National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Politics in the Celtic Nations (SCQF level 6)

Unit code: H298 12

Superclass:	EA
Publication date:	October 2012
Source:	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Version:	02

Summary

This Unit develops knowledge of the contrasting political systems in Celtic nations. Candidates will learn about legislative processes and political decision making in different nations and the extent to which these are influenced by Celtic heritage and languages.

This is a mandatory Unit in the National Certificate in Celtic Studies (SCQF level 6) but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

Outcomes

1 Identify and describe the main Celtic political parties and organisations in the Celtic nations.
2 Describe the political decision making and legislative processes in the Celtic nations.
3 Analyse the influence of Celtic heritage and languages on the politics of the Celtic nations.

Recommended entry

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, it would be beneficial for candidates to have an interest in politics.

Credit points and level

1 National Unit credit at SCQF level: 6 (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.

General information (cont)

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Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following Core Skills component:

Complete Core Skill   None

Core Skill component   Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

National Unit specification: statement of standards

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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

Identify and describe the main Celtic political parties and organisations in the Celtic nations.

Performance Criteria

(a) Identify the Celtic nations.
(b) Identify the main Celtic political parties and organisations in the Celtic nations.
(c) Describe Celtic parties and organisations in the Celtic nations in terms of their ideological differences.

Outcome 2

Describe the political decision making and legislative processes in the Celtic nations.

Performance Criteria

(a) Describe the political decision making and legislative processes in Celtic nations.
(b) Describe the effect of different electoral systems on support for Celtic parties.

Outcome 3

Analyse the influence of Celtic heritage and languages on the politics of the Celtic nations.

Performance Criteria

(a) Explain the concept of 'Celtic nations' and the importance of language to this concept.
(b) Compare how language and heritage are promoted in the Celtic nations.
(c) Analyse how language and heritage impact on the politics of the Celtic nations.

National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Written and/or recorded oral evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Evidence will be generated under closed-book supervised conditions.

Evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates can:

♦ define the concept of Celtic nation. This must be explained in terms of culture, history, traditions, identity and language.
♦ distinguish between this concept of Celtic nationhood and that of a sovereign state within a geographically defined territory.
♦ identify the Celtic nations, to include Brittany, Cornwall, Ireland, Isle of Man, Scotland, and Wales.
♦ identify at least two Celtic political parties/organisations, in at least two Celtic nations.
♦ describe accurately the ideological divergences between two Celtic parties/organisations in at least two Celtic nations.
♦ describe the political decision making and legislative processes in two Celtic nations.
♦ describe the electoral systems in at least two Celtic nations, including in terms of how the systems either help or hinder the electoral prospects of identified Celtic parties in the electoral contest.
♦ explain the importance of language and heritage in the culture of a Celtic nation.
♦ compare how language and heritage is promoted in a minimum of two Celtic nations.
♦ analyse how language and heritage impact on the politics of the Celtic nations, with reference to their influence on the policies of political parties and organisations.

National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Politics in the Celtic Nations (SCQF level 6)

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 mandatory Unit in the National Certificate in Celtic Studies (SCQF level 6), but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

The different concepts of 'nation' and 'nationality' should be introduced, showing that 'Celtic nations' does not imply nation states or sovereign states based on territorial integrity. The description of Celtic nations should make reference to people linked by a shared culture, history, traditions and identity. In this sense the Celtic nations do not necessarily exist within defined physical borders. In particular, language is central to this concept of nationality.

The many parties promoting Celtic issues within the territories of the Celtic nations should be identified and the wide range of diverse ideological positions explored, as well as their performances in electoral contests. Different electoral systems can help or hinder parties achieve their goals, especially the smaller parties. Electoral systems should be considered with this in mind. The Additional Member System (AMS), as used in the Scottish electoral process, could be used to illustrate its benefits to smaller and regional based parties.

The range of political issues will reflect the diversity of conditions and histories of the Celtic nations. Given the definition of 'nation' above, the issue of independence (Scotland) could be a priority issue, or for example, devolution of decision making (Cornwall). Other issues which could be looked at include Language Acts eg Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005; the promotion of the language and culture; economic issues and the role of the media within all of these.

Guidance on learning and teaching approaches for this Unit

This Unit involves comparing the different types of political organisations and issues affecting the peoples of the Celtic nations. Candidates will be encouraged to appreciate the diversity of approach and priorities in relation to issues, plus the common threads which form the context of this Unit eg issues of culture, heritage and language. The effects of the Outcomes of different electoral systems on the electoral fortunes of the parties can be compared, where relevant.

Much use of online materials is envisaged and where possible visits could be arranged for first-hand experience eg to the Scottish Parliament building at Holyrood. Classroom visits from relevant outside speakers are encouraged. Class discussions, debates, tutorials and group work should be considered, allowing candidates to engage in a more detailed scrutiny of key aspects of content.

National Unit specification: support notes

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Guidance on approaches to assessment for this Unit

Candidates must produce written or oral evidence covering the Performance Criteria/Evidence Requirements, generated under closed-book, supervised conditions. A holistic assessment with a recommended time limit of one hour is recommended. This could be completed in response to specific questions comprising a mixture of short-answer, restricted response and extended response items. These questions could be based on stimulus material. If reassessment is required, it should consist of a fresh assessment instrument.

In Outcome 1, candidates will be required to provide written/oral evidence that they can identify the Celtic nations, within which, a diversity of political parties and associations devoted to the promotion of Celtic issues and awareness can be found. Where considering the differences between political parties/organisations, this should be in terms of the ideology that informs their political approaches. This could include traditional descriptions such as those that fall under the umbrella of right and left, but also nationalist, republican, ecological and others.

With respect to Outcome 3, candidates should provide evidence that they can accurately describe what the term 'Celtic nation' implies in terms of culture, history, traditions, identity and language and distinguish between this concept of nationhood and that of a sovereign state within a geographically defined territory. Candidates' analysis should show an awareness of the importance of the Celtic language and heritage to this concept of nation. Candidates should be able to provide evaluation of how Celtic language and heritage is promoted in any two of the Celtic nations by accurately identifying relevant legislation and/or policies that have been adopted for this purpose.

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 Communication 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).*

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

In this Unit candidates will learn about the contrasting political decision making, legislative processes and issues in the Celtic nations.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Candidates will:

♦ define the concept of Celtic nation.
♦ identify the Celtic nations and Celtic political parties.
♦ describe the ideological divergences between Celtic parties/organisations.
♦ describe the electoral systems in Celtic nations.
♦ explain the importance of language and heritage in the culture of a Celtic nation.
♦ analyse how language and heritage impact on the politics of Celtic nations.

This means that as candidates are doing this Unit, they may develop aspects of the Core Skills of *Communication* and *Problem Solving*.

In addition, candidates may develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Working with Others* through group research activities, discussion and peer review.

This Unit has the Critical Thinking component of Problem Solving embedded in it. This means that when candidates achieve the Unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show they have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website **www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements**

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skills Component Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5 embedded.	09/10/2012