

Advanced Higher Modern Studies Draft Course/Unit Support Notes



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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this document for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the Advanced Higher Modern Studies Course. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering the Course and its Units. They should be read in conjunction with the *Course Specification*, the *Course Assessment Specification* and the *Unit Specifications* for the Units in the Course.

These support notes cover both the Advanced Higher Course and the Units in it.

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General guidance on the Course/Units

Aims

The main aims of this Course are to enable learners to:

- ◆ analyse the complex political and social processes that lead to an understanding of contemporary society
- ◆ understand and analyse complex political or social issues in the United Kingdom and adopt an international comparative approach
- ◆ develop a range of independent practical research skills by carrying out research into a contemporary issue
- ◆ present complex ideas in a range of ways
- ◆ apply evaluating skills to a range of evidence relating to complex issues
- ◆ develop a knowledge and understanding of social science research methods
- ◆ apply a multidisciplinary approach drawing on analysis from a range of social sciences

The purpose of Modern Studies is to develop learners' knowledge and understanding of contemporary political and social issues in local, Scottish, United Kingdom and international contexts. In these contexts, learners will develop an awareness of the political, social and economic issues they will encounter in their lives. This purpose will be achieved through successful study of the Course Units which focus on an in depth study of either political issues or social issues and which adopt an international comparative approach.

This Course makes a distinctive contribution to the curriculum by drawing on the social sciences of politics, sociology and economics and where appropriate, of associated ideas drawn from other social subjects. It thereby adopts a multi-disciplinary approach.

Progression

In order to do this Course, learners should have achieved one or more of the Higher Modern Studies, Higher Sociology or Higher Politics Courses.

Learners who have achieved this Advanced Higher Course may progress to further study, employment and/or training. Opportunities for progression include:

- ◆ Progression to further/higher education
 - For many learners a key transition point will be to further or higher education, for example to Higher National Certificates (HNCs)/Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) or degree programmes. Examples of further and higher education programmes that learners might progress to are Politics, Law, International Relations, Sociology, Social Work, Journalism and Media.

- This Course provide good preparation for learners progressing to further and higher education as learners doing Advanced Higher Courses must be able to work with more independence and less supervision. This eases their transition to further/higher education. Advanced Higher Courses may also allow ‘advanced standing’ or partial credit towards the first year of study of a degree programme.
- Advanced Higher Courses are challenging and testing qualifications — learners who have achieved multiple Advanced Higher Courses are regarded as having a proven level of ability which attests to their readiness for higher education in Higher Education Institutions in other parts of the UK as well as in Scotland.

This Advanced Higher is part of the Scottish Baccalaureate in Social Sciences. The Scottish Baccalaureates in Expressive Arts, Languages, Science and Social Sciences consist of coherent groups of subjects at Higher and Advanced Higher level. Each award consists of two Advanced Highers, one Higher and an Interdisciplinary Project which adds breadth and value and helps learners to develop generic skills, attitudes and confidence that will help them make the transition into higher education or employment.

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Course

This section provides further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding that could be included in the Course.

Teachers and lecturers should refer to the *Course Assessment Specification* for mandatory information about the skills, knowledge and understanding to be covered in this Course.

The development of subject specific and generic skills is central to the Course. Learners should be made aware of the skills they are developing and of the transferability of them. It is the transferability that will help learners with further study and enhance their personal effectiveness.

The skills, knowledge and understanding that will be developed in the Advanced Higher Modern Studies Course are:

Skills

- ◆ evaluating, analysing and synthesising a wide range of evidence
- ◆ critically evaluating a range of political and/or social science research methods
- ◆ presenting complex ideas in a range of ways

Knowledge and understanding

- ◆ developing and applying factual and theoretical knowledge and understanding, giving detailed explanations and analysis of complex political or social issues
- ◆ adopting an international comparative approach

Project

- ◆ identifying an appropriate complex contemporary issue for research
- ◆ using wide range of sources of information
- ◆ drawing on in-depth knowledge and understanding
- ◆ evaluating the usefulness and reliability of evidence
- ◆ evaluating, analysing and synthesising evidence
- ◆ developing a sustained and coherent line of argument
- ◆ drawing well-reasoned conclusions based on evidence
- ◆ organising, presenting and referencing findings using appropriate conventions

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Approaches to learning and teaching

Advanced Higher Courses place more demands on learners as there will be a higher proportion of independent study and less direct supervision. Some of the approaches to learning and teaching suggested for other levels (in particular, Higher) may also apply at Advanced Higher level but there will be a stronger emphasis on independent learning.

For Advanced Higher Courses, a significant amount of learning may be self-directed and require learners to demonstrate a more mature approach to learning and the ability to work on their own initiative. This can be very challenging for some learners, who may feel isolated at times, and teachers and lecturers should have strategies for addressing this. These could include, for example, planning time for regular feedback sessions/discussions on a one-to-one basis and on a group basis led by the teacher or lecturer (where appropriate).

Teachers and lecturers should encourage learners to use an enquiring, critical and problem-solving approach to their learning. Learners should also be given the opportunity to practise and develop research and investigation skills and higher order evaluation and analytical skills. The use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) can make a significant contribution to the development of these higher order skills as research and investigation activities become more sophisticated.

Learners will engage in a variety of learning activities as appropriate to the subject, for example:

- ◆ researching information for their subject rather than receiving information from their teacher or lecturer
- ◆ using active and open-ended learning activities such as research, case studies and presentation tasks
- ◆ making use of the internet to draw conclusions about specific issues
- ◆ engaging in wide-ranging independent reading
- ◆ recording in a systematic way the results of research and independent investigation from different sources
- ◆ presenting findings/conclusions of research and investigation activities in a presentation
- ◆ participating in group work with peers and using collaborative learning opportunities to develop teamwork skills
- ◆ participating in informed debate and discussion with peers where they can demonstrate skills in constructing and sustaining lines of argument to provide challenge and enjoyment, breadth, and depth to learning
- ◆ drawing conclusions from complex information
- ◆ using sophisticated written and/or oral communication and presentation skills to present information
- ◆ using appropriate technological resources (eg web-based resources)
- ◆ using appropriate media resources (eg audio-visual clips)

- ◆ using real-life contexts and experiences familiar and relevant to young people to meaningfully hone and exemplify skills, knowledge and understanding
- ◆ participating in field trips and visits

Teachers and lecturers should support learners by having regular discussions with them and giving regular feedback. Some learning and teaching activities may be carried out on a group basis and, where this applies, learners could also receive feedback from their peers.

Teachers and lecturers should, where possible, provide opportunities to personalise learning, and enable learners to have choices in approaches to learning and teaching. The flexibility in Advanced Higher Courses and the independence with which learners carry out the work lend themselves to this. Teachers and lecturers should also create opportunities for, and use, inclusive approaches to learning and teaching. This can be achieved by encouraging the use of a variety of learning and teaching strategies which suit the needs of all learners. Innovative and creative ways of using technology can also be valuable in creating inclusive learning and teaching approaches.

Centres are free to sequence the teaching of the Outcomes, Units and/or Course in any order they wish. For example:

- ◆ Each Unit could be delivered separately in any sequence.

or

- ◆ The Units may be delivered in a combined way as part of the Course. If this approach is used, the Outcomes within Units may either be partially or fully combined.

There may be opportunities to contextualise approaches to learning and teaching to Scottish contexts in this Course. This could be done through mini-projects or case studies.

Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

The following skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work should be developed in this Course.

Teachers and lecturers should ensure that learners have opportunities to develop these skills as an integral part of their learning experience.

It is important that learners are aware of the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work that they are developing in the Course and the activities they are involved in that provide realistic opportunities to practise and/or improve them.

Reading

Throughout the Course and while undertaking the project, learners will have the opportunity to develop reading skills. They may read a variety of texts, including academic journals, newspaper reports, online articles etc. This will help learners develop their skills of reading and critically evaluating the ideas contained in written sources, drawing conclusions with justification, constructing arguments in a balanced and structured way and expressing reasoned views about the texts they study. This in turn will further develop their ability to understand and use a wide range of evidence on contemporary issues.

Writing

The Course will provide considerable opportunities to develop writing skills within the Units. Learners should be encouraged to undertake extended writing wherever appropriate in order to develop the necessary skills to support their progression towards higher education and the world of work. For example, the requirements to apply knowledge and understanding about a range of contemporary political or social issues and being able to adopt a comparative approach, provide an ideal opportunity for learners to develop the skill of extended writing.

Personal learning

The Course, and in particular the project, will provide extensive opportunities for learners to undertake individually-led work. This will allow learners to develop greater levels of personal responsibility for their learning, skills in time management and skills in personal research.

Citizenship

At Advanced Higher level, learners will develop citizenship through deepening their understanding of issues facing contemporary society. They will be required to apply their knowledge and understanding of factual elements of social and political issues. They will also be required to link these with underlying theoretical or abstract ideas which will require a greater depth and detail of understanding.

Applying, analysing and evaluating

At Advanced Higher level, learners will be required to apply their knowledge and understanding of factual elements of political and social issues. They will also be required to link these with underlying theoretical or abstract ideas which will require a greater depth and detail of understanding. This enables learners to explore challenging abstract ideas by engaging with a wide range of source material, and both evaluating and synthesising information. This depth of study affords them a unique opportunity of intellectual engagement with the subject matter.

The Course will allow learners to use different sources of information including academic literature, sources from political parties or interest groups, newspaper or online articles, blogs etc. Any piece of information, or source, is capable of yielding more or less relevant input to a study, depending on the skills of the learner. However, teachers/lecturers should direct learners to more complex, and potentially richer sources of information.

The project

Completing the project will provide opportunities for developing and deepening skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Learners will have the opportunity to develop their reading and writing skills as they research their topic and write-up or present the outcomes of the activity. They will develop personal learning as they work independently to identify and refine a topic or issue, and carry out research. They will develop citizenship through deepening their understanding of complex issues in modern society. Learners will describe and summarise the research they have carried out, assess the usefulness of different sources, and express opinions and viewpoints. This Course provides opportunities to develop the skill of synthesising information. The project in particular will provide opportunities for candidates to develop their skills in this area.

There may also be opportunities for other additional skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work to be developed in the Course. For example, the use of debating, discussion groups or visits from representatives from political parties, interest groups or the media could develop skills of listening and talking. However, this could vary across centres depending on approaches being used to deliver the Course in a centre and this is for centres to manage.

At Advanced Higher level it is expected that learners will be using a range of higher order thinking skills. They will also develop skills in independent and autonomous learning.

Approaches to assessment

Assessment in Advanced Higher Courses will generally reflect the investigative nature of Courses at this level, together with high-level problem-solving and critical thinking skills and skills of analysis and synthesis.

This emphasis on higher order skills, together with the more independent learning approaches that learners will use, distinguishes the added value at Advanced Higher level from the added value at other levels.

There are different approaches to assessment and teachers and lecturers should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, as well as their understanding of their learners and their varying needs, to determine the most appropriate approaches and, where necessary, to consider workable alternatives.

Assessments must be fit for purpose and should allow for consistent judgements to be made by all teachers and lecturers. They should also be conducted in a supervised manner to ensure that the evidence provided is valid and reliable.

Unit assessment

Assessments must ensure that the evidence generated demonstrates, at the least, the minimum level of competence for each Unit. Teachers and lecturers preparing assessment methods should be clear about what that evidence will look like.

Sources of evidence likely to be suitable for Advanced Higher Units could include:

- ◆ meaningful contribution to group work and/or discussions (making use of log books, blogs, question and answer sessions to confirm individual learners have met the required standards)
- ◆ presentation of information to other groups and/or recorded oral evidence
- ◆ exemplification of concepts using (for example) a diagram
- ◆ interpretation of numerical data
- ◆ investigations
- ◆ extended response essay-type questions

Evidence should include the use of appropriate subject-specific terminology as well as the use of real-life examples where appropriate.

Flexibility in the method of assessment provides opportunities for learners to demonstrate attainment in a variety of ways and so reduce barriers to attainment.

The structure of an assessment used by a centre can take a variety of forms, for example:

- ◆ individual pieces of work could be collected in a folio as evidence for Outcomes and Assessment Standards
- ◆ assessment of each complete Outcome
- ◆ assessment that combines the Assessment standards of one or more Outcomes within a Unit
- ◆ assessment that requires more than the minimum competence which would allow learners to prepare for the Course assessment

Teachers and lecturers should note that learners' day-to-day work may produce evidence which satisfies assessment requirements of a Unit, or Units, either in full or partially. Such naturally-occurring evidence may be used as a contribution towards Unit assessment. However, this naturally-occurring evidence must still be recorded and evidence such as written reports, recording forms, PowerPoint slides, drawings/graphs, video footage or observational checklists provided.

Combining assessment across Units

Units will be assessed on a pass/fail basis. All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the *Unit Specification*. Each Unit can be assessed on an individual Outcome-by-Outcome basis or via the use of combined assessment for some or all Outcomes.

A combined approach to assessment will enrich the assessment process for the learner, avoid duplication of tasks and allow more emphasis on learning and teaching. Evidence could be drawn from a range of activities for a combined assessment. Care must be taken to ensure that combined assessments provide appropriate evidence for all the Outcomes that they claim to assess.

Combining assessment will also give centres more time to manage the assessment process more efficiently. When combining assessments across Units, teachers/lecturers should use e-assessment wherever possible. Learners can easily update portfolios, electronic or written diaries and recording sheets.

For some Advanced Higher Courses, it may be that a strand of work which contributes to a Course assessment method is started when a Unit is being delivered and is completed in the Course assessment. In these cases, it is important that the evidence for the Unit assessment is clearly distinguishable from that required for the Course assessment.

Preparation for Course assessment

Each Course has additional time which may be used at the discretion of the teacher or lecturer to enable learners to prepare for Course assessment. This time may be used near the start of the Course and at various points throughout the Course for consolidation and support. It may also be used for preparation for

Unit assessment and, towards the end of the Course, for further integration, revision and preparation and/or gathering evidence for Course assessment.

For this Course, the assessment methods for Course assessment are a question paper and a project. Learners should be given opportunities to practise these methods and prepare for them.

Examples of activities to include within this preparation time include:

- ◆ Preparing for the Components of Course assessment, for example:
 - preparing for non-question paper Components — selecting topics, gathering and researching information, evaluating and analysing findings, developing and justifying conclusions, presenting the information (as appropriate)
 - practising and refining practical skills
 - practising question paper techniques, revising for the question paper, for example practising source handling skills, or organising knowledge to support a detailed argument.

In relation to preparing for the project, teachers and lecturers should explain requirements to learners and the amount and nature of the support they can expect. However, at Advanced Higher level it is expected that learners will work with more independence and less supervision and support.

Authenticity

In terms of authenticity, there are a number of techniques and strategies to ensure that learners present work that is their own. Teachers and lecturers should put in place mechanisms to authenticate learner evidence.

In Advanced Higher Courses, learners will take greater responsibility for their own learning and work more independently, so teachers and lecturers need to have measures in place to ensure that work produced is the learner's own work.

For example:

- ◆ regular checkpoint/progress meetings with learners
- ◆ short spot-check personal interviews
- ◆ checklists which record activity/progress
- ◆ learner notes from their independent reading
- ◆ encourage learners to use anti-plagiarism software to assess the authenticity of their own work

Group work approaches are acceptable as part of the preparation for assessment and also for formal assessment. However, there must be clear evidence for each learner to show that they have met the evidence requirements.

For more information, please refer to SQA's [Guide to Assessment](#).

Added value

Advanced Higher Courses include assessment of added value which is assessed in the Course assessment.

Information given in the *Course Specification* and the *Course Assessment Specification* about the assessment of added value is mandatory.

In Advanced Higher Courses, added value involves the assessment of higher order skills such as high-level and more sophisticated investigation and research skills, critical thinking skills and skills of analysis and synthesis. Learners may be required to analyse and reflect upon their assessment activity by commenting on it and/or drawing conclusions with commentary/justification. These skills contribute to the uniqueness of Advanced Higher Courses and to the overall higher level of performance expected at this level.

In this Course, added value will be assessed by means of a question paper and a project: dissertation.

The question paper is used to assess whether the learner can retain and consolidate the knowledge and skills gained in individual Units. It assesses knowledge and understanding and the various different applications of knowledge such as reasoning, analysing, evaluating and solving problems.

The project is used to assess a wide range of high-order cognitive and practical skills and to integrate assessment. For example, the project brings a number of higher order skills together, such as skills relating to planning, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation and report-writing. The learner will carry out a significant part of the work for the project independently with minimal supervision.

In this Course, the project is a Dissertation. This provides continuity with the Advanced Higher Course that is being replaced.

Equality and inclusion

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in these *Course/Unit Support Notes* is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Course.

It is important that centres are aware of and understand SQA's assessment arrangements for disabled learners, and those with additional support needs, when making requests for adjustments to published assessment arrangements. Centres will find more guidance on this in the series of publications on Assessment Arrangements on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html.

The greater flexibility and choice in Advanced Higher Courses provide opportunities to meet a range of learners' needs and may remove the need for learners to have assessment arrangements. However, where a disabled learner needs a reasonable adjustment/assessment arrangements to be made, you should refer to the guidance given in the above link.

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Appendix 1: Further information on Units in the Course

Advanced Higher helps to prepare learners for university-level study. It gives learners an experience of in-depth research and independent analysis. The experience of dissertation writing, research techniques and source evaluation is invaluable preparation for the sorts of assignment prevalent in higher education.

Differences between Higher and Advanced Higher

There are, of course, many common features to both Higher and Advanced Higher; however, there are also some significant differences — including differences in emphasis on particular skills.

Higher	Advanced Higher
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Essential for entry to university.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ May be a conditional requirement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ The Coursework assignment is produced under a high level of supervision and control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ The Coursework dissertation is written and submitted by a deadline.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Opportunities to engage with contemporary political and social debate and interpretation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Engagement with the contemporary political and social debate and interpretation is essential.

The *Course Specification*, *Unit Specifications* and *Course Assessment Specification* documents give an overview of the Course, and it may be helpful to issue them to your learners.

There is a choice of contexts available.

Learners are expected to use libraries and online facilities as a matter of course.

There is a compelling case to be made for choosing to support the study of a context with which you are well versed and which can offer sophisticated advice and guidance to your learners. However, attempting something a bit different may stimulate both your interest and that of your learners.

Key points

- ◆ There is no prescribed order for teaching the Course.
- ◆ Be aware of submission deadlines.
- ◆ Learners will require support with time management and their workload.

Course delivery

There is no recommended teaching order for the Units in this Course. Different combinations or orderings of Unit delivery will be appropriate in different contexts. This is for centres to manage.

The Course consists of two Units:

- ◆ Contemporary Issues
- ◆ Researching Contemporary Issues

The following pages provide advice and guidance on both Units, with a focus on demonstrating how to direct the study of the Units towards supporting the production and gathering of evidence to meet the Outcomes and Assessment Standards.

It should be noted that within the *Contemporary Issues* Unit, learners will study one of two contexts.

Either:

- ◆ Political Issues and Research Methods

or:

- ◆ Social Issues and Research Methods: within this context there are two social issues options of which one should be chosen — Law and Order or Social Inequality

Contemporary Issues

Unpicking the Unit Outcomes

This section provides information on key aspects of the Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Firstly, it aims to clarify the terminology used in the Assessment Standards. There is also general guidance on the level of demand required at Advanced Higher Unit assessment.

Finally, a series of tables is provided, outlining and providing some illustration of the mandatory content for each context as well as suggested teaching methods that could be used to allow learners to generate evidence for the relevant Assessment Standards.

Outcome 1

- 1. Draw on factual and theoretical knowledge and understanding of complex political and social issues in the United Kingdom by:**
 - 1.1. Showing knowledge and understanding, in depth, of a complex political or social issue
 - 1.2. Making international comparisons and contrasts about a complex political or social issue
 - 1.3. Analysing a complex political or social issue.

Outcome 2

- 2. Evaluate a wide range of evidence about political or social issues by:**
 - 2.1. Analysing a wide range of evidence about a complex political or social issue
 - 2.2. Synthesising information from a range of sources of evidence showing a variety of viewpoints
 - 2.3. Making international comparisons and contrasts about a complex political or social issue
 - 2.4. Using evidence to make judgements and reach conclusions.

Outcome 3

- 3. Critically evaluate a range of social science research methods by:**
 - 3.1. Describing, explaining and analysing the research methodology used by social science in the context of a political or social issue
 - 3.2. Commenting on moral and ethical issues arising from conducting social science research

The Outcomes for this Unit are broken down into Assessment Standards and these Assessment Standards explain, in Modern Studies terms, what is meant for example by evaluating. So to evaluate as per Outcome 2, the candidate needs to

analyse the evidence, synthesise, compare and contrast with an international dimension, make a judgement and reach a relevant conclusion or conclusions.

Key Advanced Higher Modern Studies terms

Analysing: breaking information/material into simpler parts, looking at how these parts relate to each other and to the overall structure.

Evaluating: making and defending judgements based on evidence or criteria. The outcome of evaluating is rarely expressed in absolute terms.

Synthesising: bringing together prior knowledge and evidence from several sources to come to a different conclusion.

Complex: what makes a political or social issue 'complex'? Here is an example of a social issue that is complex:

Is society broken?

This would be considered a complex issue because there are many questions that need to be considered before the issue could be addressed. Some of these might be:

- ◆ What is meant by 'society'?
- ◆ Do we all have a common understanding of what society is supposed to be?
- ◆ What keeps society in balance?
- ◆ What is meant by 'broken'?
- ◆ Does this depend on your social status?
- ◆ What can be broken in society?
- ◆ Which groups thrive in society and why?
- ◆ Can society be broken?
- ◆ What evidence is there to support/refute the claim?
- ◆ How secure is the evidence?

Since this area of study is comparative, it would be necessary to compare and contrast the UK with at least one other country. Similar questions would be asked of all comparator countries/societies.

Note that there are varying degrees of complexity.

Here is an example of a political issue that is complex:

The media drives the political agenda in the UK to a much greater extent than it does in China.

In this case, many additional questions need to be addressed. Here are some that might be considered:

- ◆ What aspects of the media should be considered and why?
- ◆ What aspects of the political agenda should be considered and why?
- ◆ What do we mean by 'drive the political agenda'?
- ◆ Evidence to support and refute the claim.
- ◆ Why choose China as a comparator?

Understanding the Outcomes — evidence gathering

A variety of methods can be used to gather evidence that learners are meeting each of the Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Methods of assessment need not be restricted to traditional question and written response techniques, although practice of essays is still necessary for the Course question paper. The emphasis should be on allowing learners to demonstrate evidence of their competency and they should be encouraged to express this in a manner best suited to their abilities. The focus during Unit assessment should be on a candidate's Modern Studies skills and knowledge rather than just their ability to perform under timed conditions in a written format.

Assessment should be meaningful and may be part of the learning experience. It may well be the case that a candidate may naturally generate evidence for more than one Assessment Standard in a single piece of work.

In the example below, taken from an actual dissertation, the candidate has shown in-depth knowledge and understanding of a complex political issue by analysing the issue and making an international comparison with the USA. This shows that the candidate has achieved Outcome 1.

The candidate has also shown evidence of achieving Outcome 2 as he has analysed a wide range of evidence (demonstrated, in this case, by the referencing, bibliography and appendices), discussed a number of different viewpoints by synthesising the relevant information, made an international comparison and has also made an overall judgement and thereby reached an appropriate conclusion.

In the light of the social networking trend, the three main parties all competed in a covert online marketing war. For example, to slander the Tory campaign and convince voters that theirs was the right party, Labour tried to bid for the Google search terms 'David' and 'Cameron' to divert users to a page that attacked the Tory leader. On the other hand, the

Liberal Democrats succeeded in getting a YouTube clip of Nick Clegg talking about the digital economy bill as the spotlight video for iGoogle users while the Conservatives bought the front page of YouTube on polling day encouraging users to vote Conservative.

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As we see the expansion of social media on the UK political scene, all of this comes as a direct result of the overwhelming success that President Barack Obama has found in using social media to connect with the electorate. What Obama did was to strategically correlate both his offline and online campaigns under one simple message 'Change'. So whilst Obama was able to build relationships with his target audience, he understood that it was not enough to simply get the message out but rather that he had to both inspire and provide the means for people to get involved. This was achieved in a variety of unique and engaging ways. The website 'Change.Gov' was created in an effort to give the people a platform to share their thoughts (over 5000 people commented on a video asking for ideas on health care reform). Obama's campaign was also actively involved in 15 social networking sites to spread any news in 'real time.' This strategy proved immensely popular as he racked up 815000 friends on MySpace, 1.3 million Twitter followers and 3 million Facebook fans.

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All of these strategies paid dividends as they created a buzz around his campaign that subsequently gave him all of the momentum heading into the election. Therefore, it is highly likely that if it were not for Obama's embrace of the new age media that the very face of American politics would be highly different to the one we see today.

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So whilst we have examined some of the success that embracing social media can bring to political parties on both sides of the Atlantic, it is worth exploring the belief that connecting with the electorate via social media is actually worthless and, in fact, is not the agenda-defining factors in modern politics that many would have us believe.

Outcome 1

The learner will:

Draw on factual and theoretical knowledge and understanding of complex political or social issues in the United Kingdom by:

1.1 Showing knowledge and understanding, in depth, of a complex political or social issue

Learners need to demonstrate that they understand the key issues in an in-depth manner. This might be demonstrated in the form of an extended piece of writing exploring both sides of an argument, backed up by relevant examples, statistics, quotes from books, newspapers, reports. It is essential at this level that each point is fully explored and not simply stated as one short point/in one sentence.

At this level, learners should be able to show knowledge and understanding of complex issues — some examples might include looking at the similarities and differences between each of the sociological theories of criminality, a comparison of political party policy on knife crime, an exploration of the arguments surrounding the use of incarceration as punishment.

1.2 Making international comparisons and contrasts about a complex political or social issue

At this level, learners should be capable of comparing and contrasting a variety of countries. Encourage learners to avoid the obvious comparisons and look further afield, for example Indonesia, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Australia and Russia all offer opportunities.

1.3 Analysing a complex political or social issue

Learners must demonstrate that they can examine a complex issue (like those mentioned in Outcome 1.1) in detail, constructing an argument showing both sides. The examples in the above section on 'Unpicking' give detailed examples on how this might be done.

Outcome 2

The learner will:

Evaluate a wide range of evidence about complex political or social issues by:

2.1 Analysing a wide range of evidence about a complex political or social issue

Learners should be able explore a variety of sources of information, from written articles, to graphs/tables and extracts of official reports. It is important that they demonstrate an ability to evaluate the information contained therein. Ipsos Mori and YouGov are good sources for this kind of information. The sources should be of a suitably complex nature. Learners should develop the ability to access and evaluate data from official documents, academic reports and other equivalent sources. These sources are regarded as complex in terms of the quantity of data, the intricacy of detail and inclusion of technical terms.

Three examples give an idea of the complexity learners should expect:

<http://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Publications/sri-crime-what-do-the-electorate-think-of-the-key-crime-policies-may-2010.pdf> (pages 40, 9, 33)

2.2 Synthesising information from a range of sources of evidence showing a variety of viewpoints

Learners should be able to demonstrate their ability to synthesise information from a number of sources, in order to come to considered conclusions drawing together the information gathered. A good way to demonstrate this might be to conduct a mini-trial or to carry out a case study of a recent local trial. All of the witnesses provide their own separate version of events and provide different evidence. The 'jurors' (learners) pull all of the different accounts, opinions,

evidence and so on together to come to a conclusion. Another method might be to provide the learners with two newspaper articles on the same topic/story. Learners could then synthesise the information and give a short presentation. Essentially, they are expected to be able to say 'Source 1 says... Source 2 says... Therefore...".

2.3 Making international comparisons and contrasts about a complex political or social issue

As with Outcome 1.2, learners are expected to demonstrate an ability to compare and contrast internationally. Stories from international media or international government websites could be compared. For example, recidivism rates could be compared across a variety of countries by looking at official statistics.

2.4 Using evidence to make judgements and reach conclusions

Learners could be provided with a pack of information detailing, for example, the positives and negatives of Police and Crime Commissioners, and they could be asked to put together a leaflet making a judgement about the relative merits of this new system. Or they could be asked to lead a tutorial lesson where they present sources of information on a variety of theories of crime, leading the class to reaching a joint conclusion on which is most relevant in the 21st century.

Outcome 3

The learner will:

Critically evaluate a range of social science research methods by:

3.1 Describing, explaining and analysing the research methodology used by social science in the context of a political or social issue

Learners should be able to explain how each of the following methods work, the advantages and disadvantages of each and the extent to which they can provide reliable and valid evidence.

- ◆ official statistics
- ◆ other researchers' data
- ◆ social surveys: sampling, designing surveys, conducting surveys
- ◆ use of technology
- ◆ document research: official documents from the state and from private sources, personal documents
- ◆ media outputs, virtual (internet) outputs
- ◆ case studies
- ◆ interviewing: structured, semi-structured and unstructured, group/focus interviews, designing interviews, conducting interviews, participant observation

Learners should also consider primary and secondary research and reliability and validity of quantitative and qualitative research.

Reliability and validity

Assessing the reliability and validity of a given source

Learners should be given a complex source and asked to assess its validity and reliability. The lesson could begin by discussing the meaning of the two terms and then systematically 'pulling apart' a source to see whether valid and reliable conclusions can be drawn from the source.

For example, as a class you might agree that the terms are as follows:

- ◆ Validity relates to a true reflection of social reality and the ability to make generalisations about the whole population on the basis of a small survey.
- ◆ Reliability relates to the reputation of the source, trustworthiness of the results and repeatability of the survey with broadly similar results.

In terms of assessing the reliability and validity of the source, learners should then look at **all** of the elements of the source to come to a conclusion. The following are good questions to ask:

Who has produced it? Is it reputable? Is it biased? Is it dated? Has it been repeated over a period of time? Does the information make sense? Is the information clear? Is there any ambiguity? Is there information missing? What is the sample size? What is the sample frame? Do the results measure what the question asks? Overall, to what extent would a social science researcher trust the source?

The following sources are good examples to use to practise this skill:

<http://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Publications/sri-crime-what-do-the-electorate-think-of-the-key-crime-policies-may-2010.pdf> (page 27)

and:

http://www.ipsos.com/public-affairs/sites/www.ipsos.com/public-affairs/files/documents/closing_the_gaps.pdf (page 43)

3.2 Commenting on moral and ethical issues arising from conducting social science research

Learners should be able to comment on various ethical issues including, but not limited to, confidentiality, informed consent, harm, invasion of privacy. Learners need to be able to provide examples of real and recent research that shows how these ethical issues have been addressed.

Ethics — analysis of covert studies

Having introduced the concepts of confidentiality, informed consent, harm, and invasion of privacy, learners should be given the opportunity to look at examples of these moral and ethical problems in practice.

Learners should decide whether they think ethics or the information gleaned from undercover research is more important. They should be given access to the following research (or similar recent examples) and ask them to draw conclusions relating to the moral and ethical concepts they have been learning about in class:

Political activists sue Met over relationships with police spies

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/nov/21/met-police-spies-women-undercover>

The Tearoom Sex Study

<http://web.missouri.edu/~bondesonw/Laud.html>

A Glasgow Gang Observed

<http://www.change.freeuk.com/learning/socthink/glasgowgang.html>

The Hell's Angels

http://www.openculture.com/2011/07/hunter_s_thompson_gets_confronted_by_the_hells_angels.html

Unit coverage

This section gives details of the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the *Modern Studies: Contemporary Issues* (Advanced Higher) Unit. It covers all three contexts available for study and each section uses a variety of approaches to demonstrate methods, tasks and prompts which could be utilised in order to allow learners to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to generate evidence for the Assessment Standards for the Unit.

The contexts for study are listed in the following order:

- ◆ Political Issues and Research Methods
- ◆ Social Issues and Research Methods — Law and Order
- ◆ Social Issues and Research Methods — Social Inequality

While the Unit requires only one of these three contexts to be studied, teachers/lecturers should be encouraged to read across the guidance for all three contexts as a variety of approaches are demonstrated and many of the ideas are applicable to any chosen context.

Political Issues and Research Methods

Within this context learners will study a range of complex political issues in the United Kingdom (including Scotland). **Throughout their study, an international comparative approach should be adopted.** Centres and learners have flexibility in the international comparisons they make and should choose appropriate countries to enable learners to make valid comparisons and contrasts. It is not required that the countries chosen for comparative study have significantly different political systems, structures or issues from those in the United Kingdom.

Learners will be required to answer questions on Research Methods and from two of the other areas of study below. It is a matter for centres to decide which areas of study (A, B, C) to focus on, the order and approach to teaching and learning, and the extent of coverage for each area of study.

In the following table, the column on the left gives details of mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for Advanced Higher Modern Studies. This list of skills, knowledge and understanding also provides the basis for the assessment of Units of the Course. The column titled 'Examples of coverage' describes how the content might be covered and is intended as guidance only. Below this table are some illustrative examples and/or suggestions for how teaching may assist the gathering of evidence for Unit Outcomes and Assessment Standards.

Areas of study	Examples of coverage
<p>A. Power and influence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Interest groups and their impact on the political process ◆ Media and its influence on the political process ◆ Political parties and elections 	<p>Interest groups and their impact on the political process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ relationship with political parties ◆ insider/outsider role in policymaking ◆ critical evaluation of strategies/tactics ◆ ideologies of interest groups ◆ importance within a democracy ◆ membership and funding <p>Media and its influence on the political process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ functions and purpose within a democracy ◆ partisanship, ownership, regulation and control ◆ changing nature/impact of new media ◆ influence on voting behaviour and decision making <p>Political parties and elections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ relevance of political parties ◆ internal democracy and policymaking ◆ functions in a parliamentary structure ◆ membership and activism ◆ voting systems/voting patterns and trends ◆ impact of elections on the distribution of power <p>In this study, appropriate and relevant international comparisons should be made.</p>

<p>B. Living political ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Political theories, thoughts and ideas ◆ The relationship between political ideas and ideologies ◆ The contemporary relevance of political ideas 	<p>Political theories, thoughts and ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ liberty v equality ◆ obligations v rights <p>The relationship between political ideas and ideologies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ liberalism ◆ conservatism ◆ socialism/Marxism ◆ nationalism <p>The contemporary relevance of political ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ impact on political parties, policies, government legislation, interest groups and public opinion <p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ welfare provision, taxation, representation and the environment <p>In this study, appropriate and relevant international comparisons should be made.</p>
<p>C. Political structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Constitutions and political systems ◆ Branches of government and their influence in the political process ◆ Relationships between levels of government 	<p>Constitutions and political systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ evaluation of constitutional approaches ◆ parliamentary v presidential ◆ bicameral, uni-cameral ◆ federal, unitary, devolved <p>Branches of government and their influence in the political process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ legislative ◆ executive ◆ judiciary <p>Relationships between levels of government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ local, federal, devolved, national, European Union <p>In this study, appropriate and relevant international comparisons should be made.</p>

<p>Research methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Research methodology and related moral and ethical issues 	<p>Research methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ official statistics ◆ other researchers' data ◆ social surveys: sampling, designing surveys, conducting surveys, use of technology ◆ interviewing: structured, semi-structured and unstructured, group/focus interviews, designing interviews, conducting interviews ◆ participant observation ◆ document research: official documents from the state and from private sources, personal documents, media outputs, virtual (internet) outputs ◆ case studies <p>Issues in research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ moral and ethical issues in research ◆ reliability and validity of quantitative and qualitative research ◆ primary and secondary research <p>Relevant and current case studies through which these research methods can be studied and exemplified.</p>
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The following examples are illustrative of approaches which may be adopted and which will allow opportunities to gather evidence that learners have achieved the Assessment Standards of the Unit Outcomes.

Study area A: power and influence — interest groups and their impact on the political process

Example 1: assessing the success of interest groups

Learner presentation: ‘Interest groups who engage in direct action have limited or no success compared to those who engage in lawful methods.’

A suggested list of interest groups across the UK and comparator countries could be issued for learners to research and critically assess. Learners could also be encouraged to assess the impact of multinational interest groups and global movements such as Occupy Wall Street, Make Poverty History and environmental organisations.

Learners would be expected to adopt a comparative approach by applying the above hypothesis to interest groups in other countries.

It would be expected that the internet would be a strong basis for the information learners need to gather. Learners could also be directed, by drawing on a variety and range of internet sources, to reference their sources and critically evaluate the validity and reliability of the internet and specific websites as research tools.

Findings could be presented at learner-led tutorials with supporting visual presentations and printed notes for distribution to fellow learners.

Critical evaluation processes and criteria could also be established through discussion among the student group prior to delivery, which would allow peer-assessed comment on the quality and content of the presentation.

This approach would generate evidence to satisfy aspects of Outcomes 1 and 2 as well as Assessment Standard 3.1.

Study area A: power and influence — media and its influence on the political process

Example 2: ‘impact of the media’

Placemat activity

Prior knowledge will need to be established about the media and its role in a democracy. Learners should be made aware of theories on pluralism and elitism with regards to the media. A case study of the Leveson inquiry in the UK would be a good starting point for this task. Coverage of the events surrounding Leveson’s commissioning, recommendations and the political impact would act as a gateway to this task.

Learners should be provided with an A3 sheet of paper with the issue ‘Impact of the media’ at the centre with the page then sub-divided into four sections on:

- ◆ functions and purpose of the media within selected country
- ◆ ownership, control, regulation and censorship of the media
- ◆ nature and impact of use of social media
- ◆ impact on voting behaviour and government decision-making

Learners should complete this task for the UK and then, with support, assess three other countries.

To allow international comparisons, stimulus packs could be developed for each comparator country. These would include newspaper articles, website addresses, audio-visual clips, election data and statistics on media ownership; articles on media legislation and censorship laws; statistical and graphical representations of social media usage in selected countries, and election outcomes and governance.

Countries from a variety of backgrounds could be assessed, eg the USA, France, Germany, Australia, Japan or South Korea. These may be suitable to assess similar developed, capitalist, social democracies. Comparison and contrast could also be made with more authoritarian countries such as Russia, China and Saudi Arabia. Awareness of emergent nations could also be a consideration with support materials on Brazil and/or India.

Learners would be expected to provide detailed overall conclusions on the impact of the media across different political systems by comparing, contrasting and synthesising information from the four countries of study.

This approach would cover Assessment Standards 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 as well as 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 3.1.

Study area A: power and influence — political parties and elections

Example 3: ‘relevance of political parties’

Public Attitude Survey

Learners will establish background knowledge and familiarisation of the main UK political parties’ policies and manifestos in recent elections. BBC election websites covering recent UK general elections and Scottish parliamentary elections offer good, succinct summaries of these and may act as a starting point for research.

Group discussion of how to plan and conduct surveys will be required and should cover issues including producing qualitative and quantitative data; use of open, closed and optional questions, sampling and sample size, ethnographic questions, and collating and presenting results of attitudinal surveys.

Introduction to the work of respected polling organisations will help and inspire learners in this task. Ipsos Mori, Gallup and other marketing research companies’ websites can offer a plethora of exemplar material to share with learners. Many can also be contacted and will provide outside speakers to deliver presentations on their work and research methodologies.

In groups or individually, learners will be expected to produce a formal questionnaire to ask members of the public their views on parties’ ideas, ideologies, policies, record in government, leadership and image, and prior, current or future voting intentions. A discussion on the method of delivery of questionnaires should take place with consideration given to the relative merits of postal, face-to-face or online surveys (using SurveyMonkey for example).

Results could be collated and presented to the class.

A checklist of assessable criteria could be issued to learners to allow individual appraisal of the research methodology, questioning, sampling and presentation of results. Self-reflection should also allow learners to comment on ways to improve future delivery of this approach. This could be appended to copies of presentation material.

This approach would cover Assessment Outcomes 1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1 and 3.2.

Study area B: living political ideas — political theories, thoughts and ideas; the relationship between political ideas and ideologies; the contemporary relevance of political ideas

Example 4: political ideas and their relevance — a series of workshops

Task 1: tutorial on ideology

Learners will be assigned an ideology to prepare a tutorial on. To assist them they will be issued with or will have researched support materials on the major ideologies and thinkers related to:

- ◆ liberalism/conservatism/socialism/Marxism/nationalism

To these ideologies coverage may be added of:

- ◆ fascism/feminism/environmentalism

Each learner is expected to deliver a short presentation on their given ideology while other learners take notes. Presenters should be prepared to answer questions on 'their' ideology from other learners. To assess understanding of each ideology, learners could be asked to 'tweet' their interpretations of a single or each philosophy in 140 characters or fewer. This could be uploaded to a shared Twitter feed and/or written up and placed on a class 'Twitter board'.

Task 2: internet research — selected countries

Learners will be given a list of comparator countries to investigate and make academic-level posters on. Assign **one** country per pupil. To allow diversity, choice of a country from each of the following groupings may be useful:

- ◆ Group 1: UK (indefinable)
- ◆ Group 2: Sweden, Norway, Finland (Social Democratic — not G20)
- ◆ Group 3: Germany, France, Italy (Christian Democratic)
- ◆ Group 4: United States, Japan, Canada (free market)
- ◆ Group 5: Brazil, India, China, Russia (emergent nations)
- ◆ Group 6: Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, South Africa (developing nations)

The following headings may help inform the research and information presented:

- ◆ Dominant political party (parties) in late 20th and 21st century
- ◆ Key political thinkers and their ideas
- ◆ Welfare system provision:
 - universal, social insurance or market?
 - absolute poverty rates
 - relative poverty rates
- ◆ Taxation approaches:
 - progressive or regressive
 - income tax rates
 - corporate tax/rates
 - property tax rates
 - Value Added Tax/rates
- ◆ Representation in government:
 - electoral system and type of constitution
 - representation by party
 - representation by class (educational attainment/professional background)
 - representation by ethnicity
 - representation by gender
- ◆ Legal framework
- ◆ Environmental policies:
 - carbon emission levels
 - targets in relation to carbon emissions and renewables
 - position on Kyoto and Copenhagen climate agreements

Learners will then rotate around each other's work in a carousel fashion. Notes or snapshots of work taken as appropriate for later use and retrospective notation.

Task 3: hot-seating

After the research process, each learner could face a series of questions on their chosen country and be asked to determine the extent to which ideology plays a role in their country of choice.

Fellow learners or the teacher could develop their own questions, or a prescribed list, such as that below, could be developed and used:

1. Explain the ideologies you think have informed the development of the country you have researched.
2. How would Marxists view the welfare provision in the country you researched?
3. To what extent does your country adopt redistributive wealth policies?
4. Would free market thinkers like Hayek and Friedman support or oppose the tax system in the country you researched?
5. To what extent do mainstream political parties in your country of study share similar ideological outlooks?
6. Is the political system in your country of study totalitarian, pluralistic or elitist?

7. What evidence is there that nationalism and/or patriotism are a key part in national politics?
8. What does the representation of women and minorities suggest about the influence of feminism?
9. How progressive is your country of study in relation to the environment?
10. Overall, to what extent is ideology important in the country you have studied?

Task 4: group plenary

In a situation where a group of learners are involved, they may be asked to collectively offer an overall conclusion on the influence of ideology and ideas on politics at a global scale.

This approach would cover Assessment Outcomes 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 3.1.

Study area C: political structures

Example 5: constitutions and political systems

Revision table

The international comparative approach is well suited to this area of study. In order to deepen and enrich learning, it is advised that learners compare a wide range of countries, venturing beyond those traditionally studied. In order to allow learners to fully engage with a comparison of the wide variety of political structures across the world, it may be useful to compare the UK with Saudi Arabia (being an absolutist monarchy with a constitution based on the Qu’ran and organised along Unitary lines) or China (being a single-party state with a unicameral system and ambiguous divisions between its executive, legislative and judicial branches of government).

Learners will be asked to complete a revision table outlining the constitutional and political systems of the selected countries of study. These can be pre-determined by the teacher or self-selected by learners.

Headings could include the following:

- ◆ constitutional arrangements (summary of codified or uncodified approaches)
- ◆ head of state (method of selection and powers)
- ◆ legislative organisation (unicameral or bicameral)
- ◆ system of checks and balances
- ◆ separation of powers
- ◆ power and jurisdiction of the executive
- ◆ power and jurisdiction of the legislative
- ◆ power and jurisdiction of the judiciary
- ◆ division of power between national and regional governments (unitary/federal/devolved)

This approach would cover Assessment Standards 1.1 and 1.2.

Example 6: branches of government — the extent of their influence and the relationship between levels of government

Mini-wiki

This would be a collaborative piece of work between learners to produce a co-authored piece of work on the following issue:

The powers of the executive branch of government in the UK are not equally balanced by the powers of the legislature and judiciary.

Each learner could be given responsibility to research an aspect of the topic across different countries or a country on its own.

Learners would then be expected to post research, web links, discussions and selected images. This is a shared activity and can be ongoing.

As an international comparison exercise, learners could develop a case study of at least one other country — each learner focusing on one branch of government. A further wiki could be created using this evidence.

This approach could cover Outcomes 1 and 2. Outcome 3 could be assessed by critically evaluating the research methods used by each contributor to the wiki.

Social Issues and Research Methods — Law and Order

Within this context, learners will study a range of complex social issues in the United Kingdom (including Scotland). **Throughout their study, an international comparative approach should be adopted.** Centres and learners have flexibility in the international comparisons they make and should choose appropriate countries to enable learners to make valid comparisons and contrasts. It is not required that the countries chosen for comparative study have significantly different social systems, structures or issues from those in the United Kingdom.

Learners will be required to answer questions on Research Methods and from two of the other areas of study below. It is a matter for centres to decide which areas of study (A, B, C) to focus on, the order and approach to teaching and learning, and the extent of coverage for each area of study.

Teachers/lecturers should be encouraged to read across the guidance for all three contexts as a variety of approaches are demonstrated and many of the following ideas are applicable to any chosen context.

In the following table, the column on the left gives details of mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the *Modern Studies: Contemporary Issues* (Advanced Higher) Unit. This list of skills, knowledge and understanding also provides the basis for the assessment of Units of the Course. The column titled 'Examples of coverage' describes how the content might be covered and is intended as guidance only. Below this table are some illustrative examples and/or

suggestions for how teaching may assist the gathering of evidence for Unit Outcomes and Assessment Standards.

Areas of study	Examples of coverage
<p>A. Understanding the criminal justice system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Individual human rights and liberty in relation to criminal justice ◆ Judicial framework ◆ Current criminal justice issues 	<p>Individual human rights and liberty in relation to criminal justice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ rule of law and values underpinning judicial framework — overview ◆ interpretations of and challenges to the rule of law ◆ human rights and civil liberties — enhancements and limitations ◆ impact of rights legislation ◆ effectiveness of channels (interest groups, media, etc) to highlight grievances <p>Judicial framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ legislative, judicial and penal systems — overview ◆ effectiveness of relationships between parts/levels of the framework <p>Current criminal justice issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ national security ◆ reforms to the criminal justice system ◆ discrimination in the criminal justice system ◆ policing ◆ technology <p>In this study, appropriate and relevant international comparisons should be made.</p>
<p>B. Understanding criminal behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The nature and extent of criminal behaviour ◆ Evaluation of theories of criminal behaviour ◆ The social and economic effects of criminal behaviour 	<p>The nature and extent of criminal behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ defining crime and deviance ◆ measuring criminal behaviour ◆ different views of criminal behaviour — over time and internationally <p>Evaluation of theories of criminal behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ physiological ◆ psychological ◆ sociological

	<p>The social and economic effects of criminal behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ impact of criminal behaviour on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – individuals: victims and perpetrators – communities – groups – the private and public sectors ◆ public perception v reality of criminal behaviour <p>In this study, appropriate and relevant international comparisons should be made.</p>
<p>C. Responses by society to crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Theories and explanations of responses to crime ◆ Current responses to crime ◆ Evaluation of responses to crime 	<p>Theories and explanations of responses to crime:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ ideological perspectives on responses to crime ◆ prevention ◆ deterrence ◆ rehabilitation ◆ punishment ◆ protection of society <p>Current responses to crime:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ custodial ◆ non-custodial ◆ early intervention ◆ policing strategies ◆ multi-agency approaches <p>Evaluation of responses to crime:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ custodial ◆ non-custodial ◆ early intervention ◆ policing strategies ◆ multi-agency approaches <p>In this study, appropriate and relevant international comparisons should be made.</p>
<p>D. Research methods Research methodology and related moral and ethical issues</p>	<p>Research methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ official statistics

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ other researchers' data ◆ social surveys: sampling, designing surveys, conducting surveys, use of technology ◆ interviewing: structured, semi structured and unstructured, group/focus interviews, designing interviews, conducting interviews ◆ participant observation ◆ document research: official documents from the state and from private sources, personal documents, media outputs, virtual (internet) outputs ◆ case studies <p>Issues in research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ moral and ethical issues in research ◆ reliability and validity of quantitative and qualitative research ◆ primary and secondary research <p>Relevant and current case studies through which these research methods can be studied and exemplified.</p>
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The following examples are illustrative of approaches which may be adopted and which will allow opportunities to gather evidence that learners have achieved the Assessment Standards of the Unit Outcomes.

Study area A: understanding the criminal justice system — individual human rights and liberty in relation to criminal justice; judicial framework; current criminal justice issues

Example 1 — individual human rights

Transformers — newspaper articles

Having established prior knowledge on human rights and their place within the criminal justice systems of the UK and at least one comparator country, learners could be given a number of newspaper articles looking at challenges to the law and claims of human rights abuses with the legal system.

The newspaper articles could be gathered from printed press or via website news pages which would give the potential to look at stories from international countries too. Each learner would be given responsibility for one of these articles and exploring/explaining the key issues to the others in the class.

They should analyse, read and highlight their article and then ‘transform’ the extended text into a much shorter piece of text, in their own words, which makes the main points of the article clear.

This activity could help to demonstrate achievement of Outcome 1.1 (Demonstrating an in-depth knowledge and understanding of a complex political or social issue) **and** Outcome 2.2 (Synthesising information from a range of sources of evidence showing a variety of viewpoints).

Example 2 — the judicial framework and judicial system overview

Mini trial role play

Initial prior knowledge of how the judicial system works could be achieved by class discussion. This task encourages learners to act out the process of a court case as part of the judicial system and helps learners to explore the links and relationships between different parts of the framework.

A good starting point is to look at the following website:

<http://www.minitrial.org.uk>. MiniTrial is an initiative set up and run by Scottish lawyers to help schools find out more about the Scottish legal system, and they run mini trials in the District and Sheriff Courts on an annual basis. Learners assume the roles of the Sheriff, the accused, the witnesses and, using the information provided, they put together a defence and prosecution case. At the end they can have a discussion on the impact of the court system and the legislative process on all of this.

It would be useful for learners to compare their findings on the Scottish system with at least one other country and to present their findings on similarities and differences.

This activity could help to demonstrate achievement of Outcome 1.3 (Analysing a complex political or social issue) **and** Outcome 2.2 (Synthesising information from a range of sources of evidence showing a variety of viewpoints).

Study area B: understanding criminal behaviour — the nature and extent of criminal behaviour: evaluation of theories of criminal behaviour; the social and economic effects of criminal behaviour

Example 3: different views of criminal behaviour — over time and internationally

Group presentation on individual learner's views of criminal behaviour

This is a good task to use as a first introduction to the area of study — it will help to establish prior knowledge of each of the learners in the class and get them thinking about the variety of different views that exist when it comes to criminal behaviour.

Learners should study the nature and extent of criminal behaviour and the factors that lead people to becoming criminals. The following activity can help learners to develop an understanding of what crime and deviance actually are, as well as how they impact on society.

It is claimed that perceptions about crime are clouded by the media coverage of particular crimes and crimes committed by particular people. The teacher could encourage learners to have a discussion/debate looking at whether this is the case. Learners are then given the chance to try to examine some common personal perceptions of crime in the UK and internationally. An interesting international comparison might be to study South Africa or Brazil.

Learners would be expected to put together a presentation of images of crime or criminals. Learners should be encouraged to think 'outside the box' and not just flash up a stereotypical picture from each of these countries. Learners will have to show their pictures to the class and explain **why** they selected them. They can have as many as they want but they should not have any words on their images. It may be appropriate to allow them to use short visual clips too.

The success criterion for this task is that the learner fully explains their viewpoints and uses their images to show the basis for their conclusions. Learners should be encouraged to recognise that there are a variety of viewpoints.

This activity could help to demonstrate achievement of Outcome 1.1 (Demonstrating an in-depth knowledge and understanding of a complex political or social issue) **and** Outcome 2.4 (Using evidence to make judgements and reach conclusions).

Example 4 — researching the main theories of criminal behaviour

Learner-led tutorials on each of the key theorists

This task is useful in supporting the development of effective collaborative study approaches. It encourages the assimilation of a wide range of information in an effective manner. There are many theories about criminal behaviour; therefore one approach to learning about them is to assign one theorist to each learner. Learners will teach each other about the views of their particular theorist.

Learners should be provided with some materials as a starting point. This task involves leading the class in the same manner as many university tutorials are run: each learner has a small part of the Course to focus on and it is their responsibility to ensure that the key information is explained to everyone. The learners could be expected to take notes during the tutorial, and the 'presenting' learner will be expected to answer any questions the class may have at the end of their tutorial.

Success criteria should be agreed with the whole class in advance of each learner starting their research. You could, for example, ask them to explain the basics of the theory, examples/statistics used by the theorist, the criticisms of it, relevant examples from the news to suggest that it does in fact hold true today (or that it does not) and their own evaluation of the theory.

This activity could help to demonstrate achievement of Outcome 1.1 (Demonstrating an in-depth knowledge and understanding of a complex political or social issue), Outcome 1.3 (Analysing a complex political or social issues), Outcome 2.1 (Analysing a wide range of evidence about a complex political or social issue) and Outcome 2.4 (Using evidence to make judgements and reach conclusions).

Example 5 — evaluation of theories of criminal behaviour

Theorists' hot seating

Prior knowledge will have been established before this activity will work — this could be achieved through example 4 above. The aim of this task is to reinforce the individual learner's knowledge and understanding of the theories.

Learners should create a set of questions to ask a person in a five-minute interview, relating to that theorist's perspective on crime and deviance.

The teacher should give each learner the name of one theorist. They should be given an appropriate period of time to read a stimulus, revise their notes and get a clear overview of the perspective of the theorist they have been given.

The learner will then be placed in the hot seat to answer the questions the class devised at the start of the lesson. They should answer in the role of their theorist.

Each learner could also be asked to write a 50-word summary of one of the theories.

This activity could help to demonstrate achievement of Outcome 1.1 (Demonstrating an in-depth knowledge and understanding of a complex political or social issue) **and** Outcome 1.3 (Analysing a complex political or social issues **and** Outcome 2.2 (Synthesising information from a range of sources of evidence showing a variety of viewpoints).

Example 6 — impact of criminal behaviour

Placemat on impact of crime in affluent societies

Learners will complete a placemat that explores the impact that crime has on a variety of affluent societies.

Learners should be provided with a sheet of A3 paper, with a circle drawn in the middle and the page should then be divided into four (creating four rectangular segments with a circle that 'cuts into' each of the four rectangles). Learners should also be provided with a stimulus on the impact of crime in four different countries — this should be a variety of different sources where possible, for example a newspaper report, a website, a list of statistics or a video clip.

Learners will make notes on the impact that crime has in four countries (each country has its own rectangle on the A3 sheet) — focus should be on overall impact of crime, as well as the impact on individuals, communities, groups and the private/public sector.

Using the information in the four sections, learners should discuss and identify common themes. The common themes can be put into the middle circle and the impacts that are relevant to just one country can be highlighted. This information will allow learners to make international comparisons in respect of the impact of criminal behaviour. Ultimately, they should recognise that the impact of crime may be different in different countries, even if they are all affluent.

It is encouraged that learners compare and contrast the UK with, for example, Japan, Switzerland, any of the Scandinavian countries, Russia or Australia. Try to think outside of the norm when it comes to international comparisons.

This activity could help to demonstrate achievement of Outcome 1.2 (Making international comparisons and contrasts about a complex political or social issue) **and** Outcome 2.2 (Synthesising information from a range of sources of evidence showing a variety of viewpoints) **and** Outcome 2.3 (Making international comparisons and contrasts about a complex political or social issue).

Study area B: responses by society to crime — theories and explanations of responses to crime; current responses to crime; evaluation of responses to crime

Example 7: functions of penal system — prevention, deterrence, rehabilitation, punishment, protection

Internet research task

Background reading from organisations such as the Howard League for Penal Reform website allows learners to explore how prisons have evolved in the UK up until the 21st century.

Learners could be asked to identify changes or similarity in the purpose/aims of prisons over a chosen time period. They should use the information to come to a reasoned conclusion. The information also allows the learners to analyse how conditions in prisons have changed over time — there is a link here to some of the issues in the first area of study, in terms of human rights of prisoners.

A follow-up task might involve the learners looking at websites such as the Scottish Prison Service or Her Majesty's Prison Service and equivalent sites from other countries, as appropriate. Learners could be asked to find out the answers to a variety of questions that help them to explore ideological perspectives on responses to crime.

This activity could help to demonstrate achievement of Outcome 1.1 (Demonstrating an in-depth knowledge and understanding of a complex political or social issue) **and** Outcome 1.3 (Analysing a complex political or social issues) **and** Outcome 2.2 (Synthesising information from a range of sources of evidence showing a variety of viewpoints) **and** Outcome 2.4 (Using evidence to make judgements and reach conclusions).

Example 8 — alternatives to prison

Debate — the motion to be prepared is: 'Prison does not work — alternatives to prison are the only way forward'

This task could be used as a plenary following study on the challenges faced by prisons and the various non-custodial alternatives or as a means of encouraging learners to discuss their knowledge as an introduction to the topic area.

Learners could be given a stimulus, for example up-to-date statistics on recidivism rates for prisons and other methods of punishment. Involve every learner in the debate by allocating roles. The debate could be carried out in a variety of formats, with each learner contributing their ideas when called on by the teacher. It is important that they do not just read out prepared speeches but instead engage with the debate and one another to synthesise the evidence presented both in their own study and during the debate in order to come to an overall considered conclusion on the issue.

This activity could help to demonstrate achievement of Outcome 1.1 (Demonstrating an in-depth knowledge and understanding of a complex political or social issue) **and** Outcome 2.1 (Analysing a wide range of evidence about a complex political or social issue) **and** Outcome 2.4 (Using evidence to make judgements and reach conclusions).

Social Issues and Research Methods — Social Inequality

Within this context learners will study a range of complex social issues in the United Kingdom (including Scotland). **Throughout their study, an international comparative approach should be adopted.** Centres and learners have flexibility in the international comparisons they make and should choose appropriate countries to enable learners to make valid comparisons and contrasts. It is not required that the countries chosen for comparative study have significantly different social systems, structures or issues from those in the United Kingdom.

Learners will be required to answer questions on Research Methods and from two of the other areas of study below. It is a matter for centres to decide which areas of study (A, B, C) to focus on, the order and approach to teaching and learning, and the extent of coverage for each area of study.

Teachers/lecturers should be encouraged to read across the guidance for all three contexts as a variety of approaches are demonstrated and many of the following ideas are applicable to any chosen context.

In the following table, the column on the left gives details of mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the *Modern Studies: Contemporary Issues* (Advanced Higher) Unit. This list of skills, knowledge and understanding also provides the basis for the assessment of Units of the Course. The column titled 'Examples of coverage' describes how the content might be covered and is intended as guidance only. Below this table are some illustrative examples and/or suggestions for how teaching may assist the gathering of evidence for Unit Outcomes and Assessment Standards.

Areas of study	Coverage
A. Understanding social inequality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The nature and extent of social inequality ◆ Theories and explanations of social inequality ◆ Evaluation of theories and explanations of social inequality 	The nature and extent of social inequality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ defining social inequality ◆ measuring social inequality ◆ social mobility ◆ different views of social inequality — over time and internationally Theories and explanations of inequality:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ individual/functionalist ◆ structural/conflict <p>Evaluation of theories and explanations of social inequality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ individual/functionalist ◆ structural/conflict <p>In this study, appropriate and relevant international comparisons should be made.</p>
<p>B. Impact of inequality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The social and economic impact of inequality on individuals and groups in society ◆ The social and economic impact of inequality on aspects of society ◆ Current inequality issues 	<p>The social and economic impact of inequality on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ individuals ◆ families ◆ communities ◆ groups <p>The social and economic impact of inequality on aspects of society:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ health ◆ education ◆ crime ◆ employment ◆ housing ◆ income <p>Current inequality issues</p> <p>In this study, appropriate and relevant international comparisons should be made.</p>
<p>C. Responses to social inequality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Theories and explanations of responses to social inequality ◆ Current responses to social inequality ◆ Evaluation of responses to social inequality 	<p>Theories and explanations of responses to social inequality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ ideological perspectives on responses to social inequality ◆ individualist ◆ collectivist <p>Current responses to social inequality by government, private sector and third sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ welfare provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — health care provision — education provision

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – housing provision – social security – employment ◆ legislative approaches ◆ economic policy <p>Evaluation of responses to social inequality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ welfare provision ◆ legislative approaches ◆ economic policy <p>In this study, appropriate and relevant international comparisons should be made.</p>
<p>D. Research Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Research methodology and related moral and ethical issues 	<p>Research methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ official statistics ◆ other researchers' data ◆ social surveys: sampling, designing surveys, conducting surveys, use of technology ◆ interviewing: structured, semi-structured and unstructured, group/focus interviews, designing interviews, conducting interviews ◆ participant observation ◆ document research: official documents from the state and from private sources, personal documents, media outputs, virtual (internet) outputs ◆ case studies <p>Issues in research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ moral and ethical issues in research ◆ reliability and validity of quantitative and qualitative research ◆ primary and secondary research <p>Relevant and current case studies through which these research methods can be studied and exemplified.</p>

The following examples are illustrative of approaches which may be adopted and which will allow opportunities to gather evidence that learners have achieved the Assessment Standards of the Unit Outcomes.

Example 1: combining areas of study

It may be appropriate to combine areas of study and coverage within the topic of Social Inequality.

The example shown below combines the following:

- ◆ Area of study A: understanding social inequality — evaluation of theories and explanations of social inequality
- ◆ Area of study B: impact of inequality — the social and economic impact of inequality on individuals and groups in society; the social and economic impact of inequality on aspects of society

Some examples of how the Outcomes and Assessment Standards can be achieved

The main Outcomes to be covered are Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 but it is good practice to try to integrate Outcome 3 into the assessments as well.

Focus: to what extent are theories of social inequality relevant in today's society?

The following questions need to be addressed when tackling this issue:

- ◆ What is meant by social inequality?
- ◆ Does it mean different things in different countries?
- ◆ How is social inequality measured in the UK and comparator countries?
- ◆ How can social inequality be explained in the UK and comparator countries?
- ◆ Individual/functionalist/structural/conflict?
- ◆ What evidence is there that theories of social inequality are relevant in 21st century?

Since this Unit requires a comparative study with another country, the same questions should be posed for the comparator. When choosing comparators, it would be good practice to compare across a number of different societies. In this case, comparing and contrasting the UK with countries like India, Brazil, China, Mozambique or Russia will enrich the learning experience greatly.

In order to establish the impact of inequality on individuals, groups and communities, it is important to first establish the key aspects of society which provide indicators of that inequality:

- ◆ health
- ◆ education
- ◆ crime
- ◆ employment
- ◆ housing
- ◆ income

It would not be necessary to compare all of these aspects. For example, social inequality can be looked at through age, gender, class and ethnicity and it may be that gender and education in UK can be compared with gender and education in India or age and employment can be compared across the UK and China.

Using all relevant and valid evidence, conclusions can be drawn and an evaluative answer is possible (Outcome 2).

How might this be carried out at Advanced Higher Modern Studies level?

There are many excellent learning and teaching strategies and several of these have already been discussed in other parts of this document. These can all be used to generate evidence to show that a student has achieved the relevant Outcomes and/or Assessment Standards. The student can be presented with some evidence to analyse, synthesise and draw valid conclusions from. The evidence can be in the form of statistics, reports, academic papers, media articles or research documents such as opinion polls. It should be possible to compare and contrast the UK situation with that of other countries.

This research activity can be carried out individually over a period of time: several periods in class or indeed as ongoing homework. It would also be appropriate to do this where different countries and different aspects (eg housing and health) can be investigated by different groups of learners. The end result could be a discussion or debate. Learners should have choice in the final form of presentation.

The topic can concentrate on a specific country and aspect. Here are some learning objectives for a series of lessons that looks at China and the consequences of economic and social change over the last 20 years. Learners should be focused on social inequality and bear in mind the Outcomes they are working towards.

Learners will be able to:

- ◆ describe the nature and scope of the economic changes that China has experienced over the last 20 years (Assessment Standard 1.1)
- ◆ use a wide range of sources to explore the economic and social consequences of China's modernisation efforts (Assessment Standard 2.1)
- ◆ synthesise the information from the sources to identify the varying impacts of globalisation on Chinese society and how that might lead to social inequality (Assessment Standard 2.2)
- ◆ analyse national and regional inequalities associated with the economic and social changes studied (Assessment Standard 1.3)
- ◆ draw valid conclusions based on the evidence presented (Assessment Standard 2.4)

China can then be compared with the UK and indeed other countries as appropriate (Assessment Standard 1.2 and/or 2.3). It can be seen that a number of Outcomes and Assessment Standards can be covered by this topic of study, allowing the potential for relevant evidence can be gleaned to show that the student has met the assessment requirements.

The above activity can result in overwhelming amounts of information being gathered. A sorting activity using a graphic organiser can be very useful. This would involve the student in selecting valid evidence to support a specific point and adding it as appropriate to the organiser diagram, whether that is a flowchart or a web. There are many examples of graphic organisers available on the internet. The follow-up could be an extended writing activity using the evidence in the flowchart, etc. This may be a valid method for a learner to generate evidence for Assessment Standards from all three Outcomes.

Example 2: individual areas of study

It may be preferable or more relevant to cover a single area of study and develop a more focused approach to coverage within the topic of Social Inequality.

The example shown below covers:

Area of study B: impact of inequality — the social and economic impact of inequality on aspects of society — health, education, crime, employment, housing and income

The example demonstrates an approach focusing on Outcome 2 (Evaluate a wide range of evidence about political or social issues).

Focus: the impact of inequality on health and social problems

An example of how the Outcomes and Assessment Standards can be achieved

The following sources are examples of evidence that would be of a standard for an Advanced Higher Modern Studies learner to work with.

The hypothesis for study might be:

There is a wide range of evidence to show that there is a great correlation between inequality and social problems in both the UK and Sweden/Japan/New Zealand*.

*or any relevant country

This hypothesis can be broken down into a number of main areas/aims:

- ◆ What is the evidence?
- ◆ Is there a wide range of current and relevant evidence from different reliable sources?
- ◆ What is the correlation between inequality and social problems such as health, crime and unemployment?
- ◆ Is there a similar correlation in both UK and the comparator country/countries?

As the learner progresses through the sources suggested below and addresses these questions, they will be drawing on factual and theoretical knowledge and understanding of complex social issues (Outcome 1) and be evaluating a wide range of evidence about the complex issue (Outcome 2).

1. Report from Joseph Rowntree Foundation:
www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/inequality-income-social-problems-full.pdf

Report of September 2011

Income inequality grew dramatically in the UK in the 1980s and has fluctuated, if not increased still further, since then. While the Labour governments of 1997–2010 placed a high priority on poverty reduction, income inequality was not on the political agenda until Gordon Brown’s premiership when, in 2008, Harriet Harman commissioned the National Equality Panel report. The following year, *The Spirit Level* was published (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009a) and soon became widely cited as evidence that inequality caused a large array of health and social problems which affected everyone in society, not just those at the bottom.

2. ‘Research by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett has shown that among the richest countries, it’s the more unequal ones that do worse according to almost every quality of life indicator.’

David Cameron, Hugo Young Lecture, 10 November 2009

3. ‘The gap between rich and poor does matter. It doesn’t just harm the poor, it harms us all.’

Ed Miliband, speech to Labour Party conference on becoming Labour leader, 28 September 2010

4. Life expectancy at age 65 for men and women by social class, 2004–06 in England and Wales

Source: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_238743.pdf

Table 1. Life expectancy at birth: by sex and country, 2004-06 to 2008-10

Country	Years				
	2004-06	2005-07	2006-08	2007-09	2008-10
Males					
United Kingdom	77.0	77.3	77.5	77.9	78.2
England and Wales	77.2	77.5	77.8	78.1	78.5
England	77.3	77.6	77.9	78.3	78.6
Wales	76.6	76.8	77.0	77.2	77.6
Scotland	74.6	74.8	75.0	75.4	75.8
Northern Ireland	76.2	76.2	76.4	76.8	77.1

Females

United Kingdom	81.3	81.5	81.7	82.0	82.3
England and Wales	81.5	81.7	82.0	82.2	82.5
England	81.6	81.8	82.0	82.3	82.6
Wales	81.0	81.2	81.4	81.6	81.8
Scotland	79.6	79.7	79.9	80.1	80.4
Northern Ireland	81.0	81.3	81.3	81.4	81.5

1. Three-year rolling averages, based on deaths registered in calendar years and mid-year population estimates.

2. Figures for England and Wales include deaths of non-residents. Figures for England and Wales separately exclude deaths of non-residents.

p = provisional

5. Marmot review: <http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org>

Here are some of the key messages from the Marmot review:

Key messages of *Fair Society Healthy Lives*:

- 1. Reducing health inequalities is a matter of fairness and social justice. In England, the many people who are currently dying prematurely each year as a result of health inequalities would otherwise have enjoyed, in total, between 1.3 and 2.5 million extra years of life.*
 - 2. There is a social gradient in health — the lower a person's social position, the worse his or her health. Action should focus on reducing the gradient in health.*
 - 3. Health inequalities result from social inequalities. Action on health inequalities requires action across all the social determinants of health.*
 - 4. Focusing solely on the most disadvantaged will not reduce health inequalities sufficiently.*
6. Closing the health inequality gap: an international perspective:
www.euro.who.int_data/assets/PDF_file/0005/124529/E87934.pdf

Abstract

This report presents an analysis of official documents on government policies to tackle inequalities in health from 13 developed countries. All countries recognize that health inequalities are caused by adverse socioeconomic and environmental circumstances. However they differ in their definitions of inequalities and in their approaches to tackling the problem. Sweden and Northern Ireland have structured their overall public health policy to tackle the underlying determinants of inequalities in health.

Researching Contemporary Issues

Unit Outcome

Develop independent research skills in the context of complex political or social issues

Learners should identify an appropriate area of study and agree this with the teacher/lecturer. Careful consideration should be given to selecting an issue which the learner finds sufficiently interesting and challenging to spend a considerable amount of time researching in depth. In making this choice, learners should also consider the availability of resources which may vary from centre to centre.

Assessment Standards

1.1 Identifying an appropriate complex contemporary issue for research

A complex issue requires analysis and qualitative judgement, rather than a descriptive and narrative approach. The issue may be worded as a question, statement or hypothesis or a description of the area of study and should be such that the learner is challenged to provide a convincing overall conclusion to the issue(s) raised. It is likely that a suitable issue will give rise to a number of subsidiary questions or sub-issues or aims which will need to be considered in order to reach an overall conclusion providing a robust synthesis and a qualitative judgement. An appropriate complex issue is also one which will enable the learner to interrogate differing social or political perspectives or points of view. In some areas this may encompass significant debate — including major differences in the interpretation of social or political developments.

Possible ways of generating evidence

Evidence for this Assessment Standard can be generated in a variety of ways, such as a checklist, like the one provided towards the rear of this document, indicating the chosen issue and describing the process of choosing it. A short rationale could be produced to justify the issue selected.

1.2 Planning a programme of research

Once the issue has been agreed, the learner should begin planning a programme of research. This could include a variety of steps, such as:

- ◆ developing knowledge of the social or political context relevant to the chosen issue
- ◆ making decisions about the way in which the chosen issue will be tackled
- ◆ identifying a suitable range of resources
- ◆ agreeing key deadline dates for the completion of the different stages involved in researching the issue

- ◆ planning timescales for each part of the researching process
- ◆ developing knowledge of the political or social context relevant to the chosen issue

This might involve reading, for example a textbook, online resources, newspaper articles, chapters or articles from journals or other similar sources. Teachers and lecturers may need to help learners identify suitable background reading at this early stage, as well as establishing a time-frame for completion.

Making decisions about the way in which the chosen issue will be tackled

Care should be taken to ensure that a sensible range of factors/views/outcomes is considered, and that concentration on an isolated factor/view/outcome does not exclude consideration of alternative explanations. The individual learner may find it helpful to mind-map possible issues at this stage. Alternatively, an individual presentation could be made to peers, followed by a brainstorming session during which other learners contribute possible alternative approaches/interpretations.

To ensure that the approach taken is sufficiently in-depth, it may be useful to include no more than three or four main issues in the final plan. This may mean conflating some smaller issues into a single overarching issue or justifying the exclusion of some relatively minor issues. Mind mapping can prove a useful tool in suggesting how subsidiary issues relate to each other and to the overall chosen issue. Learners should be encouraged to be discerning about which information they choose to include, and their critical thinking skills can be shown by explaining why they are using or rejecting particular points.

Good planning is essential to researching the chosen issue as it provides a structured focus for collecting information. However, modification of the plan may be necessary, for example if new evidence emerges or the learner wishes to change the focus of their research. This should be seen as an integral part of planning a programme of research and learners should be encouraged to recognise that this need to amend elements of the original plan is a valid aspect of almost all independent research.

Identifying a suitable range of resources

Researching social subjects issues at this level should involve a wide range of academic reading and it is therefore important that the learner plans ahead to ensure that the resources they need are available when they need them. The starting point is likely to be resources held within the department but school and public libraries may also be able to help with accessing resources. Some university libraries provide reference facilities to final year school learners.

Sources might include online journals/papers, newspaper or press articles or press releases and blogs.

For some issues there are published works and learners may need teacher/lecturer guidance to help them select appropriate reading. Learners may also need help to distinguish between school textbooks (or books written for the general reader) and those written by academics with specialist knowledge of the

topic. While the former often provide an excellent starting point, research at this level should involve using up-to-date academic works as well. In the course of researching for the project, a good range of academic work should be consulted and learners should be able to recognise that different approaches and perspectives on Modern Studies issues may involve subtly different interpretations of events or ideas and will require careful reading.

Different subject disciplines use different research methods to create new knowledge and learners should be aware of some of these differences, for example the differences between qualitative and quantitative data. Research methodology shapes thinking so this will help learners to 'think like' or 'think within' this particular subject discipline. This will help learners become competent, critical users of information.

Possible ways of generating evidence

Evidence for this Assessment Standard can be generated in a variety of ways. The learner should be advised to keep a log as they go through the research process. They should record sources they have used, the author, page references and publication date. All learners should keep a record of this referencing for Unit assessment evidence.

Agreeing key deadline dates for the completion of the different stages involved in researching the issue

Many learners will find the process of researching independently a challenge. Therefore it may be helpful for the teacher/lecturer and learner to agree dates at which progress will be reviewed. Key dates might include:

- ◆ selection of an issue
- ◆ completion of a plan
- ◆ reviews/discussion of the collecting and recording evidence

Where this Unit is being taken as part of the Advanced Higher Modern Studies Course, the planning could also take account of:

- ◆ submission date for a first draft of the project: dissertation
- ◆ submission date for the final version of the project: dissertation, possibly at least a week before the SQA deadline date

Possible ways of generating evidence

Evidence for this Assessment Standard can be generated in a variety of ways, such as copies of planning notes, a written plan, a mind map, discussion notes or a recording of a discussion or interview. These may all provide evidence that the learner has met this Assessment Standard.

The checklist provided towards the rear of this document suggests one way of recording when progress checks have taken place.

1.3 Researching, collecting and recording information

Many learners will find it helpful to focus research on one aspect of the chosen issue at a time, rather than attempting to research, collect and record information relating to the whole issue at the same time. For example, where the chosen issue involves an isolated factor, the learner may choose to start with research focused on this aspect of the issue. Researching one aspect at a time can help to break the task up into more manageable sections and facilitates periodic reviews of progress. A progress review sheet could be used to support this process.

Once a starting point has been identified, the learner will decide how best to record information gathered. For many, word-processed or hand written note-making will be the most straightforward way of proceeding. Although many learners will have had some prior experience of collecting and recording information it is worth emphasising that it is good practice to:

- ◆ use the list of contents/index to identify sections relevant to the issue being studied
- ◆ skim read to identify the most important and relevant material
- ◆ be aware that many academics summarise their arguments at the end of a section or chapter — alternatively, their views may be outlined in the introduction or in the conclusion to the book or article

Learners could complete a simple task like the one provided below to become familiar with different sources of information and bibliographic format. Teachers/lecturers could produce a short guide to conducting research and observing ethical standards in research to help learners realise the importance of acknowledging sources and/or using sensitive information.

There is no single approved way of collecting and recording information but the following advice may prove useful.

Always note the author and title of the book/article being consulted. If a published work, the date of publication should also be recorded.

If the information is from an online source, note the URL and the date when accessed.

Summarise relevant factual evidence briefly, noting page references. By summarising, rather than quoting directly, learners will both save themselves time and avoid unintended plagiarism. Similarly, there is no need to write in sentences and abbreviations can speed up the note-making process, although it is important that the learner him/herself can subsequently make sense of the notes taken.

Record statements of the author's views by using phrases such as 'According to Jones, "...'. The recording of **brief** direct quotations may be helpful but these should be limited to a few words or phrases. Lengthy quotations are unhelpful.

Page references for views/quotations should be noted to facilitate footnoting at a later stage.

Academics often refer to the views/evidence cited by other academics. Noting references to these may help learners understand more about different academic interpretations, and aid the development of a convincing personal line of argument at a later stage.

Checks on progress could take the form of a discussion between teacher/lecturer and learner; peer review; or individual presentation to the group. In any discussion of progress made, it may be helpful for the teacher/lecturer to make sure that the learner is using evidence analytically and that a line of argument is emerging.

Possible ways of generating evidence

Evidence for this Assessment Standard can be generated in a variety of ways, such as a copy of the learner's notes which could be retained as evidence of researching, collecting and recording information. The task for recording bibliographic format provided may also help provide evidence for this stage of the process.

1.4 Evaluating, analysing and synthesising evidence

The skills that Modern Studies helps to develop particularly well are the critical evaluation, analysis and synthesis of information. The development of these skills is one of the most important aspects of researching at this level.

Evaluation and analysis

Analysis will involve the learner considering a range of information to identify patterns, trends, exceptions and so on. Pictures, maps, tables of statistics and written sources may all be relevant and learners can be encouraged to look closely and to pick out what is relevant to their chosen issue. It is important that, having analysed the information and identified the viewpoints presented in the sources, learners take a critical view of the details they have collected. This will include evaluating the validity of the information presented and a judgement on the interpretative perspective of the sources.

When using and reviewing sources it may be helpful to remind learners to take the following points into account:

- ◆ Consider first of all the **author**; what is the author's level of expertise — how much did/does he or she know about the issue?
- ◆ **Bias**, or point of view, does need to be borne in mind. But it should not be assumed unless the words of the source do actually show bias.
- ◆ The **purpose** of the source is as important when it comes to assessing reliability. Is it to persuade, to inform, to develop, to reject? Who are/were the intended readers?

- ◆ The **date** of a source might also be relevant as is the **context** in which it was written.

One more test of the value of a source is the extent to which it is supported or contradicted by other sources. Sources can be thought of as pieces of jigsaw; they are much more valuable in building up a complete picture if they can be fitted in with other sources. Learners should be actively encouraged to use sources to develop and support their arguments. They should be encouraged to see that this will strengthen their lines of argument, and to appreciate that proper referencing of sources helps the learner avoid plagiarism. Identifying sources will also help the reader to see the range of sources used.

Learners should be encouraged to evaluate academic writing critically and use their own understanding and critical thinking skills to interrogate the sources they use. Learners should be helped to realise that knowledge is usually subjective and that, within the social subjects, 'truth' is often influenced by context, perception and circumstances.

The following questions can help to make judgements about a source and help develop skills of critical analysis.

- ◆ How relevant is the source to my question or issue?
- ◆ What is the evidence used in this source to support this conclusion?
- ◆ Which of these bits of evidence does this source regard as decisive?
- ◆ Is it justifiable to draw the conclusion from the evidence as this source does?
- ◆ Does this source give less weight to, or ignore altogether, other pieces of evidence that have a bearing on the issue?
- ◆ How does this argument compare with the rival arguments of other sources, which have been similarly evaluated?

Any source should always be carefully evaluated. Learners may find it useful to apply the following questions when reading sources.

- ◆ Is the author a serious and respected scholar?
- ◆ Is the publisher/website politically neutral or is it linked to or sponsored by some political cause?
- ◆ If a website, is it managed by some responsible academic institution — typically a university or a national archive?
- ◆ Does the work include any apparatus of scholarship (references, footnotes, bibliography)?
- ◆ Does the design of the website or publication suggest that the digital special effects are more important than the words on the screen?

Practice in the skills

Teachers/lecturers should not give direct and specific help to candidates with the analysis and evaluation of the particular issues, though it would certainly be helpful to discuss with them such matters as 'For what reasons do you prefer the arguments of academic x to those of academic y?'

The following exercise helps develop the skills outlined above.
Teachers/lecturers may find it useful to go through this exercise.

The teacher/lecturer could issue a text and ask learners to identify the main line of reasoning used. The learners could critically evaluate that line of reasoning by highlighting statements which prove the argument or undermine it. Learners could also be asked to identify any hidden agendas or information which is missing that could paint a different picture. Learners could discuss how reliable the sources are in the text and whether the data is up-to-date. The teacher/lecturer could ask if the learner comes to the same conclusions as the writer.

Synthesis

Learners can be provided with a variety of complex sources of information and be asked to draw these together into a single text. These may include arguments and counter-arguments, conflicting data and a variety of subtly differing perspectives.

Possible ways of generating evidence

Evidence for this Assessment Standard can be generated in a variety of ways such as a literature review. This is a potential way to develop the skills of critical reading, analysis, evaluation and synthesis. A literature review matrix can help group together resources which address the same topic. The issues and themes emerging from the literature can be recorded and act as a framework for a literature review. An example is provided towards the end of the document.

1.5 Understanding approaches to organising, presenting and referencing findings using appropriate conventions

A critical skill is to understand how findings can be presented in such a way as to be clear, reliable and reflect the relevant conventions of the subject. There is no single way to achieve this and learners should consider in particular possible approaches to organising and referencing their work.

Organising

A key issue in communicating the ideas synthesised from the research is to be able to structure the findings appropriately. This will normally involve laying out various sub-issues relevant to the question in a logical manner which develops a clear line of argument and leads to a conclusion which can be supported.

This may mean going into detail on the various areas. These might well include:

- ◆ matters of precise definition that arise from the issue
- ◆ alternative interpretations that have been produced by different academics or academic traditions
- ◆ detailed analysis of particular pieces of evidence that have a substantial bearing on the issue
- ◆ a wide-ranging consideration of all aspects of the issue

It may be appropriate for learners to use **sub-sections/chapters/aims** to keep their material under control. These sub-sections will normally arise from the sub-issues identified at the planning stage but are not a requirement. Successful use of sub-sections will normally depend on the following:

- ◆ keeping sections to an appropriate number
- ◆ sub-sections that are linked together coherently

Formal language and tone is encouraged. For example, instead of learners using phrases like, 'I think that...', it may be more appropriate for learners to express themselves in a more academic way, for example, 'this evidence is used to support and elaborate on...'

Presenting

It is also important to develop skills in the appropriate conventions when making an academic presentation.

- ◆ A dissertation requires use of controlled language. Learners should develop the skill of presenting an argument or making a point thoughtfully and clearly.
- ◆ Main text should use a standard font which is clear and uncluttered.
- ◆ Learners should make sure they are aware of any requirements for line spacing, font size, page numbering and margins.
- ◆ Text contained in diagrams may be smaller or larger but must be legible.

Referencing

Learners should understand how to use appropriate referencing conventions. Learners should be accurate in their references.

- ◆ All quotations should be referenced.
- ◆ Specific facts such as statistics should usually be referenced unless they are the common currency of all books on the subject.
- ◆ If a paragraph is based in its entirety on one book, then that should be referenced, even if there is no direct quotation.

The style of referencing can be the straightforward one of: Author, Date, *Title*, page number.

Example: Gillespie, R. (2011) *Critical Navigation Skills*, p93

Learners may use the conventional *ibid* and *op cit* as appropriate.

Research findings should be accompanied by a bibliography. As with references, learning how to construct and present a proper bibliography is part of the development provided by this Unit. The bibliography should be a genuine note of all works used. It is important that the author's name and the title are entered correctly. The date and publisher should also be included.

Most university websites have advice on setting out a bibliography. Some well-known standard formats include Harvard, MLA and APA. The main point is that learners should be consistent in the format they choose to use and which is most appropriate for their area of research.

Websites should also be recorded in the bibliography. Web addresses should be listed, with the dates at which they were accessed. This is done because websites are subject to frequent alteration.

Possible ways of generating evidence

Evidence for this Assessment Standard can be generated in a variety of ways, such as:

- ◆ report of findings
- ◆ mind map
- ◆ information poster
- ◆ oral presentation
- ◆ short bibliography

1.6 Evaluating research methodology

Social science research methods

Social science research methods include:

- ◆ official statistics
- ◆ other researchers' data
- ◆ social surveys: sampling, designing surveys, conducting surveys, use of technology
- ◆ interviewing: structured, semi-structured and unstructured, group/focus interviews, designing interviews, conducting interviews
- ◆ participation observation
- ◆ document research: official documents from the state and from private sources, personal documents, media output, virtual (internet) outputs
- ◆ case studies

Current and relevant exemplification of each of these research methodologies is important and learners should be encouraged to continuously find such examples to enhance their understanding of the research process.

Official statistics are quantitative statistics published by government departments and their agencies and other public bodies. They can be used to collate facts and figures to see if there are any trends between related sets of information, eg crime rate and level of unemployment.

Other researchers' data is secondary data collected by someone else for some other purpose. Information collected by qualitative research such as interviews and focus groups are examples of such data. It can provide a baseline for comparison with your own primary research.

Social surveys are examples of primary research. It is not compulsory to carry out any primary research but it is recommended if appropriate. Learning about sampling, designing and conducting surveys and how technology might help or indeed hinder the process is crucial to an understanding of research methods at this level. Likewise the processes involved in interviewing are also important.

Participation observation is a qualitative research method that involves researchers studying the activities of people in their natural setting. This can be done by observing them and/or participating in their activities.

Document research usually includes official documents from the state and from private sources, personal documents, media outputs or virtual (internet) outputs.

Case studies are examples of real-life situations that provide the basis for the application of the researcher's ideas.

Critically evaluating research methodologies

To critically evaluate is to go through a process that looks at the research methodology that has been used and describe, explain and analyse it.

Example: the learner has used a particular website while investigating an issue. The website should be identified; why that particular site was chosen and then a discussion about the pros and cons of the site in relation to the specific purpose of the investigation.

The specific example below is very simple. Further detailed examples can be found in the sections on each area of study.

The Scottish Housing Conditions Survey: key findings 2011 —
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/12/4995/0>

This website was chosen specifically to help address the aim that looked at trends in fuel poverty rates in Scotland in the last five years. This website was chosen because it was relevant, current and Scottish-focused.

Checklist

Learner's name _____

Research activity	Notes	Date completed
Key dates agreed and issued		
Proposed issue		
Discussion/negotiation on issue		
Issue finalised and agreed		
Planning a programme of research	Agreed plan attached	
Agreed amendments to the plan (if any)		
Initial sources		

Review of progress (1) including evaluation and analysis of evidence so far		
Review of progress (2)		

Bibliographic format

Academic book	
Education journal	
Media source	
Internet source	

Literature review — using a matrix

This table shows a potential way of approaching a literature review. The text under each heading is an illustrative example of the issues that may be identified within a review of a particular piece of literature.

Study	Aim of study OR research question	Viewpoint of author	Main themes or points emerging	Main conclusion Any limitations?	Any future research suggested?
Author 1	To investigate factors which...	Author believes that...	Factors impacting are...	The key factor was.....	Should look at... Could extend scope of research to...
Author 2	To explore issues related to...	Author believes that...	Main evidence is...	The main impact was... Limitations: Is data now out of date? Does this matter?	Need more research to see if... Could extend research into...

Appendix 2: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

- ◆ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications are available on SQA's website at: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html.
- ◆ Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work
- ◆ Building the Curriculum 5: A Framework for Assessment
- ◆ [Course Specifications](#)
- ◆ [Design Principles for National Courses](#)
- ◆ [Guide to Assessment](#)
- ◆ [Overview of Qualification Reports](#)
- ◆ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
- ◆ [SCQF Handbook: User Guide](#) and [SCQF level descriptors](#)
- ◆ [SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#)
- ◆ [Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool](#)
- ◆ [Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers](#)

Administrative information

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History of changes to Advanced Higher draft Course/Unit Support Notes

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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