



Modern Studies: Contemporary Issues (Advanced Higher) Unit

SCQF: level 7 (16 SCQF credit points)

Unit code: H7X4 77

Unit outline

The general aims of this Unit are to develop factual and theoretical knowledge and understanding, in depth, of complex contemporary political or social issues in the United Kingdom while adopting an international comparative approach; develop skills of evaluation, analysis and synthesis of evidence on contemporary issues; and critically evaluate a range of social science research methods

Learners who complete this Unit will:

- 1 Draw on knowledge and understanding to analyse complex political or social issues in the United Kingdom
- 2 Draw well-reasoned conclusions about a complex political or social issue
- 3 Critically evaluate a range of social science research

This Unit is a mandatory Unit of the Advanced Higher Modern Studies Course and is also available as a free-standing Unit. The Unit Specification should be read in conjunction with the *Course/Unit Support Notes*, which provide advice and guidance on delivery, assessment approaches and development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Exemplification of the standards in this Unit is given in *Unit Assessment Support*.

The *Course Assessment Specification* for the Advanced Higher Modern Studies Course gives further mandatory information on Course coverage for learners taking this Unit as part of the Advanced Higher Modern Studies Course.

Recommended entry

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

- ◆ Higher Modern Studies Course or relevant component units

Equality and inclusion

This Unit Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. For further information, please refer to the *Course/Unit Support Notes*.

Standards

Outcomes and Assessment Standards

Outcome 1

The learner will:

1 Draw on knowledge and understanding to analyse complex political or social issues in the United Kingdom by:

- 1.1 Analysing a complex political or social issue in the United Kingdom
- 1.2 Making international comparisons about a complex political or social issue

Outcome 2

The learner will:

2 Draw well-reasoned conclusions about a complex political or social issue by:

- 2.1 Synthesising evidence to produce a coherent line of argument about a complex political or social issue
- 2.2 Evaluating evidence to support a well-reasoned conclusion about a complex political or social issue

Outcome 3

The learner will:

3 Critically evaluate social science research by:

- 3.1 Evaluating the reliability and validity of a source in the context of a political or social issue
- 3.2 Evaluating a research method in the context of a political or social issue
- 3.3 Analysing a social science research method from an ethical perspective

Evidence Requirements for the Unit

Assessors should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their learners, to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used.

Evidence is required to show that the learner has met the Outcomes and Assessment Standards.

The Unit will involve the study of a range of complex political/social issues in the United Kingdom (including Scotland). Throughout their study, an international comparative approach should be adopted.

Learners will also study a range of sources of information including relevant and contemporary social science research.

Any sources of information used by learners should be of an appropriate level of complexity. These could include primary and secondary sources such as:

- ◆ official statistics
- ◆ other researchers' data
- ◆ data from social surveys, questionnaires
- ◆ interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured, group/focus interviews, data from participant observation
- ◆ documents: official documents from the state and from private sources, personal documents
- ◆ media outputs: newspaper articles, magazine articles, radio and television transmissions, internet transmissions
- ◆ case studies

A range of relevant research methods will be critically evaluated from an ethical perspective.

This Unit is not intended to develop in-depth competence in applying quantitative techniques to political and/or social research.

Assessment evidence can be drawn from a variety of activities and presented in a variety of formats, including, for example, presentations, posters, detailed written responses to questions, and participation in group tasks. Not all of the evidence needs to be from one activity, but can be assembled from a variety of tasks and assessments carried out during the Course.

Evidence may be presented for individual Outcomes or gathered for the Unit as a whole.

Exemplification of assessment is provided in *Unit Assessment Support*. Advice and guidance on possible approaches to assessment is provided in the *Course/Unit Support Notes*.

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

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

1 Literacy

- 1.1 Reading
- 1.2 Writing

2 Numeracy

- 2.3 Information handling

4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship

- 4.6 Citizenship

5 Thinking skills

- 5.3 Applying
- 5.4 Analysing and evaluating

Amplification of these is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills should be at the same SCQF level as the Unit and be consistent with the SCQF level descriptor. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work is given in the *Course/Unit Support Notes*.

Administrative information

Published: April 2015 (version 2.0)

Superclass: FB

History of changes to National Unit Specification

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
2.0	Changes to wording in 'Unit outline'. Assessment Standards updated for clarity. Unit description updated and duplication removed in 'Evidence Requirements'.	Qualifications Development Manager	April 2015

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Note: readers are advised to check SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk to ensure they are using the most up-to-date version of the Unit Specification.

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