

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.

Administrative Information

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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.