

National Unit Specification: general details

UNIT	Political Behaviour: An Introduction (Intermediate 1)
NUMBER	D391 10
COURSE	Politics (Intermediate 1)

SUMMARY

This is a mandatory component unit of Intermediate 1 Politics but it can also be offered as a free-standing unit.

It offers a basic introduction to political behaviour for post-16 candidates, covering political socialisation and participation in the political process. It also introduces candidates to simple analysis and comparison of different political parties and encourages the development of basic analytical, interpretive and critical skills.

Successful candidates will have gained basic knowledge and understanding of the influences on our political thinking and the methods by which we can become involved in the political process. They can use this information to interpret and make judgements about political developments and events. By examining different political contexts they can make better sense of their world and interpret new information. They will be able to contribute to debates on political issues, recognise bias and appreciate alternative points of view.

The unit is designed to meet the needs of:

- candidates undertaking an Intermediate 1 course in Politics
- candidates undertaking a Scottish Group Award at Intermediate 1 or 2
- candidates who seek an introduction to political behaviour and who wish to undertake a free-standing unit in the subject

Administrative Information

Superclass:	EA
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National Unit Specification: general details (cont)

UNIT Political Behaviour: An Introduction (Intermediate 1)

OUTCOMES

- 1 Describe, in brief, the process of political socialisation.
- 2 Describe, in brief, a form of political participation and behaviour.
- 3 Analyse, at a basic level, the role of political parties in different political contexts.
- 4 Evaluate simple evidence and reach conclusions on an issue related to political behaviour.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre. However, it would be beneficial if candidates had achieved the following:

- a Standard Grade social subject at grade 5 or 6, or relevant Access units
- Standard Grade English at grade 6 or above or Communication at Access 3
- any other relevant qualification at an appropriate level

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 1.

CORE SKILLS

This unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete core skills for the unit	None
Core skills components for the unit	Critical Thinking Int 1

Additional information about core skills is published in *Automatic Certification of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, 1999).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Political Behaviour: An Introduction (Intermediate 1)

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

Describe, in brief, the process of political socialisation.

Performance criteria

- a) A key factor in the process of political socialisation is described simply and correctly.
- b) Political socialisation in different political contexts is described simply and correctly.

Evidence requirements

PC (a) simple written or oral description of one factor from those listed below.

PC (b) simple written or oral description of political socialisation in two different political contexts.

Factors: choose **one** from the family, peer groups, the workplace, education, religion, the media.

Political contexts: choose **two** from local, national or international contexts.

OUTCOME 2

Describe, in brief, forms of political participation and behaviour.

Performance criteria

- a) A form of political participation and behaviour is described simply and correctly.
- b) Political participation and behaviour in different political contexts is compared simply and accurately.

Evidence requirements

PC (a) simple written or oral description of one form of political participation identified below.

PC (b) simple written or oral comparison of political participation in two different contexts.

Forms of political participation and behaviour: choose **one** from elections, referenda, voting behaviour, membership of political parties and interest groups, direct action ranging from demonstration to revolution, numbers of activists and inactivists, the role of the mass media.

Political contexts: choose **two** from local, national or international contexts.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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OUTCOME 3

Analyse, at a basic level, the role of political parties in different political contexts.

Performance criteria

- a) The differences between a political party and an interest group are described simply and correctly.
- b) A key function of political parties is described simply and correctly.
- c) Party organisation in different political contexts is compared simply and correctly.

Evidence requirements

PC (a) simple written or oral description of the differences between a political party which has a conscious aim to capture decision-making power and an interest group which seeks to influence public policy without trying to take over government itself.

PC (b) simple written or oral description of one political function identified below.

PC (c) simple written or oral description which compares party organisation in two political contexts in terms of the relationship between the parliamentary party, and the party organisation, and how candidates are recruited.

Functions: choose **one** from selection of candidates, organisation of campaigns, finance of campaigns, provision of election manifesto, organisation of voters, formation of policy, allocation of office, contributing to legislation, providing alternative policy in opposition, ensuring government accountability.

Political contexts: choose **two** from local, national or international contexts.

OUTCOME 4

Evaluate simple evidence and reach conclusions on an issue related to political behaviour.

Performance criteria

- a) Contrasting views on an issue related to political behaviour are identified correctly.
- b) Contrasting views on an issue related to political behaviour are described simply and correctly.
- c) Examples of bias are recognised and described simply and correctly.
- d) Conclusions reached are valid.

Evidence requirements

PC (a) written or oral identification of two contrasting views.

PC (b) simple written or oral description of two contrasting views.

PC (c) simple written or oral description of one example of bias.

PC (d) simple written or oral conclusion which must relate to the points made in PC (b) and PC (c).

Political issues: choose **one** from direct versus indirect participation, non-violent versus violent action, party membership and interest group membership.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Political Behaviour: An Introduction (Intermediate 1)

This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 4 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

This unit has the same content as Introduction to Political Behaviour (Int 2). However, the units are differentiated by outcomes, performance criteria and evidence requirements. It follows that in a bi-level class, while candidates will cover the same content, they will not be expected to master it in the same way, ie, to the same depth of knowledge and understanding or level of skill development.

This unit, like its Intermediate 2 partner, offers an introduction to Politics and is set in the context of political behaviour. Full details of the content of this unit are set out in the course specification for Intermediate 1 Politics.

It is intended to introduce candidates to political behaviour at a basic level and to encourage them, where appropriate, to relate this behaviour to their own experiences. Candidates will begin to appreciate that the political views and participation of an individual are shaped and influenced by a number of factors, including peer group, family and media influences.

At this level the introduction to political behaviour is achieved through the understanding of political socialisation, political participation and political parties. By using a contextual and illustrative approach candidates will recognise the different forms of political behaviour and participation.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Proposals regarding approaches to learning and teaching are contained in the course specification for Intermediate 1 Politics, but for this unit particular emphasis should be placed on active learning methods and a candidate-centred approach. A good variety of resources is critical for this approach. These should be interesting, accessible and manageable and reflect the experiences of candidates working at this level.

The outcomes are interconnected and should be approached as such. It is recommended that, wherever possible, outcomes should be covered in an integrated way, eg, the study of the electioneering role of a political party may be used as a context to cover many forms of political behaviour and socialisation.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Political Behaviour: An Introduction (Intermediate 1)

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Evidence of attainment of the outcomes in this unit may be provided by a variety of methods of assessment. Matching exercises, simple structured questions, short responses, assignments or a project may all be used. Where more open-ended assessments are used, candidates working at this level will require careful briefing and clear records must be maintained to note the achievement of outcomes. Account should be taken of the nature of the class group at this level in deciding which form of assessment should be adopted. Wherever possible, a holistic strategy should be used and an outcome by outcome approach avoided. However, where an integrated approach is used for assessment it will be necessary to identify where in the candidate's response each outcome has been met.

If the evidence is 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.

Where assessments are set which allow candidates to demonstrate performance beyond the minimum standard required, evidence gathered for internal unit assessment may also be used for grade prediction and for appeals for external course assessment. (For details of the grade descriptions for external assessment, refer to the Intermediate 1 Politics course details.)

SPECIAL NEEDS

This unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment and Certification Arrangements for Candidates with Special Needs/Candidates whose First Language is not English* (SQA, 1998).