

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Families in Modern Society (Intermediate 2)

CODE F01C 11

COURSE Care Issues for Society: Older People
Care Issues for Society: Childcare

SUMMARY

This Unit is a mandatory Unit of the Intermediate 2 Care Issues for Society: Older People and Care Issues for Society: Childcare Courses and can also be taken as a free-standing Unit, it replaces the Unit D10V 11 Family Structures and Roles in Changing Society which finishes in July 2008 and will not be available after then.

This Unit is designed to introduce candidates to the diversity of family types in modern society and to the social factors which influence modern family life. Candidates will be introduced to the range of terms used by sociologists to describe particular family types and to the understanding that there is a diversity of opinion regarding these terms. Candidates will also explore sociologists' views on the function of the family in modern society and social problems relating to dysfunctional families.

This Unit is suitable for candidates in S5 as part of a school/college partnership or adult returners in preparation for the National Certificate Group Award in Care.

Outcomes

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of family types in modern society.
- 2 Evaluate social factors which influence families.
- 3 Evaluate the impact of social problems on modern families.

Administrative Information

Superclass: PN

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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Recommended entry

Entry is at the discretion of the centre. Candidates undertaking this Unit do not need any prior knowledge of sociology. However, good skills in communication will be an advantage.

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 2 level (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5*)

**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

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Families in Modern Society (Intermediate 2)

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

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of family types in modern society.

Performance criteria

- a) Describe different family types.
- b) Explain the links between different family types.

OUTCOME 2

Evaluate social factors which influence families.

Performance criteria

- a) Describe accurately the social factors which influence families.
- b) Evaluate how these social factors have influenced changes in family roles and relationships.

OUTCOME 3

Evaluate the impact of social problems on modern families.

Performance criteria

- a) Describe functions of the family.
- b) Investigate the impact of social problems on modern families.
- c) Explain how these social problems may lead to dysfunctional families.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Families in Modern Society (Intermediate 2)

Evidence requirements

Details of the mandatory content for this Unit can be found in the Appendix at the end of this Unit Specification.

To demonstrate satisfactory achievement of all Outcomes of the Unit, candidates must produce written and/or recorded oral evidence that cover all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. The assessment will take the form of a closed-book, supervised test with a time limit of one hour. Outcome 3 provides the opportunity for candidates to undertake individual or group investigations. Additional time should be allowed to enable candidates to carry out their research in these circumstances.

The mandatory content for this Unit, which is specified in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards, should be assessed by short answer and restricted response questions. The questions should sample across the mandatory content and must allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. If a re-assessment is required, it must contain a different sample from the range of content.

Specific requirements

Outcome 1: A description of **three** family types from the following: traditional extended; modern extended; nuclear; lone parent; step/re-constituted/blended family.

Outcome 2 pc (a): A description of **four** social factors from the following: religion; ethnicity; mass media; social class; changing social attitudes to divorce, lone parenting, same sex relationships; changing nature of employment patterns.

Outcome 2 pc (b): An explanation of **four** changes in family roles and relationships from the following: rising co-habitation rates; rising divorce rates; increase in lone parenting; increase in step-families; same sex parenting; role of women in families; role of men in families. Candidates should also provide an evaluation of how social factors have influenced these changes.

Outcome 3 pc (a): A description of **three** functions of the family from the following: primary socialisation; care and support; economic support; reproduction; regulation of sexual behaviour.

Outcome 3 pc (b) and (c): The impact of **three** social problems from the following: addiction, alcoholism, poverty, abuse; domestic violence.

The use of a cut-off score may be appropriate for this Unit.

The standard to be applied and breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. 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 Families in Modern Society (Intermediate 2)

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

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

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

‘There is no such thing as the family – only families’. (Giddens)

Sociologists have always been interested in looking at families - the differences and similarities to be found within families in a particular society, the influence families have on individuals and on the wider society, etc.

Sociologists have also ‘categorised’ families into certain common types, but this can be limiting if seen too rigidly. Certain families may have common features across a given society, but societies change and family characteristics change also.

Social change influences families: families influence individuals and social attitudes: social attitudes influence social change, and so it goes on.

So when sociologists originally used the term *extended family*, it was to describe the kind of large ‘kinship’ family network where individuals had specific duties and obligations to one another and even specific status. It was thought that this family form became less important when industrialisation began and a new ‘nuclear’ family type emerged which was more mobile and able to respond to the need for geographical mobility in an industrialised society.

From the 1960s onwards, with the development of new towns and outlying housing estates and greater geographical mobility of population, sociologists thought that the extended family was giving way in our society to a newer structure which they named the ‘nuclear’ family. This type of family unit was less likely to have strong ties to the wider family and probably had moved away from the main family to live in the suburbs or another part of the country – often because of better employment opportunities. Their contact with the wider relatives, uncles, aunts, etc, took place only at major events such as weddings and funerals and the nuclear family group was less likely to feel an obligation to look after older relatives, etc. Instead the focus was within the family group of father, mother and children.

This is not to say that there was not a wider network of extended family in the background, but rather to emphasise that ties with this wider group were loosened.

In the mid 20th century Young and Willmott came to the conclusion that the extended family was still relevant, especially in working class (Study of Bethnal Green) or rural areas where relatives saw each other regularly, lived in close proximity to one another and were often a support system for care of children and the elderly or vulnerable.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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In the later stages of the 20th century, social attitudes to women brought more changes in the family. Women were now more likely to have a career which they continued after marriage, so working mothers were too busy to carry out tasks for other family members which might once have been seen as part of their role. This all loosened the ties of duty and obligation.

In addition, with equal opportunity legislation came changing social attitudes to divorce, separation, single parenthood and co-habiting. With this came a dramatic rise in the lone parent family.

Once again this was not a new phenomenon, but rather one that was undergoing change. Widows and widowers had always headed families: however in earlier times, society frowned upon unmarried mothers or couples co-habiting without being married. As social attitudes changed, women, who form 98% of lone parents, sometimes chose to remain single after marital breakdown, or indeed not to marry at all when they discovered they were pregnant. Some single women now make a deliberate decision to be single and to have a child, perhaps using artificial or donor insemination methods. All of this contributed to the rapid increase in lone parent families throughout the latter part of the twentieth century.

Alongside this has been the rise of the re-constituted family, which once again is not an entirely new phenomenon but one which is changing and growing. This type of family is created when two people who have children from previous relationships form a new family unit, bringing to it their children with previous partners and sometimes adding new children from the new relationship. It is essentially a step-family.

In centuries past, if a man was widowed and left with young children, often because a wife had died in childbirth, he would have looked for another wife to help with the upbringing of his children. Because women were in past centuries so dependent financially on husbands, if the husband died a woman often found it easier to remarry than to try and raise children without a man's financial support. The most common cause for remarriage nowadays, however, is divorce or new relationships, and social attitudes to this have become more relaxed. Step-parenting is more common and it is reckoned that by 2010, step-families will be the largest type of family grouping in Britain.

Same sex parenting is also a growing trend. This has come about because of a change in social attitude to homosexuality. However, there are still legal issues around both parents being recognised as such and in most countries only one of the couple will be recognised as a parent of the child/children. Often this is a natural parent, or in some cases, adoptive parent. In 2005 Civil Partnership agreements between same sex couples became law. This gives the same legal rights to same sex relationships as those of a married couple.

A family could belong to more than one category, for example, a lone parent could have the support of a large extended family network. Candidates should be helped to recognise that the terms used by sociologists to describe common trends in families were never meant to be seen as fixed types. There must be recognition that society is constantly changing and family types too will change with variations occurring all the time.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Take the example of a family dispersed all over Scotland, yet who all phone the grandparents at least once a week, who email each other almost daily, who come to visit grandparents at least once a month and offer support in time of illness. Is this a nuclear family because they do not live nearby, or a modern extended family, observing duties and ties to the wider family but just conducting contact in a modern way?

Litwak calls this the 'modified extended family' and Young and Willmott have referred to it as the 'dispersed extended family'.

Candidates should be encouraged to see that sociologists take different views on the family and its importance to society. There is no need within this Unit to understand the differences between structuralist, conflict, interactionist, feminist or post-modernist views on the family. Rather, candidates should be encouraged to understand *change* instead of having fixed definitions of family types.

The way family life is organised affects roles and relationships within the family. Candidates should consider how roles change with family style, for example, the way in which roles in the traditional extended family differ from those in the modern/modified/dispersed extended family; the change in roles which occurs when a nuclear family becomes a one parent family; roles when parents are of the same sex, etc.

They should consider how changing social attitudes have contributed to changing roles, for example the impact of increasing equality for women in the latter part of the twentieth century and the reduction of traditional male employment.

In Outcome 3, candidates should consider the commonly agreed functions of the family and the impact of social problems which may lead to family breakdown. There must be no implication that social problems exist predominantly in any one type of family. Also, the difference between breakdown in relationships leading to divorce or separation should not be interpreted as dysfunctional. Candidates should become aware that dysfunctional families can exist in all parts of society and should investigate the most common problems relating to dysfunctional families and the impact on family members

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Candidates may use their own families to explore the range of types and the way any family undergoes change and transition between the types. Case studies, including the use of fictional families such as those in television soap operas, literature, etc could be used.

Group research could be used to explore the main social factors which have influenced and continue to influence the family with each group taking a separate factor. Outcome 3 provides opportunities for candidates to carry out individual or group investigations.

Issues around the dysfunctional family require careful handling as some candidates may have personal experience of these. Again case studies are useful.

National Unit Specification: support notes

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Candidates undertaking a childcare related course could combine this Outcome with research into child protection or those doing Social/Health Care Courses could link research to topics such as drug use, alcoholism, elder abuse in the family, etc.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the appropriate conditions for assessment of competence in this Unit are given in the *Evidence Requirements* in the Statement of Standards. Centres must make sure that all Unit assessment is carried out under the stated conditions.

Candidates will develop their knowledge and skills throughout their study of all mandatory content. This would suggest that appropriate instruments of assessment may best be attempted as an 'end of Unit' test.

Unit assessment is holistic in nature. Information on the assessment requirements is given in the Evidence Requirements in the Statement of Standards.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

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. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the Statement of Standards

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NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit

Sociologists have always been interested in looking at families - the differences and similarities to be found within families in a particular society, the influence families have on individuals and on the wider society, etc.

Sociologists have also 'categorised' families into certain common types, but this can be limiting if seen too rigidly. Certain families may have common features across a given society, but societies change and family characteristics change also.

Outcome 1

The following family types must be covered:

- ◆ traditional extended
- ◆ modern extended
- ◆ nuclear
- ◆ lone parent
- ◆ step/re-constituted/blended family.

Outcome 2

Family types have been affected by changing social attitudes and by a range of social factors. These include:

- ◆ religion
- ◆ ethnicity
- ◆ mass media
- ◆ social class
- ◆ changing social attitudes to divorce, lone parenting, same sex relationships
- ◆ changing nature of employment patters.

Changes in society inevitably lead to changes within the family. For example, in the past gender roles appeared clean cut and precise but changing attitudes to gender within the wider society has led to major changes in traditional family roles and relationships across all social groups. Candidates should be able to give a simple explanation of how such changes have influenced the following:

- ◆ rising co-habitation rates
- ◆ rising divorce rates
- ◆ increase in lone parenting
- ◆ increase in step-families
- ◆ same sex parenting
- ◆ the role of women in families
- ◆ the role of men in families.

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Outcome 3

In one sense there is nothing new within society. While there would appear to be more liberalisation, throughout history there are examples of “good, loving” families, and “bad, troublesome” families.

The term *dysfunctional family* may be new but what it conveys in relation to family life has existed probably since family life began. Recognised functions of the family unit tend to have broken down in families described as dysfunctional. Candidates should be able to describe the following generally recognised functions of the family:

- primary socialisation
- care and support
- economic support
- reproduction
- regulation of sexual behaviour

Candidates will also be expected to explain clearly the term *dysfunctional family* and to explain the links between dysfunctional families and the following social problems:

- addiction
- alcoholism
- poverty
- abuse
- domestic violence.

Staff may, of course, cover more than is outlined above but care should be taken not to go too deeply into sociological theories and studies. Candidates should however be familiar with this content as this will be sampled in Unit assessments.