



Access 3 Geography — draft Course rationale and summary

August 2011



This edition: August 2011, draft version 1.0

Published by the Scottish Qualifications Authority
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DQ
Ironmills Road, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1LE

www.sqa.org.uk

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Course rationale

Background

All new and revised National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

In this Course, and its component Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles

The Access 3 Geography Course builds upon the principles and practices for social studies¹ and will be developed primarily from the 'people, place and environment' organiser within the social studies experiences and outcomes. It also builds upon the science principles and practices and on selected experiences and outcomes from the science curriculum area.²

The Geography Course will encourage learners to develop important attitudes, including: an open mind and respect for the values, beliefs and cultures of others; openness to new thinking and ideas; and a sense of responsibility and global citizenship.

Through the study of Geography and the acquisition of techniques of geographical analysis, learners develop an understanding of aspects of the contemporary world of concern to all citizens. Learners are enabled to develop the four capacities.

Geography encourages learners to develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities in many respects. For example, learner's horizons are extended and they are challenged to look at the world in new ways. Their confidence grows as they begin to understand more about their sense of identity and learn about different countries and cultures. Learners will build up a framework of geographical knowledge and understanding with which to understand and respond to global issues which can help them develop a sense of responsible citizenship.

The investigative and critical thinking activities in this Course give learners important experience in contributing to group work and also working on their own. Learners will acquire attributes which will be important for their life and work.

Through the skills and content of the Geography Course, learners will develop an increased understanding of the environment, sustainability and the impact of global issues.

The practical and multidisciplinary nature of Geography will help to develop skills in employability and enterprise. The emphasis on the use of sources, including maps, will develop thinking skills. Learners will progressively develop skills in literacy and numeracy.

¹ Social studies principles and practice paper

www.ltscotland.org.uk/learningteachingandassessment/curriculumareas/socialstudies/principlesandpractice/index.asp

² Experiences and outcomes

www.ltscotland.org.uk/understandingthecurriculum/howisthecurriculumstructured/experiencesandoutcomes/index.asp

Purpose and aims of the Course

Geography opens up for learners the physical environment around them, and the ways in which people interact with this environment.

The purpose of Geography is to develop the learner's understanding of our changing world and its human and physical processes. Opportunities for practical activities, including fieldwork, will be encouraged, so that learners can interact with their environment.

The contexts for study are local, national, international, and global. Geography draws upon the social and natural sciences. Interdisciplinary learning is therefore fundamental to geographical study and encourages links with other disciplines.

In the 21st century, with growing awareness of the impact of human activity upon the environment and scarce resources, the study of Geography fosters positive life-long attitudes of environmental stewardship, sustainability and global citizenship. This qualification will furnish learners with the knowledge and skills to enable them to contribute effectively to their local communities and wider society.

The main aims of Geography are to enable learners to:

- ◆ appreciate the ways in which people and the environment interact in response to physical and human processes at local, national, international and global scales
- ◆ be aware of spatial relationships and develop an understanding of the changing world in a balanced, critical and sympathetic way
- ◆ acquire a geographical perspective on environmental and social issues
- ◆ develop an interest in, and concern for, the environment leading to sustainable development

Geography can create informed and active citizens by helping learners develop a greater understanding of the human and physical processes which have an impact on their environment. Learners will develop skills which are transferable to other areas of study and which they will use in everyday life.

Information about typical learners who might do the Course

Geography Courses are appropriate for a wide range of learners including those who wish to achieve a greater understanding of the environment and their place in it as well as learners who wish to progress to more specialised training or further education or employment.

All Courses in this suite will take account of the needs of all learners and provide sufficient flexibility to enable learners to achieve in different ways and at a different pace.

Through the successful completion of the Geography Course, important skills for learning, life and work are developed. These skills include the use of simple information from a few sources; using techniques to interpret simple geographical phenomena; using a limited range of simple maps and other data to organise and communicate geographical information; and research, including simple fieldwork skills.

Learners will also develop an awareness of a limited range of basic geographical information systems through ICT or alternative means.

Geography Units and Courses are offered from SCQF level 3 to SCQF level 7. Vertical progression is possible through the levels of Geography qualifications and lateral progression is possible to other qualifications in the social studies suite of Courses and selected Courses in the sciences.

This Course is recognised as an entry qualification to employment, training, and further education. This Course provides preparation for a diverse range of occupations and careers.

Course summary

Course title: Access 3 Geography

SCQF level 3 (18 SCQF credit points)

Course outline

Mandatory Units

Geography: Physical Environments (Access 3)	6 SCQF credit points
Geography: Human Environments (Access 3)	6 SCQF credit points
Geography: Global Issues (Access 3)	6 SCQF credit points

Course structure and conditions of award

This Course develops a range of cognitive skills and practical skills. Geography Courses encourage active learning, including fieldwork, in the process of developing an understanding of geographical issues.

The theme of sustainability will permeate the Course. Learners need to acquire and apply basic knowledge and skills in the collection and use of information, at an appropriate level, in order to understand geographical issues.

The skills listed above will be developed and applied over a range of physical environment, human environment and global issue contexts in the following Units. Each Unit also offers opportunities for learners to focus on particular skills:

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a variety of ways.

Geography: Physical Environments (Access 3)

In this Unit, learners will develop simple mapping skills in geographical contexts. Learners will draw upon a basic knowledge of key aspects of weather and a few landscape types in the United Kingdom.

Geography: Human Environments (Access 3)

In this Unit, learners will develop simple research skills in geographical contexts. Learners will draw upon a basic knowledge of key aspects of developed and developing countries.

Geography: Global Issues (Access 3)

In this Unit, learners will use a few sources of numerical and graphical information. Learners will draw upon a basic knowledge of key aspects of a straightforward global geographical/environmental issue.

successful learner, confident individual, responsible citizen, effective contributor

To achieve the Access 3 Geography Course, learners must pass all of the required Units. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section.

Access 3 Courses are not graded.

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Assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in Unit specifications.

They will be assessed pass/fail within centres.

SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgements are consistent and meet national standards.

Exemplification of possible assessment approaches for Units will be provided in the *National Assessment Resource*.

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