National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT   Humanism (SCQF level 4)

CODE   F576 10

SUMMARY

This free-standing Unit has been designed to provide a broad overview of Humanism and the various Humanist approaches to issues of significant human concern. The Unit allows individual candidates to attain basic knowledge of the main elements of Humanism and then investigate the Humanist approach across a range of areas. Candidates are also expected to describe a Humanist viewpoint on two moral or social issues from a personal perspective.

OUTCOMES

1   Investigate the main elements of the Humanist worldview.
2   Investigate a Humanist approach to issues of significant human concern.
3   Explain a Humanist viewpoint on a specific issue of significant human concern.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre.

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at SCQF level 4 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 4*).

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.

Additional copies of this Unit Specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Customer Contact Centre, telephone 0845 279 1000.

National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT   Humanism (SCQF level 4)

CORE SKILLS

While there is no automatic certification of Core Skills in this Unit, there are opportunities for developing aspects of Core Skills. Throughout the Unit candidates are encouraged to carry out research and to evaluate the evidence they gather. This can contribute to the Core Skills of *Communication* and *Problem Solving*.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT   Humanism (SCQF level 4)

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 SQA.

OUTCOME 1

Investigate the main elements of the Humanist worldview.

Performance Criteria

(a) Identify and describe the main elements of the Humanist worldview.
(b) State the beliefs and values on which these elements are based.

OUTCOME 2

Investigate a Humanist approach to issues of significant human concern.

Performance Criteria

(a) Identify and describe issues of significant human concern.
(b) Describe a possible Humanist approach to these issues.
(c) State why this approach is Humanist.

OUTCOME 3

Explain a Humanist viewpoint on a specific issue of significant human concern.

Performance Criteria

(a) Describe a Humanist viewpoint on a specific issue.
(b) Express own opinion on this viewpoint.
(c) Support this opinion with reasons.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT　　　Humanism (SCQF level 4)

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Evidence Requirements apply to this Unit as a whole and therefore apply holistically to all Performance Criteria of the Unit.

All Outcomes

Written and/or oral recorded evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. The evidence should be gathered by candidates on their own in a folio at appropriate points throughout the Unit as they develop their knowledge and skills.

Candidates should be given a clear investigation brief informing them that they must generate evidence in relation to:

Outcome 1 — **two** of Humanism's main elements of belief.

Outcome 2 — the Humanist approach to at least **one** issue of significant human concern. This may be a social or a moral issue.

Outcome 3 — a description of a Humanist viewpoint on **one** issue of human concern, and give at least **two** reasons for the opinions expressed.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Humanism (SCQF level 4)

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

This is a free-standing Unit.

To achieve all three Outcomes, candidates should:

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the Humanist worldview from its main principles, beliefs and values contained in the following elements:

♦ **Ethical** (moral principles, co-operative relationships, empathy and compassion)
♦ **Secular** (principles of social equality and justice, separation of religion and state)
♦ **Scientific** (scientific principles based on reliable evidence, sceptical attitude to untested claims)
♦ **Liberal** (liberal principles of democracy, including rights and responsibilities, free speech, etc)

Describe a Humanist approach to issues of significant human concern using the following criteria:

♦ **Evidence-based belief** (rather than Faith-based belief)
♦ **One Life** (rather than an Afterlife)
♦ **Natural explanations** (rather than Supernatural)
♦ **Human-oriented solutions** (rather than Divine-oriented)

Explain the Humanist viewpoint on specific issues of significant human concern. Appropriate examples would be:

♦ **Science-Technology:** Processes of Evolution or Stem-Cell Research
♦ **Natural Environment:** Climate Change or Animal Protection
♦ **Active Humanism:** Public Events (debates, conferences) or Ceremonies (weddings, baby-namings)
♦ **Health-Medicine:** The subject of death or the subject of pregnancy

If a centre makes the judgement that an Intermediate 1 candidate shows obvious ability to tackle Intermediate 2, this candidate can be transferred easily. However, it should be noted that although there are only slight differences in content at Intermediate 2, the skills of analysis and evaluation are more demanding. Therefore, some additional learning and teaching will be required if the candidate is to successfully complete the Intermediate 2 Unit.

For candidates who are expected to progress to Intermediate 2 in a subsequent year there will be significant opportunities to build on and develop the knowledge and skills they have acquired in this Unit. However it may be advisable to choose a different area of study from that planned for Intermediate 2 in order to maintain candidates' motivation and interest.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT   Humanism (SCQF level 4)

If candidates are also studying the Intermediate 1 Unit *Morality in the Modern World,* there may be opportunities to integrate the learning and teaching with some of the areas covered in this Unit, eg Medical Ethics or Environmental Issues.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Candidates and teachers/lecturers bring their own beliefs, understandings and values to this Unit, and no assumption is made as to whether they share the Humanist worldview.

The Unit is broad enough to give ample scope for candidates to exercise a degree of personal choice in their selection of areas and issues for study. Indeed, the Unit is enhanced for candidates when they are encouraged to pursue their individual interests and concerns. To facilitate teaching and learning, candidates should be encouraged to probe issues and frame questions in ways that reveal distinctions in assumptions, motivations, explanations, reasons, justifications, between a secular, Humanist worldview and other beliefs and philosophies. Whole class and group work should encourage stimulated discussion and interaction. Teacher/lecturer and external input through public events or multi-media products is of significant value and constitutes an essential part of the Unit.

Examples of Learning and Teaching strategies

While candidates are developing their knowledge and understanding of the principles, beliefs and values of Humanism and its approaches, it may be helpful if they study a range of different moral and social issues independently, in pairs or in groups. Methods could include: collecting newspaper articles or making internet searches. The individual, pair or group could then feedback their findings by way of a written or verbal report presented to the whole class. Whole class activities could include inviting a Humanist speaker so the class can take part in a discussion on a chosen topic, or the class could watch a DVD on a science topic like Climate Change. To give the issues more personal relevance and to encourage learning through experience, candidates could present their own video recordings from a range of Humanist ceremonies they have attended (Wedding, Baby-Naming, Funeral or other ceremony). Individual candidates or the class could also listen to (or attend) an organised debate that has topics related to school subjects such as Evolution or Religious Observance. The class could stage a short drama where candidates representing a Humanist worldview and others representing an alternative could participate. Also, candidates could creatively manipulate the international symbol of Humanism and design their own version of it.

Suggestions on types of resources that could be used:

Studying entire books by Humanist writers is not necessary to achieve the Outcomes of this Unit, but candidates could access (either in local libraries or from several Humanist websites) extracts from books, discussion and review papers on a wide range of social and moral issues identified in the Unit. There is also scope to demonstrate creative and expressive methods of understanding through individual or whole-class activities. Multi-media products supporting various Humanist stances on specific issues are also available from some Humanist organisations. Individual candidates or groups from schools and colleges could attend a variety of social, political and educative events (talks, debates and conferences and ceremonies) where Humanist principles are publicly practised.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Humanism (SCQF level 4)

Suggestions for order of delivery of the Unit

Worldview: It is recommended candidates study the main principles, beliefs and values of the Humanist worldview first to provide an appreciation of the breadth and scope of the Humanism and what it entails.

Approach: Providing an understanding of the Humanist approach within a range of areas leads candidates to an understanding of how Humanist viewpoints on more specific issues can be reached.

Viewpoint: This section should be undertaken last so that the candidates understanding of the subject has developed and more detailed information on Humanist attitudes to specific issues is more easily assimilated.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

In this Unit candidates will be involved in carrying out some research and gathering a portfolio of evidence. There will be a number of opportunities for discussing different approaches to moral issues. These tasks allow for developing aspects of Critical Thinking and Oral Communication

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by information and communications technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003), SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

Where possible, assessment should be used judiciously and efficiently to provide evidence of the achievement of all Outcomes in the Unit. Evidence can be gathered during delivery or at the end of the Unit and must be completed without collaboration and the assistance of teacher/lecturer advice.

Throughout the study of the Unit, evidence should be gathered in a candidate's folio and centres should ensure it consists of the candidate's own work. Authentication of candidate's work could be through an interview with the teacher/lecturer or through the presentation of drafts at appropriate points before the completion of the folio.

The gathering of material with personal value and relevance is a method of authenticating the candidate's own work. Candidates must be able to demonstrate that they can relate the aspects of Humanism they have investigated to a Humanist viewpoint on at least two of the social or moral issues outlined in the Unit.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Humanism (SCQF level 4)

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**).