPORT SUPPORTED BY THE EVIDENCE GATHERED IN THE INVESTIGATION**

PCs

- (a) The interpretation of the information is valid and justified and conforms to the practices of the discipline.
- (b) The evaluation of the information is valid in terms of the aims of the investigation.
- (c) Conclusions are relevant to the aims of the investigation.
- (d) The presentation of the report includes relevant evidence from a range of sources.

## IA Project

The student will be tested on his/her ability to prepare a report on a Social Science investigation.

The length of the report should be approximately 2,000 words of text, and not exceed 30 sides of A4 paper. In addition the report should contain appropriate illustrations, graphics, statistics, acknowledgements and bibliography. Sheets up to A3 size may be used to present graphic materials and these should be folded to A4 size. The report should include valid interpretation of the information selected in the investigation, evaluation of the information, evidence of a range of sources and conclusions relevant to the aims of the investigation.

Satisfactory performance will be that the student achieves all Performance Criteria in terms of the studied topic.

**The following sections of the descriptor are offered as guidance.  
They are not mandatory.**

### CONTENT/CONTEXT

Corresponding to Outcomes 1-3:

In this module, practical investigation methods will be used to produce individual projects relating to the People and the Past series of modules. The content of this module will be negotiated with the student. Each student will have an individual investigation to undertake relating to the People and the Past series of modules.

The topic of the investigation selected is one in which the student will be able to demonstrate practical investigation skills of a high order. This would be reflected in the nature of evaluation, the form, analysis and length of the practical investigation. Skills developed in the investigation are those recognised as being appropriate for entry to Higher Education.

Topics for study could include:

- (a) further investigation of topics previously studied in the People and the Past series of modules
- OR
- (b) new topics appropriate to the People and the Past series of modules.

The topic selected should be manageable in scale and should provide opportunities to identify issues and problems and should offer findings which can be justified within the limits of the module.

It is important that the topic selected for study has appropriate and accessible resources available for the individual student.

In his/her investigation, the student will be planning, selecting and gathering information appropriate to the chosen topic and preparing a report with conclusions of his/her investigation, the specific content of which will be dictated by the negotiated topic.

The methodology adopted by the student in the Practical Investigation should be appropriate to the People and the Past series of modules and the information may be gathered from either primary or secondary sources.

The length of the report should be approximately 2,000 words of text. In addition, the report should contain appropriate illustrations, appendices, acknowledgements and bibliography.

SUGGESTED LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES

This module is student centred with students carrying out their own individual practical investigation. The student should select the topic he/she wishes to investigate in consultation with the tutor. Individual plans for action should be discussed with the student. The role of the tutor should be seen in a support capacity. Individual interviews/tutorials should feature in this module. These would allow progress to be checked and new plans of action discussed. It is envisaged that much of the work may be carried on outside the classroom. Library/laboratory/fieldwork based approaches, or a mixture of these may be used. The class should be seen as a base from which specialist tutor support/advice is available. At a later stage in the module, students will have to devote time to the presentation of their project. The student should consult the tutor at this stage though the project should be written and presented by the student alone.

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